



Switching National Schools onto Green Energy

During October Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Eamon Ryan, TD joined pupils from St. Mary's Boys National School, Rathfarnham together with staff from RTÉ to launch this year's *An Taisce Green-Schools ESB Independent Energy Project*. This project is run by The An Taisce Green-Schools Energy Project and is supported by ESB Independent Energy. It encourages primary school students and businesses to partner up in order to exchange expertise and devise creative ways to conserve energy and reduce carbon emissions.

RTÉ, the National Broadcaster, teamed up with Ireland's 2000th Green School, St Mary's BNS, Rathfarnham. The first of this year's collaborations is seen as a flagship partnership and a major commitment by RTÉ in reducing its carbon footprint and developing its already successful sustainability programme. Previous achievements by RTE and St Mary's in areas of waste reduction, management and recycling have been recognised as best practice in both business and academic circles. It is envisaged that both RTÉ and St Mary's will share their expertise, knowledge and experiences to

produce an effective and exciting partnership.

"To have reached a point where two thousand of Ireland's National Schools are 'going green' is remarkable," said the Minister. "This is exactly the right approach to be taking – educating the future generations about sustainability and evoking a sense of passion and excitement amongst them about green issues. Congrats to the students and staff of St. Mary's for all of the work they have undertaken to earn this Green Flag – number 2000 nationally. I'm sure their collaboration with RTE through the ESB Independent Energy sponsored Green Energy Project will deliver more efficiencies both at the organisation and in the school and I wish all involved the very best of luck."

Brid Horan, Executive Director Energy Solutions, ESB said: "As a leading provider of green energy, ESB Independent Energy is delighted to support the An Taisce Green Schools Energy Project for this, the third year. It is a unique project that brings together primary school children with local businesses – students are learning about reducing carbon emissions and being greener, and are then transferring this knowledge into positive environmental action at a wider community level."

Patricia Oliver, Director of our Environmental Education Unit

highlighted the positive impact that the Green-Schools Energy programme has had to date: "Last year alone, 15-20 million units of electricity and 200 million litres of water were saved by Green-Schools throughout Ireland over the school year. This is a fantastic achievement and demonstrative of the effectiveness of projects such as this."

When asked about RTE's involvement in the Project, Eileen Duggan, Office Services Manager with RTE explained "It's great to be contributing to this very constructive and worthwhile project with a school which has clearly proved its commitment to sustainability and continuous improvement."

St. Mary's is the 2,000th school in Ireland to be awarded the prestigious Green Flag and in recognition of this achievement Minister Ryan raised the Green Flag at the school. In addition to Minister Ryan, the event was attended by representatives from ESB Independent Energy, An Taisce, RTÉ and the school's Board of Management.

Schools and businesses wishing to participate in this year's *An Taisce Green Schools Energy Project* can contact www.ESB.ie for more details.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

10 messages 2
for 2010

Green Schools Travel 2

Energy Breakfast report 2

Regeneration Opportunities for Growth 3

News in Brief 3

One-off housing and Michael Collins 4

Images above show launch of ESBie Green energy programme

An Taisce Christmas Cards

This Christmas, please consider helping An Taisce's work all year round by sending one of our Christmas Cards this year. The cards, available 'as Gaeilge' or in English, depict a snow scene around the lovely Tailors' Hall, and are 'Irish produced' on 100% recycled paper. 10 cards and envelopes are €10 (inc p&p) by emailing fundraising@antaisce.org, phoning 01 7077068 and are available online

at www.antaisce.ie



More Tailors' Hall News

After changes in licencing law and an upgrade of the building, we are now happy to announce that Tailors' Hall fully is licenced and again open for business. We have already hosted one wedding and a number of meetings. We are offering a special pre-Christmas luncheon package. The success of these ventures are critical to An Taisce's survival and to the conservation of Tailors' Hall. Please consider them in your plans and spread the word.

10 Messages for 2010



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

Agency



Europe's mosaic of cultural and natural landscapes results from centuries of human intervention.

Every month the European Environment Agency (EAA) is issuing a "message for 2010", which will highlight one theme per month until the tenth meeting of the conference of the parties (COP) to the United Nations convention on Biological diversity (CBD). Each message provides a short assessment focusing on a specific ecosystem or issue related to biodiversity in Europe. A summary of October's message is below. This is the last message of the series.

Cultural Landscapes and Biodiversity Heritage

Diverse climatic conditions, varied geology and morphology and centuries of pre- and post-industrial land use created Europe's diverse mosaic of cultural and natural landscapes, rich in biodiversity. but Europe's

landscapes have become highly fragmented and homogenised, threatening their biodiversity and affecting their multifunctional role. By managing its multifunctional culture-historical landscapes and related biodiversity sustainably, Europe can secure valuable ecosystems services while

preserving its cultural and natural heritage. Various legal instruments and initiatives address European biodiversity heritage at the landscape level. And need to be incorporated into regional and local planning. To read more [click here](#).

The message was written by Marcus Zisenis (ECNC, ETC/BD), with contributions from Dominique Richard and Sophie Condé et al.



Green Schools Travel News

Green-Schools Travel has had a very busy month and we have been out visiting schools around the country promoting sustainable travel on the school run. We ran nearly 20 teacher training seminars around the country with almost 200 schools attending. The core Green-Schools team ran an additional 20 seminars focusing on the themes of litter & waste, energy, water and biodiversity.

Currently the Travel team are undertaking travel surveys in schools around the country to determine how pupils & teachers are travelling to school. The results of these surveys and the 2008-2010 surveys will be available in the next e-zine.

Green-Schools Travel has been commissioned by Dundalk Town Council to work on the Go Dundalk Smarter Travel Project. The project is a demonstration project aiming to link behavioural change actions and infrastructural provision in primary and secondary schools. Green-Schools is delighted to be involved and looks forward to seeing more students walking & cycling in Dundalk over the coming years.

Green-Schools Travel has also been commissioned to work with Cork City Council on the EU SMILES project which aims to promote sustainable travel to school. The project involves five European countries and will be a great opportunity to disseminate information about sustainable travel in Ireland and learn from partner countries.

We are also starting to work with The Body Shop to deliver the Beauty & the Bike initiative to teenage girls. The aim of the initiative is to raise awareness of the benefits of cycling in terms of their health, fitness and confidence. We look forward to working with The

Body Shop on this initiative as it is imperative that we get more young women cycling to school.

Finally we would like to congratulate our Travel Education Officer Imelda Ryan-Jones and St. Aiden's NS in Monasteraden who won a Leading Light in Road Safety Award from the Road Safety Authority. The award highlights the wonderful work being carried out around the country by Green-Schools staff and participating schools when it comes to promoting safety on the journey to school.

Eddie Hobbs Energy Breakfast

On October 14th Ireland's energy sector congregated in the Guinness Storehouse at a fundraising event for An Taisce to hear inimitable broadcaster Eddie Hobbs speak on the subject of energy. Mr Hobbs spoke about peak oil and gas, the economics of energy and the need for energy efficiency in all of society. He generously waived a speaker's fee.

Organisations represented by tables at the event included Eirgrid, ESB Networks, Bord na Mona, Coillte and SSE Renewables. The Spirit of Ireland Group also attended in number. Other arenas represented included academia, the banking sector and environmental consultancies. Also represented were charitable foundations and the Dublin Chamber of Commerce. SEAI who were not able to attend kindly made a special donation by sponsoring one whole table at the event. Many thanks to all for their support at an event where differing views, adversaries and interests were 'at the table.' The event should realize over €5,000 for An Taisce so that it can independently continue its environmental & heritage focus without fear or favour!



Images from top: Gay Byrne and two proud pupils from St Aiden's; Gay Byrne, Imelda Ryan Jones and pupils from St Aiden's; Jumping for joy at Dublin Castle.

A personal report by Rita Canney
An Taisce member, Waterford City

Waterford Chamber of Commerce Conference “Regeneration-Opportunities for Growth”

Aside from the “as-would-be-expected”, economically-focused view of regeneration suggested by the title, I attended the above event in Waterford on the promise that some speakers promoted a broader socio-environmental view of urban regeneration. Having attended, my view would be best described as “mixed”. That said, I am positive because the fact that an agency and an audience which traditionally see regeneration as an economic process were even talking about these issues is a step forward.

Presentations covered topics which ranged from the growth-as-an-end-in-itself approach to regeneration to those which sought to highlight the value of (the built) heritage and a people-friendly public realm and to extol the virtues of genuine public participation in the regeneration process.

The presentations by Shalleen Singhal, University of Ulster, Minister Batt O Keeffe and Simon Coveney TD fell within this category, but with occasional “sprinklings” of sustainability-speak. eg the need for cities to reduce their ecological footprint and the perceived need for an increase in Ireland’s capacity for renewable energy generation and for water use efficiency.

Of the presentations with a broader socio-environmental perspective those delivered by Dr Aideen McGinley, Chief Executive of **ilex**, Christina Lister, from **Norwich HEART**; by Richard Smith of **Living Streets** and Dr. Patrick Wallace, of the National Museum of Ireland, were particularly notable.

Collectively, these presentations placed particular emphasis on public participation in the regeneration process, on the value of (the built) heritage and the perceived need to retain the integrity of this asset and on the creation of a people-friendly public realm.

Dr Wallace’s dislike of a “hanging baskets” approach to heritage preservation, and his belief that our heritage should be allowed to “speak for itself” hit a particular cord with me – bringing to mind visits to “sanitised” commercialised heritage sites versus those which have essentially retained their integrity. It would have been interesting to hear further elaboration on specific/potential conflicts which can arise between authentic heritage preservation and the “Commodification” of Heritage for tourism. A good paper

is “Heritage and Tourism in Ireland - an unholy alliance?” [click here](#)

Dr McGinley’s presentation on the Derry-Londonderry project emphasised the need for genuine, broad public participation (especially the involvement of children and young people) and on ensuring that opportunities and benefits from regeneration are targeted towards the most deprived groups. Whilst being of the mind that the real effectiveness, of any public participation exercise/ regeneration project, can only really be gauged from user feedback, I still took from the presentation, some sense that extra efforts had been made to engage with the local community. I would highlight that the need for robust baseline data to inform the regeneration process was underlined.

The local presentations, I would suggest, ranged in their focus from very specific, project-level local topics to more integrated visions. Whilst noting that the City Manager highlighted a variety of socio-cultural factors such as the local (built) heritage, the city’s estuarine location, “the people”, etc as key city assets, he appeared to me to omit the real, potential “downsides” of regeneration e.g. displacement of established communities to facilitate large-scale city centre shopping centres, rent increases, privatisation of the public realm, etc. I also noted that whilst the Manager referred to “the estuary” as a local asset, natural heritage/landscape received little attention from any of the speakers. My (jaundiced?) sense was that he sees the estuary as an amenity/tourism asset.

In summary, whilst the Conference made a demonstrable start at promoting an integrated approach to regeneration, some notable socio-environmental aspects were omitted. I also got a sense that heritage and social assets were still being viewed through the prism of “economic regeneration” but it’s fair to say that many of the speakers seemed to be mindful of the intrinsic socio-cultural value of these assets. The “proof of the pudding” of this emerging, holistic view of urban regeneration, will be revealed when it is translated into “on the ground” reality. The absence of even a handful of low-cost places being made available for community representatives/members of the public, suggests that there is some way to go in Waterford before an integrated, holistic approach to urban regeneration becomes a reality.

Boosterstown Clear-up

On a beautiful sunny Sunday afternoon October 17th an enthusiastic group combed the Boosterstown beach for litter. The group not only from Dun Laoghaire An Taisce but also Birdwatch Ireland and interested individuals including Councillor Barry Ward, hauled fifty sacks of rubbish from the long beach over the DART footbridge up to the Rock road, quite a task especially since one wheelbarrow got a puncture!



Items included car tyres, the remains of a bicycle, a carpet, clothing, a few old shoes, lots of bottles and the ubiquitous beer cans. This was our first clean up of the new sand spit at Boosterstown and litter evidence shows that others have discovered this lovely new beach too. It is a shame that this literally pristine land born out of the sea is already becoming littered. Our youngest helpers were Verity and Grace while the rest of us will not admit to being a day over 21 (plus tax). Margaret produced the much deserved tea and cake before some who shall remain nameless adjourned to the Punch Bowl for further refreshments. *Rebecca Jeffares Events and Environment committee 0879537979*

Public Consultations

In the last weeks An Taisce made a number of consultation submissions including ones on the EIA directive, National Biodiversity Plan and also to Protecting our Natural Capital- an EU strategy to conserve biodiversity and ensure the provision of ecosystem services by 2020. In addition we also input into the Department of Transport’s review of national ports policy. Thanks to all who contributed to this work. We hope to get these submissions up on the website shortly.

An upcoming consultation which you might want to input into individually is:

- The role of EU agriculture and forestry in achieving the EU’s climate change commitments - Closing 14th November 2010
- [click here for details](#)

Kulyana Cartridge Report

Starting in 2009, Kulyana, a climate change project, run by the Clare Local Association has been collecting and recycling printer cartridges in their area. The group has kept very detailed records as research for any other groups wishing to carry out a similar project.

The main problems appear to be that too many of the cartridges collected are not acceptable by the agents, leaving the group with a stock of unsellable cartridges. This raised the question as to where the unsold cartridges go from other large collectors such as recycling centres etc – are they just land-filled? Payment is either a long time coming and in some cases with British agents although they advertise in Ireland, they do not have mechanisms to pay into Irish Banks. The group have covered their costs however and have found it a useful way to make positive contacts with schools and businesses in the area and will continue on with the project, and as they continue and refine the collection it should start to be profitable on a small scale, but has taken a lot of work.

One-off Housing — a Decision Worth Looking At

The whole issue of one-off housing is highly contentious in Ireland and An Taisce frequently finds itself in the firing-line on this matter. Many of our members can relate readily to the desire of locals to build their homes on family land and close to relations. Some of the problems arise because of specific locations or the design and services proposed. Further issues arise when one ceases to look at the individual cases and review the cumulative impacts of one-off houses and the longer-term environmental and economic costs of them.

A recent decision by An Bord Pleanála provides a useful insight into some of the considerations in such cases. Extracts from the decision to refuse permission of a bungalow, associated waste water and ancillary works is included here – the full decision is available: <http://www.pleanala.ie/documents/orders/236/D236861.pdf> While An Taisce is frequently seen as the reason one-off housing applications fail – the real reasons include those listed below:

- In summary the Board highlighted it was bound by the Planning & Development legislation, and was required to consider submissions and observations received
- The Board indicated in the light of the requirements of the County Development Plan and Sustainable Rural Planning Housing Guidelines from the DOEHLG – it was not satisfied that the applicant met the criteria within these for a house in this location.
- It also indicated that : “The proposed development would, therefore, militate against the preservation of the rural environment, would lead to demands for the uneconomic provision of further public services and community facilities and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area”
- It considered that the extent of works to allow safe access to the site would unduly impact the rural costal location, and detailed other safety considerations in relation to alignment and visibility and traffic hazard.
- In considering the impact to views and the provisions of the County Develop-

ment Plan and the precedents this would set – the Board also stated: “The site of the proposed development is located on the seaward side of the public road where it is a policy (Policy BNH: 5) as expressed in the County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012 (as varied) to give the highest degree of protection to views between the public road and the sea and not to permit development which would intrude significantly on the view or materially alter the view. This objective is considered reasonable. The proposed development, by reason of its scale, proximity to the road, extent of works to the roadside boundary and location on the seaward side of the local road, forms a visually prominent feature which would materially alter the panoramic seaward view from the public road. Furthermore, the proposed development would detract to an undue degree from the rural character of the area and would consolidate a pattern of ribbon development which would give rise to an excessive density of development in a rural area. It is considered, therefore, that the proposed development would not be in accordance with the aforementioned provisions of the development plan and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.”

- Finally, given the number of dwellings depended on individual wastewater solution, the soil/geology conditions, and the extent of drainage required - the risk of contamination to water and to public health was also detailed.

In summary – ‘refusal’ was based on planning reasons and **not** just because of An Taisce, as is frequently the perception.

As part of our new feature on interesting planning cases and learning points we’d love to hear from you on cases, points of interest so we can share these in future editions.

Michael Collins Heritage Saved

An Taisce’s planning unit welcomes two recent decisions by An Bord Pleanála in relation to appeals lodged by us which have been upheld.

Last month a proposal that the national school which Michael Collins attended be demolished to make room for a petrol station and three houses was refused.

The Board agreed with us and found that “*The proposed development involves the demolition of the remaining structure of Lisavard National School where Michael Collins, a principal figure in the Irish war of Independence attended school*” and that “*the structure is of special historical interest and significance*” and “*its demolition has not been justified*”.

The board also recognised that even though the school was not a protected structure it was important to the county’s heritage.

In addition, a major hotel development at Omeath, Co Louth was also refused permission. This 122 bed hotel would have involved the demolition Durmallagh House, locally said to have housed an Irish college with historic links with the great thinkers involved in the founding of the nation (although this was not grounds for refusal).

An Taisce considers the Board’s decision particularly significant because it refers to the impact of the proposed Co Louth development across Carlingford Lough to views within Co Down; (i.e. ‘Transboundary impacts’ into another jurisdiction).

We are pleased that the Board was not rushed into rubber stamping a development on economic grounds and we are now seeking to promote sustainable development to refurbish the building. It should be noted that the Irish Hotels Federation themselves has recently published a report highlighting an over-supply of 15,000 hotel beds nationally. So refusals of these kind of developments do not lead to job losses but secure jobs in established hotels.



Tailors Hall,
Back Lane, Dublin 8

Phone: 01 4541786

e-zine E-mail: jeff@rokeby.ie

general enquiries admin@antaisce.org

**Preserving our built and natural
heritage for future generations**

Your views are important to An Taisce. Please don't hesitate to send us any feedback on content, format, etc. of this newsletter, and if there are any topics in particular that you'd like to see covered, we'll do our best to get them in.

Sincerely,

**Jeff Young, Hon Secretary, An Taisce
and Abby McSherry, Local Associations Officer**

membership@antaisce.org

Please remember
to pass this news-
letter on to others
who may enjoy it