

Maynooth Green Campus

The year is off to a great start for Maynooth Green Campus.

Biodiversity Working group

Bio blitz 2015

On 24/25 September, Dr Gail Maher (Biology) led a Biodiversity working group of up to 100 volunteers in a very ambitious exercise on the Maynooth Campus. Over a period of 24 hours, and under strict rules applied under the Intervarsity Bio-Blitz, Gail and her team succeeded in recording and identifying some 257 species of naturally occurring flora and fauna on the grounds of Maynooth University and St Patricks College. Different varieties of bat, bee, bird, moth, freshwater insects, fungi, and much more, were recorded. The team operated from base in the foyer of the library where microscopes, books, charts etc. were used to help confirm the observations made over the course of the 24 hours.



This was Maynooth's first time to participate in the national event, going head to head with three other universities, each of which had previous experience. Dr Maher and Dr Bettina Stefanini (Geography) should be credited for this very successful venture. They have been working on a number of projects with students over the past year 2 years. Bio-Blitz both builds on this work and will add to its momentum. Sampling information on species in this way can contribute greatly to the mapping of biodiversity over time and in spotting invasive species or changes that might be indicative of the effects of climate change.

Recruitment of students to Green Campus

This year, for the first time, Maynooth Green Campus made a slide presentation to every incoming group of students. In addition, we had a desk in the library along with a number of other services over the course of the week, manned by students and staff. The response to these presentations was very encouraging indeed and about 80 new students presented themselves at the Green Campus desk and signed up to participate in activities. There are definite signs of a young generation with much greater awareness of environmental issues, in particular climate change. Many students at the talks indicated that they had been in Green Schools and are keen to bring their experience to third level. International students also demonstrated a keen interest in Green Campus, judging by the numbers who signed up for activities with us.

Honorary Doctorate

Among the five recipients of Honorary Doctorates in September was Patricia Oliver, former Chairwoman of An Taisce, who recently retired as Director of An Taisce's Environmental Education Unit, which she established in 1993. The Green Campus Programme is but the most recent of several programmes Patricia initiated. The scale of operations can be judged from the fact that over 60 staff are now required to manage. In her response to receiving her award Patricia endorsed the approach taken by Maynooth Green Campus in that we have been trying to address environmental issues in a serious and transformative way across the board and not merely aiming to win the gong of a green flag. (We do of course aim to win the flag too and are keen to do so!)

Social Justice Week

Green Campus is represented on the Social Justice Week Committee, which will, again this year, include a number of sessions on climate change and social justice. This year promises to be lower in profile in that there is no major name for the launch event. Instead, there has been much greater engagement by academic departments, who are using slots in their own timetables to host special discussions or events, which will be opened to others to attend. This is a very promising development and will help to embed social justice week into the annual calendar.

