

Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027

Grange, County Sligo



Collated in consultation with Grange Tidy Towns
Summer 2022
by Woodrow Sustainable Solutions Ltd.



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The workshops, and training materials and recordings of sessions are available to the public at <http://woodrow.ie/resources>

PHOTO CREDITS

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Introduction and Local Context

The aim of this biodiversity plan is to raise awareness of biodiversity and to empower the Grange community and Tidy Towns Group to undertake actions for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within their local area.

What is Biodiversity and Ecology?

'Biodiversity' literally means the diversity of life in the world around us. It includes all sorts of life, from the tallest trees to the tiniest microorganisms, birds, fish, mosses, reptiles... the list is endless and there are still species that have not yet been discovered! Biodiversity also includes genetic diversity within species, such as the things that make each person unique, and the differences in the genetic makeup of animals and plants that come from different places.

Ecology is the study of the way that living things interact both with each other and the places in which they live (known as their habitats).

		
<p>Male house sparrow: <i>Passer domesticus</i></p>	<p>Large white butterfly: <i>Pieris brassicae</i> on Blackthorn: <i>Prunus spinosa</i></p>	<p>Badger: <i>Meles brassica</i></p>
		
<p>Dandelions: <i>Taraxacum sp</i></p>	<p>A hoverfly: <i>Sericomyia lappona</i> on Marsh- marigold: <i>Caltha palustris</i></p>	<p>Corvid nests</p>

Why are Biodiversity and Ecology Important?

All of the species in the world, no matter how small, have a specific part to play in the network of life that exists on Earth. Biodiversity has a key role in the formation of soils, availability of clean water, flood prevention, pollination of crops, natural pest control and many other vital functions. Biodiversity provides us directly with food, oxygen and medicines, and its economic value is infinite. Genetic diversity means that life on Earth is able to adapt to changes in climate, natural disasters and outbreaks of disease. Without the resources that biodiversity provides and maintains, we would not exist.

Biodiversity is not just about animals and plants - humans are an important part of biodiversity and our actions can influence other aspects of biodiversity. Ecology deals with the inter-relations between organisms and the places in which they live. This includes how people interact with the species and habitats around them.

What is a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)?

A Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP for short) is a document which acts as a guide in the management of your local area in the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of local biodiversity. Conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in your local area has a wide-ranging number of benefits for local communities:

- Increased quality of life – pleasant places to walk or sit down and take a break and/or listen to beautiful birdsong.
- There is increasing evidence of the value for children of spending time in nature, and of the health benefits for all of us of spending more time enjoying the natural world.
- Pollination of flowers and crops by insects such as bees.
- Pest control e.g.: Bats eating biting midges; Ladybirds eating greenflies.
- An increased number of plants especially trees in an area will lead to cleaner air in the local environment.
- Insects, invertebrates, (e.g., worms, slugs and snails) and fungi help breakdown dead and decaying material e.g., make compost and improve soil condition and fertility.
- A healthy local environment increases the health and well-being of the local community.
- It is impossible to quantify the aesthetic value of a beautiful view across an area of natural beauty.

What does this Local BAP contain?

- The Local Biodiversity Action Plan contains a written report with maps, which documents the biodiversity highlights of the local area.
- The plan describes a number of actions that can reasonably be achieved by the community within a set timeframe (i.e., 5 years). This LBAP focuses on sustainable actions within Grange village prioritising the built-up and urban areas.

Location and Setting

Grange is a seaside village community in north County Sligo with a population of approximately 600, situated on the N15 Sligo-Donegal Road. The village centre is located approximately 1km from the coast, which at this location coincides with the estuary of the Grange River. Grange village is surrounded by good quality farmland on a limestone substrate, separated by a network of hedgerows. The Grange River flows in a westerly direction through the centre of the village and is an important habitat for both Salmon and Trout.

The centre of Grange village contains a pharmacy, a vet, a busy SuperValu shop, a garage, a church and community hall, a post office and several other businesses, bars and restaurants. Most local children attend primary school at Scoil Naomh Molaise in the village centre, there is also a post primary school adjacent to Benbulbin Football Club and pitch. St Molaise Gaels GAA pitch and club house is located just off the main street.

Housing in Grange is mostly centred around Chapel Street and Court House Drive, where there are two private housing estates. Other than this, houses are scattered along the main N15 approach road to the village as well as the L3203 which leads down towards Streedagh and Streedagh Beach. Grange village lies adjacent to the Streedagh Point Dunes SAC, designated for its range of habitats including mudflats, salt meadows and dunes, and its populations of the narrow-mouthed whorl snail (*Vertigo angustior*). Streedagh is a popular tourist destination and surfing spot known for its historical significance and association with the Spanish Armada.

The nature of the surrounding landscape showing the boundary of the adjacent SAC is clearly visible in the aerial image of the village in **Figure 1**.

Biodiversity in Grange

Linear habitats such as hedgerows and treelines, as well as rivers and ditches, are an important feature of Grange's biodiversity.

Many houses in Grange have gardens that are planted with flowers and shrubs, and there are a number of attractive flowerbeds and planters in the village, all of which contribute to the biodiversity of the local area. Pollen and nectar for pollinating insect species are provided by flowers, vegetables and fruit trees, while berry-bearing shrubs and bird feeders provide supplementary food for birds. Mature and semi-mature trees provide habitat for birds, bats and invertebrates. Green spaces such as those at the road verges, the schools, playpark, football/GAA clubs, the housing estates in the village, the riverside area and flowerbeds and planters within the village provide opportunities for further enhancing biodiversity in Grange village.

Some biodiversity projects have already been initiated in the village, such as;

- **Bird and bat boxes:** Many of the trees in Grange already host a number of bat and bird boxes – the local schools get involved during woodwork class and help to build these.
- **Composting areas:** In a quiet corner at the back of the playpark, an excellent composting area has been built to encourage cut and removal of grass clippings and dead vegetation – these are excellent spots for earthworms, birds and all sorts of creepy crawlies. Hedgehogs can often benefit from piles of leaves left in a quiet corner – perhaps this would be a good spot coming into Autumn.



- **Planting for pollinators:** Grange has been planted with plentiful tree species some of which provide excellent resources for pollinators including; alder, willow, bird cherry and hawthorn. Perhaps adding some more pollinator-friendly shrubs and flowers into the existing planters would expand on the biodiversity in this area. Pollinator-friendly Spring bulbs such as grape hyacinth, crocus and snowdrop are excellent options as daffodils are often the only flower available in early Spring and although pretty, they unfortunately have little benefit to our pollinators – mixing in these other Spring bulbs can be an excellent and colourful option.

- **Grange Playpark:**

Grange playpark has become a hub for wildlife and community engagement. There are multiple native tree species as well as opportunities for planting bulbs, shrubs and lovely wooden planters where biodiversity friendly species can thrive. Situated alongside the river it is a beautiful spot to stop and enjoy the birdsong.

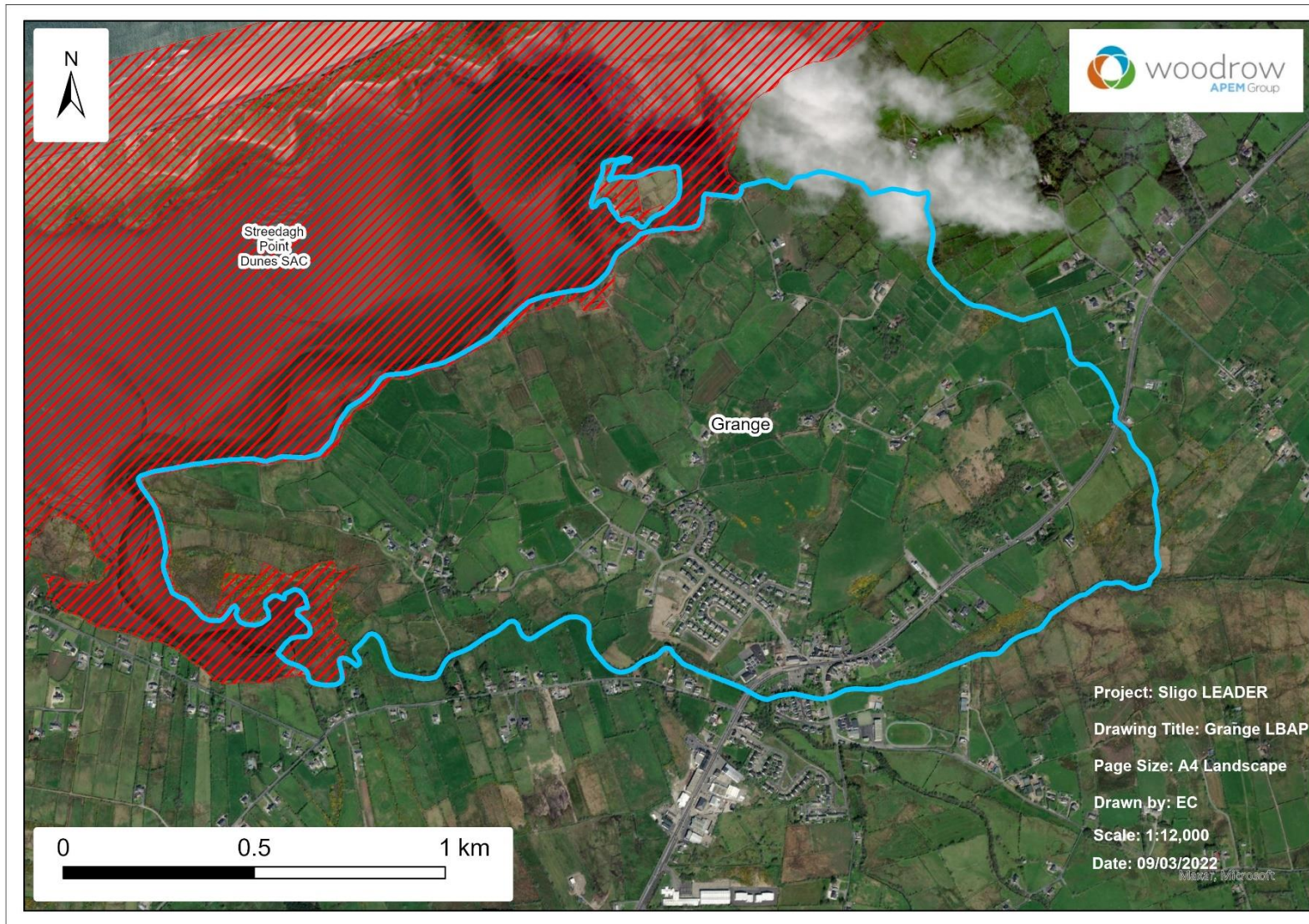


- **Grange River Walk:**

The Grange Tidy Towns Group are currently in the process of creating a picturesque river loop walk. This will be an excellent opportunity for biodiversity signage and education as well as a lovely amenity for locals and visitors alike to appreciate the biodiversity in Grange.



Figure 1 – Protected Natural Heritage Areas and Aerial Map of Grange



Grange Community Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027

Actions for Biodiversity:

This LBAP proposes a list of actions achievable through community and Tidy Towns group effort in Grange village within a timeframe of five years (2022-2027) as outlined in **Table 1**.

The actions laid out in this plan aim to :

1. Enhance the overall biodiversity of Grange
2. Be achievable, sustainable and low maintenance
3. Compliment the vision for an attractive, safe and sustainable village

The locations for these actions are shown in the map in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: Locations for Actions highlighted within the Grange LBAP



Table 1: Actions for Biodiversity

Grange Community Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027				
Action No.	Proposed Action	Proposed Location for Action	Suitable time of year	Locations on map in Figure 2
1	Plant biodiversity enhancing flowerbeds & pots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carparks – <i>SuperValu, industrial estate carpark, and along Main Street, schools, playparks and laybys.</i> In the Tidy Towns tended flowerbeds and pots in Grange – <i>consider entering the Tidy Towns Pollinator Award.</i> <p><i>Improving the appearance and biodiversity of the existing planters as well as considering planting new areas –a herb garden, a tiered planter, hanging baskets, a trellis etc. Include winter-flowering plants for early pollinators</i></p>	Feb - May	B, D
2	Change the grass-mowing regime, benefit wildflowers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roadside Grassland/Verges- <i>In the Tidy Towns managed grass verges within and leading into the village. Mow just half the width of the grass verge on the road-side, leaving wildflowers to bloom on the hedge side of the verge. This creates very attractive road verges into the village in spring and summer while enhancing biodiversity at the same time. – visibility and road safety are always a first priority.</i> Housing Estates Amenity Grassland: <i>Throughout the village as well as larger patches of improved grass with owners/management agreement. Retain areas / strips of long grass within lawned areas to benefit pollinators; and/or mow strips in rotation so that there is always an area where grasses and flowering plants are blooming.</i> https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Pollinator-friendly-guide-for-housing-estate-management-LR-page-001.jpg 	Jan-March – to delay cutting of these areas until April	Throughout area where suitable; A, B, E, F, G

		<p><i>NOTE – The playground could be used as an example of how to incorporate balance between mowed areas for children to play mixed with longer biodiversity rich grass along verges and around tree bases.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports clubs - Amenity Grassland: GAA and football clubs can improve biodiversity following the Sports Club guidance laid out in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan; https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs/ 		
3	Plant native trees and pollinator friendly shrubs- low mess, seaside species	<p><i>Throughout the village where the trees would not impair drivers' sight lines. Species selected should be low mess and suitable for the seaside climate. For example; in the Tidy Towns tended shrub beds or in grassed area surrounding play park. It's important to try and plant up gaps in existing hedgerows to help maintain habitat corridors for wildlife.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Include winter-flowering plants for early pollinators.</i> - <i>Gather local seed and sow locally.</i> 	Planting is optimal in Winter/early Spring	A
4	Create a biodiversity trail and erect biodiversity signage	<p><i>Create habitat for butterflies (e.g., nettle patch), invertebrates (bug hotels); plant wildflower area; plant native trees and hedges. Provide signs and information – e.g., reusable laminated leaflets in a box at the start of the trail. Biodiversity signage can showcase particular features of interest as well as highlighting areas that are being “managed for wildlife” to encourage awareness and public engagement – perhaps along the river walk.</i></p>	All year round - depending on resources and permissions	C
5	Erect bat and bird boxes	<p><i>In public spaces where there are trees – by the river; in the park; in private gardens where the landowner is in agreement and on outbuildings e.g., Grange post-primary school. Provide information board on the bat species occurring in Grange. Possibility to host a workshop on making and erecting bat and bird boxes or to carry out bat survey - involve local experts if possible.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - https://www.batconservationireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/BCIrelandGuidelines_BatBoxes.pdf 	Year round, but Spring is best	B, G

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - https://birdwatchireland.ie/irelands-birds-birdwatch-ireland/nestbox-designs-for-birds-and-wildlife/ 		
6	Erect bird feeders	<p><i>With owner's agreement, on trees near benches and perhaps at parks and churches where birds can be watched from a distance e.g., in the playpark area. Will require maintenance and regular cleaning of bird feeders to avoid disease etc.</i></p>	All year round – Autumn/Winter is best	B, G
7	Construct a bug/bee hotel or find a suitable south-facing earthen bank	<p>Bug hotels - <i>A spot easily visible to the public e.g., a corner of a flowerbed or any location where the public can see them and learn of their importance e.g., the school or the community garden/playground.</i></p> <p>https://pollinators.ie/the-secret-life-of-solitary-bees/</p>	All year round – summer is best	B, G
8	Use natural methods of pest & weed control - Identify areas where weed control is not necessary.	<p>Everywhere if at all possible!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Replace slug pellets with wildlife-friendly pellets, or use natural repellents such as crushed eggshells, coffee grounds or copper tape.</i> - <i>Replace chemical weedkiller with 'green' alternatives (which can be homemade) or use a flame torch to spot treat.</i> - <i>Source plants and shrubs for planting that have not been sprayed with pesticides.</i> 	All year round	Throughout area; A, B, D
9	Piles of leaves left in quiet corners to benefit hedgehog and invertebrates	<p><i>At the back of a flowerbed or at the base of a hedge where there won't be any disturbance over the winter. This is especially important for hibernating species like hedgehog – beside composting area in playpark might be a suitable spot.</i></p>	Autumn/Winter:	B
10	Biodiversity friendly hedgerow maintenance	<p><i>Everywhere, if at all possible, where this will not impede sight lines along roads. Where possible, use a 2 or 3 year rotation and ideally cut between November and January to minimise impacts on wildlife.</i></p>	Sept – Feb *outside breeding season	Throughout area

11	Monitor local area for invasive species & control where necessary	<i>Throughout Grange – could hold an invasives ID workshop – for example invasive plant species</i>	Year-round	Throughout Area
12	Green developments	<i>Example- Green bus stops: Select a bus stop coming into or within the village where biodiversity and colour could be enhanced – low maintenance.</i>	TBC	-
13	Biodiversity Data Gathering and a community biodiversity day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Involve community groups and schools. Submit records to www.biodiversityireland.ie.</i> <p><i>Seek assistance and input from local experts for such events. Include events such as sustainable seed collecting.</i></p> <p><i>Example- Bioblitz day: Download the NBDC app and have a 24hour recording day – Woodrow could input ID help for a workshop prior to the day e.g.: basics of biodiversity – birds, bugs and botany!</i></p>	TBC – ideally during the summer holidays and possibly on weekend day. Biodiversity week in May?	Throughout Area
14	A community garden/herb garden/sensory garden	<i>An area with a raised bed, herbs, flowerbed etc where community events and training could take place; wildlife gardening / workshops – perhaps an opportunity for a local school to get involved.</i>	TBC	B
15	Raising biodiversity awareness and encourage others to take action for biodiversity for the benefit of the local community	<p><i>Hold various events / social media to raise awareness of local biodiversity including wildlife news on Facebook, a photography competition with a wildlife theme. A wildlife calendar could also be created. Linking with local poets, writers and artists.</i></p> <p><i>Liaise with the Residents' Associations and other community groups in order to identify possible actions that would benefit biodiversity; tree/shrub and hedge planting with native species, changing grass mowing regimes, creating new habitats (wildflower meadows / community orchards), reducing pesticide and herbicide use etc.</i></p> <p><i>Introduce “Adopt a Planter” or “Adopt a Bird Feeder” Scheme.</i></p> <p><i>Get sports clubs and local schools involved with the LBAP.</i></p>	TBC	-

16	Provide and maintain a 'Biodiversity Noticeboard' in centre of village or alternatively online (e.g., Facebook page)	<i>Use this to raise awareness of local biodiversity features e.g., dune habitats and of issues such as decline of pollinators; beach wildlife; marine waste etc. Include information on topics such as maintaining bird feeders and wildlife friendly gardening.</i>	TBC	-
17	A sculpture or mural focal point for the village	<i>A biodiversity mural, sculpture or small mural trail – in collaboration with a local artist(s). Use this to engage all sectors of community with biodiversity – e.g., schools, sports groups.</i>	TBC	-
18	Streedagh coast clean-up or beach-clean	<i>Organise regular clean-ups/litter picking in collaboration with other local Tidy Towns groups Raise awareness of aquatic/marine habitats and biodiversity, and negative effects of waste such as microplastics in the marine environment.</i>	TBC	-

APPENDIX 1: Details of the proposed actions for biodiversity

Action 1: Plant biodiversity enhancing flowerbeds & pots

- **Enter the Tidy Towns Pollinator Award** – Tidy Towns groups are encouraged to create a buzz in their community and enter the Local Authority Pollinator Award in the national Tidy Towns competition. The award, with a €10,000 prize fund, encourages Tidy Towns groups to implement pollinator-friendly actions as part of the Tidy Towns competition. There was also a new ‘Best Newcomer Award’ in 2021, with a prize of €1,000!

<https://pollinators.ie/communities/tidytowns-pollinator-award/enter-the-2021-local-authority-pollinator-award/#:~:text=The%20award%2C%20with%20a%20%E2%82%AC,a%20prize%20of%20%E2%82%AC1%2C000.>

<https://www.pollinators.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Tips-on-entering-Tidy-Towns-Pollinator-Award.pdf>

- **Carparks e.g., SuperValu Carpark:** Improving the appearance and biodiversity of any existing planters/flowerbeds and pots as well as considering planting new areas – a seaside herb garden, a tiered planter, hanging baskets etc. Important to keep things pollinator friendly, native, and low maintenance. Some excellent low maintenance options here would include a border of heathers, lavender and mint in pots – sowing clover can also be a great option to provide food for bees.



- **Enhance what is already there:** In the Tidy Towns tended flowerbeds and pots in Grange

Adding structural diversity – a trellis or a tiered planter – contacting a men’s shed or local carpenter to build. Sourcing desired plants/bulbs/cuttings (use the resources provided separately to help decide on what would be best suited e.g., heathers, lavender, perennial nasturtium, allium- low maintenance, native, biodiversity friendly and colourful species) – donations, funding, perhaps a local business/garage/garden centre would like to be involved.

Enhance existing areas around grange: for example a trailing species such as perennial nasturtium, honeysuckle, clematis, climbing hydrangea or ivy would be a great option along this wall:



- **Bee-friendly bulbs:**

Deciding on which bulbs to plant can sometimes be confusing – many people opt for daffodils in spring as they are easy to grow, perennial and colourful, however unfortunately they provide little benefit to our native pollinator species. It is much more beneficial to plant a mixture of perennial bulbs and flowers that will provide essential food for bees in early spring when food is scarce. Snowdrops, crocus, allium and grape hyacinth are all excellent alternatives to daffodils. Check out the Gaisce award challenge to involve local schools and groups - Gaisce are asking everyone in Ireland to plant pollinator-friendly bulbs to help safeguard the future of our vital bee population: <https://www.gaisce.ie/bulbsforbees/>

The playpark and estates around Grange would be an excellent option for diverse bulb planting.



Action 2: Change the grass-mowing regime, benefit wildflowers- Let Dandelions Bee initiatives

- **Roadside Grassland/Verges-** In the Tidy Towns managed grass verges within and leading into the village. Mow just half the width of the grass verge on the road-side, leaving wildflowers to bloom on the hedge side of the verge. This creates very attractive road verges into the village in spring and summer while enhancing biodiversity at the same time.
- **Amenity Grassland:** Throughout the village as well as larger patches of improved grass with owners/management agreement. Retain areas / strips of long grass within lawned areas to benefit pollinators; and/or mow strips in rotation so that there is always an area where grasses and flowering plants are blooming
- **Sports clubs - Amenity Grassland:** GAA and football clubs can improve biodiversity following the Sports Club guidance laid out in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan; <https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs/>

Reducing the frequency of mowing allows common pollen-rich wildflowers such as Dandelions, Clovers, Knapweed, and Bird's-foot-trefoil to naturally grow among long grass. This is the most cost-effective way to provide food for pollinators and other insects.



Tightly mown grass is like a barren desert for bees, devoid of food and nesting sites.



A new approach to grass-cutting encouraged by the local Tidy Towns group as an action to help pollinators, at Kilcullen, Co. Kildare.



If roads are used as walking routes, a 'layered' mowing approach can be of use. A one-metre strip along the roadside can be maintained as short turf for walkers, while the rest of the verge could be cut every 6 weeks or annually to allow wildflowers to grow.

Aim to reduce frequency of mowing at these locations and let vital pollinator species like clover and dandelion flower before the first cut (leave them until April). If you need to cut grass before April, consider leaving a margin of unmown grass to allow corridors of biodiversity. Stepped verges or a thin wildflower strip left along boundary edges – vision/road safety is a first priority. Cutting and removing clippings can increase biodiversity in these areas. Identify areas where changes in cutting regimes could

increase biodiversity and where owners and management are open to changes in management regimes– e.g., verges, housing estates and small pockets of amenity grassland as well as local GAA clubs, faith buildings and schools. Designate an area to be managed for wildlife (signage is available through the all-Ireland pollinator plan: <https://pollinators.ie/resources/signs/>)

GENERAL ADVICE: Identify some green areas or lawns that have clover growing in them. Clover is easily identified at any time of year by the characteristic three leaflet structure of the leaves. If there are other species of wildflower such as dandelions, bird's foot trefoil or even self-heal growing in the lawns then that is even better.

Raise the blades on your lawn mower to the highest setting and cut the lawn less often. How often you cut will depend on the time of year and how fast the lawn is growing. The aim is to allow the dandelions, clovers and other wildflowers to grow and bloom but you can maintain a neat appearance by topping the grass when it grows taller than the flowers.

If you only have clover in your lawn and would like to try introducing more wildflowers then you could try scarifying the lawn and adding seeds of dandelion, selfheal or bird's foot trefoil to increase the diversity of wildflowers in your lawn. Only buy native Irish wildflower seeds or better still collect some from your local area (detailed tips on how to collect local seeds responsibly and sustainably are supplied separately in the resource documents provided) .



Action 3: Plant native trees and pollinator friendly shrubs- low mess, seaside species

Street trees

Roadside margins can be difficult locations in which to establish trees. Those suggested are pollinator friendly, resistant to pruning and should not cause any structural damage or create health and safety issues.

Species	Flowering
Juneberry Tree <i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i> 'Robin Hill'	Small white flower April. Good autumn colour
Upright Hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> 'Stricta'	White flowers May
Pillar crab <i>Malus tschonoskii</i>	Scented white flowers May. Can set fruit
Callery pear <i>Pyrus calleryana</i> 'Chanticleer'	White flowers April-May. Can set fruit.
Rowan <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> varieties	White flowers May-June
Lime <i>Tilia cordata</i> 'Greenspire'; <i>Tilia x europaea</i> 'Euchlora'	Pale yellow flowers June-July

Lime (*Tilia*) species have fragrant flowers and produce a lot of nectar; however, care is needed in the selection of cultivars as many can grow to large tree size proportions that will exceed allotted roadside space. Some are also very attractive to aphids and can lead to honeydew drip onto cars below (e.g., *Tilia x europaea*, *T. platyphyllos*). Those suggested above are smaller and don't attract aphids, therefore producing no dripping.

Excellent info found at <https://pollinators.ie/planting-native-trees-for-pollinators/>

Action 4: Create a biodiversity trail and erect signage

Create habitat for butterflies (e.g., rewilded nettle patch), invertebrates (bug hotels); plant wildflower area; plant native trees and hedges. Provide signs and information – e.g., reusable laminated leaflets in a box at the start of the trail. Biodiversity signage can showcase particular features of interest as well as highlighting areas that are being “managed for wildlife” to encourage awareness and public engagement.

The Grange River walk would be an excellent opportunity for a biodiversity trail – signage can highlight local biodiversity features along the way such as otter, fish species found in the river, the importance of riverine vegetation and alluvial woodland as well as opportunities to spot your local birds and mammals. Perhaps this could link up with the importance of coastal habitats and of protecting our dune systems – e.g., Streedagh.

Action 5: Erect bat and bird boxes

In public spaces where there are trees – by the river; in the park; in private gardens where the landowner is in agreement and on outbuildings e.g., Grange post-primary school. Provide information board on the bat species occurring in Grange. Possibility to host a workshop on making and erecting bat and bird boxes or to carry out bat survey - involve local experts if possible.

[-https://www.batconservationireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/BCIrelandGuidelines_BatBoxes.pdf](https://www.batconservationireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/BCIrelandGuidelines_BatBoxes.pdf)

[-https://birdwatchireland.ie/irelands-birds-birdwatch-ireland/nestbox-designs-for-birds-and-wildlife/](https://birdwatchireland.ie/irelands-birds-birdwatch-ireland/nestbox-designs-for-birds-and-wildlife/)

Action 6: Erect bird feeders

Excellent Advice and Guidance:

- What food should I use?
- What time of year is best?
- Feeder Hygiene?
- Cold weather – frost and snow?
- How to deter pests from feeders.

<https://birdwatchireland.ie/irelands-birds-birdwatch-ireland/garden-birds/feeding-your-garden-birds/>

Possibly an option to put up bird feeders in the housing estate green areas and follow an 'Adopt a bird feeder' policy with the residents where they take turns to have responsibility to clean and refill the feeders – can be especially important in Winter months.

Action 7: Construct a bug/bee hotel or find a suitable south-facing earthen bank

Bug hotels - A spot easily visible to the public e.g., a corner of a flowerbed or any location where the public can see them and learn of their importance e.g., the school or the community garden/playground.

- <https://pollinators.ie/the-secret-life-of-solitary-bees/>

Action 8: Use natural methods of pest & weed control - Identify areas where weed control is not necessary.

- Replace slug pellets with wildlife-friendly pellets, or use natural repellents such as crushed eggshells, coffee grounds or copper tape.
- Replace chemical weedkiller with 'green' alternatives (which can be homemade) or use a flame torch to spot treat.
- Source plants and shrubs for planting that have not been sprayed with pesticides.
- Advice and case-studies - <https://pollinators.ie/pesticide-free-places/>

Action 9: Piles of leaves left in quiet corners to benefit hedgehog and invertebrates

- Helping Hedgehogs Guidance and Advice:
https://biodiversityireland.ie/app/uploads/2022/02/Helping_Hedgehogs_A4_WEB_ENG.pdf

The back of the playpark area next to the composting site might be a good place to leave a pile of leaves

Action 10: Biodiversity friendly hedgerow maintenance

Teagasc and The All-Ireland Pollinator Guidance for Biodiverse Hedgerows

- <https://www.teagasc.ie/environment/biodiversity--countryside/farmland-habitats/value-of-hedgerows/>
- <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Pollinator-How-to-Guide-3-FINAL-1.pdf>

Action 11: Monitor local area for invasive species & control where necessary

Invasive species are generally defined as those that do not naturally occur in Ireland and which, as a result of their vigour, persistence and competitive advantage, have become established in Ireland to the detriment of our native species. Well known examples of invasive species in Ireland include the grey squirrel, which was introduced from North America and outcompetes our native red squirrel for food and territory. The New Zealand flatworm, which was accidentally brought into the country on imported plants, predates the common earthworm to the detriment of our gardens.

Irish legislation¹ makes it illegal to 'introduce, breed, release, or disperse' the most invasive species. Other, less noxious, species are not directly covered by this legislation, but it is still recommended that they are controlled where possible and are not allowed to spread.

Of most concern is **Japanese Knotweed** *Fallopia japonica*, the propagation and/or dispersal of which is illegal under Irish law. This species is extremely persistent, propagates vegetatively from minute fragments, and spreads very rapidly. It is notoriously difficult to eradicate, and fragments of rhizome may remain viable for over twenty years. Control is only achieved using systemic herbicide and should be undertaken only by trained operators with the permission of the landowner where relevant. Control must be repeated in successive years and care must be taken near watercourses, where herbicide should be injected into the stems rather than sprayed. Care should be taken not to cut or strim this plant because it propagates so readily from fragments.

¹ Statutory Instrument No. 477/2011 - European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, Articles 49 and 50.



Common invasive species occurring in the Grange area. Top: Japanese knotweed (photo credit: Invasive Species Ireland), Montbretia. Bottom: Snowberry, Rhododendron

Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) has often been planted in hedgerows in the past, and is relatively easy to eradicate. It was originally introduced into Ireland to provide food and cover for pheasants on large estates. Snowberry is not listed under Irish invasive species legislation but was Amber-listed following an invasive Species Risk Assessment undertaken by Invasive Species Ireland². It is advisable that it is not propagated or encouraged to spread, as it forms dense thickets that exclude our more desirable native species.

Montbretia, like snowberry, is listed on Invasive Species Ireland's Amber List of invasive species. It is an attractive hybrid plant bred in France from South African species, and is commonly grown in gardens, also appearing on waste ground and roadsides. It readily reproduces by means of corms and rhizomes (and occasionally by seed), spreading rapidly to form dense clumps that can completely dominate an area, eventually excluding existing native plants.

Another invasive plant species that is common amongst garden plants and is likely to occur around Grange, is the scheduled invasive alien species **Rhododendron** *Rhododendron ponticum*. This species often occurs within woodlands and old estates. Rhododendron, like Japanese Knotweed, is listed under Irish invasive species legislation and thus it is illegal to plant it or cause it to spread. This species grows

² <https://invasivespeciesireland.com/wp-content/upload-post-to-pdf-enhanced-cache/1/amber-list-recorded-species.pdf>

rapidly in the Irish climate, can tolerate shading and waterlogging, produces vast quantities of wind-dispersed seed, and effectively and rapidly regenerates from cut stems. Its foliage is toxic to mammals and unpalatable to most invertebrates. Its dense evergreen growth excludes light from the ground layer and excludes native species; dense rhododendron forms a monoculture where nothing else is able to thrive.

Cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* is an invasive species which is commonly planted in gardens. It grows in a similar fashion to rhododendron, forming dense evergreen thickets that are also toxic to livestock (its leaves contain cyanolipids that are capable of releasing cyanide). It is widely planted as a hedging species and is readily available in garden centres but is detrimental to biodiversity as it excludes native plant species and provides poor habitat for birds and invertebrates. It is listed as a High Impact Invasive Species, scoring highly in the Invasive Species Risk Assessment undertaken by Invasive Species Ireland.

Further information and links to advice on control of these invasive plant species is available online.

Action 12: Green Developments

- **Green bus stops:** Select a bus stop coming into or within the village where biodiversity and colour could be enhanced – low maintenance. A brown bus stop where the roof is simply vegetated naturally over time is also a simple option.

These are examples of both homemade and more commercial green-roof bus stops. An even simpler structure made out of wood with space for a hanging basket or a climbing flower species such as nasturtium or clematis would also be lovely.



Action 13: Biodiversity Data Gathering and a community biodiversity day

- **Wildlife Walks:**
 - Involve community groups, schools and clubs; riverside walk; coastal areas. Submit records to www.biodiversityireland.ie.
 - Focus on highlighting local biodiversity features and the actions being undertaken in the village to enhance biodiversity.

Seek assistance and input from local experts for such events. Include events such as sustainable seed collecting.

Example- Bioblitz day: *Download the NBDC app and have a 24hour recording day – Woodrow could input ID help for a workshop prior to the day e.g., basics of biodiversity; birds, bugs and botany!*

A BioBlitz is a dedicated period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all the living native or naturalised species within a particular area. Groups of scientists, naturalists and volunteers come together to conduct a field study over a set period of time, usually 24 hours, but can be shorter. Apart from its value in data collection, a BioBlitz has many benefits particularly in the promotion of the wealth of biodiversity in the local environment. A BioBlitz provides an opportunity for the public to meet scientists and ask them questions. These events are very enjoyable as the short time frame creates a festival atmosphere and makes the searching more exciting.

Established by the National Biodiversity Data Centre in Waterford, a number of BioBlitz events have been run in Ireland including annual BioBlitz competitions held at a number of sites around the country, with each site competing for the greatest number of species recorded! – They can be as big or small of an event as suits and are a great way to get community groups and schools involved – might be a good idea for biodiversity week in May (15th – 23rd May).

Action 14: A community garden/herb garden/sensory garden

A sensory garden can be an excellent opportunity to incorporate biodiversity into community benefit

-2021 - Minister for Disabilities announces €1m investment in Sensory Gardens across disability services

- <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/ef8bb-minister-for-disabilities-announces-1m-investment-in-sensory-gardens-across-disability-services/>
- <https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/resources/guidance/sensory-gardens-planning>

Example of a simple sensory garden and a raised herb bed at Westport House, Co. Mayo:



One of the beds in the playpark area could be selected as a sensory herb bed:



Action 15: Raising biodiversity awareness and encourage others to take action for biodiversity for the benefit of the local community

Hold various events / social media to raise awareness of local biodiversity including wildlife news on Facebook, a photography competition with a wildlife theme. A wildlife calendar could also be created. Linking with local poets, writers and artists.

Liaise with the Residents' Associations and other community groups in order to identify possible actions that would benefit biodiversity; tree/shrub and hedge planting with native species, changing grass mowing regimes, creating new habitats (wildflower meadows / community orchards), reducing pesticide and herbicide use etc.

- Introduce "Adopt a Planter" or "Adopt a Bird Feeder" Scheme.
- Get sports clubs and local schools involved with the LBAP.

Action 16: Provide and maintain a 'Biodiversity Noticeboard' in centre of village or alternatively online (e.g., Facebook page)

Use this to raise awareness of local biodiversity features e.g., dune habitats and of issues such as decline of pollinators; beach wildlife; marine waste etc.

Habitat map could feature on this.

Include information on topics such as maintaining bird feeders and wildlife friendly gardening.

Action 17: A sculpture or mural focal point for the village

A biodiversity mural, sculpture or small mural trail – in collaboration with a local artist(s). Use this to engage all sectors of community with biodiversity – e.g., schools, sports groups.

Action 18: Streedagh coast clean-up or beach-clean

Organise regular clean-ups/litter picking in collaboration with other local Tidy Towns groups. Raise awareness of aquatic/marine habitats and biodiversity, and negative effects of waste such as microplastics in the marine environment.