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# EMYVALE TIDY TOWNS

## Local Biodiversity Action Plan

2021-2024

*Actions for Biodiversity in our village*

# Contents

# Welcome to the Emyvale Tidy Towns Local Biodiversity Plan!

This plan is to be used the guide the work of Emyvale Tidy Towns for the next 3 years. The plan was drawn up following consultation with members of the Tidy Towns Committee and field trips undertaken in 2021.

The first section of the plan is an introduction and the project that gave rise to it as well as some biodiversity basics. Next, we outline some **Biodiversity Projects** – these will be projects that will take significant resources for the Tidy Towns Committee to complete. Finally, there is a schedule for the projects that we suggest that the Committee would undertake over the next three years - the timeframe of this plan.

Bumblebee © Anneke Vrieling, AIPP

## Acknowledgements

This Local Biodiversity Action Plan was created by Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants for Emyvale Tidy Towns. The authors would like to thank the officers of the Tidy Towns Committee for their support. Special thanks to Brenda Fields McKenna, Mary Flynn and Enda Fields. The authors and Emyvale Tidy Towns gratefully acknowledge the funding and support of Monaghan Integrated Development.

# SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 About this biodiversity plan

Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants were commissioned by Monaghan LEADER to work with clubs, groups and communities in Co. Monaghan to facilitate the development of local biodiversity plans. The principal aim of this LEADER initiative was to increase awareness of the importance of biodiversity to communities but also to empower individuals and groups to make positive contributions for the benefit of both wildlife and people.

Biodiversity has now become a key part of what local community action groups do. This project will help groups to 'design' biodiversity matters into their present and future projects and maximise the benefits for wildlife as well as people. As well as including detailed information on how to carry out projects, the plans will also be useful in raising awareness of how biodiversity is considered in these communities. This statement of best practice for biodiversity will also be useful to groups seeking financial or material support for future projects.

This biodiversity plan was drawn up following consultation with each of the participating communities which included field trips, review of past, present and proposed community projects and meetings with the organising committees.

## 1.2 What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on Earth. It includes all living things (organisms) that make up the natural world (including humans). Biodiversity also refers to the places where animals and plants live (habitats) and the complex interactions between living things and their environment which we call ecosystems.

Bee on Allium © Peter Cuthbert, AIPP

## 1.3 Why is Biodiversity Important?

Humans are a component of biodiversity and we are dependent on biodiversity to provide a range of ecosystem services. Human activities such as agriculture, forestry and fishing depend on services provided by biodiversity. We rely on biodiversity for the provision of clean air and water, food and medicines, natural landscapes, flood control, noise pollution control and much more A healthy environment is important for human health and well-being. Biodiversity provides us with natural amenities to enjoy, parks and green spaces, wildlife and landscapes to admire and thus improves our quality of life. The attractiveness of our country as a tourist destination, a place to live and do business depends to a large extent on the rich biodiversity of the county. Our country's natural heritage contributes to the attractiveness of landscapes, villages and urban centres.

Pollinator friendly plants © Cherry Townsend, AIPP

## 1.4 What's the Local Biodiversity Action Plan For?

The purpose of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) is to set out appropriate locally-based actions for the conservation, management and/or enhancement of habitats for the benefit of native species. This local biodiversity action plan:

- makes recommendations for the conservation of biodiversity through appropriate actions for the protection, management or appreciation of an area of high ecological value.
- Identifies actions to improve or enhance local areas so as to increase their value as habitats for species.
- Encourages actions to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity and its conservation.

# SECTION 2. ACTIONS FOR BIODIVERSITY

In this Section, we set out some of the actions that will be common to all of the participating groups and indeed all community groups interested in biodiversity. We also outline some of the guidelines that are accepted as best practice for biodiversity at local or wider levels.

## 2.1. Habitat Creation & Management

### 2.1.1. Habitat Creation

Habitat creation is one way to increase the diversity of habitats and enhance an area for biodiversity. Examples of small-scale habitat creation that may be appropriate and practical for community groups, schools and residents to undertake include managing an area as meadow grassland or wildflower lawn, planting hedgerows, treelines or groves of trees or creating a pond. Habitat creation should only be attempted in an area that is currently of low biodiversity value such as amenity grassland. Introducing a habitat uncommon in an area such as a pond may be of more benefit than planting more trees in an area that already has good tree cover. Creating a small complex of habitats such as a small woodland or grove of trees along with some meadow grassland around the edges to create a collection of semi-natural habitats will be of more benefit to biodiversity as it will provide resources for a greater number of species.

### 2.1.2. Tree and Hedgerow Planting

Planting native hedgerows, trees and woodlands provide food, shelter and niche habitats for a range of plant and animal life and is one of the easiest ways of increasing the biodiversity value of an area. Native trees and shrubs are best for wildlife. These species colonised Ireland naturally and are adapted to the environmental conditions here and other plant and animal life have adapted to co-exist within them.

### 2.1.3. Meadow grasslands and wildflower lawns

The traditional hay meadows once widespread in Ireland are now very scarce due to changes in farming practices. Meadows are a haven for wildlife in summer being rich in wildflowers and the insects, birds and bats that depend on them. Managing little used grassland areas as a meadow is one way to increase the resources available to wildlife. Not only does this allow the growth of wildflowers which provide essential pollen for our pollinating insects, long grass hosts a variety of other insects and invertebrates and produce seed, both important food sources for birds. Bat species will forage over a meadow grassland rich in insect life. Long grass also provides cover and nesting habitat for small mammals.

### 2.1.4. Making Meadows: Where and How to Encourage Wildflowers Naturally

Meadow grassland can be established in parkland areas or along grass verges. In general areas of meadow grassland or long grassy verges should be cut once a year in autumn and the cuttings removed. Removing the cuttings is important to prevent the build-up of nutrients in the soil. Wildflowers flourish in a nutrient poor soil where they can compete successfully with the more competitive grasses. Gradually over the years the number and diversity of wildflowers within the meadow will increase. It may take several years before you see an increase. however, avoid using commercially available wildflower mixes to enhance your meadow. These mixes often contain species that are not native to Ireland and are really only suitable for gardening and not for creating natural habitats such as meadows. In addition, some species in these mixes are plants of disturbed ground or arable fields and are unlikely to thrive in a meadow grassland.

### 2.1.5. Pollinator Friendly Planting

Much is spoken about the importance of pollinators these days, and rightly so. These are hugely important species for not only our wildflowers and trees but also for many of the plants on which we depend for food. Any biodiversity plan should have a strong focus on plants for pollinators. While native plants are best for wildlife and should only be planted in wild areas, there are a wide range of both native and non-native garden plants which provide food for pollinating insects which can be used in gardens and formal plantings. However, some garden plants are not suitable for pollinators. Planting a range of pollinator friendly plants which flower at different times throughout year will provide an important source of pollen and nectar for pollinating insects throughout the spring, summer and autumn.

### 2.1.6. Plants for Pollinators: Naturally Native

Here are some common (and sometimes overlooked) plants that are native to Ireland and Monaghan and are of great benefit for our insect pollinators:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dandelion | Ivy | Bramble |
| Daisy | Blackthorn | Primrose |
| Bluebell | Hawthorn | Foxglove |
| Bugle | Forget-me-not | Rowan |
| Red & White Clover | Heather | Spindle |

### 2.1.7. Plants for Pollinators: Non-native but Beautifully Beneficial

Here are some widely available plants that are good for pollinators but also look great in any planting scheme:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Nepeta | Ribes (currants) | Dogwood |
| Rudbeckia | Buddleia | Hebe |
| Aubretia | Hydrangea | Cransebills |
| Cotoneaster | Lavenders | Achillea |
| Berberis | Privet | Campanulas |

### 2.1.8. Composting

Compost your garden and food waste in a designated composting area. Composting reduces the amount of waste going to landfill and provides a source of nutrient rich compost for gardening. This reduces the need to purchase garden compost often sourced from peat bogs contributing to the loss of these treasured habitats. Your compost heap also becomes a habitat! Worms, beetles, slugs and even hedgehogs will make themselves at home in a well-managed composting area.

Avoid tipping of garden waste into waysides or wild areas. Grass cuttings disposed of in waysides and other wild places smothers wildflowers. Beside watercourses, grass cuttings can pollute water and even kill fish. Garden plants which are disposed of outside garden areas can take root and spread. Some garden plants can become very invasive and spread to wild areas outcompeting our native plants and can lead to damage of our natural habitats.

### 2.1.9. Bee nesting habitat

Honeybees live in hives and are looked after by beekeepers. Our wild bees do not enjoy such protection and must find a suitable place to nest. Bumblebee colonies make their nest on the ground often in long grass or other vegetation. Cut such long grassy verges between September and March so as to avoid disturbing bumble bee nests.

Solitary mining bees make their nest in tiny burrows in south/east facing banks of bare soil, sand, or peat. Keep vegetation sparse on any earth banks or stony banks to provide nest sites for solitary bees. Scrape back to bare soil annually during October to February to create bare ground for solitary bees to burrow into.

Cavity nesting bees make their nests in south/east facing stonewalls, masonry, cavities in wood or dead plant stems. Visit such areas on a sunny evening from May -September. If bees are seen, protect these areas from disturbance and, in particular, ensure that there is no herbicides or pesticides used near these areas. Additional nest sites can be provided by drilling holes in fence posts (10 cm deep and 4-8mm in diameter).

### 2.1.10. Herbicides and pesticides

We would recommend that you avoid the use of herbicides and pesticides as they cause harm to wildlife directly and indirectly. For example, using slug killer might result in fewer thrushes, hedgehogs and other slug-eating wildlife. Using herbicides to control 'weeds' along grassy verges and around trees kills wildflowers which wildlife depend on for food and seeds.

## 2.2 Protecting Biodiversity

Conserving and protecting biodiversity is sometimes as simple as getting the time right. Scheduling management actions to avoid or minimise disturbance to wildlife is crucially important. Without management, hedgerows can become gappy, reducing their value to wildlife and their stock-proofing function. Under the Wildlife Act 1976 as amended, it is illegal to cut hedges between 1st March and 31st August in order to protect nesting birds unless there are clear traffic health and safety reasons to do so.

Hedgerows should be cut about every 3 years in rotation. This means that not all the hedgerows are cut in any one year but some are left uncut to provide resources for wildlife. Hedgerows can be cut between September and March but cutting hedgerows later in the autumn, in November or December is less disruptive to pollinating insects. Hedgerows should be cut to an A shape which allows sunlight to reach the bottom of the hedge promoting a full and dense growth. The top of the hedge should be left uncut to leave some fruit and seeds through the autumn and winter months for birds to feed on.

Similarly delaying the annual garden clean-up normally carried out in autumn until early spring provides some additional shelter for wildlife. Dead plant stems and fallen leaves provide places for invertebrates and other small wildlife to shelter and hibernate during the winter months.

## 2.3 Raising Awareness

Community groups play a really important role here. Raising awareness of biodiversity and encouraging or facilitating people to engage with and appreciate wildlife is an important tool in biodiversity conservation. Providing opportunities for people to experience useful to draw peoples' attention. Even more effective, however, is increasing the amount of time people spend outdoors connecting with nature. Furthermore, the health benefit of spending time with nature is widely recognised with known benefits for both physical and mental wellbeing.

Raising awareness of biodiversity can be facilitated by organising wildlife-themed walks, bat walks, wildflower walks and bird watching or competitions, such as best wildlife-friendly estate, best garden for wildlife or a wildlife photography competition. Better still is providing opportunities for people to volunteer on a project, such as invasive plant species removal, tree planting or encouraging people to get involved in citizen science projects. It is often the social benefits of such events that will attract people to get involved. When residents understand more about wildlife in their local area, this can instil respect, remind them of the value of nature and lead to more effective conservation. Where appropriate, interpretative signage highlighting the biodiversity present in an area or promoting a particular biodiversity project can be a beneficial component of a nature-friendly community and help us all to deepen our relationship with nature.

# SECTION 3. PROJECTS FOR BIODIVERSITY AT EMYVALE

## 3.1 Brief Description of the habitats of Emyvale

Emyvale is a large village in North County Monaghan (population approx. 700). Alternatively, it is known as Scarnageeragh (Scairbh na gCaorach in Irish, meaning 'Shallow ford of the Sheep'). It lies approximately 11km north of Monaghan Town and sits on the Mountain Water River, which rises in the Bragan Mountains (in the west) and flows eastwards through the village towards Emy Lough and eventually to Lough Neagh. The banks along the riverside are lined with trees and are very pleasant, with the potential to be enhanced and further utilised. The main N2 Dublin-Derry route runs straight though the village centre, with constant traffic occurring throughout the day. The N2 joins the A5 route to the north of the Republic/UK border near Aughnacloy, County Tyrone. A bypass road has been planned for the area for some time now. The village is composed of mixed buildings, for both domestic and commercial use, interspersed with private rear yards and gardens, as well as grassy verges and patches. There is a community garden near the village centre, a children's playground and an informal sports pitch (Oriel Park), which includes a small, wooded area. Emy Lough, popular with local walkers, anglers and bathers, lies approx. 2km east of Emyvale on the Glaslough Road. The 'Back Lough' lies to the north-west of the village and is bounded by a willow-dominated wood. A small pathway runs through this wood, but has further potential, while an 'eco-trail' is planned to start from the riverside on Old Mill Road towards the Glaslough Road which will lead to the rear of the GAA grounds.

Wildflowers, roadside strip - Billy Flynn

## 3.2 RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

### Project 1: Mountain Water River – Banks and Bridges

The area by the riverside is lovely, however it has potential to attract more biodiversity, including people!

A proper 'low-mow' regime is recommended here. Long flowering meadows only need one cut per year (in Sept) while short flowering meadows need five cuts (between mid-April to mid-Oct). The type of 'low-mow' can be alternated, depending on location. Patches of cultivated, native wildflowers can be sown if desired, which involves rotavating the soil and sowing seeds in late spring or early autumn.

On the Drummully Road side (westwards), a wooden bridge structure should be reinstated here (there was one previously) so that pedestrians can cross the river and appreciate the space on the other side. A small pathway could be created (possibly by mowing) and winding a little through the trees, bounded by meadow flowers (via the 'low-mow' regime).

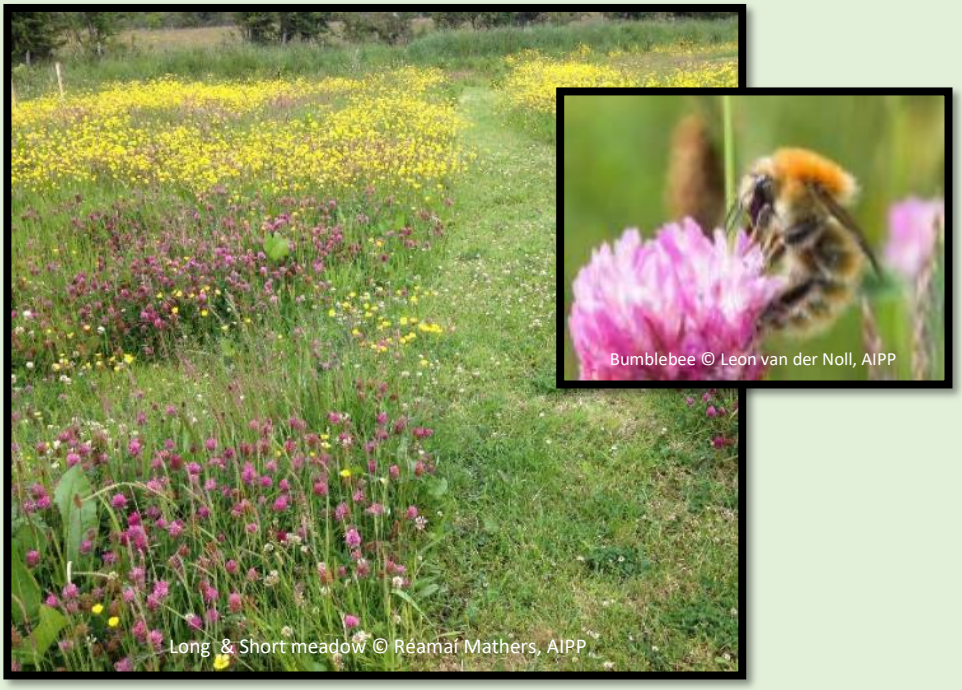
Daffodils are present in sections along the wall. Other spring bulbs such as Snowdrops, Crocuses and Bluebells would be good to plant here for earlier pollinators, as well as being visually pleasant. To reveal the old stone wall, grasses and other vegetation can be removed, however do keep the Ivy intact where possible. It benefits pollinators during the year by providing insects, berries and cover for nesting birds, etc.

The 'low-mow' regime should be extended to the opposite side of the river (eastwards on the Old Mill Road). This can again be interspersed with cultivated

wildflower patches and spring bulbs.

The low stone walls can be uncovered by removing the extensive grasses along the top section. It is important that vegetation removed is lifted and taken away, or it will degrade and create excess nutrients for the soil and waterway.

A line of native trees and/or spring bulbs is recommended along the opposite side of the river's edge (with permission from the property owner of course).



## Project 2: Drummully Road verge and riverside

There is scope to reveal the riverside stonework here (if present, as suspected), by careful vegetation removal, similar to the areas further downstream towards the village. *N.B.* Be careful not to remove too much vegetation here in case the bank becomes destabilised, leading to erosion.

Some overhanging planters along the wall and green, metal fencing (containing pollinator-friendly annuals & perennials) would be an attractive feature and bring bursts of colour in summertime (e.g. like the displays seen in Westport, Co. Mayo).

To allow a view of the river while leaving and entering the village, the road verge containing trees, scrub and hedgerow could be managed carefully, up to the weir section. Vegetation can be cut back and thinned to a certain extent, leaving the trees intact as they are maturing (they only occur every few metres in some sections). Where it gets denser, it may be appropriate to trim back a little.

Again, if there is a stone wall present underneath here, this should be exposed as a heritage feature along the route (as done along the Mill Race further back).

The trees along here and on the opposite side of the road would benefit from a tree survey by an arborist. This will be included in Potential Project 1, Section 4.

## Project 3: Former Orange Hall

The former Orange Hall ('Bog Lane Hall - L.O.L. 581') is an attractive feature on entering and leaving Emyvale. The front patch has recently been planted, bordered by a box hedge. It is recommended that pollinator friendly perennials and shrubs are planted here – e.g. Heather (*Calluna vulgaris), Potentilla fruticosa,* Catmint, *Allium*, etc. Old style window boxes containing summer annuals or perennials would also be nice. The lawns within the hedge could be managed with the 'low-mow' regime – perhaps for a long-flowering meadow as the building is not often used. This would be great for pollinators throughout the year.

Wildflower mix in bloom at Rossmore Park, Monaghan - Billy Flynn

## Project 4: Community Garden (& link-up with playground)

The community garden is utilised and well-kept by local residents who may not have enough private garden space for growing produce.

There is potential for some native hedgerow planting (including fruit trees) around the edges, where there is currently a wire fence. Where wide verges are unmanaged, non-native species like Cordylines and *Leylandii* should be removed and replaced with pollinator-friendly versions.

There is scope for long-flowering 'low-mow' and cultivated wildflower patches in areas with less footfall. Pathways in between can be left short flowering. A patch for growing various herbs is suggested for novice growers - and pollinators!

The garden would be a great community hub for locals from all backgrounds (including children) to learn about food growing, pollinator-friendly plants and biodiversity in general, via demonstrations and talks, etc. There is a polytunnel on site with potential for greater use. A few benches throughout would encourage people to sit and enjoy the garden.

The garden backs onto the village playground and playing pitch. There is opportunity here to break through the hedge/fencing into the playground, joining up the two areas. This would prevent the need to walk back onto the main road to access the playground. It might also encourage more people into the garden.

## Project 5: Oriel Park

The grassy strip along the playground in Oriel Park is ideal for managing via a short and/or long-flowering meadow regime. Spring flowers could be planted in a row alongside the fence (beneficial for early pollinators). The playing pitch can be kept mown, avoiding the verges where possible.

The area to the rear of the playground contains scrub and is currently used for dumping grass and other cuttings. A composting unit here would be tidier, more compact and might encourage locals to compost correctly. The resulting compost could be used for village planting and locals' gardens. The 'No Dumping' sign could be removed. A section could be made into a 'Wildlife Corner' containing fallen leaves, deadwood, habitat piles and bug hotels.

As mentioned under Project 4, there is potential for this area to link with the community garden. Here, native trees could be planted, creating a small grove which would link up with the existing line of trees along the pitch edge. A few bird/bat boxes could be installed on the existing trees.

A pathway could be made among the trees, carrying on from the Community Garden and planted with spring bulbs in lines or clusters. The 'gathering area' for local young people is ideal for a nice bench area. The stream would benefit from regular clean-ups. The open, grassy patch towards the housing estate is ideal for a long-flowering meadow. A 'low-mow' strip' could be left along the wooden boundary fence.

## Project 6: Back Lough & walkway potential

The Back Lough is a small lake to the 'rear' (north-west) of the village, currently accessible by a laneway behind a housing estate, which leads to private property. The lake is surrounded to a large extent by a Willow-dominated wood, with an informal pathway running through it. This has real potential to be a focal point in the village and a mini haven for biodiversity.

It has been suggested that access to the Back Lough be gained via the playground and playing pitch grounds. This would allow a walking route from the village, through the community garden, the playpark and into the Back Lough area, ending in a jetty structure onto the water. A feasibility study is recommended to take this idea further as it would be of great benefit to nature and locals/visitors.

In the interim, the lake should be cleared of debris. Some water quality testing and a tree survey/ecology study are recommended to gain an understanding of the quality of the habitat.

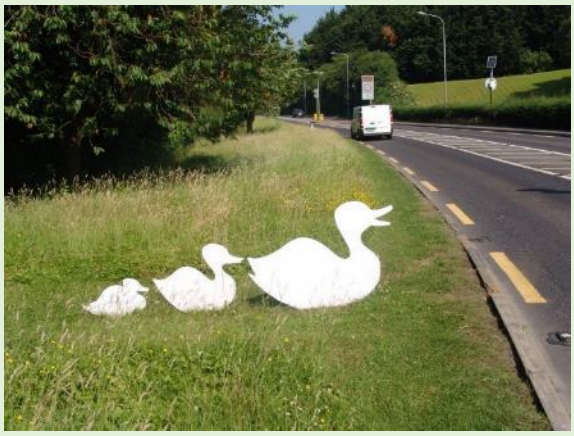
## Project 7: Grass verges around village

The 'low-mow' practice has been adopted in Emyvale, which is great. However, a better cutting regime is required throughout the year if natural meadows are to flourish going forward. 'Strips' (1m) can be left mown as usual for a 'tidier' look.

For long-flowering sections, grass should be cut only once per year (in Sept) OR 5 times per year for short-flowering meadows, (between mid-Apr and mid-Oct) and the cuttings lifted each time. Grass should be left uncut until after mid-April to allow the first Dandelions to flower for early pollinators each year. An easy-to-follow grass cutting plan for the village and a short training course would provide CE workers with guidance.

It may take a few years for natural meadows to fully emerge, but with the correct regime in place and some patience, it will happen. By including some compact information signs in the various patches, locals/visitors will understand what is happening and why grass is not being cut as traditionally expected.

In sections of the village where there is little footfall or extra space, patches of cultivated native wildflowers are an option. These bring bursts of summer colour (as seen in Rossmore Park). Suitable areas might be at 'Cois Locha', verges near the playground and on the approach to the village from the north side (from Silverhill Foods, N2).



## Project 8: Planting around village

There are a number of planters and flowerpots around the village, including those at the main bridge. There is a good opportunity here to increase their biodiversity value by adding a few more here and there along Main Street. Hanging baskets are also an option. The key thing is to include more pollinator friendly flower and plant species.

More abundant, pollinator friendly planting would be a positive addition to the main bridge, softening the concrete and metal look. Climbing plants or a vertical plant wall would be pleasant growing along the metal railing, as well as being beneficial for birds and pollinators.

Bees on Dahlia © Peter Cuthbert, AIPP

Allium & Catmint © Lesley Whiteside, AIPP

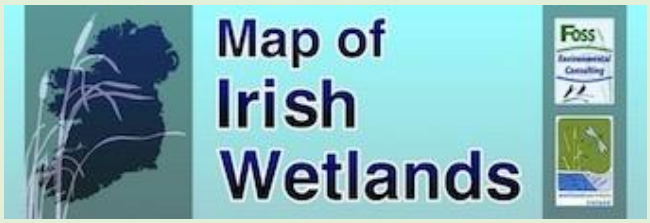
Berberis © Jo Tiedeken, AIPP

## Project 9: Focus on local wetlands

There are numerous valuable wetlands around Emyvale. These have been mapped under the Wetland Surveys Ireland project. They include Emy Lough, Back Lough, Coma Lough, Tully Lough and their environs.

Wetlands are being recognised as crucially important carbon sinks, natural flood prevention barriers and as brilliant habitats for a wide range of species. They are under threat however and need protection.

Emyvale can highlight its wetlands through focused studies, follow up talks and leaflets. Information panels could be included at the main wetland sites in the vicinity, for the benefit of locals and visitors.





Images: wetlandsurveysireland.com

## Project 10: Swift/House Martin project

Swift and House Martin numbers are in steep decline in Ireland and need all the help they can get to stabilise their populations. By placing simple nest box structures (bought or constructed) at specific locations, these birds will be enticed to set up home.

It would be a positive project for the community and could be highlighted via installing nestbox cameras, etc. Suitable locations might be under the eaves at Emyvale Leisure Centre or the Enterprise buildings near the Mill Race. Further expert advice should be sought before installing such boxes.


Successful swift project at GMIT Mayo. Image: gmit.ie

## Project 11: Murals and Green Walls

Reports have brought attention to the condition and style of the buildings on Emyvale's Main Street (N2) several times. While the bypass is still in planning, there are options to explore in the meantime that can make the village stand out in a positive way.

Artistic and colourful murals with a biodiversity theme are recommended for some of the building gables, at noticeable points, e.g. Holland's Flats, the post office, Red Boy's pub, etc.

Green walls would also be an attractive feature on one or two Main Street gables initially. These could also be good for birds and pollinators if the right plants are chosen.

In the last Tidy Towns (2019) report it was suggested to screen the block walls entering Oriel Park with climbers (e.g. Ivy – *Hedera helix*). This would also be good for biodiversity.

Mural with biodiversity theme, Monaghan town

Green wall at Trinity College Dublin. Image: universitytimes.ie

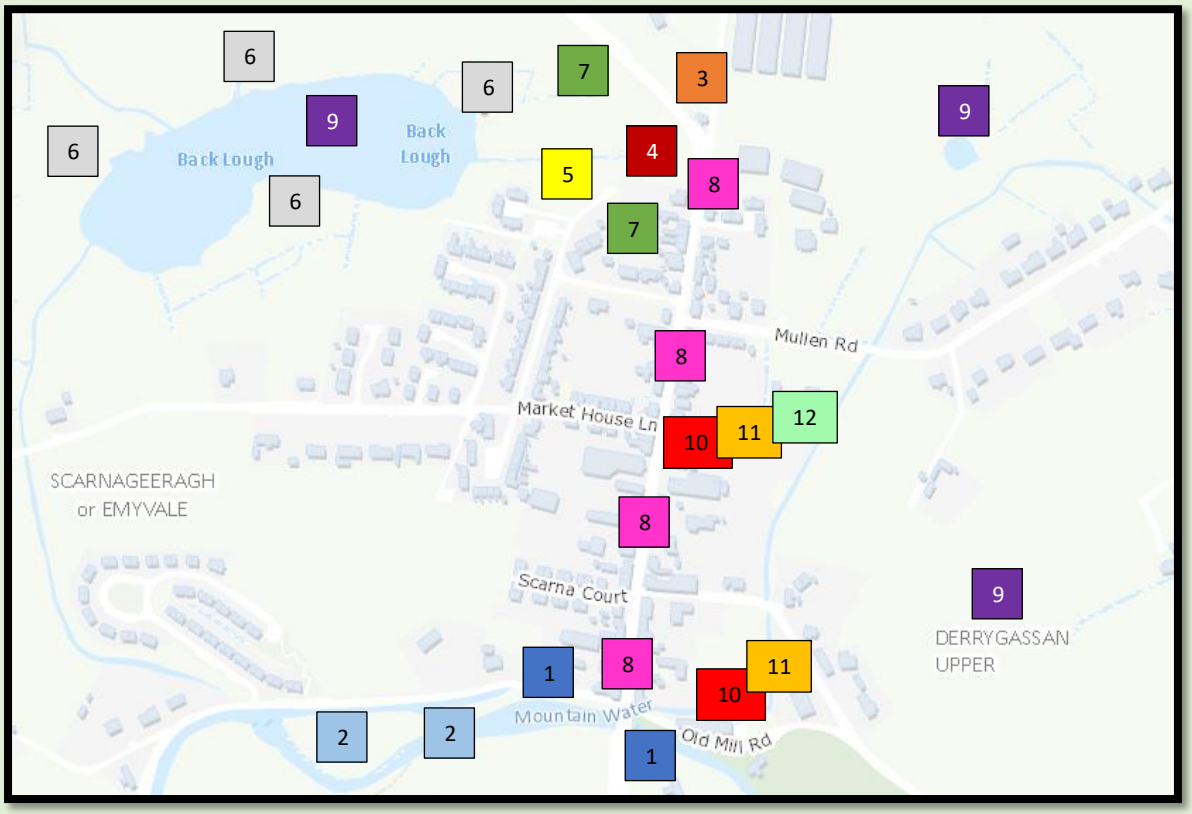
## Project 12: Biodiversity-themed public talk

Emyvale is already active in its awareness raising of nature. Some Tidy Towns members are involved with the Catchment Care initiative. A 'Bioblitz' is planned in conjunction with the Catchment Care Community Initiative Scheme. An eco-trail for the village is to commence construction soon also. A biodiversity-themed public talk would be beneficial for Emyvale, especially at a specific stage when key projects in this plan are being implemented. It could be held at Emyvale Leisure Centre.

Emyvale Leisure Centre. Image: midl.ie

## 3.3 MAP OF KEY PROJECT LOCATIONS

The map below shows the key locations for the biodiversity projects recommended in Section 3.2. Each is numbered according to the relevant project (1-12).




Map of Emyvale showing key project locations. Base map source: geohive.ie

| 3.4 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED PROJECTS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **NO.** | **PROJECT** | **MATERIALS AND MILESTONES** | **PROJECT PERIOD** |
| 1 | Mountain Water River – Banks and Bridges | Reinstate wooden bridge structure for crossing river and linking up with pathway on both riverbanks.<br><br>'Low-mow' regime: Long flowering meadows only need one cut per year, while short flowering meadows need around five cuts. Lift cuttings each time to prevent nutrient build-up in the soil and more meadow flowers to come through each year.<br><br>Wildflower and grass seed mix. Wildflower mixture suitable for limestone-rich and stony soils. Wildflower mix may be obtained from www.wildflowers.ie.<br><br>Remove excess grasses along old stone walls to reveal stonework. Ensure vegetation is lifted afterwards.<br><br>Plant spring bulbs, e.g. Snowdrops, Crocuses, Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) along the far wall edge (Drummully Road side), interspersed with the existing line of Daffodils. Continue with spring bulbs along the wall on the Glaslough Road side (if permitted by the property owner). A row of native trees would be ideal here too, e.g. Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Willow (*Salix caprea*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa).* | Any time (in consultation with landowner, etc).<br><br>Long-flowering: one cut per year (in Sept).<br>Short-flowering: 5 cuts per year (between mid-Apr to mid-Oct).<br><br>Sow native wildflowers in late spring or early autumn.<br><br>Anytime. Ensure any birds are not disturbed in the process.<br><br>Plant spring bulbs in the autumn.<br><br>Nov-March planting is the recommended tree-planting period. |
| 2 | Drummully Road verge and riverside | Trim back vegetation carefully in order to reveal a view of the river from the roadside. *N.B.* Be careful not to remove too much vegetation here in case the bank becomes destabilised, leading to erosion.<br><br>Remove excess grasses along old stone walls to reveal stonework. Ensure vegetation is lifted afterwards.<br><br>Install hanging planters along fence intermittently. Plant annuals/perennials, e.g. Perennials: Aster species, Dahlia species, Campanulas, Salvias. Annuals: *Cosmos* species, Sweet alyssum, *Limnanthes douglasii, Verbena.* | Trim back vegetation in late autumn/winter to avoid disturbing birds and pollinators.<br><br>Anytime. Ensure any birds are not disturbed in the process.<br><br>Various planting times – usually late spring or early autumn, depending on species. |
| 3 | Former Orange Hall | Low-mow regime: Long flowering meadows only need one cut per year (in September) while short flowering meadows need around five cuts (between mid-April to mid-October). Lift cuttings | Long-flowering: one cut per year (in September).<br>Short-flowering: 5 cuts per year (between mid-Apr to mid-Oct). |

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| | | each time to prevent nutrient build-up in the soil and more meadow flowers to come through each year.<br><br>Plant annuals/perennials/shrubs in front patch and window boxes, e.g. Perennials: Aster species, Dahlia species, Campanulas, Salvias. Annuals: *Cosmos* species*,* Sweet alyssum, *Limnanthes douglasii, Verbena.* Shrubs: e.g. Heather (*Calluna vulgaris), Potentilla fruticosa,* Catmint, *Allium.* | Various planting times – usually late spring or early autumn, depending on species. |
| 4 | Community Garden (& link-up with playground) | Plant hedgerow along boundary gaps, perhaps an 'edible hedgerow' e.g. Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*), Plum (*Prunus Domestica 'Opal'*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), etc. Some maintenance of new hedgerow will be required. New hedgerow plants should be pruned after 2-3 years to encourage new growth.<br><br>Establish a herb-growing patch (e.g. Mint, Thyme, Oregano, Chives).<br><br>Remove non-native species like Cordylines and *Leylandii.* Replace with pollinator-friendly versions, e.g. Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolium*), Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), *Potentilla fruticosa*.<br><br>Short and long flowering 'low-mow' options for verges and less used areas. Also, cultivated wildflower mixes, as explained under Project 1. | Both hedge laying and planting of new hedgerow plants should be carried out in winter or early spring.<br><br>Some herbs can be sown anytime, others in late spring.<br><br>Various planting times, usually late spring or early summer, depending on species. |
| 5 | Oriel Park | Plant spring bulbs, e.g. Snowdrops, Crocuses, *Muscari* along grassy playground strip.<br><br>Low-mow regime: Long flowering meadows only need one cut per year (in Sept) while short flowering meadows need around five cuts (mid-April to mid-Oct). Lift cuttings each time.<br><br>Composting unit: Can be easily fabricated and spilt into sections to speed up the composting process. Grass cuttings and garden waste can be disposed of here and resulting compost can be used locally. Rules for proper composting should be included on a sign.<br><br>Linking path between Community Garden and playground area – can link in with a possible path leading through trees and on to the Back Lough, as suggested for Project 6. Install bench where current 'gathering space' is for people to enjoy surrounding nature. Clear up debris in stream. | Plant spring bulbs in the autumn.<br><br>Long-flowering: one cut per year (in September).<br>Short-flowering: 5 cuts per year (between mid-Apr to mid-Oct).<br><br>Any time.<br><br>Any time. |

| | | | |
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| | | Plant grove of native trees (leaving room for entranceway from Community Garden) at the edge of pitch, where scrubland currently is, e.g. Alder, Hawthorn, Rowan. Remove the 'No Dumping' sign. Plant Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) in among the new and existing trees.<br><br>Install a few bird boxes on the more mature trees, e.g. for Robins/Tits/Finches. Various birdbox dimensions can be found on the BirdWatch Ireland or RSPB websites.<br><br>Long-flowering 'low-mow' option for grassy area at rear of pitch or possible cultivated wildflower patch (as explained under Project 1 above). | Nov-March planting is the recommended tree-planting period. Plant spring bulbs in the autumn.<br><br>Install before springtime. |
| 6 | Back Lough & walkway potential | Clear debris from Back Lough. Conduct a tree/ecology study and possibly water testing to determine the quality of the habitat. A feasibility study would also be useful regarding the pathway idea from the community garden through the playing pitch, the nearby private land, into the wood and lake area, ending in a jetty structure on the water itself. | Any time. |
| 7 | Grass verges around village | Prepare an easy-to-follow 'low-mow' management plan for the various green areas of the village. Ensure this is followed by CE workers, perhaps providing a short training course to explain the regime and why it is in place. Install some AIPP signage, demonstrating your aims for biodiversity in the village. | Any time – preferably as soon as possible so that natural meadows do have the chance to emerge throughout the year. |
| 8 | Planters around village | Increase number of planters and/or hanging baskets along Main Street and include pollinator friendly flowers – including annuals, perennials and shrubs. Full lists are available on www.pollinators.ie and examples are given under Project 8 in Section 2. | Preferably install planters and hanging baskets before spring/summer. |
| 9 | Focus on local wetlands | Highlight Emyvale's wetlands through focused studies and follow up talks, and information panels, etc. | Any time – the sooner the better, to conserve precious local wetlands. |
| 10 | Swift/House Martin project | Install a few swift and/or house martin nest boxes on suitable buildings around the village – e.g. the Leisure Centre, Enterprise building, etc. | Before springtime. |
| 11 | Murals and Green Walls | Artistic, colourful murals with a biodiversity theme painted on key buildings around Main Street, plus green walls, could benefit biodiversity and create life and interest in the village centre. | Any time. |
| 12 | Biodiversity-themed public talk | A public talk on biodiversity themes could be held at Emyvale Resource Centre, highlighting the various projects taking place in the village. This would inform people about related activities and encourage more participation going forward. | Any time – preferably at a specific stage when key projects in this plan are being implemented. |

# SECTION 4. ADDITIONAL POTENTIAL PROJECTS FOR EMYVALE

## Potential Project 1 Tree Survey

There are several areas of maturing and mature trees within and outside the village environs.

A tree survey would be very useful, with suggestions on how best to manage various areas going forward. It would also highlight the various tree species and their contribution to biodiversity in Emyvale.

An arborist could carry out the survey, followed by a presentation to the local community, raising awareness of the trees' value and importance.

## Potential Project 2 Weir Area, Drummully Road

The weir area just west of the village (on the Drummully Road), opposite 'Sruth an Mhuillin' housing estate, has the potential to be a pedestrian viewing area. Works are planned for the weir itself for improving fish passage, etc.

This is a pleasant spot on entry to the village, but it is currently unsafe to stop and view the river and its associated biodiversity. A small viewing platform area would be ideal here.

## Potential Project 3 Information Boards/Signs

While signs are currently not encouraged in the village, it is recommended to install a few in key areas to inform visitors/locals what is being done to encourage biodiversity. That way they might be more accepting of the different mowing regimes and alternative planting options for pollinators, etc. This could include All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) versions.

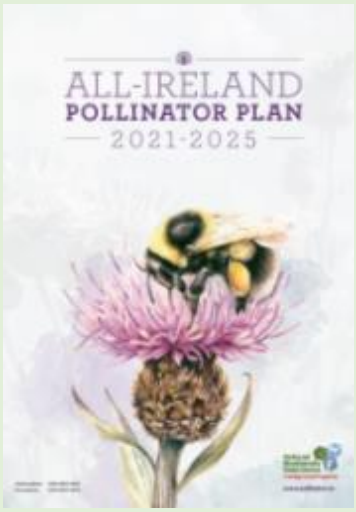
The Tidy Towns Committee could commission the design and creation of a central sign as part of this biodiversity project. The sign could also double as a 'map' of the village, with biodiversity aspects included.


Example: Information board on nature at Ulster Canal Stores, Clones

## Potential Project 4 All-Ireland Pollinator Plan

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is the largest-scale conservation project in Ireland and one of the first of its kind in the world. It encourages groups, communities, companies, schools and other organisations to play their part in conservation measures that are urgently needed to conserve our pollinating insects.

It is suggested that Emyvale Tidy Towns joins these efforts by becoming a partner of the AIPP (if not one already).



# SECTION 5. BIODIVERSITY PLAN TIE-IN WITH TIDY TOWNS CATEGORIES

The table below lays out how the eleven recommended projects (and four additional potential projects) outlined in Sections 4 and 5 tie in with the eight Tidy Towns categories. While all projects in this plan are obviously focused on biodiversity, each will help to support and enhance aspects like community involvement, aesthetics, landscaping and tidiness throughout the village and its environs.

## 5.1 TIDY TOWNS CATEGORY AND RELATED RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

| No. | Tidy Towns Category | Related Recommended Project(s) |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | Community Involvement & Planning | Projects 4, 5 & 12: linking up the community garden and Oriel Park, holding gardening demonstrations and a biodiversity talk would encourage more community involvement. |
| **2** | Built Environment & Streetscape | Projects 8 & 10: more planting throughout the village with pollinator friendly shrubs and flowers would enhance the streetscapes and buildings, as would enhancing structures with green walls and murals (with a biodiversity theme). |
| **3** | Landscaping and Open Spaces | Projects 5, 6 & 7: linking up the main public spaces and enhancing grass verges around the village. Potential Project 1: a tree survey would advise how to manage and enhance the existing trees in Emyvale, along with any new additions. |
| **4** | Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities | All Projects (1 – 12), plus Potential Projects: all projects are focused on attracting, enhancing and promoting biodiversity in Emyvale, benefitting both humans and wildlife. |
| **5** | Sustainable Waste & Resource Management | Projects 5 & 9: installation of a communal composting unit in Oriel Park and highlighting the important resources (i.e. wetlands) in and around Emyvale. |
| **6** | Tidiness and Litter Control | Project 5: installation of a communal composting unit in Oriel Park will help with litter control, especially in regard to grass cuttings and garden waste. |
| **7** | Residential Streets and Housing Areas | Projects 7, 8 & 10: an aligned and consistent 'low-mow' regime, increased planting for pollinators and artistic murals and green walls. Potential Project 3: installation of some AIPP signage (or otherwise) would communicate what Emyvale is trying to achieve in terms of biodiversity. |
| **8** | Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes | 1,2,3 & 10: banks & bridge enhancement, Drummully Road verge and riverside improvement, Orange Lodge planting, aligned 'low-mow' regime and murals/ green walls entering village. Potential Project 2: creation of viewing platform at the Drummully Road weir. |