



ECO-SCHOOLS NEWS

June 2016

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Translink Travel Challenge Celebration Event

School pupils right across Northern Ireland have been rewarded for their efforts to use more sustainable transport during the Translink Eco-Schools Travel Challenge.

A special prize-giving took place at Belfast Central Station during Translink's first ever Bus + Train Week, June 6-12, which celebrated the benefits of public transport.

Over a two week period, 36 local schools participated in the 'Translink Eco-Schools Travel Challenge' with more than 1100 pupils monitoring their travel patterns and making an effort to walk, cycle, use the bus or train for the school run.

During the Challenge, there was a massive shift away from car use to sustainable travel. Green forms of travel increased by 45% over the baseline in participating schools. This means that if every Eco-School participated every day of the school year at this level we would reduce car use by close to 100 million kilometres annually, saving a massive 25 million journeys off the school run.

Lagan College, Belfast; Ballymacricket Primary, Crumlin; Mill Strand Integrated Primary, Portrush; and Cranmore Integrated Primary, Belfast, were the top performers encouraging pupils and parents to use more environmentally-friendly transport.



Eco-Schools celebrate Travel Challenge success at Central Station.

During the event, Eco-Schools Green Flag Awards were also officially presented to Mill Strand Integrated Primary, Portrush; Ballymacricket Primary, Crumlin; and St Mary's Primary School, Portlengone; following their successful completion of the Travel Challenge.

Enniskillen Integrated Primary also won an Ulsterbus Tours educational class coach trip and day out in Dublin.

[Read more...](#)

Belfast Schools celebrate a Wheelie Big Success.

Schools from all across Belfast recently gathered at Belfast City Hall to celebrate environmental excellence with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Eco-Schools and Belfast City Council's second year of the successful Wheelie Big Challenge.

The event was held in the spectacular setting of the Great Hall in Belfast City Hall. Schools across Belfast were invited to present their final findings and actions for this year's Wheelie Big Challenge. The project saw pupils from 34 Belfast schools investigate and engage in practical actions to reduce waste, and particularly food waste, in school and at home by reducing, reusing and recycling.

Harberton Special School took first place in the Primary category and taking joint second in the same category were Mercy Primary School and Lisnasharragh Primary School, in third place was Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School.

Park School took first place in the Post Primary category and taking second place in the same category was Fleming Fulton School.

All schools attending set up brilliant displays highlighting the work they had undertaken for the Wheelie Big Challenge which included everything from worms to cookery lessons, and welly-boot planters. Some schools had moved from having no recycling in school to having as much as 80% of their rubbish recycled by the end of the Challenge and many introduced wormeries, composting and brown bin collections to tackle food waste.

Seven Belfast Eco-Schools were also officially presented with the prestigious and internationally recognised Eco-Schools Green Flag award for excellence in environmental work in their schools: Christ the Redeemer Primary School; Grosvenor Grammar School; Greenwood Primary School; Knockbreda Primary School; St Kieran's Primary School; Mercy Primary School and Fleming Fulton School.

George Lyttle, Waste Management Belfast City Council, said: "It's fantastic to see the effort and team work that these children have put in, to bring the "reduce, reuse, recycle" message to life in such a creative way. Congratulations to all the schools who made it through to the finals. It was also great to be able to celebrate the achievement of the Belfast schools receiving Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation"



Belfast Eco-Schools celebrate at Belfast City Hall.

Hedgehog Campaign -

Eco-Schools is asking all schools to help their native hedgehogs. In the 1950's it was estimated there were 36.5 million hedgehogs in Britain. It seems likely that there are now fewer than 1 million hedgehogs left.

Summer is a good time to make and situate a hedgehog home so it is ready for hedgehogs to cosy into in the autumn.

It's really easy to make a house for hedgehogs. Take a sturdy crate and turn it upside down. Cover it with stones, earth and wood, and make sure there's an entrance. If it's dry and protected, hedgehogs can use it to stay over winter.

You can buy a wooden hedgehog box, or make one to a similar design. Whenever you buy wood, make sure it comes from a sustainable source.

Make your hedgehog home a sturdy one as badgers and foxes will make a meal of a hedgehog, given half a chance.

The easiest way to help hedgehogs find a home is to give them plenty of natural opportunity. Log piles, compost heaps and cosy spaces under a shed or hedge are all popular.

Visit the [BBC website](http://www.bbc.co.uk) for more information and guides on 'how to'.

If you have seen any hedgehogs in your school grounds or have top tips you would like to share please contact ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org and have a look at our Hedgehog Campaign on our [website](http://www.bbc.co.uk).



www.bbc.co.uk

School News:

Kilkeel Eco-Schools Turn the Tide on Coastal Litter.

Thirty schools across Northern Ireland successfully combatted litter and waste by participating in the Wrigley Company Foundation 'Litter Less' campaign. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful are delighted to have delivered the campaign for the fifth year through the Eco-Schools Programme in partnership with the Foundation for Environmental Education. The Global campaign is running in 31 countries around the world, raising awareness of litter problems and encouraging positive behaviour changes.

St Louis Grammar School, Kilkeel, decided to tackle litter, not only in school, but also in the surrounding, stunning area of Mourne coastline. They invited two other local schools to lend a hand with a clean-up of Cranfield Beach: Holy Cross Primary, Attical, and Kilkeel High. 60 pupils and teachers took part with support from Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Wrigley, the local Council and the Love Your Lough Group. Love Your Lough gave the pupils an informative talk about the disastrous effects of litter on the environment, before everyone rolled up their sleeves to tackle the beach.

Despite looking quite clean at first glance, the group collected a total of 27 bags of litter including items such as a hairbrush, a pair of waders, plastic gloves, guttering and a carpet.



Council News:

Newry and Mourne - Down Your Street Awards.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council held an awards ceremony in June to thank the schools and community groups who participated in the 'Down Your Street' initiative as part of the Live Here Love Here Campaign.



Live Here Love Here, a partnership programme delivered by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, has a strong civic pride ethos helping local groups to take voluntary and practical environmental action to improve their communities and the 'Down Your Street' initiative echoes these values.

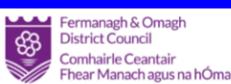
Every environmental improvement action that takes place in our local communities, however small, adds to the overall wellbeing of our district. We all know groups who are proactive in tackling environmental problems at local levels but need some help to maintain their efforts. Live Here Love Here and the Down Your Street initiative provides groups with some much needed assistance

As a thank you, a number of schools and groups who provided a record of their work were entered into a rewards scheme and were presented with awards and prizes on the day.



St Patrick's Primary School, Burrenreagh

Thank-you to the following Councils who support the Eco-Schools Programme:



International Eco-Schools News: Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE).



The international Jury went through and discussed the top national entries in the media categories of articles, photographs and videos, across the age categories 11-14, 15-18, 19-21, as well as the new category; International Collaboration. The Jury then decided on this year's YRE International Competition winners, who will be shortly receiving prizes and distinctions for their entries. All entries can be found on the competition's [Exposure page](#). This year's winners can be found via this [Unesco page](#).

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful news:

Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland is operated by the environmental charity Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. Here is the latest news from other areas of our organisation:

Live Here Love Here Small Grants Open

The third year of the Live Here Love Here Small Grants Scheme will help communities, schools and groups to take practical action to improve their local environment and support the growth of civic pride throughout Northern Ireland.



The environmental charity, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful will be working with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Tourism Northern Ireland, local Councils and Choice Housing to launch the Live Here Love Here Small Grants Scheme.

The Small Grants Scheme is designed to help groups improve the quality of their local environment by reducing littering and dog fouling; enhancing the environmental management of a local area; contributing to the development of civic pride within a community with a focus on environmental improvements; or to enhance or attract tourism to their community through environmental improvements. Interested groups can visit www.liveherelovehere.org for more information and an application pack.

Don't forget you can **pledge** your support to the Live Here Love Here campaign and receive up-dates about actions being taken in your community.

Northern Ireland's best beaches celebrate with awards

The International Blue Flag Awards have recognised ten of Northern Ireland's beaches as "world class" for their facilities and water quality.

The Blue Flag Award recognises beaches with the highest standards of facilities and water quality. This year Northern Ireland can boast of ten beaches and two marinas that have reached this benchmark.

The international Blue Flag award, which is administered locally by environmental charity Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, is a mark of excellence in 49 countries.

The Blue Flags were awarded to -

- Castlerock, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- Cranfield Bay, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
- Crawfordsburn*, Northern Ireland Environment Agency
- Magilligan, Benone, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- Magilligan, Downhill, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- Murlough Beach Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
- Portrush West, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- Portstewart Strand*, The National Trust
- Tyrella Beach Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
- Whiterocks, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council



Other News:

'Sow, Grow, Munch'

This great school resource has been created by Jilly Dougan to inspire schools to grow their own produce. It is a beautifully produced piece of work which would compliment many Eco-Schools topics.



A PDF (3MG) of the resource can be accessed on the Eco-Schools website [here](#).

Best Kept School Awards

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Eco-Schools were delighted to attend the NIAC Best Kept School Awards this month. It was great to see so many excellent Eco-Schools picking up prizes on the day. Big congratulations to the overall winner 'Best of the Best' St Cohmghall's College, Lisnakea. Well done to all the [regional winners](#) too.

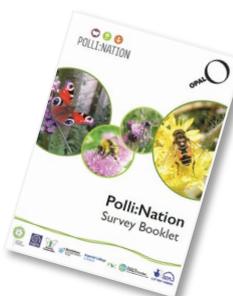
Bright Green Future

Bright Green Future is looking for 15-17 year olds who are interested in the environment and climate change to change to take part in a two year programme from September 2016. Participants will receive training, attend work placements, do local projects and take part in a summer school, all with the aim to provide the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to take a path towards a career in the environmental sector. Applications are open now until July 17th; go to www.bright-green-future.org.uk to find out more.



OPAL Polli:Nation survey booklet

OPAL have launched a great pollinator survey booklet which is a super resource for schools. You can learn all about pollinators, how to identify them and hunt your school grounds for them. Then you can add your results to the online database. This is a lovely biodiversity task and also useful for numeracy and literacy skills. Check out this [survey](#) and all the other great OPAL resources on their [website](#).



Green Flags this month.

Congratulations to all the schools who have achieved their Green Flag award in the last month. We are continually amazed at the knowledge and enthusiasm of all the pupils and staff at our Green Flag schools and they are to be congratulated on their fantastic achievement.

Congratulations this month go to:

- Pond Park Primary, Lisburn
- St Scire's Primary, Omagh
- Augher Central Primary, Augher
- Killyhommon Primary, Enniskillen
- Mullavilly Primary, Portadown
- Presentation Primary, Portadown
- Glencraig Integrated Primary School
- Gortin Primary, Omagh
- Sion Mills Primary, Strabane
- St Brigid's Primary, Newry
- St Laurence O'Toole's Primary, Newry
- St Patrick's Primary School, Cullyhanna
- Edenderry Primary School, Portadown
- Oakgrove Integrated Primary, Derry
- Belmont Primary, Belfast
- Six Mile Integrated Primary, Antrim
- Rosetta Primary, Belfast
- Cranmore Integrated Primary, Belfast
- Gracehill Primary, Ballymena
- St Paul's Primary, Slievemore, Derry
- St Brigid's Primary School, Derry
- St Patrick's and St Brigid's Primary, Ballycastle
- St Patrick's Primary, Rasharkin
- Forge Integrated Primary, Belfast
- St Columba's Primary School, Kilrea
- St Mary's College, Portglenone
- St Patrick's & St Joseph's Primary, Coleraine
- St. Colmcille's Primary, Ballymena
- Windmill Integrated Primary, Dungannon
- Crumlin Integrated Primary, Crumlin
- Magherafelt Nursery, Magherafelt
- New Row Primary, Magherafelt
- Steeple Nursery, Antrim
- Ardstraw Jubilee Primary, Newtownstewart
- St Theresa's Primary, Strabane
- St Colmcilles Primary and Nursery, Claudy
- Donemana Primary, Strabane
- Euston Street Primary, Belfast
- Killen Primary, Castlederg
- St Catherine's Primary, Strabane
- St. Ita's Primary, Belfast
- Andrews Memorial Primary, Newtownards
- Comber Primary School, Comber
- Good Shepherd Nursery, Belfast
- Ballycarrickmaddy Primary, Lisburn
- Victoria Primary, Carrickfergus
- Moneymore Primary, Magerafelt
- St Patrick's Primary, Craigavon
- Woods Primary, Magherafelt
- Mountnorris Primary, Armagh
- St Joseph's Primary, Madden, Armagh
- St. Bronagh's Primary, Newry
- Aughamullan Primary, Dungannon
- Ballyclare Primary, Ballyclare
- Ballyoran Primary, Portadown
- St Joseph's Primary, Strangford



Killyhammon Primary, Enniskillen



St Patrick's and St Brigid's Primary, Ballycastle



Crumlin Integrated Primary, Crumlin.



Mullavilly Primary, Portadown



St Columba's Primary, Kilrea

Have a brilliant summer!! We'll see you in September.



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Don't stop here! Visit our Eco-Schools Northern Ireland [website](#) for more news, project ideas, programme guidance, case studies, delivery partner information, and much more.