



Mayo Green News

Grow it Yourself!

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In recent times, there has been a huge resurgence of interest in growing our own vegetables. This is evident in the number of gardening courses and classes in villages and towns all over Mayo. It comes as no surprise then, that there is also a growing nationwide organization, called GIY (Grow it Yourself). This organization, which now has five branches in Mayo, offers advice and friendship for fellow garden food producers. There are currently groups in Westport, Castlebar, Ballina, and Foxford, and a group has recently been launched in Claremorris. This home grown organization was set up in Waterford by writer, broad-

caster and social entrepreneur, Michael Kelly in 2009, whose interest in sustainability led him to seek advice from other organic growers. Having been unable to find a group to join he decided to start his own. In just a short space of time, there are now over 80 groups, involving around 6,000 people in Ireland and elsewhere, and the organization is currently being established in Australia, the UK and the US.

Visit www.giyireland.com to find out where your local group is, for news and events, a garden calendar, tips of the day, and so on. Michael Kelly also has his own website www.michaelkelly.ie which provides valuable information



Delaway Cabbage, a native of Mayo. Seeds are available from www.seedsavers.ie

for experienced or novice growers. The motto of the group is “taking the self out of self-sufficiency”, so now is the time to enjoy gardening as a social outlet. Join your local group to share skills, and learn how to get the best out of your Mayo garden.

Special points of interest:

- News and stories about our local environment.
- Local Green issues.
- Updates on Corrib protest and the Occupy movement.
- Green Party News

Well Done to the Tidy Towns of Mayo!

A number of towns in Mayo have scored exceptionally well in this years Tidy Towns competition. Of the thirty-seven entries from Mayo, many did very well, improving on previous years. Westport came a close second in the whole country, Killarney beating the town by just one point for the tidiest town. Murrisk and Aughagower were second and third.

Among other top scorers are

Kilmaine Village (below). Kilmaine has recently opened a new walkway around the village. They also hope to begin work on a community garden in the near future.



Endeavour Award for their significant improvement on last year, and Ballina won a Heritage Award following its improvements to the Salmon Weir Bridge in the town.

It is not always obvious just how much work goes into keeping our towns and villages in such excellent condition and we'd like to congratulate and thank all those who give their time to improve our environment.

News from Rossport -The Struggle Goes On



The struggle at Rossport goes on, with fifteen protesters appearing in court at Belmullet on 12th October. So what is the story? What do they want? According to the website the Shell to Sea Campaign has three main aims: 1) That any exploitation of the Corrib gas field be done in a safe way that will not expose the local community in Erris to unnecessary health, safety and environmental risks. 2) To renegotiate the terms of the Great Oil and Gas Giveaway, which sees Ireland's 10 billion barrels of oil equivalent* off the West Coast go directly to the

oil companies, with the Irish State retaining a 0% share, no energy security of supply and only 25% tax on profits against which all costs can be deducted. 3) To seek justice for the human rights abuses suffered by Shell to Sea campaigners due to their opposition to Shell's proposed inland refinery. Meanwhile, the Rossport Solidarity Camp continue to report the "use of unlawful force on peaceful protestors". In recent days, representatives from Kilcomman were banned from observing a meeting of the Dail Committee on Natural Re-

sources, because they were classed as a protest group. However, representatives of the oil and gas lobby group, IOOA, and other interested parties, had no such problems and were seen mingling with civil servants. Sr. Majella McCarren said she had seen a similar situation when attending a meeting about Shell in Nigeria, some sixteen years ago. Father Nallen, an independent observer, said "*We, at the very least, deserve a proper explanation and an apology for the way we were treated. This is not credible democracy*". More info at www.shelltosea.com.

School Transport is a Burning Issue!

"Presently, school bus fees can only be spread over two installments, making them increasingly difficult to pay, and resulting in more cars on our roads."

If you have ever heard the traffic report on an early September morning, you will notice that we are told to expect much heavier volumes of traffic due to schools returning. This is a cause for concern, firstly because we have a growing obesity problem in this country, with an estimated one in five children in need of more exercise. Not to mention their parents who, if

over 40 are more likely to be overweight here than anywhere else in the country. Why aren't these people walking or cycling to school? Secondly, there is the issue of cost, that school buses have become more expensive than taking children in individual cars. To make matters worse the increase in fees has not been accompanied with an easier way to pay. Parents

who are already struggling to pay for school book, and uniforms are presented with a bill for up to €325 per secondary school child. At present this bill can only be spread over two instalments, the first in August, the second in early December. It is easy to see then, why so many extra cars arrive on our streets in term-time. The Mayo Greens have written to Bus Eireann on this

Claremorris School Replaces Books with ipads.



St. Colman's School in Claremorris is one of seven schools in the country which have opted to use ipads instead of school books this year. The scheme hopes to benefit pupils by reducing the weight they carry in their bags, and parents by spreading the costs. The school arranged funding from their local credit union, meaning

that each child pays €23 per month over the course of the school year, at a total cost per student of €700. This includes electronic versions of school books, updated regularly. This has 'green' benefits for two reasons. Firstly it would mean a significant reduction in paper and printing. Saint Vincent de Paul estimate that one million school books are

dumped each year. That's tons of paper! Secondly, it may enable students to travel to school on foot or by bike, for all or part of their journey. Currently 329,229, pupils travel to school by car, with only 25% of pupils walking, and 2% cycling. We hope to keep you updated on how the experiment is going.

Food for Thought: Basic Income - Simple?

Basic Income is a system in which every member of society is granted a payment unconditionally, without means testing or work requirement. It is based on the idea of everyone holding equal citizenship and equal rights to a good quality of life. It would completely overhaul the current tax credit and social welfare system in that everyone would be entitled to the same amount, Exceptions would be children, who would receive a lower amount, and those with disabilities who would require a slightly higher payment. This would then give recognition to those who work in the home, as parents and carers, giving them a basic wage for their currently unpaid labour. The same would apply for those who volunteer in the community. It would also be of help to those who wish to start up in business

and those who have previously been self-employed. It would relieve the poverty traps of the current social welfare system, eliminate the dependant status of one member of a household on the other, and encourage all people to enter paid employment. Work which others do not want to do, for example cleaning toilets, would require a decent wage as an incentive for people to do them, so decreasing wage inequality across different occupations. So what's the catch? How is it paid for? Apparently this idea has recently been costed in Ireland, and could be funded entirely by abolishing the current tax incentives which favour the more well off., for example those who save in pension schemes and/or pay private health insurance and pay less tax as a result. Income tax levels

would not have to rise to pay for the implementation of this scheme. So why don't we do it? The scheme would require those in power to view society as a collective, as citizens with equal rights, rather than as individuals in competition with each other. The problem is that any move to increase income equality is not seen as conducive to the current neo-liberal agenda. This scheme would require Ireland to become closer to the Republic promised by the Proclamation, and entirely different from the Ireland which led to the Celtic Tiger and our current financial melt down. For more info go to: BIEN Ireland, www.basicincome.org , or www.socialjustice.ie . The idea for this article came from a recent Claiming Our Future event in Cork.



'Occupy' Ireland - A Deeper Shade of Green?

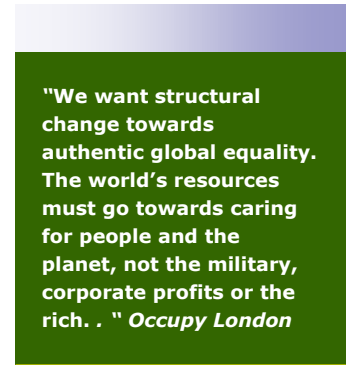
As there is a distinct lack of information in the media, we have copied these demands from the Occupy Dublin protest's Facebook page.

We are the 99% of Ireland, we demand a sovereign republic, free of corporate control. We demand control of all natural resources within our land and sea borders. We demand a setting up of a non-usurious national bank, printing

debt-free money and acting as a utility for the people only. We demand a court system acting under a natural system of law which mirrors the Brehon system of our ancestors.... We demand all corporations be held accountable for all breach of the law. We demand all men/women on this Island have access to the freedoms that were the original intention of the creation of the Republic. We are inspired by the

movement on wall street and will continue to support this global movement.

The London Group has also laid out their demands, at <http://occupylsx.org/?p=221>. Many of this movement's demands echo Green beliefs of environmental sustainability and social justice, as you will see below and overleaf.



What We Are About.

We Are For:

- More decision-making at Community level.
- Open government.
- A basic income for all citizens.
- Renewable energy and Recycling.
- Neutral peace-keeping in Northern Ireland.
- Workers' Co-ops and

small family businesses.

- Emphasis on public transport.
- Non-violent direct action.

We Are Against:

- Pollution of air, sea and land.
- The depopulation of the countryside and overcrowding in the cities.
- Control of industry by

large national and multinational companies.

- Nuclear weapons and nuclear power.
- Land and property speculation.
- Both state and paramilitary violence in Northern Ireland.
- The exploitation of the third world.
- Exploitation of animals.



Green Party Principles

Meetings are held in Westport on the first Monday of each month. New Members and Supporters are Always Welcome

Contact us at magslsbeehan@hotmail.com

Chairperson: John Carey 087 1636396

We're on the web at :

www.mayogreens.org

This newsletter may not represent the views of all members of the Mayo Green Party or the Green Party at national level.



The Green Party/Comhaontas Glas adopted at its foundation these seven principles by consensus:

- The impact of society on the environment should not be ecologically disruptive.
- Conservation of resources is vital to a sustainable society.
- All political, social and economic decisions should be taken at the lowest effective level.
- Society should be guided by self-reliance and co-operation at all levels.
- As caretakers of the Earth, we have the responsibility to pass it on in a fit and healthy state.
- The need for world peace overrides national and commercial interests.
- The poverty of two-thirds of the world's family demands a redistribution of the world's resources.

Climate Change? What Climate Change?

Many people remain sceptical about the issue of climate change, so we have decided to do a spot of myth-busting with the help of palaeo-climatologist Mike Henehan.

Qu.1. If the earth is getting hotter how come it was bloody freezing last winter?

Ans. Ah, but weather isn't the same as global temperature. As a general rule of thumb, when it is unusually cold somewhere, the heat is just hanging around somewhere else. In 2010 and 2009, while we had unusually cold winters in Europe and America, Greenland and Arctic Siberia experienced record high temperatures. Greenland, for example, had temperatures up to 5 °C higher than their average December temperatures. As a result, melting of ice from



Greenland sped up rapidly over 2009 and 2010.

Qu 2.. Could this be due to changes in the sun or something? Ans. No. No on a number of counts. Firstly, the changes in energy that the Earth gets from the sun due to short-term variability in the sun's output is miniscule compared to that which would be induced by an influx of greenhouse gases. Secondly, we are just coming out of a period of relative solar inactivity, and yet we still saw warming during this time. Thirdly, there is no correlation between solar radiative forcing and temperature changes over the past hundred years.

Qu. 3 How bad is it going to get? Ans. Well there's a trillion-dollar question. There are teams of scientists all over the world working on this as we speak.

The problem is, in order to compute what will happen to the earth's climate system, you need to have a computer model that incorporates all the complex processes that regulate the earth's climate, like ice sheet growth and melt, biological processes, weathering, burial rates of organic carbon, etc. This takes very powerful computers and very reliable estimates of these processes and how they change with warming. One thing that we probably can say with some certainty is that we're likely to see more storms and more extreme weather conditions, as well as changes in rainfall distribution. The truth is, we're heading somewhat into the unknown, and there will probably not be a way back.