



## Eco-Schools Newsletter

Hello and welcome to the Eco-Schools Northern Ireland December 2014 Newsletter. We would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and hope that you enjoy a well-deserved Christmas break.

## Book Now for Eco-Schools 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Event

Schools across Northern Ireland should have received a hard copy of their personal invitation to the Eco-Schools 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Event, which will be held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at the Meadowbank Sports Arena, Magherafelt. With an expected 3000 guests we recommend booking your tickets soon to avoid disappointment!



We are pleased to confirm workshops and shows from, amongst others, Scientific Sue and BBC mentalist David Meade, and pupils will have the opportunity to take part in an official Guinness World Record<sup>®</sup> attempt.

Email-invitations are being sent out regularly through Eventbrite so please keep an eye on your inboxes for your invitation. From the 5th December we will be opening up the number of tickets available per school. If you have already booked tickets and would like more or if you would like to book your free tickets please contact Eco-Schools on 02890 736 920 or [cathy.gorman@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](mailto:cathy.gorman@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org).

## Operation Energy Power Down Day



Over 100 schools from across Northern Ireland took part in this year's SSE Airtricity, Operation Energy, Power Down Day as part of international Eco-Schools World Days of Action. Results so far are showing a great result again this year. Dundonald Primary School sent this report of the actions they took on the day:

“Dundonald Primary School saved a lot of electricity during Power Down Day. The Eco-Committee made big and bright posters to remind everyone about the special day. All of the teachers and pupils tried their best to help out with saving energy. The classes turned off computers, interactive whiteboards and lights to save power. We went with our caretaker, Mrs Boyce, to take electricity readings every day from Monday to Friday. Power Down Day was a great success - we used 20% less electricity! This was a really good result as the day was very wet and dark and we needed more lights on.” Aliah and Stephanie, Dundonald Primary Eco-Committee.



## The Wheelie Big Challenge



Eco-Schools and Belfast City Council are delighted to launch a new, fun, waste themed, project and competition called the Wheelie Big Challenge for schools in Belfast City Council.

Wheelie's challenge is action based and the competition will be judged not just on the amount of waste reduction but also on the actions taken and campaign run in the school and at home to reduce waste. Shortlisted entries will be invited to Belfast City Hall in June to present a final display outlining their waste actions. The closing date for competition entries is 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Prizes for Primary and Post Primary School are:

First Place - £500      Second Place - £300      Third Place - £200

The Challenge is based around 4 key areas: Wheelie's Workshop, Wheelie Big School Audit, Wheelie Big Competition and Wheelie Big Celebration.

For see our website for more information on the [Wheelie Big Challenge](#).

## Nicholas Jamison, 'Future Environment Minister', at the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Event

Lagan College pupil, Nicholas Jamison, recently spoke at the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at the Glasshouse in Stormont. Addressing an audience of current Ministers, local celebrities, business leaders, community groups, environmental champions and Eco-Schools pupils, the 'Future Environment Minister' reported that in 2028, through the work of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, the Northern Ireland public had fully supported campaigns to reduce litter, waste and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and actively take care of their local environment. In doing so, his role had almost become redundant as the people of Northern Ireland became environmental champions.



## Young Reporters for the Environment



Young Reporters  
for the environment

Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) is an international competition open to young people aged 11-21 interested in environmental journalism. The aim is to investigate environmental issues and problems and report on them through written, photographic or video journalism, while showcasing potential solutions. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful are operating the YRE competition again this year through Eco-Schools. With a number of schools already working on entries, there is still time to get involved in this year's competition. If you would like any further information please contact [ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](mailto:ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org)

## Delivery Partner Update

We have a number of delivery partners who can help schools with the topics, either by visiting their schools or by providing the necessary resources. The full list of [delivery partners](#) can be found on the Eco-Schools Website.

## Cluster Group Meetings

### Belfast City Council

15 schools attended an Eco-Schools and Belfast City Council Good Practice Meeting at Forge Integrated Primary School on the 18<sup>th</sup> November. Guests, including 20 visiting pupils, enjoyed a presentation and tour of the school from pupils of Forge who explained their work up to and since their Green Flag was awarded last year. The schools also heard information from Belfast City Council, Waste Manager, George Lyttle and Eco-Schools Project Officer, Ruth Van Ry. Joe Mulhern, from Harberton Special School gave an inspirational talk on a tree trail developed in partnership with their neighbouring school Taughmonagh Primary School. After the presentations schools were able to chat and view work displayed on an 'ideas table'.



"It was lovely to see first-hand how a school is engaged in the Eco-Schools programme. The teacher and children of Forge Primary School gave an enthusiastic account of their Eco-activities. All the presentations were very informative. An event like this helps to refocus on Eco-Schools and how the programme can be progressed in our school." Mr Merrick, Principal, Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School.

### North Down and Ards Borough Councils

Teachers from 10 schools in the North Down and Ards Borough Council areas came together to find out more about the Eco-Schools Programme. Following a presentation by Ruth Van Ry, Eco-Schools Project Officer, there was a question and answer session and an opportunity for teachers to look through some Eco-Schools files and work from Green Flag Schools.

**Limavady Borough Council** is organising a Cluster Group meeting on **22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015** in the Council Offices in Limavady. This meeting is designed to assist schools in the Limavady area through the Eco-Schools programme. The meeting will focus on offering practical advice to achieve Eco-Schools awards as well as news on projects, competitions and resources available. There will also be an opportunity for schools to share ideas about their Green Flag experiences.

**Down District Council** is hosting a Cluster Group meeting in their Council Offices on **29<sup>th</sup> January 2015** at 2.30pm. There will be a question and answers session and an opportunity to chat to a member of the Eco-Schools team.

## Green Flag Awards

Well done to the following schools on achieving the Eco-Schools Green Flag in November:

- Riverdale Primary School
- Moneyrea Primary School
- Castletower School
- Lagan College
- Eden Primary School
- Taughmonagh Primary School
- Barbour Nursery School
- Ulidia Integrated College



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.

## Holy Trinity College Success Story



Holy Trinity College Eco-Warriors have achieved impressive results in the Eco-Schools and SSE Airtricity World Days of Action Power Down Day. Having identified that their school was in the least efficient category possible on their Display Energy Certificate, the HTC Eco-Warriors tackled the Energy topic through the Eco-Schools Programme and were able to save a massive 20% on the Power Down Day. The Eco-Schools Programme has played an important part in the school becoming more energy efficient and electricity bills for the period April 2013 – April 2014 showed that Holy Trinity College had cut their electricity bill by a staggering £6,000 from the same period the previous year. This was a fantastic achievement and the school went on to win a National SSE Airtricity Eco-Schools ‘Operation Energy School of the Year’ award for their efforts. For the full story, please

see the [Holy Trinity College case study](#) on the Eco-Schools website.

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