

The Northern Standard

Circulating in Counties Monaghan, Cavan, Armagh, Louth and Fermanagh



Sustainability Matters

Transition Monaghan initiative

Compiled by Liam Murtagh & Mícheál Callaghan

Professor John Sweeney to lead Climate Change Seminar in Monaghan this Saturday



Climate Change & the Inter-Connected Web of Life is the title of the seminar that will take place in Monaghan this Saturday, 11 October in the Hillgrove Hotel from 9.30am to 4pm. This event, which is open to members of the public is being organized by Eco Congregation Ireland. Eco Congregation is a multi denominational organization that encourages the main Christian Churches in Ireland to promote environmental protection in their work.

Emeritus Professor John Sweeney, NUI Maynooth, will facilitate this event, which will look at Climate Change: The Facts, Impact & Response. This event promises to be a highly interesting event, at which many people interested in environmental issues from across Ireland, will be in attendance.

Professor Sweeney currently leads a research programme into the impacts of climate change and the production of climate scenarios for Ireland for mid and end century. John was one of the contributing authors and a review editor of the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In this role he was one of many recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

The event comes on the back of the recent pastoral reflection on Climate Change from the Irish Catholic Bishop's Conference. This reflection entitled "The Cry of the Earth: A Call to Action for Climate Justice", reflects the growing movement of interests which are vocally calling for action on climate change. A couple of weeks ago (Sunday 21st September), over 600,000 people, representing a broad range of groups, took to the streets of cities across the world, demanding action on climate change from global leaders. This mobilization, which saw over 300,000 people march in New York City alone, including UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and Mary Robinson, was the largest ever show of solidarity on climate change. It coincided with the international Climate Summit in New York. International leaders will meet in Peru in December at the 20th Conference Of Parties, in an attempt to get one step closer to a binding international agreement on climate change, which is expected to be delivered in Paris in 2015.

Saturday's event is in the Hillgrove is open to all. A contribution of €20 will include refreshments and a light lunch. For more information email or phone Marie Cox: marie@mercyntn.org tel 048 85548127. Members of Transition Monaghan will be in attendance, if you would like to arrange to meet with one of us please e-mail transitionmonaghan@gmail.com

NOTICEBOARD

Climate Change & the Inter-Connected Web of Life: Event on this Saturday, 11 October 9.30am to 4pm in Hillgrove Hotel, Monaghan. Emeritus Professor John Sweeney, NUI Maynooth, will facilitate the event, which will look at Climate Change: The Facts, Impact & Response. Fee: €20 incl lunch. Organised by the Sisters of Mercy. Email marie@mercyntn.org or tel 048 85548127. See www.ecocongregationireland.com/archives/4799.

Transition Monaghan Planning Event: Making the most of an uncertain future will be the theme of a brainstorming and planning session hosted by Transition Monaghan on Saturday 18 October at 12.00pm, Ballybay Wetlands Centre. We will look at how we can influence sustainability in our county in a number of areas including food, water, energy, biodiversity & health. Contact transitionmonaghan@gmail.com for info

Fermanagh Walking Festival: Saturday 11 & Sunday 12 October. Choice of six walks including one on Sliabh Beagh. See www.fermanagh.gov.uk/autumnwalk.

Apple Press Day: Sunday, 12 October, 1pm-5pm. Family fun day at Address House, Annaghmore, Co Armagh. See www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ardress-house.

Organic Centre Courses: Rossinver, Co Leitrim. Saturday, 11 October: (1) Wine and cider making. (2) Plan a year's harvest - start now. (3) Seaweed walk and talk. Sunday, 12 October: (1) Wheatgrass, sprouts, microgreens and juices. (2) Wind turbines - an introduction. Saturday, 18 October: (1) Growing in Polytunnels - an introduction. (2) Natural Cosmetic Making - Winter workshop. Saturday, 19 October: (1) Micro Hydro - revised. (2) Nuno Felting - Scarf Workshop. See www.theorganiccentre.ie.

Sonaire Courses / Events (Laytown): Candle making course on Saturday, 18 October 10am - 4pm. Pumpkin Carving on Saturday, 25 October, 12pm - 2pm. See www.sonaire.ie

Young Environmentalist Awards (ECO-UNESCO): Closing date for registration is 28 November but participants (aged 10-19) have until 28 February 2015 to complete their group project in one of ten categories. Once registered, groups can avail of ECO-UNESCO's training, advice and on-going support. See www.ecounesco.ie.

Nocturnal Nature Tour on Crom Estate, Co Fermanagh: Thursday & Friday, 23 & 24 October, 7 - 10pm. Booking essential. Contact 048 6773 8118. Email crom@nationaltrust.org.uk. See www.fermanagh.gov.uk/community/nocturnal-tour-crom-estate.html

Newtown Stewart Time Trade Workshop: Torn - paper card making, led by John Harding, Saturday 8 November 10am - 12 noon - Greystone Farm, Newtown Stewart, Co. Tyrone. Contact john@greystonefarmni.org

EVENTS FOR FARMERS, BUSINESSES & PUBLIC BODIES

Wastewater Management Using Plants (Conference): Thursday, 16 October in Armagh City Hotel. Final event of the ANSWER Project, a project that has been very successful in developing the use of Short Rotation Coppice Willow for the bioremediation / biofiltration of effluents and leachates. Closing date for registration is Friday, 10 October. Register at www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wastewater-management-using-plants-tickets-13001797727.

Skills & Knowledge to Achieve Near Zero Energy Buildings - Conference & Training: Wednesday, 15 & Thursday, 16 October at Wood Quay Centre, Dublin. See www.qualibuild.ie or www.igbc.ie.

Green Hospitality Conference & Awards - Making Responsible Tourism Pay: Thursday, 16 October 8.30am to 2.30pm in The Marker Hotel, Grand Canal Square, Dublin. See www.ghaward.ie.

Septic Tank Options - Natural treatment systems in the context of the EPA Code of Practice: Thursday, 16 October in Moycullen, Co. Galway. Training course delivered by Fíódhlinn Harty author of 'Septic Tank Options and Alternatives - Your Guide to Conventional, Natural and Eco-friendly Methods and Technologies'. See www.wetlandsystems.ie.

SUSTAINABILITY SNIPPETS

WWF: World has lost 50% of its wildlife since 1970, as Ireland bottom of class

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) issued some stark news this week in its publication of 'The Living Planet Report'. According to the report the world has lost over 50% of its wildlife (animals, birds, fish, insects etc...) since 1970. This is the direct cause of human activities and pollution in an era which saw unparalleled economic growth and population expansion. The figure for freshwater eco systems is even worse, where numbers have nose - dived by 75%. The largest contributions to this decline have been exploitation and habitat degradation / change, accounting for 37% and 31% of the loss respectively. According to the report species loss has been worse in developing countries, where a rapid pace of development has often been accompanied by lax environmental regulations and standards. This, however, does not mean that the developed world is a shining light on species protection or sustainability. As we know, the largest economic powers are contributing most to climate change and are using most of the earth's natural resources. Quite often, due to the import of natural resources and products from other countries, we in developed nations 'export' our environmental damage to developing nations. This might happen, for example by importing products that are produced in an unsustainable way. Therefore as consumers we all have a responsibility to ensure that we try to shop in a responsible manner.

Despite our name the 'emerald isle', Ireland comes out looking quite badly from this report. Our little country has the 14th highest ecological per capita in the world, higher than that of the United Kingdom. Ecological Footprint is calculated on the individual consumption levels in each country, both within its own territory area as well as resources obtained from other countries. According to An Taisce, Ireland's import of steel and household goods, fossil fuel, fertiliser, feed for animals, caged fish, sugar products, palm oil, clothes and plastics are linked to environmental degradation across the globe.

It is not all bad news, however. In England, the other has been brought back from near extinction. Through a combination of international and national policy initiatives, community actions and individual responsibility we can all take steps to stem the tide and indeed begin to improve our biodiversity and levels of wildlife. Next year will be a crucial year in this regard as world leaders will agree on a new binding agreement on climate change and the UN will come with a new set of Sustainable Development Goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals. We must join the growing mobilisation of civic society across the globe to demonstrate to our leaders that we want clear action to lead us to a future that we can share with nature and pass on to our children.

Lighting up your business. With the days getting darker & shorter your business needs to deliver the necessary lighting for a particular application as efficiently as possible. Additional benefits are reduced maintenance requirements and associated costs by using long life lamps. More information is available on the SEAI website at http://www.seai.ie/Your_Business/Technology/Buildings/Lighting/g.html

Transition Monaghan is a voluntary community initiative promoting local and global sustainability. For more information see www.transitionmonaghan.org or email transitionmonaghan@gmail.com. Anyone interested in assisting in the compilation of this column including noticeboard, please email a message to the same address.