



## Welcome to the Fenagh Tidy Towns Biodiversity Plan!

This plan  
Fenagh for

a

is to be used to guide the biodiversity work of the next 3 years. The plan was drawn up following consultation with members of the community group and

field visit undertaken in August 2022.

The first section of the plan is an introduction to this plan and

the work that gave rise to it as well as some biodiversity basics. Next, we outline the Key Biodiversity Projects – these will be projects that may take relatively significant resources for Fenagh Tidy Towns to complete. Finally,

there are recommendations for some additional projects we suggest that the group would undertake over the next three years, the timeframe of this plan.

# Section 1. Introduction: Fenagh Community Biodiversity / Pollinator Action Plan Action Plan

## **This Plan is a Biodiversity Project**

Biodiversity has now become a key part of what local community action groups do. This project will help Fenagh to 'design' biodiversity considerations into their present and future projects and maximise the benefits for wildlife as well as people. As well as providing a schedule of actions the plan will also be useful in raising awareness of how biodiversity is considered in Fenagh. This may then empower individuals and groups such as residents' associations to make positive contributions for the benefit of both wildlife and people.

This plan will serve as a 'statement of best practice' for biodiversity and is hoped will also be useful in seeking financial or material support for future projects.

This biodiversity plan was drawn up following consultation with Fenagh Tidy Towns, an in-person visit with a focus on areas to be enhanced for biodiversity and liaison with the Leitrim County Council Heritage Officer.

## **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.

### **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 country. Our country's natural heritage contributes to the attractiveness of landscapes, villages and urban centres.

### **What is this Community Biodiversity/Pollinator Action Plan For?**

The purpose of a Community Biodiversity/Pollinator 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 community biodiversity/pollinator 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.



There are some striking flowerbeds and pots throughout the village of Fenagh, including the 'Welcome' boat near Quinn's pub. It is positive that a little herb garden is located here too – great for

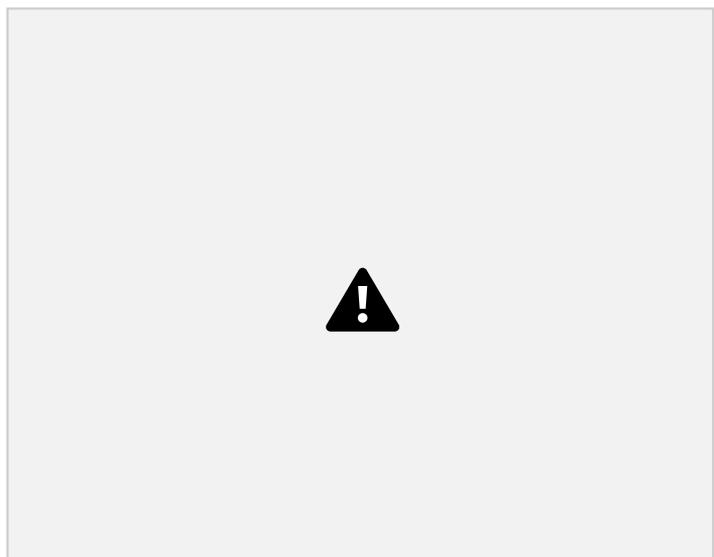


pollinators and people! There is also a plot of planted wildflowers nearby. It is recommended to replace the traditional annual bedding plants with pollinator-friendly varieties. Traditional bedding plants like Begonias, Marigolds and Petunias have little to no nectar/pollen and have to be replanted each year. Alternative bee friendly options are Lavender, Heathers, Allium, Salvias, Catmint and Geranium sylvaticum. These are perennials that return each year with a little maintenance.

Perennial shrubs like Viburnum tinus and Potentilla fruticosa can provide colour and food for pollinators throughout the year. For more plant list options see [pollinators.ie](http://pollinators.ie).



Project Period: 2023-2025

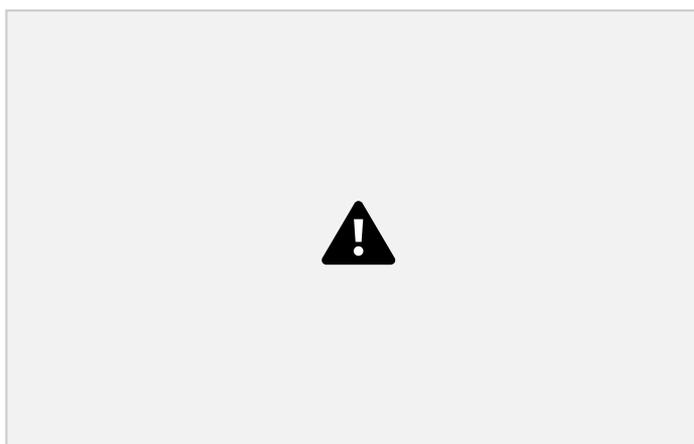
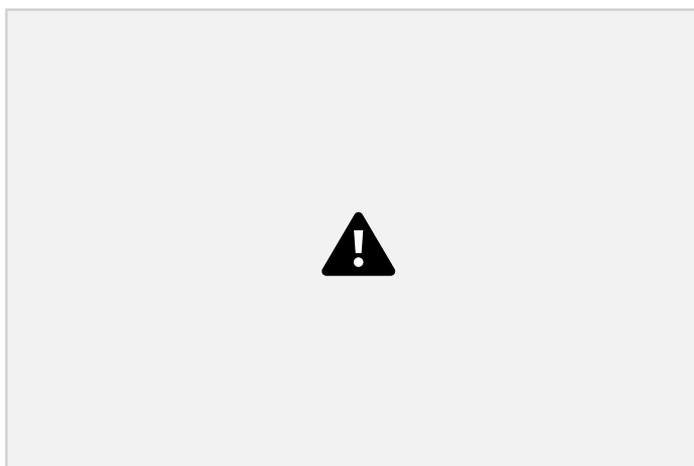






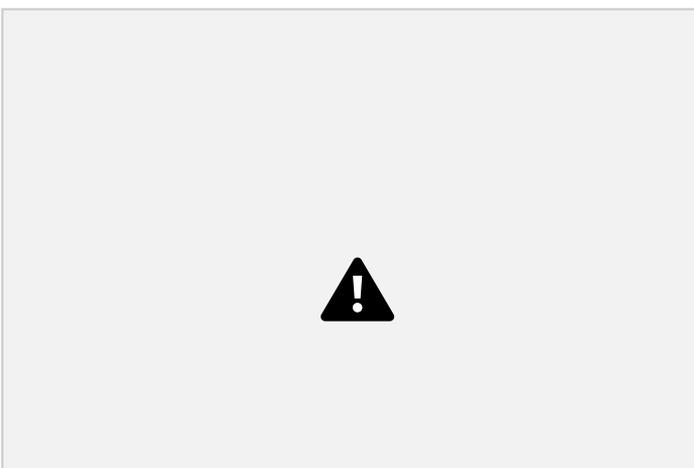
The roadside orchard on the way out to Foxfield is a lovely addition to the green space along here. The apple trees and currant bushes looked quite healthy and were bearing fruit on the survey. A strip of long grasses, wildflowers and Bramble provides a great 'run' for wildlife such as birds and small mammals, as well as pollinators. The AIPP sign informs people why some areas are uncut.

This space could be enhanced by planting 4 or 5 native fruit trees of the Apple/Plum/Pear variety, plus up to 10 fruit bushes, e.g. Blackcurrant, Redcurrant, Strawberry, Raspberry and/or Gooseberry. While wildlife will benefit from eating the resulting fruit, it would be great if local people could too, in the form of fruit-picking days in the autumn, followed by a jam making or apple pressing event, for instance! It is also advised to cease the dumping of grass cuttings along the verge as this will over-fertilise the soil and suppress growth of natural grasses/flowers. Cuttings should be composted in the nearby graveyard compost bay (or otherwise). Reducing the amount of mowing along this verge would also reduce the amount of cuttings produced!



Project Period: 2023-2025

In the parking area with the planted border, past the visitor centre, there is a small vegetable patch with a sign. It is unclear how often this is used and would be good to encourage more activity here. A designated corner here, with the addition of herbs like those from the 'Welcome' boat is recommended. Local

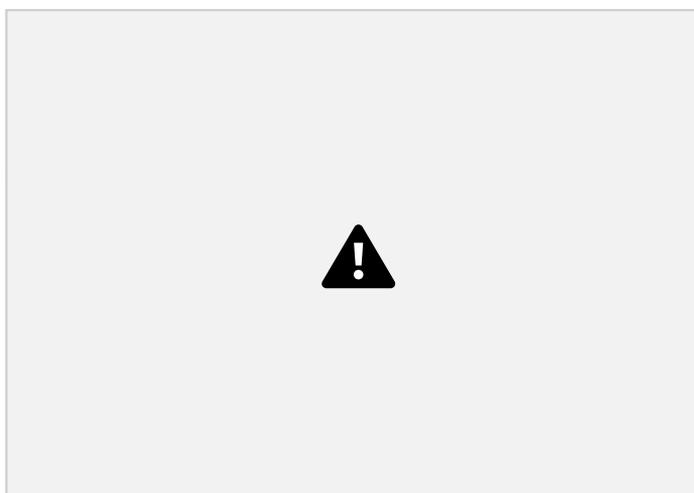


groups and schoolchildren should be encouraged to pick and use the resulting vegetables for cooking. Combined with the fruits yielded from the small orchard at the roadside further along, there is much potential for Grow-It-Yourself type courses and events in the village.

Project Period: 2023-2025

The handball alley is a big part of Fenagh's activity in the village centre and the building is a focal point beside the Visitor's Centre. The climbers are a nice addition to the wall. A biodiversity-themed mural on part of the wall or gable here would not only brighten up the general space but would also highlight the importance of biodiversity to local people and visitors.

Murals depicting nature scenes have become more common throughout the country and have proven to be popular and effective at awareness-raising.



Project Period: 2023-2025



The new graveyard out towards Foxfield is a great space with lots of potential to encourage more biodiversity. The lawns are currently extensively mown, but there was no fresh grass cuttings seen in the existing compost bays, suggesting another disposal method is used. A 'low-mow' regime based on a short-flowering meadow, involves mowing the grass every 6 weeks



instead of every week/fortnight (see 'Creating Meadows' section). This will mean less grass cuttings need to be disposed of and natural meadow flowers, e.g. Clover, Dandelion and Self-Heal will get a chance to grow and feed the bees!

The compost bay here would benefit from some clear signage, showing composting methods, what materials to add (and not), and how to rotate it,

etc. Resulting composting can be used for village flowerbeds, for instance.

Spring bulbs would add great colour and much

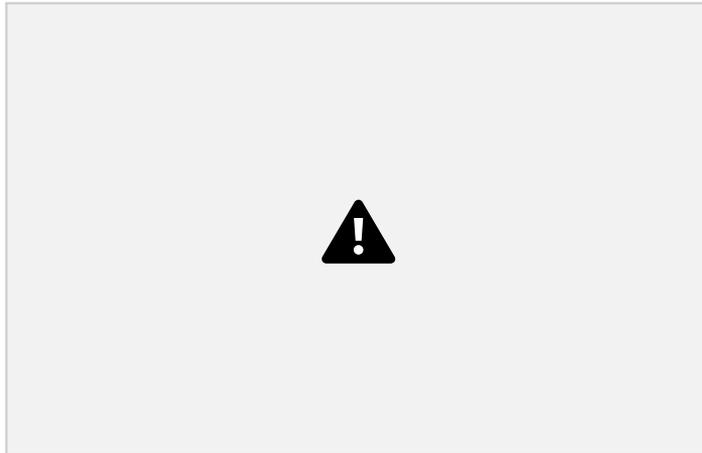
needed early nectar/pollen for bees. These can be

planted in lines and/or patches across the green

space. Snowdrops, Crocuses, Muscari and Bluebells

are recommended to plant over Daffodils and Tulips

for their pollen/nectar value, although some of the latter species could be mixed in too.



Project Period: 2023-2025

This little clearing would be an ideal mini wildlife

space. There is already some nature signage and a

bug hotel in place here. Small areas in the centre could

be strimmed once or twice a year, leaving a space

for a natural bench, (see example below).

Patches

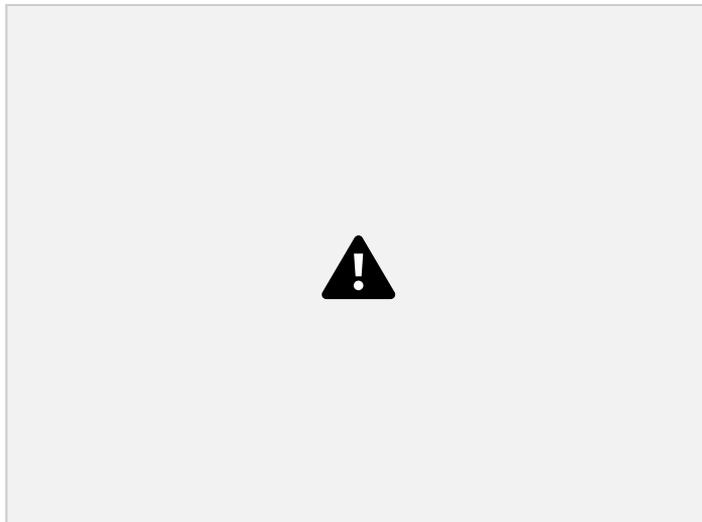
of native Bluebells would add colour and provide

food for bees in spring. Some creative features, e.g.

wooden 'stepping stones' could lead to a tree trunk

base up to a 'Mouse House' for instance. A nature themed sculpture might also go well here, fitting with

local wildlife, e.g. see the 'Wolf hut' image below.



Project Period: 2023-2025



1	<b>One Biodiversity Event</b>	<i>The Tidy Towns group will organise at least one biodiversity-themed awareness event for the residents of Fenagh and the wider public. Themes could include a night-time bat walk, native wildflower walks or talks on managing natural meadows.</i>	<i>Annually, 2023-2025</i>
2	<b>Moving Away from Herbicides</b>	<i>Fenagh Tidy Towns generally avoids herbicides in its day-to-day activities. The Tidy Towns group could campaign for the end of glyphosate-based herbicides in Fenagh and the wider area.</i>	<i>2023-2025</i>
3	<b>Protect and monitor stream water quality</b>	<i>The bridge in Fenagh village was damaged on the survey day following a crash, with resulting debris in the stream. This is a somewhat regular occurrence. It would be important to ensure the debris is cleared and the stream kept clear for wildlife, e.g. for birds like Kingfishers, Grey Wagtails and Dippers. Stream water quality may be monitored via yearly water testing. Water quality training through Citizen Science projects with the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) is also worthwhile.</i>	<i>2023-2025</i>
4	<b>Become a Supporter of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP)</b>	<i>Becoming a Supporter of the AIPP may galvanise efforts to protect pollinators in the local community. It will help everyone to understand why certain actions are being taken, e.g. 'Low-mow' regimes.</i>	<i>2023-2025</i>