



Clarecastle Biodiversity Plan & Report 2019 to 2025 Rev 01 June 2021



Bee Orchid, Port of Clare, Clarecastle

Biodiversity Team: **Joan McCarthy, Catherine O'Connor,
Christy Leyden, Eric Shaw, Ellen Quin &
Jean Ryan**

Plan / Report Rev 01 Author: Jean Ryan 16 June 2021



Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage and Wildlife Team is a sub-committee of Clarecastle Community Development - their aim is to source, collect & publish Cultural, Historical, Wildlife and Natural Amenities material in order to raise awareness and to aid preservation of knowledge and amenities. The Group work in tandem with Clarecastle Tidy Towns under the overall umbrella of Clarecastle Community Development CLG.

The initial plan (Rev 0), was documented, post team attendance of the CLDC & Burren-Beo Biodiversity course held at CLDC Centre Ennis 2019 and has since been updated to report on action items. This Plan / Report has also been updated to include a specific Biodiversity plan for the People's Park by Mary Dillon and a subsequent revised version of this plan (to reflect latest thinking on biodiversity), in conjunction with CLDC 'Training to Develop a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan for an Outdoor recreational Space in Your Community' Biodiversity course May to October 2021 (Dr Fran Giaquinto & Linda Gilsean).

This document shall now serve as a plan / report of all actions completed and status of actions pending to show progress made in real time, throughout project lifecycle.

Biodiversity in Clarecastle, Co Clare.

Clarecastle village is situated beside the River Fergus and for this reason has estuarine, wetland & mudflat habitats, which is excellent for bird watching -particularly migrants (Lapwing, Shelduck, Curlew, Teal, Widgeon, Sand martins, Whooper Swan etc). Due to its geological make up (limestone bedrock), the land is calcareous and for this reason tends to have similar flower (Bee Orchid, Bird Foot Trefoil, Yellow Rattle, Quaking Grass, Crow Garlic etc), bush and tree species (Ash, Willow, Hazel, Holly etc), to that found in the Burren Co Clare.

The village is mostly surrounded by farmland, where ample biodiversity can be found in hedgerows, particularly around Lissane and Island McGrath areas, where Blackberry, Crab Apple, Hawthorn, Hazel and Elderflower support pollinators, small mammals, and many birds.

As the Clarecastle was the Port of Clare, there is a substantial amount of built heritage in the area, which now supports roosting & nesting birds and bats. The Port of Clare, at the New Quay location is home to an untouched wildflower meadow, where different species of Orchid and wild grasses can be seen. A large variety of pollinators (Butterflies, Bees, Hover flies & Dragon flies), can be seen benefitting from this habitat.

Clarecastle now being largely a residential area, has many garden and parkland habitats, which support garden wildlife. There are also woodland areas such as Ballybeg Woods and Killone Abbey which support woodland animals and forest birds. Local lakes & ponds in the area, support nesting water birds such as Coots, Duck, Great-crested grebe, Newts & Common Frog etc.

The purpose of this Biodiversity Plan / Report is to bring awareness and to preserve and promote existing wildlife in the Clarecastle area. The plan / report will focus on the natural and built heritage in the village, with the involvement of community groups and local school, where possible.

The plan / report shall be rolled out using a phased approach, over 5 years. All actions shall be reported on in table 1 through subsequent revision update, to show project progress in real time within proposed seven-year timeframe from 2019 to 2025.

Table of Contents:

<u>Title:</u>	<u>Page:</u>
1. Clarecastle Biodiversity Plan / Report	4
2. Ensuring Success	10
3. Resources for Implementing the Biodiversity Plan / Report	11
4. Clarecastle Natural Heritage Habitats	13
5. Clarecastle Built Heritage Habitats	13
6. Port of Clare Habitat Map.	14
7. Ballybeg Woods Habitat Map.	15
8. Clarecastle community Biodiversity features to date (8A-8D)	16
9. Proposed Loop walk Signage	17
10. Annual Mini Bio Blitz Surveys 2019 to 2021	17
11. Attachments	18



Left to right: Lapwing, Birds-foot trefoil, Knapweed, The New Quay Clarecastle



Left to right: Marsh Orchid, Cowslip, Harts Tongue Fern found in Clarecastle.

Table 1: Clarecastle Biodiversity Plan & Report.

Note: Colour key: amber – in progress, Green - complete & Red – action has ceased / no longer required.

No:	Action:	Lead Partner:	Other Partners:	Timeframe & Status update June 2021:	Approx. Cost:
1.	<p>1(a): Create a mapped looped walk around Clarecastle village with enhanced signage (to include QSR code), taking into account the biodiversity found at both the built and natural heritage habitats</p> <p>1(b): Outside village environs: Clare Abbey, Killone Abbey & Killoo Church signage installation. Bluetooth & software set up to relay QSR information</p> <p>1(C) Generation and installation of Biodiversity signage at the Quay (species at the Quay), Clarecastle playground (wildlife through the seasons) and Community Garden (Hand illustrated germination & pollinator signage</p>	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group.	Clare County Council, Leader.	<p>2019- 2025</p> <p>Heritage signs in progress. Due date for completion: TBD</p> <p>QSR code for Biodiversity detail has been assessed and found to be unsuitable for signage currently ordered. The Biodiversity / Heritage looped walk map shall be the focus going forwards, timeframe: 2025</p> <p>Complete</p>	<p>Heritage signage cost: TBD</p> <p>Loop walk map cost: TBD</p> <p>1000 euro</p>
2	<p>Seek preservation of biodiversity and access to the old Famine Relief road from Lissane to the Port of Clare, where a section is found on the grounds of Roche* Ireland.</p> <p>*Note: Roche plant is due to be turned back into a brown field site. Mount signage to detail the history of the famine road and the biodiversity that can also be found at this location.</p>	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group.	<p>Clarecastle / Roche Liaison Group.</p> <p>Clarecastle Tidy Towns.</p> <p>Dermot Kelleher (Graphic Designer)</p>	<p>2019-2025</p> <p>Demolition works under way at Roche, currently unsafe to enter premises. Action shall be reviewed at a later stage</p>	Signage Cost: TBD
3	Seek the retention / handover of existing Roche biodiversity	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage &	Clarecastle / Roche Liaison Group.	2019-2025	N/A

Clarecastle Biodiversity Plan / Report Rev 01, 2019-2025

	signage.	Wildlife group.			
4	<p>Wildflower meadow at the Quay, Port of Clare. Preservation, maintenance & enhancement of this area. Assess & develop wildflower meadows / areas at other locations within Clarecastle (Peoples Park - tree planting etc)</p> <p>Green Corridor – Reduce grass cutting on entrance roads to Clarecastle. Work with Council to schedule full cut in September</p> <p>Quadrants at Clare Abbey roundabout – to follow planting and grass cutting management as seen at Clare Abbey side.</p> <p>Designate areas for Biodiversity within community such as St Joseph’s Terrace, Maddens Terrace,</p> <p>Conduct Habitat and Biodiversity study of Peoples Park and the Quay, Ballybeg & Peoples Park</p> <p>Tree audit & maintenance Clarecastle Village & Clare Abbey.</p>	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group.	Burren-Beo & CLDC Wildflower Meadow training Dr Janice Fuller Andrew St Ledger	<p>2019-2021</p> <p>Complete 2021 - Green spaces were left to turn into wildflower meadow at Peoples Park, GAA Pitch and in the Clare hill Graveyard. Apple trees were planted in the Peoples Park Orchard area</p> <p>Complete 2021 – reduction of mowing on the entrance roads and in the village green areas to allow Dandelions and other early flowers flourish & seed for pollinators</p> <p>Complete 2021 – Reduction of grass cutting for pollinators to allow wildflowers to bloom and seed</p> <p>Complete 2021: Grass cutting was reduced to allow for flowers to bloom and seed for pollinators</p> <p>Complete 2021: Habitat survey was conducted of the Quay, Ballybeg, Peoples Park and school wildflower meadow</p>	

Clarecastle Biodiversity Plan / Report Rev 01, 2019-2025

				Complete 2021: Tidy Town group. Trees replaced where needed as part of Tree week and dead trees removed.	
5.	Nest boxes and bird signage at the Peoples Park	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	Burren-Beo & CLDC Training Clarecastle Men's shed	2019-2025 Partially complete 2021: Bird boxes fabricated by Men's shed pending mounting. Swift box with electronic caller mounted on the community hall gable end. Signage for People's park pending draft review and fabrication	300 euro 400 euro
6.	Ennis to Clarecastle River Fergus Greenway Feasibility study – what pollinator friendly planting to go in over the next 3 years	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	Clare County Council, Leader. OPW	2019-2025: In progress 2021	TBD
7.	Community Orchard in Clarecastle People's Park Build stone wall to enclose tree's Develop wheelchair access to the Peoples Park Acquire services of Andre St ledger to advise on tree planting and further developing Orchard	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	Clarecastle Tidy Towns, Men's shed, Clarecastle Scouts, Clarecastle Community garden, Clarecastle NS, Seed Savers, & Burren-Beo & CLDC orchard Training Andrew St Ledger	Complete 2021: Apple tree saplings have been planted in the orchard at the people's Park. Stone wall has been built Paths have been tarmacadamed to allow for easier access for wheelchair users, buggies etc Andrew St Ledger was contracted to advise on tree planting in the Peoples Park & Clarecastle village	500 euro
8.	Invasive species mapping & control	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage &	Clarecastle Tidy Towns, Clarecastle	partially complete 2021:	TBD

Clarecastle Biodiversity Plan / Report Rev 01, 2019-2025

		Wildlife group	Community garden, BurrenBeo & CLDC Invasive weed training, Invasive Species Contractor, Clare Co Council Signage.	Knot weed has been identified and treated by council at Lissane and other locations around village. Travellers Joy has also been found covering an extensive area of Ballybeg woods. Invasive weed training is pending	
9.	Community Composting for community garden, school & local housing estates, where possible.	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	Clarecastle Community garden, Resident committee's, Greener Clare Composter Pigs Burren-Beo & CLDC	2019-2023 Action pending on this 2021	TBD
10.	Clarecastle Biodiversity & Heritage Visitor Centre Approach Roche regarding old Cottage near site entrance location.	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	Shannon Estuary Way Reps, Burren-Beo & CLDC training, Leader & Clare Co Council. Business / commercial property. Roche Ireland.	2019-2025 Action pending on this 2021	TBD
11	Community Training: Dr Janice Fuller & Andrew St ledger to provide talk to Clarecastle community regarding Biodiversity Mini BioBlitz (Ballybeg Woods / The Quay Clarecastle, School wildflower meadow & People's Park) with local school children & community groups Bumblebee study	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	Dr Janice Fuller Andrew St ledger Jean Ryan Christie Leyden	Complete 2021 Community training was rolled out. Mini BioBlitz have been conducted at Quay, Ballybeg woods, School wildflower meadow and peoples Park – see attachments for survey sheets. Study was to determine how many species could be found and in what habitats do they favour. Bumble Bee Study ongoing	500 euro

Clarecastle Biodiversity Plan / Report Rev 01, 2019-2025

				monitoring populations post since cease of pesticide use in Clareabbey transect	
12	Website training	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	Burren-Beo training contacts & CLDC	Complete 2020: ICan website in conjunction with National History Museum. Clarecastle now has its own Heritage and Wildlife website with regular postings and publications.	TBD
13	Specific Biodiversity Plan for Peoples Park development	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	Mary Dillon	Plan Complete 2020: Plan actions partially complete and shall continue until 2025. Some actions may change to suit community needs based on team review & feedback	500 euro
14	<p>Change to Perennial planting in shrub beds instead of Annuals throughout Clarecastle village.</p> <p>Look to reduce number of flower beds to limit water wastage throughout village.</p> <p>Baskets and planters to be upgraded to self-watering grade.</p> <p>Baskets & planters to be planted with pollinator friendly plants as per Dr Janice Fuller</p> <p>Cease use of herbicide by the Council as a means of weed control – CCC still use herbicide on paths</p> <p>Spring bulbs planted (Autumn 2020), in the</p>	Tidy Towns group	N/A	Complete 2021: All actions complete and in use.	1000 euro

Clarecastle Biodiversity Plan / Report Rev 01, 2019-2025

	Peoples park to promote early pollinators				
15	Biodiversity Mural to be generated by local school children at entrance to building site near Clarecastle bridge	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	Heritage & Biodiversity talk provided to local school children. Mural artist to liase with local school children	Complete: 2020 Two murals produced and mounted at entrance to site	500 euro
16	Recorded Biodiversity talk to be used to highlight local biodiversity at Clarecastle & Ballyea aimed for use in local schools and scouts	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	N/A	Complete 2021: Recorded talk with PPT slides has been sent on and used by both Clarecastle & Ballyea National Schools	N/A
17	CLDC 'Training to Develop a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan for Outdoor recreational Space in Your Community' Actions from this Training: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update People's park Plan to include new actions as a result of this training. 2. Create a set of procedures for managing different areas of the People's Park 3. Survey Trees in peoples Park to determine how much Carbon is stored in them. Survey soil type. 4. Conduct Quadrat Survey of People's park to determine number of species within People's park 5. Check online 	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group, Tidy Towns & Men's Shed	CLDC Dr Fran Giaquinto & Linda Gilsenan	In progress 2021: Course running May to Oct 2021 Action status: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In progress 2. In progress 3. To be completed 4. To be completed with Mens Shed and Local children 5. To be completed 6. To be assessed and costed 7. To be assessed and costed 8. To be compiled 	N/A for Course Actions: Cost TBD

Clarecastle Biodiversity Plan / Report Rev 01, 2019-2025

	<p>resources to determine areas of Conservation and species recorded in the Clarecastle area</p> <p>6. Create 2 raised borders for pollinator friendly plants</p> <p>7. Generate signage to explain the management & re-wilding project being actioned.</p> <p>8. 8 Years worth of Biodiversity data to be compiled and sent to National Biodiversity data centre</p>				
18	Signage at the Quay to be replaced due to dampness	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	Dermot Kelleher	Under review 2021	400 euro
19	Seek consultation with landowners at Killone Abbey with view to preserving Bluebell wood	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	N/A	Under review 2021	N/A
20	Assess and review temporary barriers around wildflower meadow at the quay to reduce compaction of soil and hence protection of flower species such as bee & Marsh orchid etc. We have lost some species to heavy footfall	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	N/A	Under review 2021	TBD
21	Postcard competition – people and place with local schools	Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & Wildlife group	ICan	In progress, entrants have submitted – judging to take place 2021	200 euro

2. Ensuring Success

The successful implementation of the Biodiversity plan / report requires commitment from the community to support the projects, activities and / or events outlined in the plan. The

Clarecastle Biodiversity Plan / Report Rev 01, 2019-2025

Clarecastle & Ballyea Heritage & wildlife group shall monitor and evaluate the implementation of the ‘Clarecastle Biodiversity plan / report 2019-2025’. The group shall meet at least twice a year in order to set annual goals and to review progress to date.

3. Table 2 Resources for implementing the Biodiversity Plan:

No:	Action:	Resources:
1.	<p>1(a): Create a mapped looped walk around Clarecastle village with enhanced signage (to include QSR code), taking into account the biodiversity found at both the built and natural heritage habitats</p> <p>1(b): Outside village environs: Clare Abbey, Killone Abbey & Killoo Church signage installation. Bluetooth & software set up to relay QSR information</p> <p>1(c): Biodiversity signage at the Quay, Clarecastle playground & Community garden</p>	<p>www.irishtrails.ie www.clarelibrary.ie www.heritagecouncil.ie www.geohive.ie www.heritagemaps.ie www.mapsbiodiversityireland.ie Dermot Kelleher signage</p>
2	<p>Seek preservation of biodiversity and access to the old Famine Relief road from Lissane to the Port of Clare, where a section is found on the grounds of Roche* Ireland.</p> <p>*Note: Roche plant is due to be turned back into a brown field site. Mount signage to detail the history of the famine road and the biodiversity that can also be found at this location.</p>	Roche Ireland & Clarecastle Liasion group
3	<p>Seek the retention / handover of existing Roche biodiversity signage.</p>	Roche Ireland & Clarecastle Liasion group
4	<p>Wildflower meadow at the Quay, Port of Clare. Preservation, maintenance & enhancement of this area. Development of wildflower meadows / areas at other locations within Clarecastle (GAA Grounds - tree planting etc)</p> <p>Green Corridor – Reduce grass cutting on entrance roads to Clarecastle. Work with Council to schedule full cut in September</p> <p>Quadrants at Clare Abbey roundabout – to follow planting and grass cutting management as seen at Clare Abbey side.</p> <p>Heritage or art installation to be considered for Clare Abbey round about.</p> <p>Designate areas for Biodiversity within community such as St Joseph’s Terrace, Maddens Terrace,</p>	<p>www.butterflyconservation.ie All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020. www.rhs.org.uk Janice Fuller@eircom.net Andrew StLedger</p>

Clarecastle Biodiversity Plan / Report Rev 01, 2019-2025

	<p>Conduct Habitat and Biodiversity study of GAA complex, Parish Graveyard, Scout site, Peoples Park and Riverbank.</p> <p>Tree audit & maintenance Clarecastle Village & Clare Abbey.</p>	
5.	Nest boxes and bird signage at the Peoples Park	www.birdwatchireland.ie Tralee Wetlands Centre Vincent Wildlife Trust Men's shed Swift group Ireland Local Camera Club Clarecastle
6.	<p>Ennis to Clarecastle River Fergus Greenway</p> <p>Feasibility study – what pollinator friendly planting to go in over r the next 3 years</p>	See point 1 above
7.	<p>Community Orchard in Clarecastle People's Park</p> <p>Build stone wall to enclose tree's</p> <p>Develop wheelchair access to the Peoples Park</p> <p>Acquire services of Andrew St ledger to advise on tree planting and further developing Orchard.</p>	Seed Savers All Ireland Pollinator Plan www.onetreeperchild.com Andrew St Ledger
8.	Invasive species mapping & control	Biodiversity data centre Clare Co. Council
9.	Community Composting for community garden, school & local housing estates, where possible.	Greener Clare Composter Pigs.
10.	<p>Clarecastle Biodiversity & Heritage Visitor Centre</p> <p>Approach Roche regarding old Cottage near site entrance location.</p>	Clare Co. Council Shannon Estuary Way Leader Roche Ireland
11.	<p>Community Training: Dr Janice Fuller & Andrew St ledger to provide talk to Clarecastle community regarding Biodiversity</p> <p>Mini BioBlitz (Ballybeg Woods / The Quay Clarecastle, Peoples Park & Clarcastle NS wildflower meadow) with Local School Children & community groups.</p> <p>Bumblebee study completion</p>	Dr Janice Fuller Andrew St ledger Old School Clarecastle Kristy Leyden
12.	Website training	ICan training
13	Specific biodiversity plan for Peoples Park	Mary Dillon Burren Beo
14	CLDC Training to Develop a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan for an Outdoor Recreational Space in Your Community'	Dr Fran Giaquinto & Linda Gilsenan

4. Clarecastle Natural Heritage Habitats



From left to right: Port of Clare, Ballybeg Bluebell woods, The New Quay



From left to right: Residential garden areas, Fergus River, People's Park

5. Clarecastle Built Heritage Habitats



From left to right: The Market House, Bannatyne's Corn store & Miller House, Scott's Corn Store, Clarecastle castle.



From left to right: Port of Clare, Clare Abbey, Killone Abbey.

6. Port of Clare Habitat Map



8. (A) Clarecastle Community Garden



From left to right: Community garden water harvesting shed (made from recycled water bottles) & Bug Hotel.

8. (B) Clarecastle Community Signage -Community Orchard



From left to right: Apple Trees and apples growing in the Community Orchard
At the Peoples Park in Clarecastle

8. (C) Clarecastle Community Signage – The Quay Biodiversity Signage



From left to right: Clarecastle Quay Biodiversity signage, Seasons signage (x 4 panels)
Clarecastle Playground.

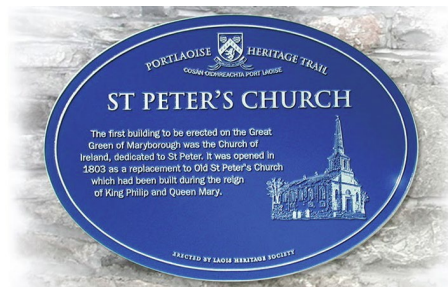
8. (D) Clarecastle Community Signage – Community Garden Signage



From left to right: Clarecastle Community Garden signage: Seed Dispersal, Germination & Pollinator – Honeybee.

9. Proposed Looped Walk & Heritage Signage

Where appropriate, biodiversity information of flora and fauna, bird activity, bats etc. to be incorporated into a looped walk map



Heritage signage.

10. Annual Mini Bio Blitz Surveys conducted between 2019 to 2021

The Mini Bio Blitz surveys are conducted with local Clarecastle National School children by Jean Ryan with help from Clarecastle Heritage and Wildlife Team

Survey sheets and habitat maps have been generated (see above & attached), where colour copies were printed and assembled onto recycled clipboards (made from old advertising corrugated plastic), and the children were tasked with filling these out in the field. The purpose of the survey sheets is as follows:

- To identify species that are in the chosen area for survey.
- To highlight species found with focus on positive & negative indicator plants
- To show the different habitats and varying species that are found in each
- To show children how to conduct a survey
- To show the importance of re-wilding of areas - no matter how small
- To look for signs of animals as evidence that they are in the area

Most importantly for the children to have fun with Biodiversity & Science and to identify some new plants / animals / birds / insects that are not listed in the survey sheets.



Clare Abbey, Killone Abbey, Ballybeg Woods, Killoo Church, St. John's Well to be included in an expanded Map.

11. Attachments:

1. Mini BioBlitz Surveys – used with local primary school, scouting and wider community, to survey local wildlife and to enter findings onto National Biodiversity centre website:
 - (A) Mini Bio-Blitz the Quay Clarecastle
 - (B) Mini Bio-Blitz Ballybeg woods Clarecastle.
2. Bumble Bee survey – Survey of Bumble Bee's found in the Clarecastle area.
3. Abbey to Abbey Walk – Clare Abbey to Killone Abbey Biodiversity walk
4. Peoples Park Biodiversity Plan – Mary Dillon
5. Mini BioBlitz survey conducted with first class students of Clarecastle National School on 24th May 2021, Wildflower meadow and Peoples Park were the areas focused on.
6. Clarecastle & Ballyea Biodiversity Talk Slides
7. CLDC 'Training to Develop a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan for An Outdoor Recreational Space in Your Community' Report 04 June 2021 for the People's Park Clarecastle. Linda Gilsean & Fran Giaquinto