



Abbeyleix Climate Action Walk

 Abbeyleix, County Laois

The project involves an interactive Climate Action Walk through the town of Abbeyleix, which features QR codes to raise awareness of what climate change looks like on the ground. The project involves Dr Niamh Shaw, Science Communicator in Residence with Abbeyleix Climate Action Project.

The Climate Action Project was supported by Creative Ireland Laois as part of the Creative Ireland Programme (2017–2022) in partnership with Laois County Council, Abbeyleix Tidy Towns and Midlands Science. The walk was created thanks to the support of Healthy Ireland, an initiative of the Government of Ireland with funding from the Healthy Ireland Fund and the Sláintecare Fund delivered by Pobal, administered by Laois County Council.



Interview Questions and Responses

How did you as a community agree the key objectives that you wanted your project to deliver?

The Abbeyleix Tidy Towns group, in partnership with Laois County Council, is driven by accessing funding opportunities and they collectively agreed to submit an EOI (Expression of Interest) application. The key objective was to implement an expert in the community and activate the community to take climate action, which is what Laois County Council and the Tidy Towns group collectively aimed to do.

How did you decide upon a single project idea that could deliver against those objectives?

The project was funding driven, therefore when the opportunity came from Creative Ireland to provide a science communicator to animate climate action locally, the Tidy Towns group identified this has a great opportunity in partnership with Laois County Council.

Describe the process by which you achieved consensus around objectives and projects. Has that consensus held or does it remain challenged by some in the community? If so, how are you dealing with that?

Abbeyleix Tidy Towns, alongside the Abbeyleix SEC, had a small reach in relation to climate action. The project enabled Abbeyleix Tidy Towns to raise awareness and gain consensus to take further climate action in the community. This has led to an increased awareness and involvement of the community with little challenge to taking climate action.

How did you approach planning and project management around your selected idea?

Dr Niamh Shaw, in partnership with Laois County Council, Abbeyleix Tidy Towns and wider community groups to raise awareness and build consensus. Therefore, the planning and project management approach was highly collaborative, although it was driven by Dr Niamh Shaw as a strong public communicator.



Funded through the Just Transition Fund and the Carbon Tax Fund

How has that stood the test of time through the project? Have you had to revise your plans. How have you managed that process?

The project management approach had to be highly adaptable due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Niamh Shaw created a mini-TV series and gained traction with the local community. This was followed by a magazine article and engagement with local TV producers.

How did you identify a funding need?

Creative Ireland was identified via horizon scanning for funding by Laois County Council and Abbeyleix Tidy Towns. The project team at Laois County Council, in partnership with Abbeyleix Tidy Towns, were both important in identifying the initial funding opportunity and chance to procure a science communicator in residence on a 6 month basis.

How have you managed the process of bidding for funding?

Although the EOI was submitted by Abbeyleix Tidy Towns, the bidding process for community projects is typically highly collaborative involving Laois County Council, the Local Enterprise Office and SECs (Sustainable Energy Communities). Communities need to be closely involved in the process and become co-developers in applications by meeting regularly.

Did you have a need for specialist expertise for your project? If so how did you handle that and approach experts?

Dr Niamh Shaw was the specialist advisor following an open e-tender process administered by Abbeyleix Tidy Towns and the Abbeyleix Sustainable Energy Community (SEC). Niamh successfully drove the awareness activity in the project as an internationally leading communication expert.

What have been the hardest difficulties to overcome and how did you overcome them?

Identifying and accessing funding is critical for launching climate action projects in towns and communities similar to Abbeyleix. Making connections to Laois County Council, Laois LEO (Local Enterprise Office) and the SEAI was important in identifying funding opportunities, including the opportunity via Creative Ireland.

Has the community managed to stay true to the original project vision? If not, why not? If it has, how has this been achieved?

The Abbeyleix Tidy Towns and Abbeyleix SEC remained true to their vision of launching and developing a climate action project. To do this, these two interlinked community groups worked in close partnership with Dr Niamh Shaw, Laois County Council and Midlands Science and had a strong collaborative approach for designing and implementing the specific activities.

The expertise of Dr Niamh Shaw was critical for delivering the project and for achieving the original vision.

What have been the biggest learnings from the delivery of your project?

The most important learning was the need to be adaptable and to develop new formats for communicating climate action due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and physical meeting restrictions. Therefore, when communities are developing similar climate action and communication projects, they must consider alternative formats for delivery when designing the project. For example, Dr Niamh Shaw delivered an online and live TV mini-series, named Abbeyleix Almanac TV (<https://www.abbeyleixtidytowns.net/climate-action-project/almanac-tv>).

What decisions, or elements of organisation have been the most important in the delivery of your project?

Procuring Dr Niamh Shaw as an expert science and climate communicator was a critical decision in delivering the project and the success of the project would have been constrained without a leading communicator.

What were the most important sources of advice and guidance for your community as you moved through the different phases of the project?

Case studies are very powerful for other communities to learn. Therefore, reaching out to other Tidy Towns groups, County Councils, Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) and similar community organisations can be very helpful for developing initial project ideas for replication and potential funding opportunities.

Key contact

Mark Clancy, Abbeyleix Tidy Towns
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Links

Website: <https://www.abbeyleixtidytowns.net/climate-action-project/climate-action-walk>

Press Release: <https://www.laoistoday.ie/2020/10/16/in-pictures-all-smiles-as-abbeyleix-climate-action-project-launched/>

Creative Ireland: <https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/event/science-communicator-in-residence-abbeyleix-climate-action-project/>



Hounslow Green Skills Bootcamp

 Hounslow, England

Hounslow Borough Council and wider community partners secured funding to deliver environmental skills training in land management and arboriculture through a 4-week course which began in February 2023. The course was aimed at unemployed Hounslow residents to help kickstart green careers and concluded with an interview with a partner employer.



Interview Questions and Responses

How did you as a community agree the key objectives that you wanted your project to deliver?

The Greater London Authority (GLA) provided funding for Green Skills Bootcamps, designed in collaboration with a wide range of borough councils in London and community groups.

The objectives were agreed in collaboration with the GLA, Hounslow Borough Council and the community, aiming to provide an interview for people attending the course to drive employment in the borough, providing core skills and tackling climate change.

How did you decide upon a single project idea that could deliver against those objectives?

The Green Skills Bootcamps are key for meeting these objectives and Maydencroft as delivery partners in Hounslow designed the criteria for the bootcamps around ecology, tree surveying and tree planting. Therefore the design of the Green Skills Bootcamps were strongly shaped by the procured consultant in the delivery process.

Describe the process by which you achieved consensus around objectives and projects. Has that consensus held or does it remain challenged by some in the community? If so, how are you dealing with that?

Consensus was gained by Hounslow Borough Council by recruiting people onto the course in partnership with the Meadowbank Adult and Community Education Centre who have strong community links, and set clear equality and diversity target to increase green skills in women. The Green Skills Bootcamp has not been challenged and has been greatly valued by the local community in Hounslow.



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Funded through the Just Transition Fund and the Carbon Tax Fund

How did you approach planning and project management around your selected idea?

The project management activity was undertaken directly by Hounslow Borough Council and regular meetings were organised with partners, including the Adult and Community Education Centre with strong links to the community.

How has that stood the test of time through the project? Have you had to revise your plans. How have you managed that process?

Initially, the project was going to launch in January 2023 however the recruitment process did not begin until December 2022, therefore there was not enough time to recruit over Christmas 2022. The beginning of the project was therefore delayed to avoid any further disruption.

To ensure a strong uptake, Hounslow Borough Council have provided the cost of childcare and travelcards for people in Hounslow to get to the community centre to increase participation. This process has been undertaken in strong collaboration with all partners.

How did you identify a funding need?

The GLA announced largescale grant funding and to help participants in the Green Skills Bootcamp overcome barriers to employment. Hounslow Borough Council works closely with the GLA and therefore identified this funding opportunity for the benefit of the local community, providing approximately £5,000 – £6,000 worth of support and equipment per person.

How have you managed the process of bidding for funding?

The bidding process was managed directly by Hounslow Borough Council and potential partners were invited to participate in the bidding process for the project. These partners include Hounslow Highways, Lampton Community Services, Lampton Academy and Meadowbank Adult and Community Education Centre.

Did you have a need for specialist expertise for your project? If so how did you handle that and approach experts?

Lampton Academy and Maydencroft delivered specialised green skills training projects. Hounslow Borough Council was able to procure Maydencroft directly utilising existing industrial networking connections within Hounslow Borough Council.

What have been the hardest difficulties to overcome and how did you overcome them?

The largest difficulty was overcoming access to personal information and meeting GDPR expectations to ensure appropriate recruitment of individuals onto the bootcamp. This enabled Maydencroft to shape the training and final tests with the community appropriately, especially for those with learning difficulties. Maydencroft worked closely with Hounslow Borough Council and the Meadowbank Adult Community and Education Centre to enable this.

Has the community managed to stay true to the original project vision? If not, why not? If it has, how has this been achieved?

The project stayed true to its original vision. The only deviation within the project was the introduction of Groundwork UK into the project who set up 6 monthly employment opportunities to enable improved work experience following the Green Skills Bootcamp. This opportunity was enabled by an industrial networking conversation by Maydencroft as delivery partners.

What have been the biggest learnings from the delivery of your project?

Recruiting the most appropriate participants at project launch with an interest in the green skills sector was key to ensuring successful delivery of the Green Skills Bootcamp.

What decisions, or elements of organisation have been the most important in the delivery of your project?

A key decision was to recruit individuals with learning disabilities at certain levels and individuals with a basic level of English and Maths skills. This was key to ensure variety on the Green Skills Bootcamp whilst delivering training at an appropriate level for employers.

What were the most important sources of advice and guidance for your community as you moved through the different phases of the project?

Green Skills Bootcamps are a very new concept in the UK therefore it was difficult to identify sources of advice aside from the industry expertise of Maydencroft as industry leading training providers.

Key contact

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Links

Website: <https://hounslow.greentalk.io/story/green-skills-bootcamp>



Ovington Tree Planting Project

 Ovington, Northumberland, England

The Ovington Tree Project aims to deliver increased biodiversity, new wildlife corridors and improve carbon sequestration in the Tyne Valley area of Northumberland, with around 2,500 trees planted to date.

Spring 2021 saw the first major planting driven by Ovington Parish Council, followed by the Woodland Trust and Northumberland County Council donating hedgerow and copse trees in November 2021. Northumberland County Council and Woodland Trust supplied more trees in autumn 2022. These were planted by local families following a treasure trail to create a mini copse.

New hedgerows started to be planted November 2022 next to the River Tyne supervised by the Tyne Rivers Trust with special advice from Woodland Trust and a landowner.

In February 2023 more tree planting across the parish brought the total planted to date to 2,480 trees, including new hedgerows.



Interview Questions and Responses

How did you as a community agree the key objectives that you wanted your project to deliver?

A local parish councillor concerned by the amount of ash dieback in the parish convinced the Parish Council to pay for a survey of free-standing trees in gardens or roadsides. The community was presented with the outcome of the survey and the impact of ash dieback. The consultant produced a map to show trees in 10 years' time, 25 years' time and 50 years' time. Nearly 65% of all free-standing trees are ash.

This process enabled the community to agree the key objective of planting new trees to address climate change, combat the loss of mature trees which is a major threat to local wildlife, and replace diseased trees being felled.

How did you decide upon a single project idea that could deliver against those objectives?

Following the survey results the Parish Council and Ovington Community Group collectively agreed to plant new trees, hedgerows and replace diseased and dying trees in the foreseeable future. Parish councillors were then asked to come forward to form a project group and Anne was appointed project manager. By working with landowners, Northumberland County Council, Highways England, Forestry England and Woodland Trust, Anne identified the 'right tree / right place' for a specific location.

Describe the process by which you achieved consensus around objectives and projects. Has that consensus held or does it remain challenged by some in the community? If so, how are you dealing with that?

Consensus has been achieved and held by working with the Ovington Community Group (OCG), Northumberland County Council and local schools. For example, events and activities include:

- A small test day of tree planting for local families.
- Booked the local village hall and the OCG provided free refreshments and the Parish Council provided an exhibition with a Q&A session. This also involved filming the event for the Queen Green Canopy project, which created a lot of local interest and consensus.



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- Discussed the project with the children in local schools and children can use the project as a living classroom.

How did you approach planning and project management around your selected idea?

Project management and planning is undertaken on an entirely voluntary basis by Anne, involving networking with parish councillors, other communities and a range of external organisations.

Parish councillors are involved and Anne enables volunteers to undertake certain actions around organising tree planting and events. Anne was an insurance risk manager and was involved in many large projects at the same time.

The key approach is ensuring the Parish Council and project has a clear strategy, outcome, and approach for grant funding.

How has that stood the test of time through the project? Have you had to revise your plans. How have you managed that process?

Anne has ensured contingency planning is in place and identifying risks from the outset. There are always alternative plans to ensure some members of the community turn up for events and for planting activities.

To ensure ongoing activity and external interest to generate funding or donations, Anne has advertised the name of the project widely with other Parish Councils, community groups, Northumberland County Council, the Woodland Trust and CPRE (The Countryside Charity).

How did you identify a funding need?

Ovington Parish Council has raised £6,500 in grants and donations as an ongoing process to obtain funding for planting and protecting the trees. For example, Anne directly approached the Woodland Trust and Northumberland County Council who have shared grant funding to buy trees.

Ovington Parish Council, jointly with the Ovington Community Group have undertaken fund raising events and provided letters to businesses and community members who are known to be potential benefactors. Anne also directly applied for grants from the Queen Greens Canopy, Northumberland County Council and private charities.

How have you managed the process of bidding for funding?

All bidding for grants is undertaken internally by the Parish Council and Ovington Community Group. Members of the community are also invited to contribute to writing bid applications and has supported local community spirit and sense of community.

Did you have a need for specialist expertise for your project? If so how did you handle that and approach experts?

Planting alongside the River Tyne requires licenses and permissions. The Tyne Rivers Trust therefore supervised the planting activity and requested donation following the Parish Council directly approaching. This relationship has been built through local community connections to the Tyne Rivers Trust. In addition, local tree maintenance contractors are directly procured to remove any bracken or bramble to prepare for tree planting.

What have been the hardest difficulties to overcome and how did you overcome them?

Generating interest for volunteers on the day in the winter and in bad weather is the largest challenge. This has been overcome by working closely with volunteers and ensuring they are supported, recognised and praised, helping them visualise of what their impact would be.

Has the community managed to stay true to the original project vision? If not, why not? If it has, how has this been achieved?

The community has stayed true to the original vision. However, it has been extended through a Linear Tree Arboretum linking Ovington to Ovingham. This has allowed people to have greater access to the trees through two walking circuits and has been the basis of using grants from the Woodland Trust and Northumberland County Council grants.

This has been achieved by having a clear collective strategy and geography for planting to avoid scope creep and to remain focused.

What have been the biggest learnings from the delivery of your project?

Accessing information on land ownership is key and applying per field or piece of land can be very expensive to access land ownership information. This required an enormous amount of effort and networking by Anne and the Parish Council.

Approval of tree planting projects also requires approval from multiple stakeholders including Northumberland County Council, landowners, Highways England, Natural England and trusts.

What decisions, or elements of organisation have been the most important in the delivery of your project?

The key decisions included:

- Identifying dates for planting.
- Ensuring suppliers can deliver on certain dates.
- Identifying where the trees will be delivered.
- Ensuring tree protection storage in bulk to reduce costs.

What were the most important sources of advice and guidance for your community as you moved through the different phases of the project?

The Woodland Trust has provided expert advice upon soil types and tree types which has aided the decision making for identifying trees which can last at least 100 years.

Advised by other Parish Councils and Northumberland County Council to potentially restructure the Ovington Tree Planting project into a CIC (Community Interest Company) to manage increasing donations and to have a sustainable model with committee members as landowners from neighbouring villages. This may create a more cohesive and larger scale project.

Key contact


Anne Hudson, Ovington Community Group/Ovington Parish Council
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Links

Website: <https://coronation.gov.uk/event/tree-project-wildlife-survey-ovington/>



The National Construction Training Centre, Mount Lucas

 Mount Lucas, County Offaly

The National Construction Training Centre in Mount Lucas offers training services, assessment, certification and registration in construction related areas to the employed and unemployed and is recognised as a retrofitting and NZEB (Nearly Zero Energy Buildings) Centre of Excellence within the Midlands. The centre is located near Daingean in County Offaly and is managed by Laois & Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB).

The centre offers:

- The National Apprenticeship in Scaffolding
- The National Skilled Operator Traineeship
- Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Tickets and the transfer of those to the UK equivalent (CPCS)/ on HSE (the UK SafePass).



Interview Questions and Responses

How did your organisation come about? What are your key areas of focus?

Mount Lucas is a state funded entity, which was taken over by the Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board in 2015. As a result, everything the centre does is leased or funded by capital funding from Government of Ireland. The centre was upskill or reskill in the construction sector to support the Just Transition.

Mount Lucas has both a local focus for Laois and Offaly and a national focus by operating programmes which are unique to Mount Lucas and do not exist elsewhere in Ireland. The Skilled Operator Traineeship and Scaffolding Apprenticeship both have a national focus. The NZEB and retrofit courses are delivered online and in the centre, varying from one day training to 3-4 week courses.

What key objectives did your organisation set out to address in the project?

The centre set out to address the skills deficit and design its programmes in conjunction with industry, using a collaborative approach to identify the skills gap. The remit of the centre is to provide training courses for unemployed people to get them back into the workforce and upskill employed people to future-proof them and give them new currency or accreditation.

How has that vision stood the test of time? Have you had to revise your plans?

All the activities offered at Mount Lucas are designed to upskill people and reintroduce them to education. Providing people with skills and capacity has remained their focus and plans have not been revised.



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How did you agree on key projects?

Construction Industry Federation (CIF) approached the National Construction Training Centre in Mount Lucas to develop the National Apprenticeship in Scaffolding, and Mount Lucas also consulted with representatives of industry such as NASAC in the development of the course. Equally, if the centre have identified a skills deficit, they approach key industry leaders to gain their input, which occurred for the NZEB and other retrofit courses.

How do you develop new projects?

The process of developing new courses involves drafting proposals and an occupation skills profile. Mount Lucas also seeks industry input to make sure courses are fit for purpose. Mount Lucas has a quality assurance manager and team who are involved in the development of courses. The course then goes for approval to a quality assurance team and quality council, who review the course to make sure it complies before it is put forward for validation.

Taking the example of the NZEB courses, the industry approached Mount Lucas with a need. Mount Lucas then put together a draft programme and ran 10 pilots, seeking feedback from those who were on the courses to make adjustments. The course then moved from a pilot stage to a validation stage.

If a community were to deliver a training programme, how would they go about developing this?

The Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board has a community function involved in local groups and training. They do a skills review of what is required in the area, by bringing the community together and asking what skills the community has and what skills they require.

If there is a training need within a community, the community group would put together a business case outlining the area of requiring upskilling. The community then approaches the ETB directly. The ETB would put together a programme and Mount Lucas would contract the expertise if needed and deliver the training.

How did you identify a funding need? How would communities go about identifying a funding need?

Mount Lucas is a state funded entity, meaning when they require funding, the centre designs a fully-costed programme proposal based on rationale, as part of their budget submission.

Within the Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LEOTB) there is a funding stream for communities, and an individual within the LEOTB manages these funding applications. There is an application form which needs to be supported by a business case.

Did you have a need for specialist expertise?

Gaining the specialist skillset required and building up a bank of instructors has been one of the biggest areas of challenge. If firms don't have expertise on site, they contract expertise in relation to the development of courses and training. In some areas of construction finding instructors is difficult, as there is more money to be made on site.

What were the biggest learnings from the delivery of your project?

Companies will always have unique individual needs which may not be the same as the needs of other companies. Before the centre develops programmes, it ensures that industry wide needs are addressed to provide the most useful training.

What decisions or elements of organisation have been the most important for the delivery of your programmes?

Having the correct instructors is important to ensure appropriate delivery of educational programmes. From a governance perspective, having the right quality controls in place is key to making sure everything they do is quality and learner based. This ensures that they have done everything in their power to provide learners with the most opportunities.

What were the most important sources of advice and guidance for you as you developed new projects?

The centre connected with industry and policy makers, such as the Department for Housing, Local Government and Heritage with, the Health and Safety Authority and gained awareness of key policy areas. This process has helped to design courses which follow national policy and strategy.

What advice would you give you community organisations looking to deliver a project relating to the delivery of training?

Design a business case to get a clear idea of outcomes, such as getting local people to engage with education, providing people with life skills, or upskill in a new area of growth. This provided a community with an opportunity to plan what it wants or needs to achieve.

Identify opportunities and organisations are in the sector, alongside training and funding opportunities. The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) is good to approach and funding streams are often available with BnM (Bord na Mona) under the Just Transition Fund.

Key contact

John Kelly, Centre Manager
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Links

Website: <https://mountlucas.ie/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MountLucasNationalConstructionTraining>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mountlucastc>



Wicklow Sustainable Energy Community: Energy Awareness Day

 Wicklow, County Wicklow

Wicklow Sustainable Energy Community is a voluntary group which sets out to ensure that Wicklow responds to the climate emergency. The group has been shortlisted as a finalist in SEAI's Energy Awards 2022 in the Inspirational Energy Community category and hosted a free Energy Awareness Day in June 2022.

The Energy Awareness Day featured 18 electric vehicles from 10 dealerships sourced locally and nationally, alongside range of electric bikes and installers of solar panels, heat pump suppliers and electric car charger suppliers.



Interview Questions and Responses

How did you as a community agree the key objectives that you wanted your project to deliver?

The Wicklow SEC, with a small core team of 6 people, identifies projects which are attainable and avoids large scale projects due to lack of expertise and resources.

The key objective of the Energy Awareness Day was to make people more aware of climate change and how to take action, accessing a large audience from within Wicklow town and the wider hinterland. Essentially, the Wicklow SEC wanted to access people with no experience or who wanted to make the next step in their climate action journey.

How did you decide upon a single project idea that could deliver against those objectives?

The Wicklow SEC had capacity for organising and managing an awareness day and identified that it within 6 months to a year, avoiding a project which was too large scale. The Wicklow SEC committee members collectively agreed that an Energy Awareness Day was the best way to access a large number of residents and businesses at relatively low cost.

Describe the process by which you achieved consensus around objectives and projects. Has that consensus held or does it remain challenged by some in the community? If so, how are you dealing with that?

Publicity was key to achieving the consensus of the community and exhibitors. The Wicklow SEC issued 8,100 flyers to the local community and businesses to raise awareness of the event and to attract visitors, families and children.

All 6 committee members of the Wicklow SEC were collectively behind the project and mutually agreed to pursue the project following open dialogue in project meetings.



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How did you approach planning and project management around your selected idea?

The Wicklow SEC committee met every week for 6–8 weeks before the event to manage the project. The approach involved separating tasks to individual committee members to contact exhibitors, manage publicity and manage on-site logistics, directed by the Wicklow SEC Chairman.

The critical element in the planning process was working closely with the postal service to ensure the flyers reached 8100 addresses and to enable a successful event.

How has that stood the test of time through the project? Have you had to revise your plans. How have you managed that process?

The small core project management team of 6 at the Wicklow SEC functioned very effectively, in partnership with undertaking planning well in advance of the event. The planning process began before the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019 and early 2020, with the event occurring in June 2022. However, the event was originally scheduled to take place in 2020.

How did you identify a funding need?

The funding requirements were small for the event. An existing relationship with the Wicklow SEC with a local hardware shop, who sponsored the printing of the flyers free of charge and signage. The Wicklow SEC worked with Wicklow Tidy Towns who financed the distribution of the flyers, which was the largest expense.

Wicklow County Council financed an electric bike to raise awareness and provided smoothies to visitors. The local hall and facility were given by the local parish for free and didn't charge any exhibitors to host at the event.

These arrangements were driven by building strong relationships with local community stakeholders and highlight the importance of the event in supporting the local economy and wellbeing of the community.

Did you have a need for specialist expertise for your project? If so how did you handle that and approach experts?

Designers of the flyers and signage were procured directly by the local hardware store which was the only specialist expertise required. The relationship between Wicklow SEC and the local hardware store was critical for enabling the printing and eventual distribution of the flyers.

What have been the hardest difficulties to overcome and how did you overcome them?

The only difficulty was the lack of insulation companies not turning up on the day. However, extensive networking and reaching out directly to businesses ultimately enabled a successful event to occur.

As a result, local car dealerships in Wicklow and other clean energy exhibitors experienced a large increase in requests and orders following the event.

Has the community managed to stay true to the original project vision? If not, why not? If it has, how has this been achieved?

The Wicklow SEC stayed true to its original vision by undertaking regular project planning meetings and ensuring the scope of the event was not too large to manage.

As a result, Wicklow County Council are interested in financing the event in 2023 and launching future energy roadshows across the wider County Wicklow using existing supplier connections.

What have been the biggest learnings from the delivery of your project?

The key learnings reflect the most important requirements for hosting an event of this scale:

- A large space for the exhibition area and a separate area for entertaining families and young children.
- A car park with space for approximately 40 cars to host the EV exhibitors.
- Provision of food and drink by vendors.
- Communicate with an advertising agency and install local signage.
- A lead person to organise the event into a coherent time frame.
- Plan well in advance by meeting every week virtually or in person from 10 weeks in advance.
- Allocate specific roles to people within the community organisation or project management team.

What decisions, or elements of organisation have been the most important in the delivery of your project?

Contacting a range of various businesses well in advance of the event was a critical decision, especially the car dealerships in Wicklow, Wexford and Dublin which sourced approximately 18 EVs for the event. The Wicklow SEC decided to directly phone businesses, emailed the flyer and asked them for confirmation and were in constant contact.

Initially, the Wicklow SEC organised a strong committee interested in taking climate action, energy saving and had strong local connections to potential suppliers for the event.

What were the most important sources of advice and guidance for your community as you moved through the different phases of the project?

The Wicklow SEC reached out to a key local contact who operates a successful local fair in Wicklow. This was a critical source of advice and contact who directed the Wicklow SEC to a local food supplier and advised the team to establish a dedicated children's play area to keep adults at the event for longer periods and to gain more interest.

Key contact

Sylvester Burke, Wicklow Sustainable Energy Community:
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Links

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WicklowSustainablesEnergy/>

Press Release: <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/wicklow/news/wicklow-tidy-towns-gears-up-for-saturdays-information-packed-energy-awareness-day-41753164.html>