

# Sock's 1st Birthday

# DUNDALK

# TIDY TOWNS



SPRING / SUMMER EDITION 2023

A SELECTION OF AMAZING BIODIVERSITY PROJECTS BY MS DALY'S CLASS IN REALT NA MARA.



Welcome to the Spring/Summer Edition of our Dundalk Tidy Towns newsletter. In this issue we will look at Sustainability and how we can do little things everyday that can help the Earth. We also have features on some of Sock's friends from nature, activities and lots more.

**Also! Big Happy 1<sup>ST</sup> Birthday to Sock's!**

THIS NEWSLETTERS THEME IS ALL ABOUT:

# SUSTAINABILITY

Thank you to all the schools who gave us wonderful feedback on the biodiversity kits that we sent out with the last issue. A special thank you to Ms Daly in Realt Na Mara who invited us to the school to see the great work that they are doing and the kit in use, and also to Ms Dorian and Mrs Millen's Junior Infant's Class at St Malachy's I.N.S who sent us these fabulous photos. They even composed a poem on feeding the birds!



Feed The Birds

Now is the time to feed the birds,  
 Just in case you haven't heard,  
 Their stock of berries is running low,  
 It takes some time for them to grow.  
 We're here to help with nuts and seeds,  
 We will look after all of their needs,  
 Providing the birds with winter food,  
 Will put us all in a very good mood.  
 As we approach the season of spring,  
 The well-fed birds will be happy to sing.

By Mrs Millen's Junior Infants  
 St. Malachy's I.N.S.



# SOME NATIVE IRISH TREES

TAKE A LOOK AROUND OUR BEAUTIFUL IRISH LANDSCAPE AND YOU CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE THE ABUNDANCE OF BEAUTIFUL NATIVE TREES THAT ARE OFTEN HUNDREDS OF YEARS OLD. TREES ARE VALUABLE FOR SO MANY DIFFERENT REASONS, FILTERING POLLUTION, SHELTER, SCREENING, FOOD AND SHELTER FOR BIRDS AND MAMMALS. PLANTING NATIVE IRISH TREES IS A SIMPLE, COST EFFECTIVE AND VALUE ADDING WAY TO DO OUR BIT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.



BEECH TREE



ASH TREE



SYCAMORE TREE



HAWTHORN TREE



WILLOW TREE



HORSE CHESTNUT



HAZELNUT TREE



ROWAN TREE



OAK TREE



ALDER TREE

## BUILDING A BETTER HABITAT

### ACTIVITY: THIS IS A REUSE / RECYCLE CHALLENGE

**TOILET ROLL SEEDLING STARTERS**  
 HAVE A GO AT REUSING/RECYCLING TOILET ROLL INSERTS, SO THAT THEY CAN BE USED AS SEEDLING STARTER POTS, PEN HOLDERS, BIRD FEEDERS ETC. SOCKS WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOUR IDEAS SO SEND US SOME OF YOUR PHOTOS AND WE WILL FEATURE THEM IN OUR NEXT ISSUE.

**A WONDERFUL INITIATIVE**  
 THIS PHOTO BELOW SHOWS A RECENT INITIATIVE FOR AN EDIBLE GARDEN WHICH HAS JUST BEEN COMPLETED IN PEARSE PARK. THIS PROJECT FUNDED BY POBAL COMPRISES OF TWO BEDS PLANTED WITH FRUIT BUSHES AS WELL AS HERBS AND CAN BE USED BY THE LOCAL RESIDENTS. OTHER PLANTS INCLUDE BLACKCURRANTS STRAWBERRY PLANTS, CHAMOMILE, THYME, OREGANO, AND LEMON BALM.



SEND US PHOTOS OF YOUR TOILET ROLL CREATIONS



THERE WILL EVEN BE A PRIZE FOR THE MOST INVENTIVE REUSE OF THE TOILET ROLL.

A HUGE THANK YOU AS EVER TO OUR AMAZING AND DEDICATED LITTER PICK CREWS.



## SUSTAINABILITY (INBHUANAITHEACHT)

All life on Earth depends on the natural resources that come from the environment including food, water, plants, and minerals. Sustainability is the idea that humans must interact with the environment in a way that ensures there will be enough resources left for future generations.

**DID YOU KNOW?** There are now more than seven billion people on Earth. These billions of people use the planet's resources every day. Human activity has harmed the environment in many ways.

**In fact, humans currently demand 1.6 times more resources than Earth can regenerate!**

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
RECYCLING A SINGLE  
500ML ALUMINIUM CAN  
SAVES ENOUGH ENERGY TO  
POWER A TV FOR OVER  
FOUR HOURS



**RETHINK** - YOUR CHOICES  
**REFUSE** - SINGLE USE  
**REDUCE** - WASTE  
**REUSE** - EVERYTHING  
**REPAIR** - BEFORE YOU REPLACE  
**REPURPOSE** - BE CREATIVE  
**RECYCLE** - LAST OPTION  
**REFURBISH** - OLD STUFF

**HOW TO BE SUSTAINABLE EVERY DAY?**  
YOUR LIFESTYLE IS YOUR CHOICE AND YOU CAN CHANGE IT. REMEMBER SUSTAINABILITY BEGINS WITH YOU!

## JUST SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW HUMANS HAVE HARMED THE ENVIRONMENT

- Some of the resources that people use cannot be replaced once they are used. People use huge amounts of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas, which have led to pollutant gases being released into the atmosphere.

*These gases are warming up our planet, causing sea levels to rise and creating more extreme, dangerous weather, in a process called climate change.*

- Plastic was introduced in the early 1900's and by the 1990's we were using plastic for everything from containers for food, to lamps, toys, bottles, bags and much more. But plastic takes millions of years to decompose and so one of the biggest problems now is what happens to all this plastic when we're done using it.

## WHY IS SUSTAINABILITY IMPORTANT?

Sustainability is a way to protect and conserve the environment. There are a limited amount of resources in the world that humans must extract from the very earth in order to produce houses, cars, computers, and pretty much everything else. When we use the word sustainability to mean maintain, it means to maintain it forever. This is because our actions have a lasting effect on the environment and we should protect it for our future generations.

## EVERYDAY THINGS WE CAN DO TO HELP THE EARTH AND BE SUSTAINABLE

- ❁ RECYCLE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
- ❁ TURN OFF LIGHTS WHEN NOT IN USE.
- ❁ SAVE AND REUSE LEFTOVER FOOD.
- ❁ BUY LOCAL PRODUCE AND REUSE SHOPPING BAGS.
- ❁ AVOID BUYING ITEMS WITH TOO MUCH PACKAGING.
- ❁ DO A LITTER PICK AT YOUR SCHOOL OR HOME.
- ❁ FOR LUNCH USE A REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE & LUNCH BOXES/BAGS.
- ❁ HAVE A SHOWER INSTEAD OF A BATH IT USES LESS WATER.
- ❁ CONSIDER BUYING ITEMS FROM SECOND HAND/CHARITY SHOPS.
- ❁ PLANT A TREE OR SOME NATIVE POLLINATOR PLANTS TO HELP THE BEES AND OUR INSECT LIFE.
- ❁ IF YOUR WATCH, OR A TOY IS BROKEN OR NOT WORKING TRY GETTING IT FIXED BEFORE YOU BUY YOURSELF A NEW ONE OR TRY AND REUSE.

# SUSTAINABILITY

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
IT TAKES MORE ENERGY TO MAKE 1 KG OF PAPER THAN IT TAKES TO MAKE 1 KG OF STEEL. DON'T WASTE PAPER!

**CUPLA FOCAIL**  
EARTH = AN DOMHAN  
CLIMATE CHANGE = ATHRÚ AERÁIDE  
SUSTAINABILITY = INBHUANAITHEACHT  
RECYCLE = ATHCHÚRSÁIL  
THE FLOWERS COME OUT IN THE SUMMER = TAGANN NA BLÁTHANNA AMACH SA SAMHRADH

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
IT TAKES AROUND 2,700 LITRES OF WATER TO MAKE A SINGLE COTTON T-SHIRT.  
THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT THE CLOTHES YOU BUY AND RECYCLE OLD CLOTHES YOU DONT USE..

# MEET MORE OF OUR LOCAL NATIVES!



AN OTTER SPOTTED ON THE BANKS OF THE RAMPARTS, DUNDALK



## THE OTTER / 'MADRA UISCE'

- \* Otters are members of the weasel family, which means they are related to skunks and badgers, but not beavers.
- \* Otters are found most everywhere in the world. The highest density of them in Europe is Ireland!
- \* The Irish for otter is "Madra Uisce" which translates as "Water Dog".
- \* The majority of the otter's diet comes from the water. They are nocturnal carnivorous hunters, which mean they sleep during the day and are most active at night, and their diet consists of different types of meat. They eat a lot of fish and crabs, and sometimes other shellfish. They are notable for their ability to use stones to break open shellfish on their stomachs.
- \* Otters are agile swimmers and can only hold their breath for up to forty seconds when diving for prey. They can dive as deep as fourteen metres to reach their prey.
- \* Otters are playful animals and appear to engage in various behaviours for sheer enjoyment, such as making waterslides and then sliding on them into the water.
- \* 26<sup>th</sup> May is World Otter Day.

**KEEP AN EYE OUT: OTTERS HAVE BEEN SPOTTED BOTH ON THE RAMPARTS AND ON THE CASTLETOWN RIVER.**

## THE SWIFT 'GABHLÁN GAOITH'

- \* The Latin name for swift is Apus which means 'without feet,' which actually refers to the Swift's short legs rather than to any lack of feet. Swifts' legs and feet are adapted to cling to vertical surfaces rather than perching on wires and walking on the ground.
- \* Swifts are a small migratory bird that visit Ireland each year to nest.
- \* Swifts are birds of the sky, rarely landing. They feed, drink, mate and even sleep on the wing. They may fly without stopping for a year or more.

- \* They travel from southern Africa where they have spent nine months of the year
- \* From May to August each year, you will usually hear Swifts before you see them; their distinctive piercing 'screaming' call is uttered on the wing as they fly superbly over roof tops at high speed.
- \* They are among the fastest of birds, with our Common Swift able to reach speeds of over 110km per hour.

- \* Swifts pair for life, returning to the same site each year for a little nest renovation before laying and incubating their eggs. They like to live in houses and churches, squeezing through tiny gaps to nest inside roofs.
- \* The swift population in Ireland has decreased by 40% since 2008 this is due to loss of nest sites due to building renovations and construction of modern buildings.

**KEEP AN EYE OUT: SWIFT NESTING SITES COUNTY MUSEUM DUNDALK CONTAINS 40% OF CO LOUTH'S SWIFT'S NEST SITES WITH THE MUSEUM AND LIBRARY HAVING THE MOST.**

## Dandelions / CAISEARBHÁN'

Dandelions are small bright yellow flowers and are from the same family as sunflowers and are one of the most populated plants in Ireland. Once they've been pollinated, the flower head changes to the characteristic fluffy seed head, commonly called a dandelion "clock". Dandelions are considered a weed by many people, probably because the plants are incredibly resilient. They can grow almost anywhere.

Dandelions are among the first wildflowers to bloom each year, making them an ideal food source for the first pollinators emerging from hibernation. Many insects rely on the dandelion as a food source for themselves and for their larvae.

Several of our native butterflies and moths lay their eggs on dandelion leaves and the bright yellow flowers, with their generous stores of nectar, are a magnet to pollinating insects like bees and hoverflies. The seed heads are also a valuable food source for seed eating birds like the goldfinch. This is why it's so important not to cut your grass too early, and to leave as many dandelions as possible out on your lawn.

## FUN FACTS

- \* The name dandelion comes from "*dent-de-lion*" in French, which means "*lion's tooth*," for the dandelion's jagged leaves.
- \* All parts of the dandelion plant are edible from their stems, leaves, roots and flowers.



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*share with us!*



*Don't forget to share with us any of your photos of projects or activities from this newsletter, especially how you use are creative with toilet rolls! You can share any photos with us via email, facebook or instagram.*