



# ECO-SCHOOLS NEWS

November 2016

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## Eco-Schools Teachers Conference Stranmillis College, 9th March 2017, 10am-3pm.

Save the date! We are delighted to invite teachers to our Teachers Conference hosted by Eco-Schools, with support from DAERA, at Stranmillis College in March 2017.

The conference will have an outdoor learning theme while also touching on many other sustainable education topics. There will be guest speakers, provision of a selection of workshops delivered by other partner organisations and ourselves and exhibit area. Lunch will also be provided.

To register your interest in attending please contact [Cathy Gorman](#).



## Green Flag application guidelines 2016/17

We accept Green Flag applications at **any time throughout the year** however below are some deadlines for applications if you would like to be assessed before a certain time of the year:

- **Pre-Easter** assessment: **6th January 2017**
- **Summer** assessment (before 23rd June): **10th March 2017**

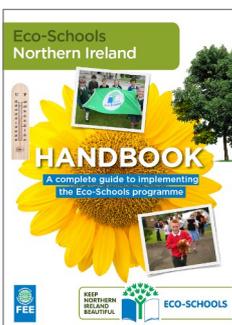
We will do our best to assess schools submitting after the suggested deadlines but may find this difficult, particularly in the summer term, which is very busy. So beat the rush and get your application in early.

Thanks to all the schools who submitted applications by the 4th November deadline. We look forward to assessing you before Christmas!

**Please note** the preferred application method in 2016/17 is through the **School Zone online system**. Initial feed back from schools suggests this is a much improved method of submission. We will still accept paper applications but please ensure you are using the [new form](#) - older formats may not be accepted by us.

Simply log into the Eco-Schools NI [website](#) and start your online application in your **School Zone**. You can save your sections and return to the form at your convenience. The application will tell you if each section is completed. Once you have approved all sections a submit button will appear to send it directly to us.

The School Zone can be used all the way through your Eco-Schools journey to Green Flag to save documents and data in one handy place. You should start saving your data in the **Data Zone** now, even if you are not going to apply this year. This interactive area helps with your Monitoring and Evaluation step and has been designed to present your data in an interesting and useful format. From 2017/18 schools applying for Green Flag will have to fill in this area for their chosen topics so familiarise yourself with it now - we hope you will enjoy it.



**Be sure you start using the School Zone for collecting your data and saving your Eco-Docs in your own resource area - Environmental Review, Action Plan and Eco-Code. These will automatically be submitted with your online Green Flag Application.**

If you have forgotten your login please [contact us](#).

### New Look Eco-Schools Handbook.

We are excited to announce a new look Handbook for the Eco-Schools Programme. This is great guide on how to complete each step and apply for awards. [Please download it from our website](#).

## Time to ask - 'Where's our Climate Change Bill?'

Eco-Schools attended the Climate Rally at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, this month organised by Friends of the Earth, Christian Aid and Trocaire. It was a good opportunity to meet local MLAs and put the question to them 'Why doesn't Northern Ireland have a Climate Change Bill?' There is Climate Change legislation in place in all other parts of the UK.

Climate Change is becoming an increasingly important issue and yet often it feels like our Politian's locally and globally aren't giving it the attention we think it deserves. If this is an issue that concerns you we would encourage you to write to [your own MLA](#) and ask them the same question.



**Chris Lyttle MLA for East Belfast lends his support**

## Translink Travel Challenge - get on board!

The Translink Travel Challenge is now open to all schools. The Challenge runs all year until **22nd May**, for any **2 weeks** that you choose. Encourage sustainable travel to school and record your results in the resources provided. Send your results to us for the chance to win super prizes!

This year pupils are also invited to enter a creative **#Smartmovers** project - with either a short written entry with photos or **new this year** a 30 second video clip using the phrase **'We're smart movers because...'**



A celebration award ceremony will be held at Central Station, Belfast in June. All schools who send results and/or a #Smartmovers project will be entered into a prize draw for an Ulsterbus school trip to Dublin. This is not only a competition but a great project with lots of learning and monitoring resources provided. Visit [www.translink.co.uk/ecoschools](http://www.translink.co.uk/ecoschools) for more information on the prizes and excellent resources or email [ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](mailto:ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org).

## Cash in with your Clobber

Schools across the country are taking part in the 'Cash for Clobber' competition run in partnership with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Eco-Schools and Cookstown Textile Recyclers. This great method of being environmentally friendly by recycling also raises some welcome funds for the schools taking part - **40 pence/kilogramme**.



Schools which collect the most textiles per pupil are in with the chance to win the annual 'Cash for Clobber' competition with fantastic **prizes of up to £1,500**. The closing date for the competition this year is 30th June 2017.

Cookstown Textile Recyclers are the only BSI certified clothing recycling company that Eco-Schools recommends. Clothing collected is redistributed to developing countries around the world or recycled into industrial fibers.

Schools who would like to get involved are asked to call the Cash for Clobber Team on **028 9447 9380** or visit [www.cashforclobber.com](http://www.cashforclobber.com) or [www.eco-schoolsni.org](http://www.eco-schoolsni.org).

## Topic of the Month: Global Perspective

Citizenship, in its context of fair decision-making, runs throughout the Eco-Schools process. The Global Perspective topic asks pupils and the wider school community to consider how their actions and life choices might affect people in other parts of the globe, particularly from an environmental viewpoint. Elements of social justice can also be examined through Fairtrade and migration caused by climate change. Your pupils may even want to fund raise for a global aid charity as part of their look at this topic.



This topic is a great opportunity to link with or contact schools in another part of the world that might face quite different environmental challenges than we do here in Northern Ireland. Eco-Schools is an international programme with Eco-Schools all over the globe so [contact us](#) if you would like assistance in contacting an Eco-School in another country.

Trócaire are our sponsors of the Global Perspective topic and have a wide selection of excellent teaching resources as well as offering school visits. Here some great sources of inspiration:

- Trócaire [website](#), also email [Rosie Murray](#) about school visits
- The [Global Learning Programme](#) offers teacher training workshops and a wealth of resources
- [Habitat for Humanity](#) offer workshops to schools and resources as well as youth schemes
- The Eco-Schools [Eco-Inspiration](#) resource for Global Perspective (PDF 10MB)
- Leading British environmentalist [Tony Juniper's KS3 resources](#)
- The [Global Goals](#) for teaching resources on the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- A [map and list](#) of other countries involved in Eco-Schools internationally
- The British Council's [Schools Online](#) Resources.



## School News: Fairview Primary and Ballycraigy Primary Developing the Science of Eco-Schools

Two local primary school teachers, Neil McAllister and Jocelyn Brown, are putting together an online resource to give primary teachers ideas and activities to teach science through the ten Eco-Schools topics. Both are teachers in Ambassador Eco-Schools and are responding to requests from colleagues around Northern Ireland for ideas and guidance in running a successful Eco-School.



The idea for the resource is that it will support topics and themes currently in place within your school but provide a real science emphasis, therefore boosting the profile of science within your school.

Neil and Jocelyn are both Fellows of the Primary Science Teaching Trust (PSTT) and are working under this banner, in conjunction with Eco-Schools, to build up this resource. They are asking for some help in providing ideas and inspiration. It could be lessons you do which links the Eco-Schools topic with what you are teaching e.g. building a solar powered vehicle for the energy topic or simply activities which go on in your school which help achieve an Eco-Schools topic e.g. how you manage your vegetable garden.

If you have lessons, activities, investigations or projects you do in your school which fit with any of the ten topics, please get in touch with Neil - [nmcallister634@c2kni.net](mailto:nmcallister634@c2kni.net) or Jocelyn - [jbrown545@c2kni.net](mailto:jbrown545@c2kni.net). They would love to hear from you.

# Council News: Eco-Schools Cluster Group Meetings-



Belfast City Council schools are invited to a 'Going for Awards' themed cluster group meeting on the 8th December 3pm-5pm at the Eco-Schools office, 2 Paulett Avenue, Belfast, BT5 4HD. Contact [Cathy Gorman](#) to register your attendance.

Thanks to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council for hosting a Cluster Group meeting on the 10th November.

## Green Flag Assessor training at Lough Neagh Discovery Centre.

Eco-Schools are delighted to be offering Assessor training on the 17th January hosted by Lough Neagh Discovery Centre. The training will run from 10am- 2.30pm. To take part you will be expected to commit to two assessments a year and complete an Access NI check. Contact [Cathy Gorman](#) for more details.

Thank-you to the following Councils who support the Eco-Schools Programme:



## International Eco-Schools News:

### Eco-Schools Operators gather in South Africa for annual meeting

Last month Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful attended the Eco-Schools National Operators Meeting (NOM) hosted in South Africa by WESSA (the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa) who run the programme in South Africa. The three day event saw 85 delegates from over 50 countries around the world come together for an exchange of knowledge and best practices around environmental education at school level.

The focus of this year's conference was the United Nations' [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#) and the critical role that the Eco-Schools programme plays throughout the world in supporting these goals by providing education for sustainable development. [Read more...](#)

We were privileged to visit Monde Primary School near Johannesburg during the NOM. Monde faces many environmental and social challenges with great fortitude and resilience. We were blown away by the energy and enthusiasm of the pupils, teachers and parents at the school. They have been focusing in water conservation, recycling, healthy living and school grounds.

National Operators are keen to create more international links between Eco-Schools globally. If you would like to be linked with an Eco-School overseas please contact [Ruth Van Ry](#).



### Young Reporters for the Environment look to USA for inspiration from drinking straw reduction awareness campaign

The [OneLessStraw.org](#) website was founded by Olivia (14) and her brother Carter (15.5) and hopes to bring attention to the issue of 500,000,000 plastic straws being used *each day* in the USA. The two young people have really been successful in drawing attention to this environmental issue and proposing solutions to it. Their campaign caught the attention of Keep Scotland Beautiful's YRE programme and could inspire similar actions at home.



## Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful news:

Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland is operated by the environmental charity Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. Here is the latest news from other areas of our organisation:

### 2 Minute Beach Clean comes to Northern Ireland

BeachClean boards are hitting the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council beaches to combat litter on our shoreline. The #2minutebeachclean boards are placed on a beach, and have a space for litter pickers and bags; so when you are out and about on your local beach you can pick up a litter picker and a bag and carry out a quick clean up. A two minute beach clean might seem insignificant but removing even the smallest bit of rubbish makes a difference. That one piece of plastic is no longer a hazard to our marine life and won't break down into micro plastics which could be ingested.



Don't forget you can [pledge](#) your support to the *Live Here Love Here* campaign and receive updates about actions being taken in your community.



The scheme has been a great success in other parts of the UK and Ireland [read more](#). If you would like to get involved or purchase a board for your area, please contact [Nicola Fitzsimons](#).



### Social Media - how to promote your event effectively

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful have produced a handy guide to using Social Media to promote an event or project you might be planning. It also includes links to all of our social media sites. If you would like us to help you promote an event through our social media just let us know. For more information [download the guide](#).

## Other News:

### Register now for RSPB Big Schools' Birdwatch!

3 January – 17 February 2017

Registration is now open for the 2017 Big Schools' Birdwatch; a simple educational activity that gets you and your class/group closer to the birds visiting your area. It takes just an hour and works for all ages and abilities.

You can use the Birdwatch to work for you: as the centrepiece of cross-curricular studies, Eco-Schools awards, or as part of work to improve your school grounds. By taking part you'll also be providing us with data on how well some of our most familiar birds are faring, as well as helping to give nature a home at your school.

Every year, educators from every corner of the UK take part with their classes. There's plenty of flexibility to run it with any age group of children and we have resources to help. Join in with Big Schools' Birdwatch 2017 and help us make it the biggest ever!

When you register for Big Schools' Birdwatch we'll send you a free bird identification poster for your classroom - the perfect preparation for the big day. To register and find out more go to [www.rspb.org.uk/schoolswatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/schoolswatch)



### Innovation Lab seeking Year 13 design geniuses for bin competition

Eco-Schools are happy to lend support to the Innovation Lab's competition for Year 13 pupils, studying Technology and Design, which is asking for fresh ideas and designs for our household bins.

We've become familiar with the standard wheelie bin shape but is there a better way? If you think you have a great idea for the bin of the future and would like to work with the Innovation Lab team to make it a reality then contact [Rebecca.Walsh@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Rebecca.Walsh@finance-ni.gov.uk) for more information on how to take part.

The competition is running from January - April 2017.



### Butterfly Conservation NI Volunteer Events

Butterfly Conservation have a number of events organised with other delivery partners across NI in the coming months with improving habitats for endangered butterflies as their theme. These are a great opportunity to learn about habitat management, get lots of fresh air and exercise and have some fun too. Find out more on their [events webpage](#).

### Green Flags this month

Congratulations to all the schools who have achieved their Green Flag award in the last month. We are continually amazed at the knowledge and enthusiasm of all the pupils and staff at our Green Flag schools and they are to be congratulated on their fantastic achievement.

Congratulations this month go to:

- Hazelwood Integrated Primary, Newtownabbey
- Ballykelly Primary, Limavady
- St Brigid's Primary, Ballymoney
- Birches Primary School, Craigavon
- Beechlawn Special School, Hillsborough
- St Mary's Primary School, Portaferry
- Knocknagor Primary School, Omagh
- Largymore Primary School, Lisburn
- Greenwood House Assessment Centre, Belfast
- St Malachy's Primary School, Strangford
- Templepatrick Primary School, Ballyclare
- Downshire Primary School, Hillsborough
- St Mary's Primary School, Cookstown
- Ulidia Integrated College, Carrickfergus
- Eden Primary School, Carrickfergus
- College Farm Nursery School, Armagh
- Killylea Primary School, Armagh



Hazelwood Integrated Primary, Newtownabbey



Ballykelly Primary, Limavady



Knocknagor Primary, Omagh

Contact us at:

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The Eco-Schools Programme is supported by DAERA

**Don't stop here! Visit our Eco-Schools Northern Ireland [website](#) for more news, project ideas, programme guidance, case studies, delivery partner information, and much more.**