

LEADER

Community-Led Local Development



National Rural Network

LEADER 2014-2020 (EXTENDED TO 2022) NRN CASE STUDY

BALLYBOUGHAL ENVIRONMENTAL WORKSHOP SERIES

Summary

The Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society was established in 1999, in response to agricultural intensification and hedgerow removal in the local area. The environmental group was set up to promote hedgerows, and their biodiversity and cultural value. Through nature walks, training and workshops, the Society aims to educate people on the history and botanical make-up of hedgerows, and generate an appreciation for the flora and fauna on their doorstep. Between October 2017 and December 2018, LEADER funding supported the Society to attract various biodiversity experts to Ballyboughal, to host a series of environmental workshops, which enhanced the active learning experience for participants and the accessibility of these workshops to people living in the area.

Context

The Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society has been active in organising and hosting events to raise awareness of local biodiversity since its establishment in 1999. Each year, up to 10 nature walks have been held, targeted at young people between the ages of 8 and 14, mothers, families and the active retired in the community.

Project name: Ballyboughal Environmental Workshop Series

Date: October 2017 – December 2018

Local Action Group: Dublin Rural LEADER

Implementing Partner: Fingal LEADER Partnership

Type of Beneficiary: Environmental Group

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 3: Rural Environment / Subtheme: Local Biodiversity

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society

Address: Richardstown, Ballyboughal, Co. Dublin

Further information:

- [Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society | Facebook](#)
- [LEADER Impact Campaign | Winning Entry](#)



Nature walks for all the family - Source: Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society

In addition, the Society has offered hedge-laying training to farmers, community groups and indeed anyone interested in learning this skill.

"If we don't value the local environment ourselves, how can we expect planners to value it?"

Ann Lynch, Founder Member & Secretary, Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society



An example of hedge-laying in Ballyboughal – Source: Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society

In 2016, in recognition of the growing interest in biodiversity in Ballyboughal, particularly from the active retired in the area, but also from new members of the community, LEADER funding was sought to support a series of environmental workshops that would aim to promote and preserve the unique hedgerow landscape in the area while also showing participants how to responsibly and positively interact with nature. Up until this point, events such as these had been organised and held totally on a voluntary basis.

This funding would enable the Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society to attract biodiversity consultants and lecturers to host a number of workshops, thus greatly broadening the range of expertise. Not only would this help to meet the growing demand for biodiversity and environmental experiences in the Ballyboughal area, but the added expert knowledge would serve to enhance the active learning experience for participants of the workshops.

Objectives

- To make people more aware of biodiversity and its value by providing them with a positive learning experience out in the countryside.

Activities

In preparation for applying for LEADER funding, the Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society tapped into existing networks available to them in the locality which included a biodiversity expert, the GAA club, Foróige, lecturers, mothers' groups, men's sheds, community councils and also contacts within organisations such as the Heritage Council and Wildlife Trust. This helped the Society to generate potential ideas for upcoming workshops, to identify experts best placed to host these workshops and to get an idea of the costs involved. The application process was then initiated in March 2016.

As this was the Society's first time applying for LEADER funding, help was required to accumulate and organise the necessary paperwork to support the application. Considerable patience was shown, and assistance provided, by Fingal LEADER Partnership, which helped to make the Society feel valued in the community. The application was ultimately approved in August 2017.



Results

Between October 2017 and December 2018, LEADER funding helped to support a total of nine environmental workshops in Ballyboughal and the surrounding areas, which incorporated activities like mycology walks, bushcraft, foraging for herbs, painting bee boxes, sampling local fruit and vegetables, and learning about various types of animals, falconry, birds and trees.



*All smiles at a workshop hosted by Newgrange Falconry in Ballyboughal
– Source: Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society*

As these workshops were hosted by a variety of biodiversity experts, they attracted increased levels of interest and excitement, in addition to stronger attendances.

“There is a biodiversity wave happening. We were there at the beginning and now it is gathering momentum”

Ann Lynch, Founder Member & Secretary, Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society

Rather than having to travel across Ireland, sometimes long distances, for similar environmental events, LEADER support enabled the Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society to attract experts to host workshops in the locality. This made it more accessible for people of all ages to attend.

Being able to host this series of environmental workshops in Ballyboughal has raised the profile of the village itself. The Society made a conscious effort to support local pubs or cafés after each workshop, giving participants an opportunity to discuss the events of the day, which has helped to create a sense of camaraderie in the community.



The Society has helped to build an appreciation for the flora and fauna in the area – Source: Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society

The overall success of the LEADER supported workshops has helped to put the Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society on the map, making it easier for them to publicise and attract strong levels of participation at future events.

“LEADER has given us affirmation, and enabled us to have experts down to Ballyboughal, ensuring that every member of the community, young or old, can benefit from these workshops”

Ann Lynch, Founder Member & Secretary, Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society

Lessons

Involve stakeholders in the decision making process

As the environmental workshop series was targeted at people of all ages and backgrounds, the Society recommends involving as many stakeholders in the community as possible in the decision making process, with regard to what the project should entail, what the funding is most needed for and what should be included in the LEADER application. This ensures that a wide range of views and perspectives are considered, and are reflected in the final decisions taken.

Stay positive

The LEADER application process can be quite arduous and this required a lot of time and effort from volunteers within the Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society. The important thing though, they say, is to work through it and to try to stay positive. This is a motto that the Society adapts to the protection and improvement of biodiversity in general. The focus is always on what has been achieved, and what more can be done into the future.

“The LEADER Programme has helped us to raise the status of biodiversity, sowing the seeds for the next generation”

Ann Lynch, Founder Member & Secretary, Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society



Some of the local beavers painting and decorating bee boxes - Source: Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society

Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€3,898.19
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€2,923.63
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€1,836.04
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€1,087.59
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€974.56
+ (iii) Other funding sources	n/a

Contact details

Project beneficiary name	Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society
Contact person	Ann Lynch
Email	lynchjustice@gmail.com
Address of beneficiary	Richardstown, Ballyboughal, Co. Dublin