



## **3 Year Development Plan 2024 - 2026**

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**A Vision for Ballinahown Village  
Ballinahown Community Development**





# Introduction

The Ballinahown Tidy Towns 3-Year Plan serves as a roadmap for community development from 2024 to 2026. Anchored within the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), our initiatives align with global efforts to create a more sustainable and inclusive world. This plan does not set out to include all of the work carried out by BCD but to guide the work of Ballinahown Community Development (BCD) for the next 3 years. It is a subsection of a more detailed strategic plan for Ballinahown village which takes us up to 2030. We set out the Key Projects that will have greatest impact for Ballinahown along with an overview of ongoing tasks and projects. These include multi-annual initiatives that may extend beyond the 3-year span of this plan.

BCD would like to thank all stakeholders, who are too many to name, who contribute to the development of the village from funders and advisors to the tireless work of volunteers. Over the past 3 years, BCD has secured approximately €140,000 amount of funding following the application of in excess of 20 grants. With this funding several experts and specialists were engaged to advise on issues such as biodiversity, water management, landscape planning, building maintenance and sustainability to name a few. It is anticipated that an even greater spend will be undertaken in the next 3-year period and this plan aims to outline some of the major projects planned.

# About Ballinahown



Ballinahown, also spelled Ballynahown (Irish: Baile na hAbhainn, translated "Town on the River") is a rural village in south Co. Westmeath. The village gets its name as it is located on the River Worm, a tributary of the River Shannon.

Ballinahown village has a population of approximately 200 people with a hinterland population of approximately 3000.

The village is located approximately 10km south of Athlone on the N62 and circa 5km from the River Shannon. The areas surrounding the village are low lying agricultural and Midlands Raised Bog. The Esker Riada also runs adjacent to the village.



"Nurture the gentle side of nature,  
nurture the gentle side of life, a  
cluster of bog yew roots, continually  
emptying to receive, bring me to loves  
source" Fr F Grey



# Message from the Chairperson

Ballinahown Community Development Co. Ltd., (BCD), is the representative local voluntary body tasked with the responsibility of protecting and developing the community facilities of the village of Ballinahown.

This, over the years has involved activities across a variety of 'action areas' including promotion, protection and development of community projects, facilities and the environment. The village has prospered as a result, despite the challenge and adjacency of a very busy public road, (the Regional Route N 62), through the centre of the village. Despite this challenge the village has managed to create and maintain an environment conducive to craft, art and community engagement and this 3-year plan is intended as a support to these endeavours. Local community actions are critical to the cultural and social well-being of not just our community, but also the nation as a whole.

BCD has been supported in both its vision and its work by Westmeath Co Co, Westmeath Community Development, LAWPRO, Community Foundation, Pobal, Dept of Community & Rural Affairs, HSE Lotto and Athlone Credit Union .The following 3-year plan is the product of the community, supported by BCD, in their endeavours for Ballinahown to be a 'Place of Well-being' for all.





# Development Process



BDA works in partnership and collaboration with the local community and strives to positively impact on the community in a plethora of ways. Therefore this 3 year development plan was developed through analysis of previous Tidy Towns reports, brainstorming by committee members, engagement with local stakeholders for input and feedback on what would benefit the local area, engagement with businesses to ensure ongoing support for future initiatives and developments and communication and collaboration with local and national agencies such as Westmeath County Council and the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Ballinahown:  
a 'Place of  
Well-being'  
for all



# Mission Statement

At Ballinahown Community Development, we are dedicated to safeguarding our local environment and enhancing our community's well-being. Through collaborative efforts, we strive to preserve nature, promote sustainability, and boost tourism and leisure activities. Together, we are building a stronger, greener, and more inviting community for all.

# Vision Statement

Our vision is for Ballinahown to be a thriving, sustainable community in tune with nature. We aim for a village where people enjoy leisure and tourism while protecting our environment for the future. Together, we will inspire others to care for our natural world.

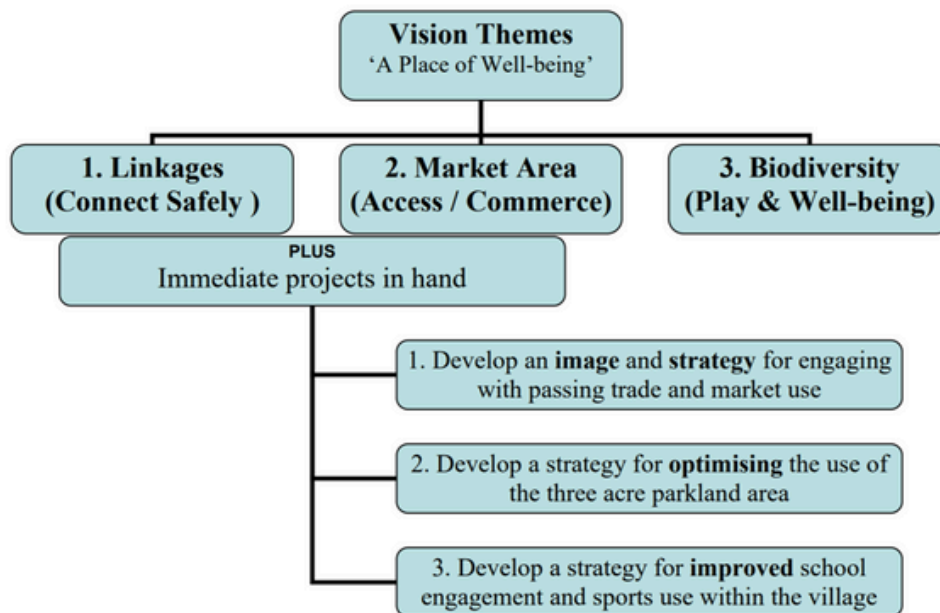
# Key Projects

The next section outlines both the Key Projects for BCD for 2024-2026 along with ongoing tasks and projects. These are the projects that will have the greatest impact on the village, its landscape and natural environment over this time. They are also the projects that will demand the greatest time and resources of the committee and its supporters.





This document outlines how a cohesive vision of activities exist within the village, BDA are currently progressing through a range of activities.



The vision seeks to both reflect the immediate needs of the community and to convey the contingencies and possibilities of the village across a range of timescales and intervention scales, as outlined below:

(i) ongoing works (0-1 Year)

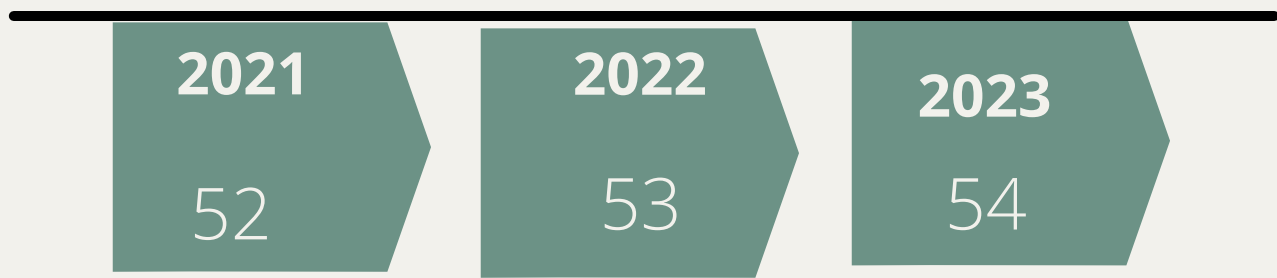
(ii) Short Term (1 - 2 Years)

(iii) Medium Term (2 - 3 Years)

Long term strategic interventions over a development period of anything from 4 years, to 10 years, to 2030 are detailed in the Ballinahown Development Association 10 year plan.



# Community – Your Planning & Involvement (60 Marks)



## Key Projects & Actions

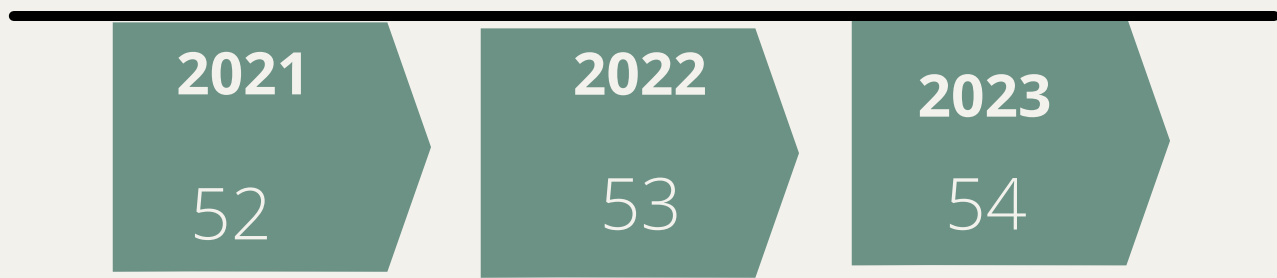
**Entente Florale:** We are in the privileged position of being entered into Entente Florale in 2024. We aim to raise awareness of this prestigious honour among local residents and encourage them to get involved in the process. We will do this by holding public meetings, updating our website and social media channels and sharing information through our newsletters, community notes in the local newspaper and our volunteer what's app group. The aim of Entente Florale is the sustainable development of European towns, villages and cities to enhance the quality of life of citizens which links to SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

**Local History – BCD,** together with local historians will create a timeline of the development of Ballinahown Village beginning in 10,000BC with the formation of Esker Riada which provided a route through the bogs of the Irish midlands and ultimately was influential in the development of the village of Ballinahown. This will be a staged project beginning with the installation of bi-lingual story boards in the community pergola. It will develop over the timeline of this plan with more detailed story of the timeline on the Ballinahown Village website. The final phase of this project will be the translation of the information into different languages, accessible through a QR code. Documenting the village's development promotes cultural preservation and education, contributing to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

**Website Development –** Over the course of this plan, funding will be sought to ensure that the Ballinahown Village website is maintained and developed in line with General Data Protection Guidelines (GDPR) along with ensuring it has an up-to-date SSL certificate, which stands for Secure Sockets Layer. This certificate ensures that data exchanged between a user's web browser and the website's server is encrypted and secure. The website will be further enhanced to ensure that all bookings and payments for the community hall can be facilitated through the website. Enhancing digital infrastructure aligns with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) by fostering technological advancement and digital inclusion.



# Community – Your Planning & Involvement (60 Marks)



## Key Projects & Actions

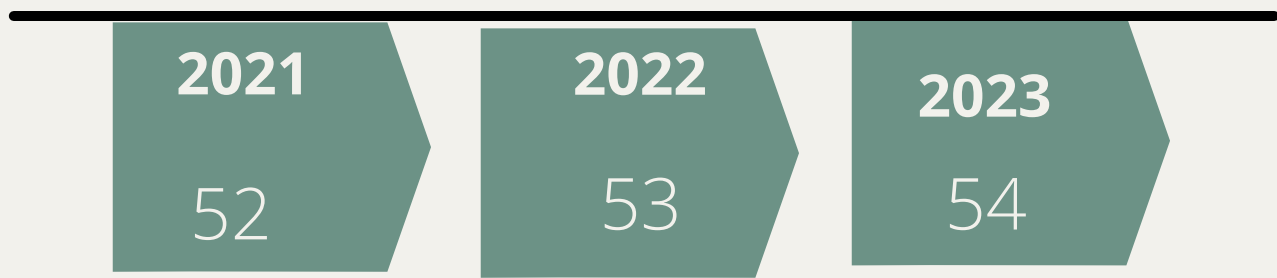
**Community Hall – Development and restoration work, with the support of the Just Transition Fund, will be carried out on the Community Hall. This includes the installation of a new kitchen, restoration of original floor tiles, insulation of halls and floors, replacement of windows and reroofing. This will be done in full consultation with the community. Renovations improve community spaces, supporting SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by enhancing accessibility and functionality of public facilities.**

**Communication Survey - We will develop and disseminate a consultation survey to ascertain the preferences of the community on how BCD will communicate with them. This will include questions on methods of communication and strategically placed community notice board. Over the course of this plan the findings of this survey will be considered and enacted. Engaging with residents fosters inclusivity and participatory decision-making, addressing SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.**

**Interactive Map: We will research and develop an interactive map of Ballinahown. This will offer numerous benefits, including enhanced accessibility, promotion of local businesses and tourism, community engagement, and education about the village's heritage. Collaboration between local stakeholders, including authorities, businesses, and residents, will be crucial in developing the map. This supports Sustainable Development Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth by promoting local businesses and tourism, generating employment opportunities, and contributing to the economic vitality of the community.**

**Mini Library: Using donated books and resources, the mini library will be maintained and promoted. Its location will change within the community hall to a more prominent placement to ensure greater awareness and access to the community. This speaks to Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education, aiming to ensure inclusive and equitable access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all**

# Community – Your Planning & Involvement (60 Marks)



## Key Projects & Actions

**Amber Flag:** BCD will support the school in maintaining its Amber Flag. This is an award given to Irish schools that actively promote mental health and well-being among their students and staff. It signifies that the school has implemented initiatives and practices to support mental health awareness, resilience-building, and a positive school environment. Amber Flag recognition underscores the school's commitment to fostering mental health awareness and well-being, aligning with the ethos of community involvement and proactive planning promoted within Tidy Towns. This aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, emphasising the importance of mental health awareness and resilience-building within communities.

**Grow volunteer base:** Through our own reflection, at committee level, it has been noted that there is a gap in volunteers from the 12 – 25 age group. In order to ensure the long-term viability of the group, it is important to foster relationships and build interest in the community among this cohort. We will liaise with our partners in Ballinahown Soccer Club to reach out to this age group and offer volunteering opportunities, mentorship and potential projects that they may wish to get involved with. This aligns with SDG Goal 17: Partnership for the Goals, by fostering collaborative efforts for community development and inclusivity



# Streetscape & Public Places (60 Marks)



## Key Projects & Actions

**Community Colour Scheme:** We will engage a colour expert to plan a complementary colour scheme of all public buildings in the village. This service will be available to residents free of charge also. Promoting cohesive aesthetics contributes to SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by enhancing urban landscapes and public spaces.

**Community Poly Tunnel:** In the community polytunnel, local school children and volunteers will work together to grow a diverse range of vegetables and flowers, promoting experiential learning and environmental awareness. Children will learn basic life skills of growing and cooking their own food, utilising, not only the polytunnel, but also the newly installed kitchen in the community hall. The flowers they propagate will be used throughout the village in all public spaces where appropriate. Encouraging sustainable agriculture aligns with SDG 2: Zero Hunger and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production by promoting food security and sustainable practices.

**Village Walkway:** With the support of Westmeath County Council, we will develop infrastructure to safely connect key community amenities e.g. the Community Hall with the Community Sportspark. We will install pedestrian activated solar lighting to light this walkway. Developing infrastructure and implementing sustainable lighting solutions not only enhances community connectivity and safety but also contributes to Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable urban environments.

**Recycling Area:** Resurface existing recycling area to make it safer and more aesthetically pleasing. The existing fence in this area will also be repaired or replaced if necessary. Resurfacing and improving the aesthetics of the recycling area, along with repairing or replacing the fence, aligns with Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production by promoting more efficient resource use and waste management practices within the community.

# Streetscape & Public Places (60 Marks)

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## Key Projects & Actions

**Rainwater garden:** Establish a rainwater garden along the village walkway. This garden will not only be aesthetically pleasing but also serve an important ecological function by helping to manage rainwater runoff and promote biodiversity. Establishing a rainwater garden not only adds to the village's beauty but also supports Goal 15: Life on Land by managing rainwater runoff sustainably and fostering biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration efforts.

**1916 Memorial Garden:** Maintain 1916 memorial structures and further develop the information in this area by providing more detail on each of the signatories. Plant wildflower corridors in and among the structures. This aligns with Goal 4: Quality Education by promoting awareness of historical events and figures while also contributing to Goal 15: Life on Land through biodiversity preservation efforts.

**Village Fountain:** The village fountain, a focal point of the village, will be cleaned and maintained to ensure it works at full capacity. This supports Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation by contributing to sustainable water management practices within the community, while also enhancing the aesthetic value of the village.

**Village Signage:** An audit will be conducted on all village signage and consideration will be given to state of repair, purpose and function and placement. The results of this audit will inform changes made to signage which may include repair, replacement, relocation and/or removal of signs. This supports Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by improving urban planning and management.

# Streetscape & Public Places (60 Marks)



## Key Projects & Actions

**Outdoor Classroom:** We aim to utilise the outdoor classroom in our biodiversity park to its fullest extent and will issue invitations to national schools outside the village to use it to support and enhance their educational programmes. This will be done through the local principals' network. In addition, our local national school, Ballinahown NS, will continue to use of the outdoor classroom regularly and will hold an awareness day, inviting members of the community to the Biodiversity Park to showcase all of the facilities on offer and the children's understanding of their environment. This aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education by promoting experiential learning and fostering environmental awareness and stewardship among students.



# Green Spaces & Landscaping (60 Marks)

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## Key Projects & Actions

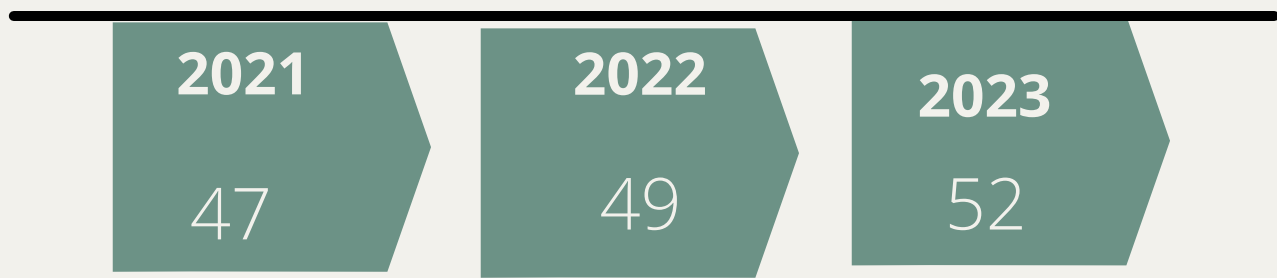
**Planting schedule:** Planters and flower beds will be carefully tended and evaluated on an annual basis to ensure they are strategically located and effectively support our biodiversity goals outlined in our biodiversity plan. This includes our commitment to fostering pollinator-friendly planting practices throughout the village. We will explore the option of planting appropriate plants on the stone walls along approach roads to boost biodiversity, offering habitats for diverse plant species, insects, and small animals, thus enriching the ecological balance of the area. Native trees will be planted throughout the village. This not only contributes to Goal 15: Life on Land by promoting biodiversity conservation but also supports Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by enhancing urban green spaces and ecological balance.

**Weedex Machine:** BCD will invest in a Weedex machine, leveraging innovative technology to maintain weed-free environments without relying on chemical treatments or power hosing. This sustainable approach not only preserves local ecosystems and reduces environmental impact but also aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 15 (Life on Land) by promoting responsible land management practices.

**National School:** With the support of BCD, the local national school children will carry out an audit of all trees on the school grounds. They will name them in English, Irish and Latin. Furthermore, they will plant hawthorn and green beech hedging along the perimeter of the school. Flowering creepers will also be planted on the school grounds. This effort aims to enrich the school environment, promote ecological awareness, and aligns with SDG 15: Life on Land.

# Green Spaces & Landscaping

## (60 Marks)



## Key Projects & Actions

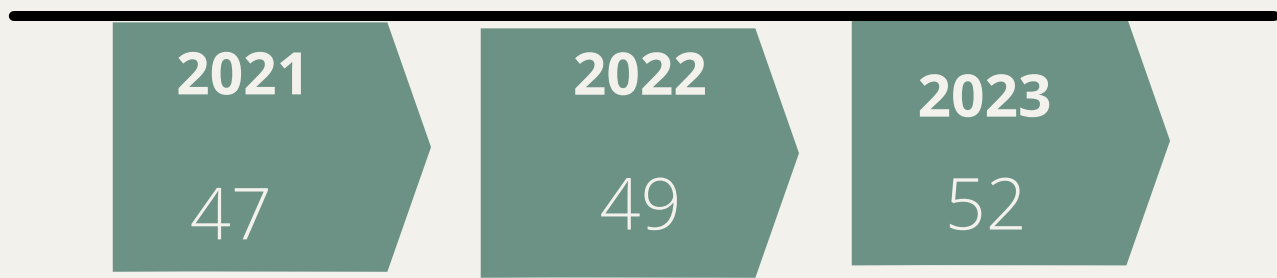
**Outdoor Seating:** Maintenance and installation of outdoor seating as required. This contributes to Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by enhancing public spaces, promoting social inclusion, and fostering community well-being.

**Village Trees:** Tree survey of village will be conducted with a corresponding map that is colour coded identifying trees throughout the village and their maintenance plan. Trees will be labelled with names in English, Irish and Latin. This aligns with Goal 15: Life on Land by promoting sustainable forest management and conservation practices, while also supporting Goal 4: Quality Education through environmental education initiatives.

**Sculpture Trail:** The Sculpture trail which was commissioned in the Sports Park in 2016. It began with the trees at entrance to Sports Park which were deemed to be in dangerous condition due to disease. The trunks were used for chainsaw carvings by a local artist to create beautiful sculptures. This was a great project to turn a disadvantage into art and surround us with stories and beauty for the community and children. The initial project included carvings drawn on Irish mythology; The Children of Lir; Diarmuid and Grainne; Pangur Bán and the Salmon of Knowledge. Three new tree carvings were completed with the artist and school children in January 2017. The artist and school children undertook a creative engagement process to design and execute the Fairy Tree Houses. These sculptures will be serviced, treated and maintained to ensure they continue to bring joy and beauty to the village. This aligns with two different SDG's. SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being - By transforming a potentially dangerous situation (diseased trees) into art, the project contributes to the physical safety and mental well-being of the community. Engaging with art and nature has been shown to improve mental health and well-being. SDG 4: Quality Education - The involvement of school children in the creative process of designing and executing the Fairy Tree Houses provides a unique, hands-on educational experience outside the traditional classroom setting. It fosters creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration among students.

# Green Spaces & Landscaping

## (60 Marks)



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# Green Spaces & Landscaping

## (60 Marks)

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## Key Projects & Actions

**Village Pump:** This central part of the village history will be painted and an information panel outlining its history will be installed. Here we aim to enrich cultural heritage preservation efforts, contributing to Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by fostering community identity and preserving local history.

**Green Flag:** Ballinahown NS is currently working towards achieving its Green Flag for Biodiversity. It has previously achieved Green Flags for Litter and Waste; Energy; Water and Travel. As the children strive to achieve their 5th Green Flag they will incorporate the knowledge they have gained while working on the previous four themes. The school is in year one of the two-year Biodiversity programme and BCD is supporting the children in their endeavours – working alongside them in the community polytunnel; helping them to install bug hotels and wildflower gardens in the school grounds; assisting them in taking water samples from our pond in the Biodiversity Park and involving the children in a tree survey being conducted in the village. The school's Green Flag committee meets regularly and maintains a noticeboard in the school highlighting its endeavours, ensuring there is an awareness of all activities among the wider school community. Once the school achieves its Green Flag for Biodiversity, it will move onto the next two-year programme, Global Citizenship – Litter and Waste. This effort aims to enrich the school environment, promote ecological awareness, and aligns with SDG 15: Life on Land.

# Nature & Biodiversity in your Locality

## (50 Marks)

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## Key Projects & Actions

**Biodiversity Area:** Plant and maintain carefully chosen native trees, wild flowers, fruit trees, bushes and scrubs. Continue to develop biodiversity field with aquaculture area including the pond.

The school children will conduct regular water quality testing at the pond as part of their Green Flag project, aiming to assess the health of the aquatic ecosystem and contribute valuable data to ongoing conservation efforts.

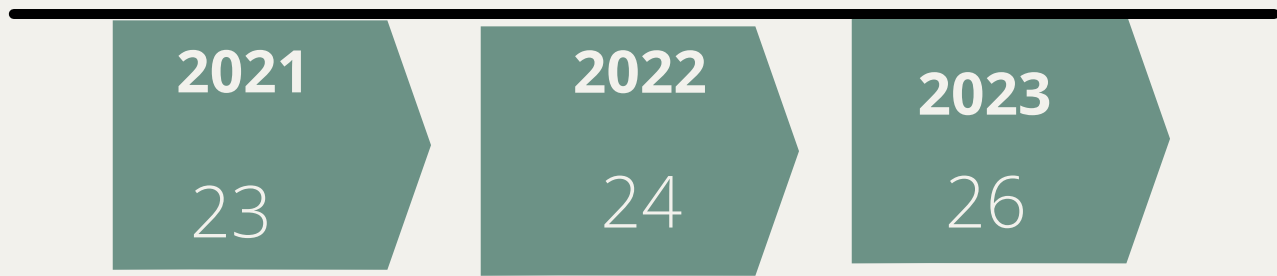
Planting and maintaining diverse vegetation and engaging in water quality testing promote biodiversity conservation: SDG goal 15 and education for sustainable development: SDG goal 4 along with SDG 13 by enhancing ecosystem resilience and biodiversity, which are essential for mitigating the impacts of climate change and fostering climate resilience.

**Foraging Pitstops:** We will develop foraging pitstops along the Athlone road, with long grass and wildflowers, with the aim of encouraging insects and animals to traverse through the village, promoting biodiversity. This approach supports Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land by fostering habitat connectivity and enhancing ecological resilience within urban environments.

**Water Management Plan:** Utilising this plan, work to improve water quality, create healthy water flow patterns and enhance the biodiversity value of the River Worm, which flows through the village. Improving water quality and enhancing river biodiversity align with sustainable water management: SDG goal 6 and biodiversity conservation: SDG goal 15 along with also directly contributing to SDG 14. By prioritising the health of the river ecosystem, the community supports the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources.

# Sustainability -Doing More with Less

## (50 Marks)



## Key Projects & Actions

**Green infrastructure Map:** With support from Westmeath County Council, we will develop a green infrastructure map for Ballinahown which will provide a comprehensive overview of natural assets such as parks, wetlands, and green spaces, facilitating informed planning decisions and promoting sustainable development. This initiative aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by promoting the creation of inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable urban environments.

### Electric Charging Point

Apply for funding to install an electric car charging station in the village. If successful, install charging point. Installing an electric car charging station in the village aligns with our sustainability goals by promoting the use of electric vehicles, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on fossil fuels. As the popularity of electric vehicles increases, providing infrastructure for charging becomes essential to encourage their adoption within our community. Installing an electric car charging station supports sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) by promoting the use of electric vehicles and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### Community Hall

Upgrade insulation and windows in community hall. Upgrading the insulation and windows in the community hall is crucial for reducing energy consumption and improving the comfort and functionality of the space. By enhancing the energy efficiency of the building, we can lower utility costs and minimise our environmental footprint while creating a more comfortable environment for community activities and events. This contributes to affordable and clean energy (SDG 7) by reducing energy consumption and improving comfort, aligning with sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11).



# Sustainability -Doing More with Less

## (50 Marks)



## Key Projects & Actions

### Recycling Area

Upgrade accessibility to recycling area. By making it easier and more convenient for people to recycle, we can increase recycling rates and promote a culture of environmental responsibility within the community. This promotes responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) by encouraging recycling efforts and reducing waste sent to landfills, contributing to sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11).

**Recycling Initiatives:** In partnership with the local school implement and support the national WEEE Ireland Blue Battery Boxes initiative to recycle batteries. Implementing recycling initiatives for batteries is crucial for preventing environmental pollution and conserving valuable resources. Batteries contain hazardous materials that can leach into soil and water if improperly disposed of, posing risks to human health and the environment. By supporting this program for recycling batteries, we can ensure their safe and responsible disposal while recovering valuable materials for reuse. This supports responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) by preventing environmental pollution and conserving resources, aligning with environmental protection efforts (SDG 15).

**Community Polytunnel:** Maintain and promote the use of the community polytunnel by residents to promote self-sustaining living. This will provide a space for school children, individuals and families to grow their own food and cultivate a connection with nature. By encouraging local food production, we can reduce dependence on imported goods, support local agriculture, and foster a sense of community resilience and empowerment. This fosters sustainable agriculture (SDG 2) and community resilience (SDG 11) by encouraging local food production and self-sustaining living practices. By providing opportunities for education, skill-building, and community engagement, this initiative also supports SDG 1's objective of reducing inequalities and empowering individuals and communities.

# Sustainability -Doing More with Less

## (50 Marks)

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## Key Projects & Actions

**Recycling Clothing:** BCD will continue to support our local soccer club, Ballinahown FC, in its endeavours to collect old football kits and boots for distribution among younger members. A local network of parents will continue to recycle and upcycle clothing among families in the area. By promoting the reuse and repurposing of clothing, these efforts contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 12, Responsible Consumption and Production by reducing waste and promoting sustainable practices within the community.

**Scarecrow Festival:** Ballinahown NS will continue its endeavours to promote sustainable practices through its Scarecrow Festival each Halloween. This event involves each family creating a scarecrow using recycled materials which is displayed in the school garden in late October. This also aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 12, Responsible Consumption and Production by fostering a culture of sustainability and promoting eco-friendly practices within the community.

**Cycle Centre:** Building on the theme of Bike Week, BCD recognises the importance of encouraging cycling from an early age and will establish a dedicated and safe space within the biodiversity park for young children to learn how to ride bikes. This initiative will include providing bikes for borrowing on-site and constructing a bike shelter to keep the bikes dry and accessible. By promoting active lifestyles and sustainable transportation habits, BCD's investment in this project aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), contributing to healthier communities and more environmentally friendly urban spaces.

# Sustainability -Doing More with Less

## (50 Marks)

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## Key Projects & Actions

**Bike Week:** BCD will continue to support annual Bike Week in order to foster and support a culture of sustainable transportation, promoting physical activity and reducing carbon emissions associated with car use. By encouraging cycling, communities contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by creating more accessible, safe, and environmentally friendly urban environments.

**Propagation:** BCD will support and educate school children to utilise the community poly tunnel to propagate their own plants for planting in the village, fostering a sense of environmental stewardship and community engagement. This initiative will align with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by providing hands-on learning opportunities and Sustainable Development Goal 15 (Life on Land) by promoting biodiversity and sustainable land management practices within the local ecosystem.

### **Circular Economy**

: BCD will explore the possibility of forming a partnership with Ballinahown Sportspark and the local village shop to create a comprehensive birthday party package that incorporates the use of both community facilities. This collaborative effort seeks to leverage the resources of local businesses and organisations, promoting sustainability through the reuse and repurposing of materials. By sourcing party supplies locally, such as food items and decorations, and encouraging patrons to support nearby businesses, this initiative will not only reduce waste but will also stimulate the local economy. Through this innovative approach, BCD will contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by fostering a culture of resource efficiency and promoting sustainable practices within the community while also fostering economic growth and community cohesion.



# Tidiness & Litter Control

## (90 Marks)



## Key Projects & Actions

**General Maintenance:** In collaboration with the CE Scheme, a quarterly maintenance plan will be devised to provide structured guidance for the activities of CE participants. Regular reviews of this plan with committee members will ensure alignment with community objectives and promote effective resource utilisation. This initiative supports Sustainable Development Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth by fostering employment opportunities and enhancing skills development within the community.

**Litter:** The local school will conduct a litter survey. A volunteer rota will be established to ensure regular litter picks happen year-round throughout the village. Support from local authority will be sought to manage approach roads which are too dangerous for volunteers. Addressing litter issues is crucial for maintaining the cleanliness and attractiveness of the village, as well as preserving the local environment and wildlife. Conducting a litter survey allows us to identify problem areas and prioritise cleanup efforts. Establishing a volunteer rota ensures ongoing maintenance and instils a sense of community pride and responsibility. Seeking support from the local authority demonstrates a collaborative approach to addressing litter hotspots and improving overall cleanliness and safety in the village. This contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities and Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land.

**School Car Park:** Relining the parking area at the school is necessary to improve safety, accessibility, and functionality for students, staff, and visitors. An upgraded car park can enhance traffic flow, alleviate congestion, and provide designated spaces for parking, reducing the risk of accidents and improving the overall appearance of the school grounds. This promotes Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities and Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education.

# Tidiness & Litter Control

## (90 Marks)

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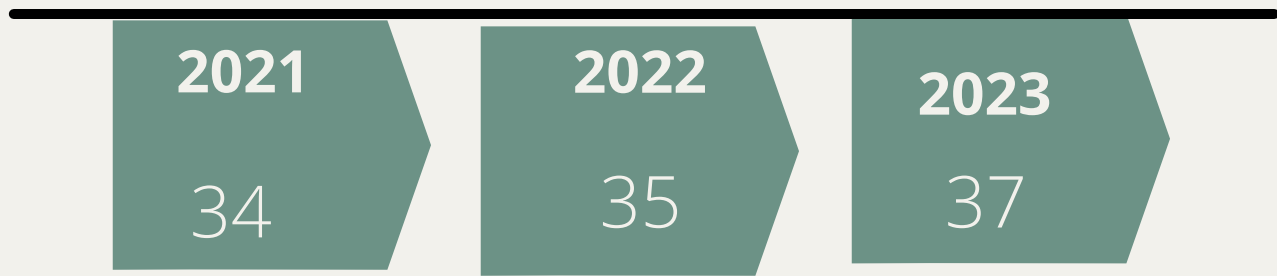


## Key Projects & Actions

**Community Hall:** Flower beds will be audited for tidiness, visual appeal and support to biodiversity. A planting scheme will be established and implemented. This will ensure that the community hall grounds are well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing. Establishing a planting scheme and implementing it not only enhances the beauty of the surroundings but also promotes biodiversity by incorporating native plants and pollinator-friendly species, creating habitats for local wildlife and contributing to the overall ecological health of the area. This contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land and Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

**Grass Maintenance:** A grass maintenance plan will be developed and implemented. Maintaining some areas of grass with longer growth supports biodiversity by providing habitats for a variety of plant species, insects, and small animals. This approach allows us to strike a balance between manicured landscapes and natural habitats, fostering ecological diversity and resilience within the village environment. This aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land and Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

# Residential Streets & Housing Areas (50 Marks)



## Key Projects & Actions

**General Appearance:** Collaborate with local businesses and homeowners to ensure regular maintenance and upkeep of boundary walls, gutters, and downpipes, enhancing the overall appearance of the village. Keeping these elements well-maintained enhances the visual appeal of the village, creating a positive impression for residents and visitors alike. Collaborating with local businesses and homeowners for regular maintenance enhances the village's appearance, supporting Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by creating visually appealing and inclusive urban spaces.

**Community Compost:** Provide support to residents in maintaining their homes and gardens by offering a community compost area as well as guidance (through our website and social media channels) on proper usage, fostering a sense of pride and community ownership. By supplying community compost and advice, we empower residents to take ownership of their surroundings and contribute to a healthier, more sustainable community environment. Providing community compost and guidance fosters community pride and ownership, contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by promoting sustainable practices and community engagement

**Sustainable Gardening:** Partner with Westmeath County Library and local children to promote the Grow It Yourself (GUI) Initiative, encouraging community engagement in sustainable gardening practices. Encouraging sustainable gardening practices not only benefits the environment but also promotes community involvement and education around food production and environmental stewardship. Partnering with local organisations to promote sustainable gardening practices supports Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by encouraging community involvement and education in environmental stewardship

# Residential Streets & Housing Areas (50 Marks)

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## Key Projects & Actions

**Community Colour Palette:** Engage with the wider community through various media outlets to update the Community Colour Palette for residential buildings, ensuring a cohesive and visually appealing aesthetic throughout the village. Initiate the update of building colour schemes across the village following consultation on the Community Colour Palette, enhancing visual harmony and cohesion within the community. Updating the Community Colour Palette and building colour schemes fosters a sense of unity and identity within the village while enhancing its visual appeal and attractiveness. This promotes visual harmony and community identity, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by enhancing the aesthetic quality and cohesion of residential areas.

**Planting:** Collaborate with residents to plant native and pollinator-friendly plants around residential areas, creating a welcoming environment that promotes well-being for all. Promote the use of the community polytunnel for propagation purposes. Planting native and pollinator-friendly plants improves biodiversity and creates a more sustainable ecosystem, while the use of the community polytunnel encourages communal gardening and self-sufficiency among residents. This supports Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land and Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by creating sustainable ecosystems and inclusive urban green spaces



# Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes (50 Marks)



## Key Projects & Actions

**General Appearance:** Paint farm gates and walls within the village in line with the Community Colour Palette. This will enhance visual coherence and contribute to the overall aesthetic appeal of the village supporting Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

**Wildlife Corridors:** Continue to nurture Wildlife Corridors behind Community Playground and Recycling Area. Nurturing Wildlife Corridors supports biodiversity and ecological health aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land.

**Road Aesthetics:** Engage with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) through Westmeath County Council to investigate and test different road finishes acceptable for use on the regional route going through the village to begin to address speed of traffic going through the village and so supports Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

**Signage:** Design and erection of three main signs at the entrances into the village and also an array of internal signage within the village for the purposes of direction and naming. Installing clear and informative signage improves navigation and enhances the sense of identity and cohesion within the village, benefiting residents and visitors alike and therefore contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

**Greenway Development:** BCD, in collaboration with partners in Westmeath County Council, will engage with Bord na Móna on the development of a proposed cycleway link between Athlone and Clonmacnoise, with a connection to Ballinahown Village. This initiative exemplifies Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by promoting accessible and sustainable transportation options, fostering economic growth, and enhancing connectivity within the region.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, the Ballinahown Tidy Towns 3-Year Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for enhancing the village's aesthetics, sustainability, and community well-being from 2024 to 2026. By focusing on key projects, yearly tasks, and ongoing initiatives, Ballinahown Community Development (BCD) aims to build a greener, more inviting community for all residents and visitors. Through collaborative efforts with stakeholders and support from funding bodies, BCD has successfully undertaken various projects over the past three years, laying a strong foundation for future endeavors. Looking ahead, the plan identifies critical areas for improvement, including infrastructure upgrades, environmental initiatives, and community engagement efforts. With continued dedication and community involvement, Ballinahown is poised to thrive as a sustainable and vibrant village, serving as a model of community-driven development for years to come.



# E.U. Sustainable Goals

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were set in 2015 by the international community as part of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through which countries of the world collectively pledged to eradicate poverty, find sustainable and inclusive development solutions, ensure everyone's human rights, and generally make sure that no one is left behind by 2030. The EU made a positive and constructive contribution to the development of the 2030 Agenda. We are committed to implement the SDGs in all our policies and encourage EU countries in doing the same.

BDA supports the EU Sustainable goals throughout our community projects.



# Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

Hall Renovation – **Project 50% complete:**  
Expenditure €250,000 (Just Transition funding)-  
providing a work hub for people within community.

## MAINTAINENCE PROJECTS

Our “used” clothing collection facility: Members of our community are encouraged to donate clothes in to charity.

Free access to our community green spaces where families can come together without cost.



Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

A member of our community organised a "Food Drive" event for a local charity who delivers food directly to families in need within our community and surrounding areas. -100% complete for 2020-21

## MAINTAINENCE PROJECTS

Our local school children grow vegetables and plants in the poly tunnel with their teachers.

## FUTURE PROJECTS

## FUTURE PROJECTS

Food Collection Event for 2021

GUI education programme in association with local school.

# Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

Astroturf & Hurling Wall – Expenditure €510,000 (€300,000 secured via Leader funding. Cross-border support from Westmeath LCDC and Offaly LCDC). Works beginning July 2021. **Project -50% complete**

“Halloween Drive through”- community 2020 event for the children .

Live Crib at Christmas Event on local church grounds.

## MAINTAINENCE PROJECTS

Our walking track was a fantastic resource during the pandemic for young and old. We extended lighting to facilitate early morning and later evening usage.

Free access to our outdoor community spaces where families can come together safely without cost.

## FUTURE PROJECTS

Create a seated social outdoor space.

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Goal:



#### NEW PROJECTS

Craftworkers Development programme (in conjunction with Westmeath and Offaly LCDC)

Development of Website to promote and share information on the various projects within Ballinahown village.

#### MAINTAINENCE PROJECTS

Our“phone box” library.

Maintain links with local schools and pre-schools in the area

Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

Female Participation in Sport: In 2019 Ballinahown Soccer club developed girls soccer teams. The number of girls participating in soccer has increased by 100% in 2021.

Local playschool staff have completed social diversity training.

# Goal:



## MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

CE scheme staff maintain village cleanliness.

Water butts are in place around community buildings.

Local school involved in village tidy up.

Power-washing of paths and public spaces that uses recycled water.

The river running through the village is protected by the safe farming practises and support of surrounding farmers.



# Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

Lights on walking track were upgraded to LED lighting.

Christmas lights were upgraded to LED lights  
Installation of new gas heating system in the Community Hall

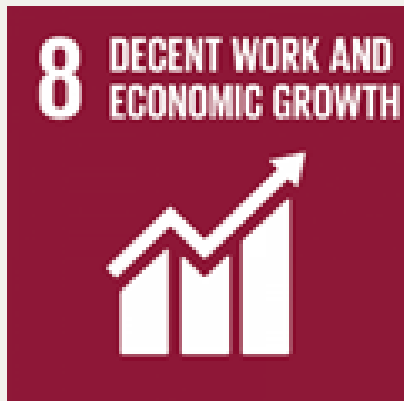
Energy Audit of Community Hall ( see attached)

Above projects are 100% complete

## FUTURE PROJECTS

Solar panels will be in place on upgraded village hall

# Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

Hall Renovation – Expenditure €250,000 (Just Transition funding)- providing and extending work opportunities for people within community.

Develop and promote market space in the car park.

# Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

Hall Renovation – Expenditure €250,000 (Just Transition funding)- providing a work hub for people within community. Upgrading works will include solar panels and insulations. This project will provide local employment.

Upgrading of the car park

Cross-roads realignment (Town & Village Renewal grant)

Bull and Farmer Sculpture in car park.

## FUTURE PROJECTS

Redirection of Community Walking Track – away from carpark.

Installation of additional equipment in Playground

Upgrading of Water Feature in Village Carpark (introduction of copper)

## MAINTAINENCE PROJECTS

Painting of various village buildings/benches e.g. Village Inn

# Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

Village is accessible to wheelchairs- plan to widen footpath on Village corner.

## FUTURE PROJECTS

Sensory play equipmet to be sourced and installed in playground.

# Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

Conference Attended by Committee members on sustaining and economic growth.

“Just Transition funding” Hall Renovation – Expenditure €250,000 (Just Transition funding)- providing a work hub for people within community.

Market space in the carpark.

## MAINTAINENCE PROJECTS

Ballinahown Village has a bus service via Bus Eireann and TFI Local Link Laois Offaly\_



Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

### Energy Audit of Community Hall

Promote and develop project between local businesses and national school to reuse packaging

# Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

Relocation of Community Composting facility.

Biodiversity Field (Town & Village Renewal grant).  
This involves construction of a Village Pond and associated planting.

Planting of native trees in the Biodiversity area

Planting of perennials in public spaces (moving away from annuals)

Installation of Village Apiary (Supported by the Community Environment Action fund)

Installation of signage promoting the understanding of bees and importance in biodiversity

Upgrading of Butterfly Garden completed by school children

## MAINTAINENCE PROJECTS

Recycling Bins for community use.

Collection of water in water butt for use in the village projects.

# Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

Biodiversity Field (Town & Village Renewal grant). This involves construction of a **Village Pond** and associated planting.

## MAINTAINENCE PROJECTS

The river going through the village is fenced off in the playground for children's safety. It is protected by safe farming practises of surrounding farmers. The riverbed was cleaned for Pride of place competition. Information signage in place.

# Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

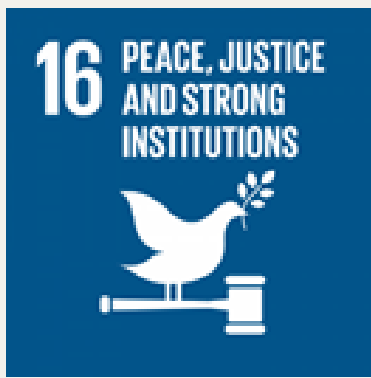
Installation of Village Apiary (Supported by the Community Environment Action fund)

Installation of signage promoting the understanding of bees and importance in biodiversity

Planting of native trees in the Biodiversity area

Local school children taught about cycle safety.

Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

BDA supports and is supported by other committees within the community e.g. Ballinahown Community Sports Part Astro Turn Project.



# Goal:



## NEW PROJECTS

Just Transition Fund

## MAINTAINENCE PROJECTS

BDA have fostered strong working relationships within the community and surrounding areas such as Offaly and Westmeath County Councils.

- local Soccer club
- local GAA Clubs
- local businesses
- local schools
- Local parish
- Leader



Contact us

Web: <https://www.facebook.com/Ballinahown-Community-Development->