

# Welcome το / fáilte go Ballinahown



July 13th 2024

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Message from our chairperson                                | 2  |
| Community car park: market, fountain, sculpture and pergola | 3  |
| Polytunnel, water butt, bike stands                         | 5  |
| 1916 Garden   | 7  |
| Recycling area  | 9  |
| School, wildflower area, bug hotels and AstroTurf           | 11 |
| Ballinahown Sports Park, sculpture trail and woodlands walk | 13 |
| Playground  | 15 |
| Apiary and biodiversity pond                                | 17 |
| Amphitheatre  | 19 |
| St Colmcille's Church                                       | 21 |

**In citing the criteria relevant to each stop, we will use a numbered system as follows:**

1. Planning and Development
2. Sustainable Environment – Climate Change Mitigation
3. Built Environment
4. Landscape
5. Green Spaces
6. Planting – Permanent and Seasonal
7. Environmental Education
8. Effort and Involvement
9. Tourism/Leisure
10. Communications



## Message from our Chairperson

On behalf of Ballinahown Community Development, and our wider community, I would like to welcome you to Ballinahown. Thank you for your time and we hope your visit allows you to fully appreciate the steps we have taken to build a sustainable community, which meets the needs of all the people who call Ballinahown home.

We are truly grateful for the opportunity to participate in Entente Florale Europe. It has allowed us to garner great support from our local authority – Westmeath County Council – to deliver many long-term projects planned as part of our Ballinahown 2030 Vision Document.

Our ethos in Ballinahown has always been about sustainability and climate action. We find creative solutions to meet our needs. Over the years we have upcycled many surplus or end-of-line materials from the council and given them a home in Ballinahown.

We have always taken an innovative approach in Ballinahown, developing the village in a way that puts people first and secures our future as we have climate mitigation to the fore of our decision-making.

This booklet provides details on each of the stops planned for your visit. We believe these projects demonstrate the sustainable approach we have taken in the development of Ballinahown and how we have created awareness of the importance of climate action and sustainability, particularly among the younger population, ensuring we have passed on all of our learnings to the next generation.

Warmest regards,

**Helen Conneely,**

*Chairperson of Ballinahown Community Development.*





## Carpark - market, fountain, sculpture and pergola

## Information

## notes



Notes

## polytunnel and environs

**Criteria met:** 2, 6, 7, 8

### Information

- Bike stands strategically placed to link into a central artery, connecting all facilities.
- They help promote cycling as a sustainable mode of transport.
- Community polytunnel contains raised beds made with recycled material.
- Peat-free compost used.
- Used by community members, preschool and national school.
- Fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers all grown here.
- Outdoor beds installed for hardier vegetables.
- Busy all year with planting now for next season.
- Plans to propagate flowers in line with our sustainable ethos.
- Vertical herb garden installed.
- Harvested rainwater used with a bespoke system increasing rainwater capture.
- Local schoolchildren benefit greatly from use of the polytunnel.





Notes

## 1916 Garden and Slí na hAbhainn

Criteria met: 1, 2, 5

### Information

- A peaceful, reflective space dedicated to history and remembrance.
- Opened in 2016 to mark centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising.
- Expanded orchard to contain seven trees, one for each signatory of the Proclamation of Independence.
- One of the signatories – James Connolly – is an ancestor of members of our community.
- The plinths were designed from old louvres in the church steeple.
- Recycled metal added to hold plinths in place.
- A tranquil retreat and cultural touchstone for the community.
- Summer perennials sown.
- Slí na hAbhainn walkway bordering 1916 Garden connects hall, housing estate, school and sporting facilities.
- It creates a central artery through our village.
- Uses innovative, solar-powered, pedestrian-activated LED lighting.



## Recycling Area and Swale

**Criteria met:** 1, 2, 6, 8

## Information

- First underground recycling facility in Ireland in 2009.
- BCD worked in partnership with many organisations to have it installed.
- Provides recycling facility for a 20km radius.
- Receptacles placed one metre above ground made it more accessible.
- Further upgrades in 2024 include new gravel, concrete surface and replacement signage.
- Wall removed for safer use of space by pedestrians.
- Swale adjacent is a grassed, wetland, planted channel.
- Swale filters water from road and underground recycling centre.
- It captures rainwater, holds it and filters it through the earth.
- This space teaches about recycling; providing well-designed, accessible facilities and climate action.

## notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.





## School Grounds and all Weather pitch

## Information

## notes



## Planting – Permanent and Seasonal

**Criteria met:** 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

- Exercise track is one of two community walkways.
- It measures 0.7km and its surface ensures it is accessible for wheelchairs and buggies.
- It was installed with LEADER funding.
- The exercise track is heavily utilised and lit by LED lighting after dark.
- Areas of uncut grass for wildlife and pollinators.
- Unique tree sculptures transformed aged/dying trees into artworks.
- They tell many stories from Irish Mythology.
- Native woodland walk is a magical space for young and old.
- Pathways resurfaced to make them accessible to all.
- Utilised by schoolchildren weekly for exercise classes.
- Willow archways created by adult learners working with a willow artist.
- These amenities bring many visitors to our village.

## notes





## playground

**Criteria met:** 5, 9

## Information

- Playground developed with LEADER funding almost 20 years ago.
- Located in a beautiful, mature, natural space by the River Worm.
- Local schoolchildren had input in the design.
- Variety of play equipment and green space.
- Promotes physical and imaginative play.
- A peaceful space for families and community members to enjoy.
- Use of vibrant, durable paints to revitalise playground ensures an appealing environment.
- Education boards inform how our playground supports biodiversity.

## notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.



**Criteria met:** 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

- Biodiversity Park leased to community by Westmeath County Council.
- Park funded under Town and Village Renewal Scheme.
- Pond, measuring 50mx40m, constructed in spring 2022.
- Pond and planting wetland species add to biodiversity value of the area.
- Apiary established in conjunction with BCD to attract native bees.
- Established by a third-generation local apiarist who maintains the hives with his four children.
- Bees are active and honey is harvested and sold locally.
- Bees are one of our primary pollinators.

## notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. There are approximately 20 lines visible on the page.





## Tourism/Leisure

**Criteria met:** 2, 5

- Community amphitheatre is part of Ballinahown 2030 Vision Document.
- Pollinator-friendly wildflowers in this location provide opportunities for the bees.
- Seating is recycled plastic and concrete blocks were donated, surplus material.
- Erratic, glacial stones are specific to neighbouring county Offaly.
- Our amphitheatre overlooks the community orchard.
- Used by schoolchildren for outdoor lessons, music and dance performances.
- Tiered seating creates a more formal educational space.

## notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.




## Streetscape and St Colmcille's Church

## Information

## notes





Consciously designed and responsibly printed by  
**TheFACTORY.ie** on 100% recycled paper with  
eco-inks, using their self-generated green energy.