

Cork Environmental Forum promotes Water Conservation

With the issue of charging for water currently a daily issue in the media and in conversations throughout the country Cork Environmental Forum has been promoting water conservation in collaboration with community groups such as Tidy Towns in County Cork. These workshops are supported by the Environment Directorate of Cork County Council.

To date there has been a workshop in North Cork organised by the Castlelyons/ Bridebridge Tidy Towns & Heritage group entitled **“Don’t Be A Drip... Be Water Wise”**. Another workshop took place in Rathbarry in West Cork delivered over two sessions. More workshops are planned for 2015.

All of the workshops focus on ways to conserve water in the home examining aspects such as how we use water, loss through leaks, in the kitchen, in the bathroom, flow reduction, water harvesting, hidden water use, equipment and products and future actions people can make to reduce their use of this precious resource. The workshops provide opportunities to discuss ways of reducing water consumption which in the future should help people to save money on water bills. They are very practical allowing attendees to see first-hand water saving devices such as aerated shower heads, flow restrictors, toilet flush adaptors and many more tips and ideas of saving water in everyday life.

The workshops to date have included some input on the Water Framework Directive, a European wide law that aims to safeguard all water and water dependent ecosystems: groundwaters, coastal waters and wetlands. David Lee from SWAN gave a presentation on this at the Castlelyons session and emphasised the importance of integrated catchment management, referencing the work being undertaken in the nearby River Allow under IRD Duhallow.

Rathbarry experienced first-hand the impacts of flooding in 2012 when the village, a national award winner in the Tidy Towns, had one of its access roads completely washed away, while some residents were stranded in over 1m of water. Again the issue of catchment management and the CFRAM programme were of interest to the people who attended the workshops there. The workshops both touched briefly on Marine Litter and eutrophication, the former being of particular interest to the Tidy Towns members that attended. In Castlelyons, Virginia Cantillon, Chairperson of the Tidy Towns played the short but harrowing video of the impact our waste is having on Albatrosses on Midway Island which can be seen [here](#).

Currently average daily use of water in Ireland is 150 litres per person, in other countries this is closer to 100 with Denmark using just 90 litres. Through the water module in the Global Action Plan Programme that Cork Environmental Forum has been delivering since 2003 the limited supply of fresh drinking water available to everyone on this planet is highlighted, and given the nature of our economic system, even in wet Ireland, we are inextricably linked into the global water supply through food and energy.

There is an imperative to conserve both conservation and water efficiency have a crucial role to play in protecting people and the economy. Clean drinking water is not as abundant as we may think and is an expensive commodity to provide. Despite the seemingly abundance of rainfall and water in Ireland there are huge challenges in delivering a quality water supply to all citizens and we can all play a role in conserving our use by making small changes.

Groups interested in providing a Water Conservation Workshop in their Community in 2015 can get in touch with Cork Environmental Forum by emailing Bernie Connolly at bernadette@cef.ie or contacting 083 1468064.