

## Corrib Catchment - Tidy Towns survey, 2019

### A thank you and reflections

#### *By the Corrib Beo Partnership*

**Corrib Beo** partnership would like to say a special thanks to all the respondents of our tidy towns survey which was done back in Autumn 2019. The aim of the survey was to see how connected local communities within the Lough Corrib catchment are to their local waterbodies. We would like to say **well done** to our respondents, who have been active with the Tidy Towns project for years now. You are true leaders in keeping our communities environmentally friendly.

**Results / Torthaí.** The results of the survey have shown us a lot of positive things:

- All the communities involved are aware where their water supply comes from,
- There is a good awareness how your waste-water is treated and
- Folks know what your local waterbody is called, like the Black River in Shrule, the Sinking River in Dunmore or the River Clare.

These factors are important when we talk about water and local catchment appreciation.

**Connections with water:** The results show how each community is connected to its local waterbody and catchment. Some of the links that you mentioned were:

- *Natural and cultural heritage*
- *The history of the water source and how it provided drinking water to generations gone by*
- *Old water extraction tools by water bodies which can still be seen today*
- *Public access to the waterbody in some of the communities, for activities like fishing.*
- *There are active litter guardians in some of our communities, done by local schools*
- *Flooding incidents have added to public appreciation to local water bodies*
- *Want to revive River-walk amenities in communities where they have declined.*

Water related achievements are coming in all sorts of new forms. For one community, this involves the setting up of River workshops and **art sculpture** projects, that focus on highlighting water quality issues and biodiversity on our local waterways. This project hopes to connect local community to its water bodies, in particular kids and teenagers. Kids then design their own art sculpture and place them down by their local river in the hope that it will increase public awareness on these issues.

**River walks.** There is a notable increase in developing river walks, which are a great public amenity that gives us a chance to respect nature from a different perspective.

**Eco Activities:** We asked if any of your Tidy Towns groups were involved in any eco activities. We promote the use of eco friendly activities for our local communities in order to protect and preserve water quality. Our results show that over **60%** of our respondents were involved with at least one activity or more (see examples below).

These methods require that you just put a little extra thought, before you use water in your home or local community.



*Think Before You Flush Campaign*



*Think Before Your Pour Campaign*



*Rain Water Harvesting*



*Green Cleaning*



*Dragonfly Recording with Biodiversity Ireland*



*The Yellow Fish Campaign (Only rain down the drain!)*



*The Refill Campaign*

**Access to Water.** Local communities would love to see access to the River to be more straightforward, satisfying the concerns of the landowners and the general public respecting their environment. There was mention of how successful Greenways around the country have proven to be.

50% percent of responses showed that there is no local access to their waterbodies.

Corrib Beo Partnership believes that a waterbody can only be truly appreciated when you see it in person. We hope that this partnership can facilitate more access to the waterbodies of the Corrib catchment in the future, which can help add social appreciation to our natural environment

**Investment.** Another thing to highlight is that *Uisce Eireann* are building new sewerage treatment plants next to rivers. An example of this can be seen by the Sinking river in Dunmore. This is a key part of sustainable development, as the old sewerage systems discharged sewage directly into our local rivers and waterbodies.

### **Water related concerns**

Half of our respondents were worried about effluent from local farming activities.

**Agriculture** has put significant increased pressure on our waterways in the last several decades. Some of the concerns were

- the spreading of slurry on wet land with rain forecasted that night,
- spreading of herbicides
- runoff effluent from farming activities.

Traces of pollution can be seen in the form of foam floating on the water in the town centres of some of our respondents. Littering around waterbodies ( like Tyres) is another concern in the eyes of the communities within the Corrib catchment.

These findings re supported by the EPA /LAWPRO Assessment of the Corrib Catchment (2018) which found that the main pressures on Water Quality are: **Sediment, Agriculture, Forestry, Urban Waste Water & Domstic Waste Water** (Septic tanks) [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie)

### **Community Water Fund.**

Every year, the Local Authorities Water Programme funds a Water and Communities Award as part of the Tidy Towns competition. Our results show that none of the Corrib participants have been involved with this fund up to 2019. We encourage all communities to enter this award for the benefit of a healthy waterbody. The award is to recognise communities who are taking positive steps towards raising awareness and showing appreciation of their local rivers, lakes, streams, canals and coast.

<https://www.tidytowns.ie/special-awards/>

The communities who responded have all been successful with water related achievements. Each community has taken leadership to go out and achieve a water related goal. These ranged from Tidy Towns Endeavours Award 2017, winners of Mayo County Council Litter League Competition 2017 and Recipients of Bat Conservation Grants 2017 & 2018.

### **Summary / Focal Scoir**

It is good to see that the communities who responded are keen to develop their waterways and keep them clean by employing sustainable techniques.

We hope that this survey will raise awareness on the benefits our waterbodies have to the environment , people and the economy

Corrib Beo Partnership advocates that communities take on ecofriendly activities.

### **More Info / Breis Eolais:**

We attach a sheet which gives links to several ***Water Focussed Activities for Community Groups*** in 2020 & we hope that u will find these useful.

Míle buiochas - Thanks to all of our repondents for your interest. It is good to know that the communities of the Corrib catchment are engaged with their natural environment.

A special thanks to **Catherine Seale** of the Local Authorities Water Programme, who coordinated this survey and the results

### **Looking Ahead / Súil Romhainn**

For summer of 2020, we are engaged with various projects with EU LIFE to begin information/ communication campaigns and to develop an information portal with the purpose of improving the portrayal of environmental data from the Corrib in a community based approach.

We are also in the process of developing concept notes for a recreational project named “Trails of the Corrib countryside” as well as a “Corrib cultural identity” project. Stay tuned to our social media for more information on this.

Due to government restrictions we have halted our plans for a “*Lough Corrib- Facing the future*” festival which was planned for August 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020. This was going to be a weekend of debate and discourse with several guest speakers in colloboration with **Moycullen Heritage, Oughterard Arts Programme, Brigit’s Garden & Cnoc Suain**, with support from the **Local Authorities Waters Office (LAWPRO), Galway County Council, LEADER, the Community Wind Fund** and a range of local partners.

Updates on these events are to follow

Best wishes / Le gach dea ghui,

**Eoghan Concannon, Denis Goggin and Micheál Ó Cinneide**

**Corrib Beo Partnership.**

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