



## CASE STUDY:

# STRABANE SIGERSONS, CO. TYRONE



## The challenge we faced

**We have a wide-ranging activity base in our club – it will always be about our games first and foremost but it's also important to us to reach out into the community and to look to the future for the young people involved in our club.**

When the opportunity arose to take part in the Green Club Programme, it was a chance for us to get involved in a new way in projects that would benefit the club, the community and the environment.

We are located in a town, so there were particular challenges for us when getting involved in green projects but also great opportunities to make a difference in an urban environment.

## The solution we identified:

We looked at our club and operations and thought about where we could make a difference.

We decided to focus on the three areas of biodiversity, energy efficiency and tackling plastics.

Of these, we started with biodiversity and tackling plastics as these were areas where we could take action at very low cost and have an immediate impact.

We then connected in with the local council (Derry-City and Strabane District Council), with Conservation Volunteers NI and with Keep NI Beautiful for advice and guidance.

## The actions we took:

- We started by planting 150 trees in the club, with club members from the Dermot Early Youth Leadership Initiative, club volunteers and volunteers from Conservation Volunteers NI and with Keep NI Beautiful for advice and guidance.
- We left a patch of land behind the goalposts completely uncut and planted pollinator-friendly flower beds.
- We carried out an energy audit and as a first step insulated the building, upgraded our clubhouse heating and lighting systems by replacing our boiler, changing all the radiators and thermostats, changing the lights to LEDs, and upgrading the electrics throughout the building.
- Based on our energy audit, we also drew up an action plan for other short, medium and long-term energy efficiency actions and investments
- We implemented a Tackling Plastics programme and banned the use of single-use plastic bottles in the club – we started by phasing the use out before implementing the complete ban and we supported it by providing reusable water bottles to club members.



## The impact our project had

- When we carried out our initial plastics audit as part of our Tackling Plastics programme, we counted 87 single-use water bottles at one training session of 150 children. Banning single-use plastic bottles has had a big impact in terms of the waste we produce in the club as well as in terms of litter left around our pitches and grounds.
- We have more insect and pollinator activity in the club since we started leaving some grass unmown during the summer and since planting our trees and flower beds.
- Club members taking part in the Dermot Early Youth Initiative, which is for 15 to 18 year olds, were really active in driving and implementing our actions. The club's Green Club projects were a great opportunity for them to get actively involved in environmental projects, to learn by doing and to make a very positive difference by influencing action and behaviour in the club.
- Our projects have contributed to greater awareness and to changes in behaviour throughout our membership
- We're already planning other Green Club projects. In early 2023 we will plant two hundred trees and pollinator-friendly flower beds and we have planned more energy projects, to reduce our energy use and save money for the club. These include short term actions energy efficiency actions as well as bigger projects including a solar PV installation .

## Who we partnered with

- We worked closely with Derry City & Strabane District Council
- Keep NI Beautiful's Tackling Plastics programme was really useful in helping us reduce single-use plastics in the club <https://www.livehereandlovehere.org/cgi-bin/PlasticPromise>
- We partnered with Conservation Volunteers NI on our tree planting and biodiversity projects
- Our Dermot Early Youth Initiative club members were central to our Green Club projects

## Funding we received :

- The trees we planted were supplied through the Department for Community's Warm Well and Connected (WWC) Programme, with support from Derry City & Strabane District Council's Tree Officer
- We received funding from the Sport NI 'Building Back Better' scheme for our energy upgrades

## Top Tips from Strabane Sigersons

- Clubs can have an immediate impact by doing small things at low or no cost
- Single-use plastics is an area where clubs can act really quickly and quite easily
- Quick wins are important to take the programme forward
- Green projects give younger club members a change to get involved and show leadership and they are a way for the club to look towards the future for their younger members
- Good partnerships are really important in supporting clubs to identify and implement action



Read more about GAA Green Club Projects at: [gaa.ie/greenclub](https://gaa.ie/greenclub)