

MEATH SETS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

With huge parallels between the actions adopted in response to Covid-19 and those which need to be adopted to embed the Sustainable Development Goals, Meath County Council has become the first local authority to set up a dedicated Climate Action and SDG Team.

This is certainly a year Ireland will never forget. Never in our wildest dreams could we have imagined how we would need to radically change our behaviour and how we live.

Our world shrunk to 2km, but technology allowed us access to a bigger world, helping us to stay in touch. We started to appreciate what's on our doorstep and within our communities, our nature and heritage, one connecting us to the present and the other to the past.

Due to the ongoing strong community spirit, we have all pulled together to help each other and protect those most vulnerable within our communities.

Meath County Council's Chief Executive Jackie Maguire noted that now is the time to embrace the SDGs, embed them into the organisation's services, projects and actions, and include them in policy making going forward.

"There are parallels between Covid, the SDGs and the services we now provide due to the pandemic. And as we remain #InThisTogether we strive to protect and help the most vulnerable and create a resilient and inclusive environment. As an organisation we can actively promote the SDGs to our many customers and citizens, to lead by example."

Maguire further stated: "The SDGs will sit under the remit of the Climate Action Team, which has already started to incorporate the goals into its awareness work around the climate crisis. This team will now be the Climate Action and SDG Team."

Meath County Council is the first local authority to assign the goals to a dedicated team and section, according to its chief executive.

TAKING PRACTICAL STEPS

Meath's Climate Action and SDG Officer



Embracing the SDGs - Cathaoirleach Cllr. David Gilroy, Climate Action & SDG Officer Caroline Corrigan, Chief Executive Jackie Maguire and Director of Services Larry Whelan

Caroline Corrigan added: "We have an opportunity to create awareness around the SDGs with the many customers we engage with, and to showcase how individuals, communities and businesses can take practical steps to achieve the goals."

She said that the first step for the local authority in the SDG journey has been to look at how the SDGs may be instilled into the organisation culture.

"To do this we examined our Corporate Plan which sets out our mission and vision for County Meath, core values and engagement with customers and stakeholders. An exercise was undertaken aligning the SDGs to the supporting strategies of the Corporate Plan to ascertain those SDGs on which we can have the most impact."

Cllr David Gilroy, Meath County Council's Cathaoirleach and Chair of the Climate Action Forum, described this as "a wonderful opportunity to build on the goodwill and togetherness that living with

Covid has produced" within the county and communities.

COMMUNITY INTERACTIONS

"We must adjust to a 'new normal' as we start the Covid recovery and there is no reason why the SDGs cannot be at the heart of this.

"We can bring the ethos and language of the SDGs into daily life; working together we can bring the SDGs down to a local level, into our communities to create a better and more resilient environment for everyone to enjoy.

"On behalf of our councillor-led Climate Action Forum we will endeavor to promote the SDGs in our many interactions with constituents."

In her concluding remarks Jackie Maguire said: "There is no doubt we're going through challenging times but working towards the SDGs allows us to build back a better world, one where we can develop sustainably, protect our environment and be inclusive and resilient."