



Community Climate Assembly

Success stories on climate action

Report on an event held at Bailey Allen Hall, University of Galway on 27 September 2025



1. Introduction

On Saturday, 27 September 2025, community groups from across Galway assembled at University of Galway to share their ideas, challenges and success stories on climate action as part of the Community Climate Assembly. The event brought together more than 100 delegates, representing 50 community groups, under the themes of water, mobility, nature, food and wellbeing.

The opening session heard from

- MC: Niall Ó Brolcháin, University of Galway
- Cllr. Mike Cubbard, Mayor of the City of Galway
- Prof. Becky Whay, University Deputy President & Registrar
- Brendan Smith, Tuath Terryland Forest Park
- Amber and Gemma Cunningham-Moorat, Youth Climate Assembly

The assembly then welcomed speakers from University of Galway, Tuath Terryland Forest Park, Youth Climate Assembly, Corrib Beo, Carra Mask Corrib Water Protection Group, Limerick School of Art & Design, Irish Cycling Campaign, Connemara Greenway, Gluas, Hinterland West, Talamh Beo, Galway City Partnership, Westside Community Garden, Galway Atlantaquaria, Galway & Claddagh Swan Rescue, and Galway Community College.

An exhibition also featured many community groups, researchers and companies involved in sustainability and climate action in the region. The Community Climate Assembly was organised by Aerogen, Atlantic Technological University, Corrib Beo, Galway City Community Network, Galway City Council, Galway Roscommon Education & Training Board, Galway Science & Technology Festival, Galway Volunteer Centre, Tuath Terryland Forest Park and University of Galway.

The remainder of this report presents the highlights of the discussions from the four thematic sessions and a selection of photographs from the event.

2. Water

Speakers

- Peter Higgins, Corrib Beo
- Kevin O’Crowley, Carra Mask Corrib Water Protection Group
- Dr Stefano Odorico, Limerick School of Art & Design

Slides:

[Water - Peter Higgins.pptx](#)

[Water - Kevin O’Crowley.pptx](#)

[Water - Stefano Odorico.pptx](#)

Questions for discussion

- What makes Lough Corrib special and important for local people, nature, and visitors?
- What are the biggest problems and threats facing the lake today?
- What actions can we take now to protect and improve Lough Corrib, and how can we work with all stakeholders to ensure it is restored and safeguarded for the future?

Discussion summary

- People have a deep connection with their local water bodies, especially Lough Corrib which connects Galway City, Galway County and Mayo
- Participants shared their personal stories, e.g. ‘I learned to swim there’
- Water is special for ecology, human health, recreation, heritage, community and connections
- There was a strong desire for greater sustainable interaction with Lough Corrib, including walking and boating
- Concerns were expressed about nutrients, pollution and invasive species – as outlined by Kevin O’Crowley
- It was recommended that all stakeholders be engaged, including those farmers who have yet to engage, and attendees commended the engagement examples from Peter Higgins and Stefano Odorico
- Regulation, enforcement and future planning are also needed
- We should cultivate a spirit of guardianship and stewardship

Scanned notes:

[Water notes.pdf](#)

3. Mobility

Speakers

- Martina Callanan, Irish Cycling Campaign
- Dr Pat Collins, Connemara Greenway
- Brendan Mulligan, Gluas

Slides:

[Mobility - Martina Callanan.pptx](#)

[Mobility - Brendan Mulligan.pptx](#)

[Mobility - Patrick Collins.pptx](#)

Questions for discussion

- What do people of all ages and abilities need to make sustainable transport the easy choice when moving to and through their neighbourhood and community?
- What can neighbours, groups and colleagues do to persuade decision-makers to make streets safer and nicer?
- What can individuals and communities do to help to advance Light Rail Transit to the next stage (which is further analysis of potential routes with a view to identifying an Emerging Preferred Route to go to public consultation)?

Discussion summary

- The main theme was that people want more options to travel sustainable
- Regarding cycling, and following Martina Callanan's and Pat Collins' presentations, the main discussion points were the need for safer streets and dedicated cycling infrastructure and greenways, improvements to the TFI bike share scheme, more cycle training and access to refurbished bikes (An Mheitheal Rothar is one resource in this regard)
- On public transport, attendees raised the importance of reliability, frequency, access for all abilities, cost and rural transport
- Gluas was referred to as a 'game changer' with praise for Brendan Mulligan and the Gluas group for their campaigning
- Suggested actions were:
 - Lobbying government and local authorities
 - Communicating the benefits of safe cycling, Connemara Greenway and Gluas through story-telling, media and role models
 - To demonstrate by marching through the city like a tram

Scanned notes:

[Mobility notes.pdf](#)

4. Food & Wellbeing

Speakers

- Claire Davey, Hinterland West
- Fergal Anderson, Talamh Beo
- Imelda Gormally, Galway City Partnership & Áine Hickey, Westside Community Garden

Slides:

[Food - Claire Davey.pptx](#)

[Food - Fergal Anderson.pptx](#)

[Food - Imelda Gormally.pptx](#)

Questions for discussion

- What are the current community-led solutions that support resilient food systems in Galway?
- What barriers do communities in Galway face when trying to access quality local food?
- What does an inclusive food system that protects the environment look like in Galway city and county?

Discussion summary

- Attendees emphasised the importance of community-led solutions like those presented by Claire Davey, Fergal Anderson, Imelda Gormally and Áine Hickey
- There should be promotion of growing through community gardens, allotments, tidy towns and men's sheds
- One of the main challenges is space – access to land and space for markets
- Another challenge relates to funding: funding for community gardens, subsidised land, and the additional cost of organic food
- The food system and the importance of healthy and quality food should be taught in schools and through cookery classes
- Proposals included:
 - Reducing food waste by using systems such as FoodCloud (the University of Galway Student Pantry uses this model)
 - Seed and gene banks to avoid extinction
 - Membership programmes with rewards for buying local

Scanned notes:

[Food & Wellbeing notes.pdf](#)

5. Nature

Speakers

- Dr Nóirín Burke, Galway Atlantaquaria
- Emily Reilly, Galway & Claddagh Swan Rescue
- Tom Flanagan, Galway Community College

Slides:

[Nature - Noirin Burke with videos.pptx](#)

[Nature - Emily Reilly.pptx](#)

[Nature - Tom Flanagan.pptx](#)

Questions for discussion

- What can local neighbourhoods and workplaces do to protect and enhance biodiversity?
- How can biodiversity be safeguarded in an expanding city with more built environment for its growing human population?
- What would be your definition of a 'National Park City' and how could such a status protect the health of both the human and wildlife populations of Galway city?

Discussion summary

- There is a public love of nature, but sometimes people are disconnected from green space or aren't sure what they can do to enhance biodiversity
- Some specific suggestions included No Mow May, native planting, community composting, avoiding pesticides, bug hotels, bat boxes, bird houses, and generally using spaces (incl. verges, laneways) for flowers, plants and pollinators
- Other green citizenship could include volunteering for initiatives such as Galway National Park City and getting involved in measurement (e.g. bio-blitz and other citizen science)
- Access to green and blue spaces should be increased to harness their mental and physical health benefits and to bring back the cultural connections between people and nature, including Irish heritage
- Planning and regulation should safeguard biodiversity by protecting green areas, preventing urban sprawl, promoting sustainable transport, nature-based solutions and green buildings, and the temporary use of vacant sites to support biodiversity

Scanned notes:

[Nature notes.pdf](#)

6. Photographs

All photographs available here: <https://www.mcmphoto.com/-/galleries/community-climate-assembly-2025>





















Appendix 1. Community Climate Assembly schedule

10:00-10:30	Exhibition & Tea/Coffee
10:30-10:45	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr. Mike Cubbard, Mayor of the City of Galway• Prof. Becky Whay, University Deputy President & Registrar• Brendan Smith, Tuath Terryland Forest Park• Amber and Gemma Cunningham-Moorat, Youth Climate Assembly
10:45-11:30	Water session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peter Higgins, Corrib Beo• Kevin O’Crowley, Carra Mask Corrib Water Protection Group• Dr Stefano Odorico, Limerick School of Art & Design• Discussion
11:30-12:15	Mobility session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Martina Callanan, Irish Cycling Campaign• Dr Pat Collins, Connemara Greenway• Brendan Mulligan, Gluas• Discussion
12:15-12:45	Lunch
12:45-13:30	Food & Wellbeing session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Claire Davey, Hinterland West• Fergal Anderson, Talamh Beo• Imelda Gormally, Galway City Partnership & Áine Hickey, Westside Community Garden• Discussion
13:30-14:15	Nature session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr Nóirín Burke, Galway Atlantaquaria• Emily Reilly, Galway & Claddagh Swan Rescue• Tom Flanagan, Galway Community College• Discussion
14:15-14:30	Closing session
14:30-15:30	Optional campus tour

Appendix 2. Organisations represented at the Community Climate Assembly:

ABJ Foundation	Galway Volunteer Centre
Aerogen	Genesys
An Taisce	GLUAS - Light Rail for the Galway Metropolitan Area
Ballybane Community Garden	Hinterland West
Ballyglunin community	Irish Cycling Campaign
Bounce Back Recycling/Upcycling	Let's Get Galway Growing - GCP
Carra Mask Corrib Water Protection Group	Limerick School of Art & Design
Cisco Systems Ltd.	Nature Link West
Claddagh Swan Sanctuary	Northern and Western Regional Assembly
Connemara Greenway	Renmore Residents Association
Corrib Beo	Salthill Men's Shed
Dark Sky Ireland	SPeco sustainability consulting
Fine Gael	StreamScapes
Gaillimh le Gaeilge	Students' Union University of Galway
Galway Atlantaquaria	Talamh Beo
Galway Chamber	Tejidos Femeninos
Galway City Community Network (GCCN)	Tuatha of Terryland Forest Park
Galway City Council	United Women Galway
Galway City Partnership	University of Galway
Galway Community College	WarmHome Hub
Galway County Council	World Saviours Organization (WSO)
Galway Educate Together	Youth Work Ireland Galway, SAUTI- Youth project
Galway Energy Co Operative / Warm Home Hub	
Galway Green Party	
Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board	
Galway Science & Technology Festival	
Galway Traveller Movement	