

GET INVOLVED

Your local Newspaper Community Project **2014**

seai SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND



Taking part in Get Involved are Betty Galvin, Danny Forde, Senan O'Reilly, Becky Jenkins and Trevor Sargent. Pic: Jim Campbell

Echo backs future proofing project

by Anna Hayes

A NEW project aimed at helping the people of Co. Wexford to conserve natural resources and save money is The Echo's entry in the Get Involved competition, run by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland.

The project, entitled 'Future-proof the Model County' is hoping to make people aware of how they can both save money and save the earth's natural resources, with a focus on two areas: forming a practical service to help with installation and maintenance of rainwater harvesting devices and; providing a service to assist house-

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holders to make and use good compost.

The project, which is being coordinated by Senan O'Reilly and former Green Party leader and Minister Trevor Sargent, originated when a group of Wexford residents were discussing the 'transition town' initiative which began in Kinsale, Co. Cork.

That project aimed to make communities more resilient to future shocks caused by climate change, oil dependency, etc. and the group hit on the idea of helping more people to home-compost and harvest rainwater as ways to develop community spirit, conserve natural resources, improve soil health and

save money for individual householders.

The first part of the project will be a public meeting at Wexford town library on Tuesday, September 8 where Davie Philip from the Eco-Village in Cloughjordan will outline the importance globally and benefits locally of 'future proofing Wexford'. Members of Wexford Co. Council's Environment section and of Wexford Tidy Towns Biodiversity Committee will be invited to offer their own thoughts and advice on the project.

From there, teams or 'paramedic groups' to tackle both the compost and rainwater sides of the project will be established and

the initiative is due to be officially launched on Friday, September 25 at a local venue.

Throughout the course of the project, The Echo will publicise examples of good rainwater harvesting and good composting and use of compost as well as advertising the email query line for anyone interested in getting help with either of the issues.

Monthly progress reports will also let the public know how the project is going and to see if targets for increasing composting and harvesting are met.

Coordinators of the project Mr. O'Reilly and Mr. Sargent said: "Benefits of the project include getting

more people talking about and actively involved in conserving natural resources. For the local environment, the wider use of well-made home compost will help to improve soil health and also encourage more people to become growers."

Rainwater harvesting is also a benefit to gardeners as rainwater is better for plants than tap water.

They added: "The long term benefits for the community will include creating a template for similar community based mutual support services including things like energy conservation measures, wildlife habitat work, car pooling, allotment provision or

school parents organising a walking bus." For anyone interested in getting involved in the project, the contact is Senan O'Reilly who is contactable via email at wexlive@gmail.com or on 086 242 7981. Members of the group who developed the project will be in attendance at the public meeting on September 8, more details of which to follow.

The coordinators added: "We are hopeful of that a critical mass of people will become involved at the public meeting and through coverage in our local media. All told, we would hope each 'paramedic' group would have a rota of about 12 volunteers."