

### News & Events



#### Blue Flag Beaches



Nine beaches around Clare were presented with their Blue Flag award for 2018. Lahinch, Kilkee, Whitestrand Miltown Malbay, Ballycuggeran, Cappa, Fanore,

Spanish Point, Mountshannon and Whitestrand Doonbeg all retained their Blue Flags. The Blue Flag is a prestigious prize, awarded only to beaches of the highest standard. The Blue Flag represents high standards in water quality, environmental information and education, environmental management as well as safety, services and facilities.

These awards showcase the amazing bathing areas available in the county, as well as the excellent work by communities and the Local Authority to maintain these high standards.

#### Minister Naughten's speech to EU Energy Ministers



Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment Denis Naughten has called on his EU colleagues to become as 'self-sufficient as possible in terms

of energy' in a recent speech to EU Energy Ministers. The primary focus of this self sufficiency is on renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency. Minister Naughten highlighted the importance of meeting the current climate change targets, as well as ensuring that European economies grow in a 'long term sustainable manner'.

This Minister also stressed the need for Europe to increase its production of bio-fuels. Additionally, the minister supported greater use of electricity in road transport and better systems to install renewable energy systems on buildings. More information is available from the [DCCAIE](http://DCCAIE) website.

#### National Dialogue on Climate Action

The National Dialogue on Climate Action are a series of regional gatherings taking place around the country. They will be used to create awareness about, and motivation to act against, the challenges posed by climate change, while also gathering views and opinions from citizens on climate policy implementation and prioritisation.

The dialogues will run for two years, and are free for members of the public to attend. The event will feature a workshop and a number of expert speakers on climate

change and the environment. More information is available on the [DCCAIE](http://DCCAIE) website.

#### Climate Action Fund

As part of the 'Ireland 2040 Plan', the government announced a €500 million fund to help deal with climate change and it's challenges. The Climate Action Fund will support initiatives that contribute to the achievement of Ireland's climate and energy targets.

Rather than allocating the money to Government Departments, the funds will be allocated competitively to the best projects in relevant areas. The funds are available to local government, business, educational institutions, chambers of commerce and more. More information is available on the [PER](http://PER) website.



Renewable energy sources are an excellent way of reducing energy consumption and increasing efficiency, while saving you money on your electricity and heating bills! This summer edition of the newsletter will focus on Solar

Photovoltaic (PV). Solar PV systems use the sun's energy to convert daylight into renewable electricity for your home.

A 3kW Solar PV system, if well located, would produce approximately 2,600kWh of electricity per year. This equates to around 40% of the energy demand for a typical Irish home. Options can be added to help maximise the amount of electricity generated. Diverter switches can be added to ensure any excess electricity is diverted to heating hot water, rather than being wasted. A battery storage system is used to save electricity that is being generated by the solar PV system, but is not currently being used. The battery will then discharge this stored electricity when it is next needed.

According to the SEAI, solar PV panels are usually priced at €1,500 to €2,000 per kW installed (ex. VAT), but these prices can vary depending on system size, roof accessibility and hardware chosen. Most Solar PV systems are eligible for the government's Home Renovation Incentive (HRI). This scheme allows people to avail of a 13.5% tax credit, to a maximum value of €30,000, on all works carried out over the value of €4,405. More information on the HRI and Solar PV's can be found at [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie) and [www.seai.ie](http://www.seai.ie).

# Tips for Energy Efficient Homes and Gardens



➤ Your appliances use 20% of their electricity when they are left on standby. A typical household could save around €46.56 per year by just plugging out their appliances each night.



➤ Only about 10% -15% of the electricity that incandescent lights consume results in light, the rest is turned into heat. LED lights use 85% less energy, keep your home cooler and could save you €9 per bulb p.a.

➤ This summer, dry your clothes outside rather than in the tumble dryer. Outside drying can be just as effective, while also saving you money on energy bills.

➤ Believe it or not, your dishwasher is more efficient than you! In fact, a full dishwasher uses less than half the energy you do when washing dishes by hand and also uses gallons less water too.

➤ Check the settings on Air-conditioning units at home or in work. The heating set points should not be above 21 degrees, while the cooling set points should not be below 24 degrees. Many systems are the wrong way round, so the AC never switches off!



➤ Refrigeration makes up around 16% of the average energy bill. Don't overload the fridge making it work harder and use more energy. For every 20 seconds a fridge is open, it can take up to 45 minutes for it to bring the temperature back down to normal!



➤ Green waste is not rubbish, so stop sending it to landfill! You're throwing away good nutrients so either compost or mulch and then apply around your plants for the best fertilizer possible.

➤ Install a Water Butt in your garden to help conserve water this summer, and use it for washing the car and gardening. Water butts are inexpensive and will reduce your water costs as well as the energy required for treating and pumping water to you.

➤ Do not cut your grass too short! Never remove more than 25% of the initial height of the grass in one cut. This can have serious implications for your lawn, such as damaging the roots of the grass, as well as increasing moss and weed growth.

➤ Line any hanging baskets with bubble wrap to retain water and stop the plants from drying out. You can also use water retaining gel crystals and water globes in baskets and pots to help lock in moisture.

