



## NEW YEAR, NEW IDEAS

We're now entering the spring of 2018 and as this is the first issue of the year what better time to take stock of what we've done and where we're going. Over the course of 2017, we've been working towards our goal of improving the public realm around Cork city. After building a network of over 100 volunteers and collaborating with dozens of other organisations, we're well on our way.

Our stand-out project of the last year has been our fruit and veg garden at Portney's Lane on the Coal Quay. The derelict site had been overgrown with weeds and used as an illegal carpark for years. Thanks to a grant from Energia and GfY Ireland, and the work of our dozens of volunteers from the locality and beyond, we were able to transform the city centre space into a thriving garden where we produced a large crop of delicious potatoes, beetroots, cabbages, onions, and much more. Currently we're working on expanding the garden with new trees already planted up.

Elsewhere, we created more urban gardens at sites at George's Quay, Patrick's Quay, and Kyril's Quay, to name just a few, all the while continuing to maintain existing green projects at Coleman's Lane and North Gate Bridge. The only regret from the year was having to move out of our garden on Kyle St following the sale of the site, though we hope to see the former derelict space developed soon.

Our electricity box painting collection has also grown. Some of our most popular additions in 2017 were a tribute to the Frank and Walters, a pop-art style 'Welcome to Cork' themed box, and a painting paying homage to Tanora, Corkonians favourite fizzy pop. We were also pleased to work on a series of box paintings with the Cork Samaritans to promote their free-phone helpline number 116 123.

Elsewhere, we participated in 2017's Culture Night, staging history walks across the Oldtown



of Cork city, and held a talk on urban food gardens as part of the Cork Food Policy Council's inaugural Food Harvest Festival. We also held a series of nature walks over the summer months, something which we hope to make into a more regular occurrence this year.

And speaking of 2018, we'll be continuing in the same vein of gardening and painting but hoping to do even more. We'll continue to green as much of the city as possible, but our aim for the year is to change our focus from non-native herbaceous bedding annuals to native Irish wildflowers. Native plants will provide more benefits to the biodiversity of the city and should, in time, encourage the proliferation of more bees, butterflies and ladybirds.

Other ideas which we're currently exploring include organising a city wide clean-up day, creating parklets (temporary green amenities on road side parking spaces), and producing a Cork themed podcast. So, lots to watch out for and happy 2018 to all our supporters.



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