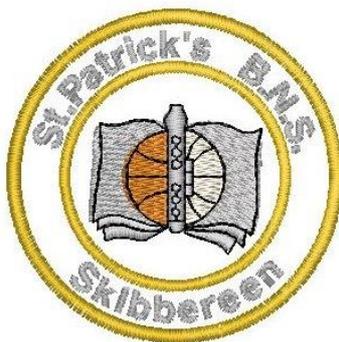




St. Patrick's Boys' National School
Skibbereen



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St. Patrick's B.N.S.

About Our School

Our School

St. Patrick's B.N.S. is located on the outskirts of Skibbereen town, catering for boys from Junior Infants to 6th class. We were 2 separate schools – a junior school and a senior school until we amalgamated in September 2015. We are a boys' school with classes from junior infants to 6th. We also have an ASD Unit catering for children with autism. We moved to our current building in 1981 from the old school in Market Street.

Our Students

203 boys attend our mainstream classes from junior infants to 6th. Our students come from Skibbereen Town and the surrounding areas.

We opened our first class for children with autism in 2001. This has grown over the years to a thriving Autistic Unit. We now have 3 classes for autism including an early intervention class for children aged from 3 to 5 years of age. We now have 16 boys and girls with autism attending our school from all over West Cork – from Glengarriff to the west to Dunmanway to the north and Rosscarbery to the east.

Our Staff

We have grown to a staff of 31. Since amalgamating, we now have an administrative principal, Mr. Alan Foley, 9 classroom teachers, 9 support teachers and 9 SNAs. We also have a secretary, cleaner and caretaker.

Our Vision

We propose to develop the area to the rear of the school into a school garden with a number of elements. We plan, over a 3 year period and involving 3 distinct phases, to develop this area into a living, working area of beauty which would enhance the well being of the children of our school and the people of Skibbereen.

Phase 1

- Landscaping of Sensory Garden
- Landscaping and construction of Amphitheatre
- Planting of Willow Tunnel and Willow Dome
- Creation of multi sensory path through Sensory Garden
- Construction of Herb Wheel and Zen Garden within Sensory Garden
- Planting of herbaceous plants and grasses within Sensory Garden
- Planting of mature, staked trees
- Installation of seated areas within Sensory Garden

Phase 2

- Construction of Wormery
- Construction of Raised Beds in front of temporary classrooms
- Construction of Composting Area
- Construction of Insect Hotel

Phase 3

- Planting of mixed native hedging along full length of fence at rear of school
- Creation of path along full length of new hedging
- Planting of orchard
- Construction of Geodome

Phase 1 – Sensory Garden

The plans for the Sensory Garden have been developed primarily around the needs of the children with autism in our school but it is also a resource which will be enjoyed by the entire school and the wider community.

Sensory Path

The Sensory Path will lead right through the Sensory Garden. It will have a range of surfaces including stones, gravel, sand, bark mulch, straw etc.

Herb Wheel

The Herb Wheel will operate like a raised bed and will facilitate the growing of various herbs.

Zen Garden

The Zen Garden will be a peaceful area where people will have the opportunity to rake and manipulate the various textures within the garden.

Willow Tunnel and Dome

The Willow Tunnel and Dome will be a living sculpture which will grow and develop with the children and will provide years of horticultural, sensory and imaginative learning for all our students.

Amphitheatre

The Amphitheatre will operate as an outdoor classroom where children experience a different learning environment.

Planted Area

The planted areas will consist of shrubs, herbaceous plants and grasses which will stimulate the senses through touch, smell and sight.

Seated Areas

It is important that those entering the Sensory Garden have the opportunity to stop and appreciate the beauty and peacefulness of the garden.

Phase 2 – Growing

The second phase of our development centres around providing children with hands on experience of growing flowers, plants, fruit and vegetables.

Raised Beds

We plan to construct a number of raised beds so that each class will experience planting and growing flowers, plants and vegetables.

Wormery

We plan to construct a glass fronted wormery so that children can experience and create their own rich compost for assisting their growing projects.

Composting Area

We plan to construct a simple composting area for making our own compost which will be used in turn in the garden.

Insect Hotel

We plan to construct an “insect hotel” where children can observe native insects in a natural environment.

Phase 3 – Observing Nature

The third phase of our development involves providing people, especially children, with the opportunity to observe nature in a safe environment. It provides incredible educational opportunities and real life experiences of a natural habitat.

Mixed Native Hedging

By planting mixed native hedging along the boundary of the school and creating a path alongside it, we provide an opportunity for people to observe native trees up close and the seasonal changes which they experience. It also provides an opportunity to observe insects, birds and animals which might make their homes within this habitat.

Orchard

By planting an orchard, people will get the opportunity to observe the stages in the growth and development of various fruit and also to harvest the fruit.

Geodome

A geodome will enable us to grow fruit and vegetables all year round. It will provide fantastic educational opportunities and introduce the children to a wide range of possibilities for planting and growing, cooking and eating. The geodome, circular in nature, will have a teaching area in the centre and will have raised beds circling the interior of the dome for planting and growing.

Who is the garden for?

School Community

- **Pupils** – the garden will be primarily for the pupils within our school. They will be central to its management, maintenance and growth
- **Pupils with autism** – the value of the garden cannot be underestimated for the children in our school with autism and have been central to its design and development
- **Staff** – the staff of the school will oversee the maintenance and management of the garden and be central to its use as a learning environment
- **Parents** – parents will be involved in the construction and maintenance of the garden and will have access to it on a regular basis

Wider Community

We recognise the importance of sharing our garden with the wider Skibbereen community and beyond:

- **Skibbereen Community Playschool** – the playschool has been built next to our school and we would encourage them to use our garden on a regular basis
- **Open Days** – we would love the opportunity to showcase our garden and would host annual open days where the people of Skibbereen would be invited to visit
- **Grandparent's Day** – we have plans to host an annual "Grandparent's Day" and the new school garden would be an ideal location for this
- **Skibbereen Retirement Village** – our school has strong links with the Retirement Village and our choir regularly sing for the residents. We would love to invite them to enjoy our new garden

- **School website** – we are currently in the process of developing our school website and plan to display pictures and information about our garden on the website
- **Other schools** – other schools would be welcome to visit our school to learn and possibly get ideas for the development of their own school gardens. We would also invite other schools to get involved in gardening projects in our garden
- **CoAction & COPE**– our ASD unit has a strong involvement with CoAction and COPE. We have many past pupils from our ASD classes who could visit, help and work in our garden as there is very little for this age group in our community at present
- **A Taste of West Cork** – our school has been involved in this food festival since its inception and our new garden would be a perfect location to host events and promote the festival

Who will build, develop and maintain our garden?

Staff

10 staff members have already volunteered to be members of our “Garden Committee”. Lead by Brian Granaghan, who has experience of similar projects in the past, they have developed this plan for the development of the school garden. The school plans to foster and promote an interest within the school and throughout the wider community in the planting and growing of our native species. We also have a part time caretaker who will regularly maintain the garden and its surrounds.

Parents

The voluntary support of the parent body has always been a strength of our school. Parents from a wide variety of backgrounds have pledged their support to this project. The drawings accompanying this proposal have been done by such a parent and we plan to develop our garden with the continuing support of our parents.

Pupils

Our pupils will be the primary “gardeners” in this project. 2 classes are currently involved in the Skibbereen Community Gardens and enthusiasm and interest levels among pupils are very high. Each class will maintain their own raised bed under the guidance of their teacher. A “Garden Club” will take responsibility for the weekly maintenance and weeding of the garden during break times. The pupils will be the lifeblood of this project and help sustain and develop our garden into the future.

Local Expertise

We have been in contact with local experts and garden centres in relation to the landscaping of our garden and the purchase of plants, trees etc and plan to support the local economy in the development of this garden project.

Skibbereen has an active “Men’s Shed” who we hope to approach in the development of our project. There is a large number of actively retired people in the Skibbereen area who we hope would get involved in this garden.

Michael Burke who heads the Horticulture Adult Education in the Rossa College has also agreed to advise and assist at all stages of our project.

Outside Agencies

The school plans to approach a number of outside agencies who would support the school in an advisory capacity. The “***Heritage in Schools Scheme***” is a scheme which can be applied for whereby Heritage Council part funds a visit to the school by specialists in a number of areas. We have also requested support from horticultural advisors within ***Teagasc***.

UCC

UCC has recently established a Centre for Organic Horticulture Research in Liss Ard Estate, Skibbereen. We have already approached the college for advise and to establish links with our new development which would sustain it into the future.

Lord David Puttnam

Lord David Puttnam is a trustee of the Eden Project in England and has worked with Tim Farley of Bespoke Structures Ireland who would supply our geodome. We would hope to involve David Puttnam in our project and plan to make contact with him in the near future.

How do we fund this project?

The development of this project relies on the amount of money available to the school. In order to maximise the potential of this project, we need to apply for funding and sponsorship as well as receiving voluntary support:

Voluntary Labour

A principle means of reducing the cost of this project will be voluntary labour. We will be relying on the goodwill of parents, staff and pupils for much of the creation of this garden as well as any other agencies who may be able to support us in a voluntary capacity.

School Funds

Similar to the vast majority of schools, we do not have vast amounts of expendable income. However, the Board of Management have always supported the school in such ventures and should make a contribution towards this project.

Parent's Association

The school has a vibrant and energetic Parent's Association who regularly fundraise to support school projects. We will again be relying on our P.A to fundraise to support this venture.

Gwendoline Harold Barry Trust

We are aware of the Gwendoline Harold Barry Trust and the great work they have done in the past in supporting projects related to horticulture. We would be hopeful that they would support us in this project.

Trees for Schools

"Trees for Schools" is a project run by the Native Woodland Trust. 30 free native trees are provided to schools under this scheme.

Local Sponsorship

We would be very hopeful that once we begin this ambitious project that we will receive financial support from local business and enterprise.

Approximate Costings:

Feature	Quote provided by	Approx. amount
<u>Phase 1</u>		
Initial landscaping	Mark Lee	€850
Willow tunnel & dome	Lucy Bell, Growing Gardens	€650
Multi sensory path	Mark Lee	€1830
Herb wheel	Sean Crowley	€805
Zen garden	Mark Lee	€975
Seating	Thornhill Bros	€1500
Plants, herbs & grasses	Deelish Garden Centre	€2775
Total Cost of Phase 1		€9385
<u>Phase 2</u>		
Raised beds	Quickcrop.ie	€1680
Composting area	Sean Crowley	€2324
Insect hotel	Sean Crowley	€580
Wormery	Sean Crowley	€742
Topsoil/Landscaping	Mark Lee	€750
Total cost of Phase 2		€6076
<u>Phase 3</u>		
Geodome(after 20% discount)	Bespoke Structures Ireland	€8720
Native hedging	Deelish Garden Centre	€525
Orchard	Deelish Garden Centre	€220
Total Cost of Phase 3		€9465
Overall Cost		€24,926