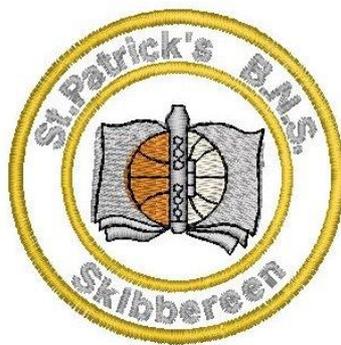




**St. Patrick's Boys' National School
Skibbereen**



**Official Opening of Garden &
Geodome**

10th September 2016

Origins of Our Garden

The staff of St. Patrick's B.N.S. started a discussion less than a year ago about how to further develop the area of ground behind the school. The original idea was to build a number of raised beds into the slope. From this starting point, the idea of a school garden evolved and bloomed. Teacher Brian Granaghan has designed an exciting and multi faceted garden which we are so proud to share with the public today.

Work Begins

On February 26th 2016, work began on our garden. Local gardening expert Mark Lee carried out the initial work to develop the garden layout. Since that date, we are amazed at the progress which has been made thanks to staff, children, parents and the wider community.

Key Elements of our Garden

Geodome – we believe we are the first primary school in the country with its own geodome. Our geodome enables us to grow fruit and vegetables all year round. It allows us to experiment with exotic plants: we are growing pineapple, banana, tea, avocado and many more. We have our Venus Fly Traps and even our own mini paddy field for growing rice. It provides fantastic educational opportunities and introduces the children to a wide range of possibilities for planting and growing, cooking and eating. The geodome, circular in nature, has a teaching area in the centre and has raised beds circling the interior of the dome for planting and growing.



Raised Beds – we have 10 raised beds – one for each class. Each class gets to grow something different so that by the end of their time in St. Patrick's, each child will have grown a variety of plants and vegetables.

Sensory Garden – Our Sensory Garden has a Sensory Path which leads from one end of the garden to the other. It is divided into a number of different sections, each with a different surface e.g. bark mulch, gravel, stone, logs etc. We also have a Zen Garden where we can rake and play with the sand. On either side of our sensory path are our planting areas where we can grow various plants, shrubs and crops.



Willow Dome & Tunnel - The boys from 3rd & 4th class, under the guidance of Lucy Bell, built our willow tunnel and dome. Over the next year and a half this will grow to give us an enjoyable and fun place to play and learn.

Amphitheatre – We have built an amphitheatre which will act as an outdoor classroom. All we need now is some good weather!!!

Wild Trail – We have made a simple wild trail behind our prefabs where we can observe wild flowers and grass as well as insects and small creatures

Insect Hotel – we have built a simple insect hotel out of pallets. We have filled each tier with a different material for bugs to use to make their homes. It's ideal for classes to visit to see little creatures up close.

Woodland Area – we are lucky to have a small area with mature trees. We have put some bird houses in here and it is a beautiful sheltered area within the garden.

What Comes Next??

Wormery & Composting Areas – we will be building a wormery and composting area so that we can make our own compost for growing.

Orchard – we plan to plant an orchard this year so that we can grow our own apples, pears and other fruit.

Native Hedging – we plan to plant a number of different varieties of native hedging along the perimeter fence at the back of our school.

Mini-Forest – we will plant a number of trees close together to make a mini forest.

Herb Wheel–we will build a herb wheel so that we can grow a variety of herbs.

Water Feature – we want to introduce a water feature to our garden.

Thank You

Without the help of a large number of people, this garden would never have been possible.

Gwendoline Harold Barry Trust – the Trustees have pledged €13,000 to our project. Thanks to their generosity, we have the garden of our dreams.

Parents' Association – Our P.A. has raised over €10,000 for our garden already and have been an incredible support from the start.

School Community – from parent donations to help on our work evenings, we cannot thank the pupils, families and friends of this school enough.

Fusion Home Interiors have kindly donated over €500 worth of paint.

Norman Deane Tree Services – Norman has supplied and delivered over €500 worth of bark mulch for our paths and growing areas.

Lorkan Murphy and Tadhg Murphy supplied and delivered a number of trailers of horse manure for use as organic fertiliser.

Skibbereen Golf Club donated and delivered the sand for our Zen Garden.

Tim Farley built our Geodome, **Mark Lee** did our groundworks and **Andrew Hume** built our raised beds.

Teagasc – Liam O Driscoll organised a team of Teagasc workers to volunteer to work on the garden.

School Garden Committee – the staff members who give up their lunch breaks to run the garden club for the pupils twice a week.

Ian O Regan drew up produced our garden plans so that we could make our initial presentation to the Gwendoline Harold Barry Trust.

Kevin O Flynn allowed us access through his land to the back of the school so that machinery and deliveries could access the garden.

To all those who have helped, advised and supported us in this project, we sincerely thank each and every one of you. We welcome you all to visit our garden in the future and to share in the wonderful resource that you have helped us to develop.