

The Braidside Bunch

By Isabella, Lily and Milena, P7D.

Once upon a time, there was a lovely place called The Ecos Centre in Ballymena. Well, it used to be lovely until one peaceful day a massive digger came and destroyed it. Before it was replaced with a monstrosity of a motorway, it had been the beautiful home of Connie the rabbit, Isabelle the hedgehog, Sammy the Squirrel and Jerry the mouse, along with many more animals.

Isabelle was devastated. She had lived there since 2002 (which is a long time in hedgehog years). Connie decided they needed a new home, so she instructed Sammy to climb a tree and scan the Ballymena landscape for somewhere suitable. Sammy spotted Braidside Integrated Primary School. It seemed like a perfect fit with two bug hotels, eleven fruit trees, bird boxes, butterfly trees and a small forest. Sammy was so excited about his discovery. "You need to see the new home I've found for us. It is so awesome. There are trees to climb, bugs to eat, fruit to nibble on and loads of wonderful plants," Sammy told the others.

Connie liked the sound of it but Jerry was unsure. Isabelle reassured him. "It's such a good breeding site Jerry and it would mean you can make new friends. There will also be great shelter for you in the long grass. There are so many plants and trees and bushes that the air is fresh and clean," she explained. "The residents of the school have an eco-community and they also work with Sustrans who encourage people to get active and leave their cars at home."

"That means there's less carbon-dioxide around!" shouted Jerry.

That was it settled. The four friends made their way to Braidside Integrated Primary School. When they arrived, they met frogs, birds, butterflies and lots of other types of bugs. They immediately overheard the P7s talking about winning a hedgerow in a competition. Connie, who wasn't short on confidence, hopped over to the others and said, "Guys, the P7s are talking about a hedgerow. Something to do with keeping Northern Ireland Animals beautiful, but I don't need help with that! A hedgerow would really benefit me – there would be soft soil that I could dig in."

"Oh, that would help me hide my nuts," said Sammy.

Isabella added, "I could hibernate in it and it would be a safe place for Jerry to sleep peacefully."

"The hedgerow sounds great," finished Connie, "let's hope it happens and we can invite loads more friends."