



SUPPORTING WELLBEING  
Annual Report 2020

burrenb<sup>o</sup>trust  
connecting people and place



# Our Mission and Our Work

## Our Mission

Burrenbeo Trust is a landscape charity dedicated to connecting all of us to our places and our role in caring for them.

## Our Vision

### HERITAGE CONSERVATION

A place which is valued for its natural, built and cultural heritage; whose conservation is innovative and sustainable, and can be used as a model elsewhere to help other communities realise the potential of their heritage.

### ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

Where people have the opportunity to know, experience and share their heritage.

### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Where communities can thrive through working sustainably with the landscape.

## Our Approach

To continue to develop as an inclusive, independent and transparent charity working towards the sustainable future of the Burren.

To engage with local communities to generate a sense of informed pride in heritage and landscape through community stewardship, place-based and community-based learning.

To promote sustainable communities through the concept of the Burren as a learning landscape.

To develop models of best practice for community stewardship and place-based and community-based learning as a means of sustainable conservation.

To disseminate knowledge, develop resources and continue to learn and grow as an organisation through the shared knowledge of others regionally, nationally and internationally.

## Through these avenues:

**Education**

**Advocacy**

**Active Conservation**

**Research**

**Information Provision**

As 2020 draws to a close, our thoughts are with everyone who has been affected by COVID-19.

Throughout this challenging year the Burrenbeo Trust worked mainly online, continuing to connect people with the Burren and creating new opportunities for people to share and experience place-based learning.

We had to suspend our regular monthly gatherings in the Burren from March, including our **Members' Heritage Walks, Winter Tea Talks** and **Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers' (BCV)** events, as well as our **Áitbheo** school programmes and **Burren Farm Visits**. In September and October we held **Members' Walks, BCV events** and a **Heritage Trainers' weekend course** with public health measures, before high level restrictions were reintroduced in mid-October.

Moving our events online opened up opportunities to engage with new contributors and reach a wider audience in Ireland and globally: the weekly **Wild Wednesday Webinars** in April showcased the work of **Farming for Nature Programme** ambassador farmers all over Ireland; the **Burren in Bloom Online Festival** in June invited participants anywhere in the world to celebrate the arrival of the Burren flowers with online talks, stories and family fun; the **Learning Landscape Online Symposium** was held in July with world-class speakers; from August, our monthly **Online Tea Talks** included presentations

on *Our Limestone Landscapes in Ireland* and other countries; the **Burren Winterage Weekend** in October featured ways in which farmers across the world are contributing innovatively to addressing our climate and biodiversity crises. Recordings of our online events are available to view on the **Burrenbeo Trust YouTube Channel**, along with beautiful videos for **Heritage Week** and the **Burren Winterage Weekend**. Our social media following on the **Burrenbeo Trust Facebook page** and on **Twitter** grew this year, as did subscriptions to the **Burrenbeo Snapshot e-newsletter**.

We hope to return soon to our **Áitbheo** work with schools; in the meantime we are developing an interactive **Áitbheo Online** platform for schools with funding from Rethink Ireland. We are also preparing to run **Áitbheo** with communities and schools in Co. Galway in 2021 with support from Galway Rural Development and LEADER.

We are most grateful to this year's event leaders and volunteers, to our members, business members, donors and benefactors, and our funders. Please continue to support our work through membership, volunteering and donations – we will need your help to get through the difficult times ahead. Let's keep connected – we are stronger together.

**Annalisa Murphy**  
**Burrenbeo Trust Coordinator**  
**December 2020**

# The Organisation in Numbers

## Since the beginning:

- 8,003** **People have attended** the **195** educational monthly heritage walks and winter talks series since 2009. Our Burren in Bloom festival walks and talks have attracted **4,341** people since 2010.
- 1,814** **Young Burren Experts** have graduated from our free 9-week week Áitbheo (previously named Ecobeo) heritage programme in **36** different local primary schools since its inception in 2003.
- 514** **Individuals** have worked, for free, with the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers to carry out active conservation projects in the region since 2010.
- 370** **Place Heroes** have graduated from our Áitbheo Secondary active place-based learning programme.
- 168** **Monthly snapshots** have been sent out to a growing base of Burrenbeo subscribers with news and events from the region since 2007. Currently **4,172** people receive this free each month.
- 164** **Grants** were written to 60 different funding bodies since 2009 in order to keep this organisation going. **93** were successful, generating €573,049 for the organisation in the past 12 years.
- 154** **Primary school teachers** and heritage educators from **16** different counties have trained on our place-based education courses since 2014; this is central to spreading our model of place-based learning nationally.
- 36** **Burren farmers** have led walks across their land in the Burren for Burrenbeo Trust in order to raise awareness of this exceptional landscape with its unique story since 2008. A further **132** heritage experts have also given their time for free to raise awareness through walks and talks for the organisation.
- 12** **Years ago** the Burrenbeo Trust was launched as a landscape charity building on the educational work of Burrenbeo Teoranta started by Brendan Dunford and Ann O'Connor in the 9 previous years.

## This year:

- 122,000 Euro** is the amount that Burrenbeo Trust had to raise this year. This is a shoestring budget to deliver the wide range of programmes and a testament to the value for money that the organisation provides.
- 16,828** is the total number of **users of our websites** this year with over 100 pages of information on the Burren's natural, built and cultural heritage. This amounted to **51,317** individual page hits and includes our Burren in Bloom and Burren Winterage Weekend festival websites.
- 9,811** **People currently follow us** on the social media sites Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.
- 1,000** **People attended our public events** this year celebrating the Burren and learning from it, including the Learning Landscape Symposium, the Burren in Bloom festival, Heritage Week events and the Burren Winterage Weekend.
- 596** People have attended our **monthly walks** and **winter tea talks**.
- 700** **Individuals, couples and families** are currently members of the Burrenbeo Trust.
- 39** **Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers** made up **54** attendances at 4 conservation events this year. This adds up to approximately **432** days donated to the region in active conservation.
- 28** **Key projects** and areas of work were coordinated and delivered by the Trust this year.
- 20** **Grant applications** were submitted this year by Burrenbeo Trust with only 10 being approved. It is increasingly difficult to fit heritage, environment and sustainable communities into grant requirements.
- 6** **Staff** currently work at the Burrenbeo Trust office amounting collectively to just 100 hours a week to coordinate and deliver the wide range of projects the organisation runs today.



What makes a place unique? And what makes an organization unique? Places are distinctive when their geology, climate, flora and fauna illustrate the striking diversity of the natural world. Organizations are unique when they follow the lead of their unique places and create education opportunities, community programs, economic revitalization initiatives and audacious explorations that are rooted in that diversity.

I do a lot of biking in beautiful places — on the rain-forested coast of British Columbia and the rugged coast of Maine, in Toronto's urban parks and in the cutesy Cotswolds. But the one bike ride of the past couple of decades that stands out most in my mind took us up into the high winterages. We rolled up into high limestone country along the flanks of Mount Carron, then down into a sheltered valley to Glencolumbkille, then hairpin turned our way up over the ridge and down to the Burren Perfumery. High country and hidden valley, barren rock and riotous flora in such a compact package. It was glorious.

Similarly there not many place-based education and conservation organizations in North America and around the globe that are as intriguingly rich, and as cosily charming, as the Burrenbeo Trust. Burrenbeo's place-based education programs are absolutely on-point and pedagogically inspired. They connect children and parents, farmers and business owners, to a place unlike any in the world. They make the quiet little Burren a world class learning landscape. On top of that they manage teacher training, agricultural preservation, wildflower festivals, and international conferences. It's a wonder to me that the small, but intensely energetic, staff of the Trust keep so many balls in the air at the same time. What a joy to know that this little corner of the world is in their good hands.

#### **David Sobel**

David is a trailblazing environmental educator who raised his children in the heart of nature. His story shows other parents how they can counter today's pervasive 'nature deficit.'

## Goals for 2021

The Burrenbeo Trust aims not only to continue and strengthen its current programmes but also to focus on the following:

- To spread the word locally, nationally and internationally that learning in place, through place and for place is hugely beneficial for individuals and their local and global communities.
- To further develop community ownership and leadership of our events.
- To increase the number of Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers, increasing active conservation in the community, while also promoting environmentally friendly 'green health' and combatting social isolation among a range of social groups in our region.
- To become more engaged with socio-economic challenges in the region, in the belief that supporting communities supports the environment.
- To increase fundraising income to cover all our core activities and to identify new funding avenues.
- To continue to research the impact of the organisation's place-based learning programmes on community stewardship.
- To evaluate the programmes in place and refine them where needed to reflect current needs in the communities around us.

### **Responding to change**

The past year has been a momentous one for all of us, everywhere. We have had to adapt, individually and collectively, personally and professionally, to rapidly changing circumstances and be much more agile in how we act today and plan for tomorrow. It is with a sense of pride that I reflect on how the team at Burrenbeo have responded to these many challenges, but also with concern as to how we will face the turbulent, and possibly recessionary, times ahead. Our rapid shift into the virtual realm has been forced on us – we miss our monthly walks in the Burren, our tea talks in Tubber and our festivals of learning in Kinvara - but have really enjoyed engaging with a wider 'zoom' audience, and hearing from a range of nationally and internationally renowned speakers. Another 'upside' has been the opportunity to gain a deeper awareness of, and appreciation and respect for, our locale during lockdown. This is core to Burrenbeo's work in advocating for more place-based learning and stewardship at school and community level and something that will be key to addressing our growing climate and biodiversity crises. I'd like to conclude by thanking our amazing staff who have been magnificent in embracing change, and our volunteers and members who have been so generous in their understanding and support; we will continue to achieve great things for the Burren and its communities if we remain committed and innovative in our approach during the months and years ahead.

**Brendan Dunford, Trust Secretary**

# Education

## Achievements 2020

At the beginning of 2020 we delivered our **Áitbheo Primary course** in Kiltiernan, Craughwell, Gort and Tubber National Schools with a total of 111 pupils taking part in the programme. We are communicating with schools presently with regards to current restrictions and hope to have another 4 schools lined up to begin in January 2021.

We are currently working on designing and launching an online version of our **Áitbheo Primary programme** with the intention to pilot the programme in April next year with 2 schools initially.

25 Transition Year pupils from Seamount College received scholarships for the **Áitbheo Secondary course** in the early part of 2020 following their course introduction field trips. The students graduated as **Laoch Áite** (place heroes). Over 190 Transition year students will attend the modified **Place Based Áitbheo field trip** on their own school grounds during the autumn of 2020.

Our weekend **Áitbheo Training course** for teachers and community educators in October shared our tools for building place based learning into education programmes and school curricula. The course sold out rapidly and we are offering a second weekend course in February 2021.

While our 9th **Learning Landscape Symposium** organised for March had to be cancelled due to government restrictions, we were delighted to hold it online in July to a global audience. It was a huge success with just over 430 attendances over 4 days.

We continue to provide **orientation sessions** for numerous visiting groups and groups from universities, schools and adults online, and at selected locations across the Burren.

*'I think my place is nice but we can make it amazing. One person can make a big difference. If we all just pitch in we can make Lisdoonvarna great. Once we make Lisdoonvarna great we can make the world a better place.'*

**Alannah, Lisdoonvarna  
Áitbheo Primary Participant**

After watching quietly from the side lines (with admiration) for many years, in 2020 we took the plunge and became members of the Burrenbeo Trust. Partly this was to say thanks for the inspiring Place Based Conference held online during the summer, and partly because it was high time we aligned ourselves with a group of people whose motivations we share so completely.

What a way to make lemonade from lemons! Place-Based Education delivered online might seem an oxymoron, yet the conference brought us glimpses through the windows of international experts, sharing stories, ideas and images from both coasts of North America and from around Ireland. It whetted our appetite to go exploring in our own neighbourhood, learning more about the natural history; the biological diversity that was, is, and might be; and the lives of people who came before us. And we were inspired to try new approaches in our work with primary school children around the country, as panellists on the Heritage in Schools programme.

To follow this, we signed up for the two-day Place Based Learning Training course with the Burrenbeo Trust in October, and we are very glad we did. We found the studies and practical experiences enjoyable and fascinating. An important aspect in our work is that the lessons are adaptable to include as diverse participants as you might find in any school setting, and we found this to be the case.

Some of our preconceptions were challenged (always a good sign), exploring the concept of Rewilding and recognising that some modified environments are worth preserving in their modified states.

As often happens in groups, much is gained from the knowledge the other participants bring, if the facilitator is skilled at opening the space. Grainne and Kate have that skill. Obviously, appropriate precautions were taken to safeguard against the spread of Covid, inside and outside the classroom. We were reminded that any day is a good day to spend time outdoors, regardless of the weather. The first afternoon was sunny, the second wet. We had loads of fun and important learning in both circumstances.

We're looking forward to seeing what journeys Burrenbeo Trust bring us on next year.

**Fionn and Jonathan Angus  
Fionnathan Productions**



# Advocacy

## Achievements 2020

We continue to develop our models of community stewardship and place-based learning that can be shared elsewhere.

We coordinated the **Burren Winterage Weekend** strangely online this year with a virtual cattle drive to celebrate the key role farmers play in maintaining this unique landscape.

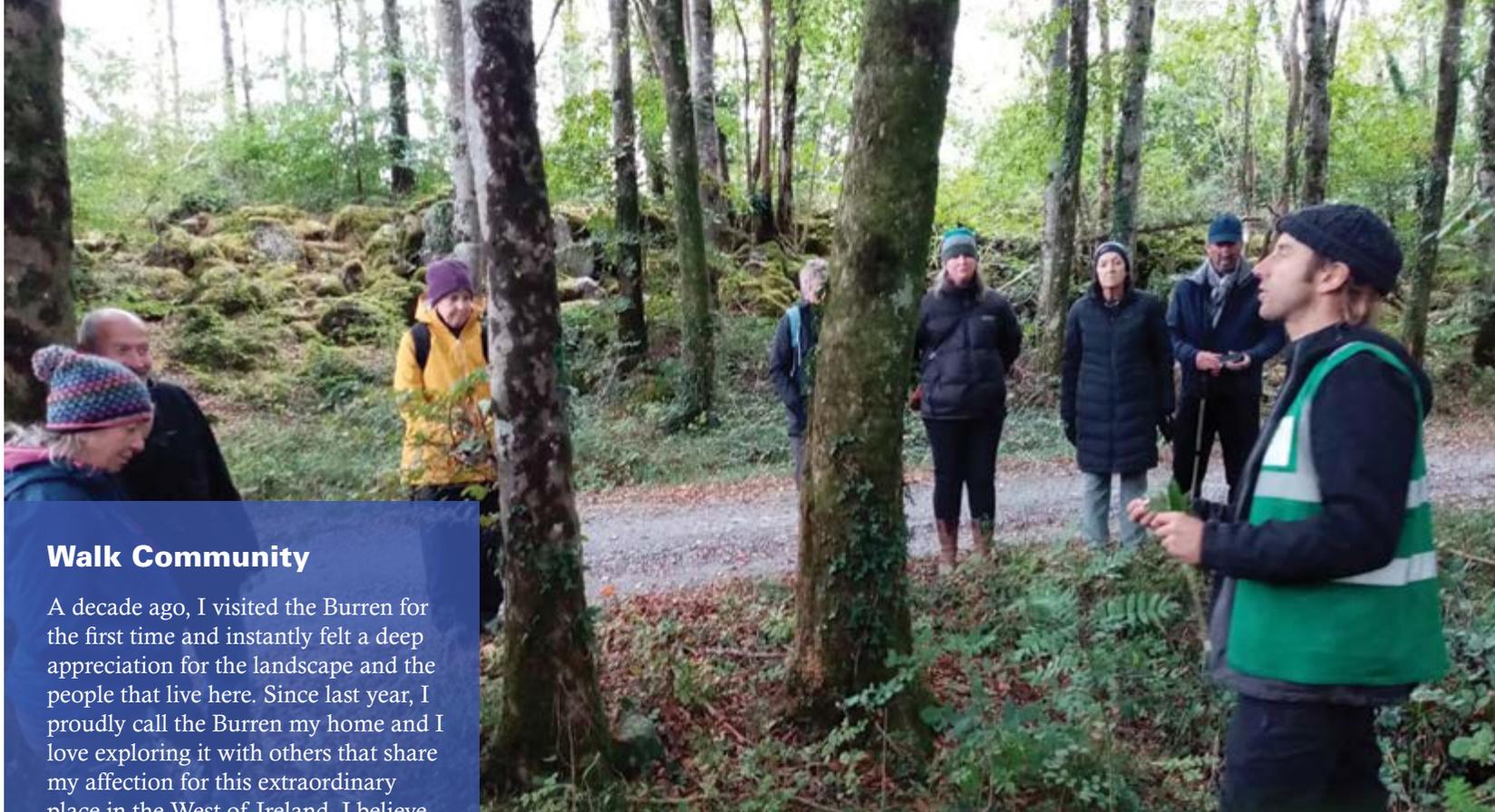
We continue to be a partner in the **2020 National Farming for Nature Awards** - a new initiative to share stories of farmers across Ireland who are managing their land in a way that benefits nature. **Farming for Nature** is a project managed by former Burrenbeo Trust coordinator Brigid Barry.

We continue to promote the Burren as a place of inspiration from which people can learn from their surroundings, in accordance with the **Learning Landscape Feasibility Study** which was launched in 2014.

We continue as lead partner of the **Burren Community Charter Project**.

We continue to promote the Burren in both **regional and national media** throughout the year so that the region maintains a high profile among decision-makers and the public.

We continue to work closely with **key local organisations** such as the Burren Programme, the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark, the Burren Irish Farmers Association, the Burren Eco-Tourism Network and others.



## Walk Community

A decade ago, I visited the Burren for the first time and instantly felt a deep appreciation for the landscape and the people that live here. Since last year, I proudly call the Burren my home and I love exploring it with others that share my affection for this extraordinary place in the West of Ireland. I believe this is what the monthly Burrenbeo walks are all about! Every walk is special; whether you join a local farmer who shares knowledge of their farmland, or discover the natural and cultural heritage of the Burren with an expert. There is always so much to learn and discover.

The monthly Burrenbeo walks have become even more special during these challenging times. Getting out and enjoying the Burren landscape together is just great and I am happy I can contribute as a walk coordinator. I hope to see you on one of the walks soon.

**Karen van Dorp,**  
Burrenbeo Trust member  
and Walk Coordinator

## Áitbheo Community

Galway Rural Development contracted Burrenbeo Trust in July 2020 to undertake Community Biodiversity and Heritage Training for 6 communities from the Loughrea and Oranmore Municipal Districts in Co. Galway. Recruitment of community groups for the programme, which is due to start in January 2021, is under way. The programme aims to deliver training to community groups that will culminate in local biodiversity plans with actions to protect and enhance nature and wildlife. The programme is community-led with our approach being 'by the community, for the community'.

The community groups will start with the Burrenbeo Trust's place-based learning programme, *Áitbheo* ('living place'). This hands-on learning encourages the groups to take a fresh look at their places, including the geology, archaeology, history, land use and ecology of their local areas. At the end of the *Áitbheo* programme the community groups identify actions they want to take to protect and enhance biodiversity in their local areas, and each group will set out their priority actions in their community biodiversity plan. We are looking forward to working with the 6 community groups in 2021.

**Mary Dillon, Community Engagement Project**



## Burren in Bloom

The decision to host Burrenbeo's 15th Burren in Bloom festival, celebrating the renowned biodiversity of the Burren, online was not an easy decision to make but owing to Covid-19 restrictions it became necessary.

A mixture of talks and events as well as family friendly events like a quiz, storytelling and an art workshop were organised as a part of the festival that took place over 4 evenings between 3rd and 6th of June, 2020.

'Ireland in Bloom - a vision for people and nature' was the focus of the opening talk by Jane Stout, professor of Botany at Trinity College Dublin. There was a panel discussion with inspiring farmers, farming for nature. We had talks by Gráinne Ní Chonghaile (Caomhnú Árann from Inis Oírr), Janice Fuller (ecologist and national Tidy Towns adjudicator and Maria Long (grassland ecologist with NPWS). There was storytelling for little ones by author Shane Casey, an art workshop for all ages with wildlife artist Gordon D'Arcy and a blooming Burren family quiz to test participants' knowledge of the Burren flowers. A range of contributors also shared short videos on their favourite flowers which can be found on our YouTube channel.

## Burren Winterage Weekend

Burren Winterage Weekend, our annual celebration of farming for nature in the Burren and beyond was carried out with a range of online events this year featuring inspiring local and international speakers.

The Burren Winterage School featured speakers from Austria, Slovenia, Colombia, Japan, South Africa, Greece, Finland, USA, UK and Ireland, sharing experiences of farming for nature and how farming can make a more positive contribution to addressing our global climate and biodiversity crises.

This year the Cattle Drive was not open to public but was broadcast virtually and featured the Casey family from Fanore, bringing live images of the Burren landscape and the unique tradition of winterage into homes all over the Burren and far beyond. It was also the occasion for the launch of the first children's book on the theme of winterage written by farmer Shane Casey and illustrated by wildlife artist Gordon D'Arcy. Family events for the festival included an online Burren Farming Family quiz, a Burren Animals themed art workshop by Gordon D'Arcy and storytelling by local farmer and author Shane Casey.

We would like to thank the Department of Agriculture, The Heritage Council and FBD for their financial support of this event.



## Farming for Nature

*'Delighted to win the public vote but the real winning was being nominated and meeting like-minded farmers from across the country and spectrum of farming systems. For us it was a privilege to be there with such high-class people engaged with their land'*

**Thomas and Claire O'Connor, winners of the 2019 Public Choice Award.**

Farming For Nature is an independent, non-profit initiative set up to acknowledge and support those farmers who farm, or wish to farm, in a way that will improve the natural health of the countryside. It comes under the umbrella of Burrenbeo Trust and has a national remit. We aim to offer inspiration, resources and support to encourage farmers to be part of the solution of minimising the impact of agriculture on climate, biodiversity and water quality. Much of the impetus for Farming for Nature came from our experience of working with farmers in the Burren region. This convinced us, if given the right financial incentives, technical support and encouragement, of the enthusiasm of many farmers to look after their heritage.

The project started with the national Farming For Nature Ambassador Awards in 2018. The main purpose of this award was to unearth and to share the stories of farmers across Ireland who are making a positive difference to nature on their farms and in their communities. We want to show that farmers are a part of nature and not apart from it, and we want to use these positive testimonies to encourage others to follow suit. We want to show that farming for nature can also be agriculturally, economically and socially progressive. Today, we have 34 Ambassadors in our network. These farmers are active in sharing their knowledge and information with peers through farm walks, podcasts, online talks and webinars and more.

We are also currently developing our resources, our outreach and expanding our network every month. We are doing this through our website, our forum, online talks, videos and various outreach streams. We hope you can join us on this journey.

For more information go to [www.farmingfornature.ie](http://www.farmingfornature.ie)  
Brigid Barry, Project Coordinator, Farming For Nature  
contact: [info@farmingfornature.ie](mailto:info@farmingfornature.ie)



# Active Conservation

## Achievements 2020

It's been an unusual year this year as mentioned so many times previously. Due to Covid-19 restrictions we managed to run 3 different events this year (and 1 **first aid training weekend**) for the **Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers** (BCV) with 54 attendances in 2020.

All events have an important conservation impact and involve education and awareness-raising.

Without our keen bunch of conservation volunteers many important sites around the Burren would be lost, especially the **butterfly breeding site** at Fahee, and numerous **Burren monuments** would become lost in hazel scrub, so a huge thanks to all involved for their support. Thanks also to our dedicated and enthusiastic BCV committee, leading events and helping to plan for each year.

1 day was spent **clearing scrub** around archaeological and historical sites.

2 days were spent on **habitat management** around areas important for rare species to increase reproduction such as an important bat breeding site, and a butterfly breeding site.

1 weekend was spent on **first aid training**.

Over 39 different individuals have **volunteered** with us over the past year and we are hoping to get more events running for 2021 with the potential for a few new projects arising.

If you would like to know more about our events and/or sign up to our volunteering email list please contact [kate@burrenbeo.com](mailto:kate@burrenbeo.com)

We are always on the lookout for new projects around the Burren area so please don't hesitate to contact us with any suggestions you may have.



## Burren Butterflies

Partnership and collaboration are vital to build the infrastructure needed to raise awareness of nature and conserve habitats. A successful collaboration between Butterfly Conservation Ireland (BCI) and the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers (BCV) has seen some wonderful guided walks in the Burren and “scrub bashes” at a wonderful, secluded butterfly-rich haven at Fahee North, just north of the Burren Perfumery.

Our walks have taken us through parts of the Burren from May to September, providing a taste of the butterfly richness of the region. We have traversed species-rich limestone grassland, limestone pavement with scattered hazel, hawthorn and blackthorn, the walled green roads, limestone heath and walked through hazel woods and along hedgerows.

Our walks have taken place in all weathers, that's the Burren - amazing but unpredictable. In muggy July drizzle, we still got to see Ringlets, Meadow Browns and Dark Green Fritillaries. The sunny days brought out even more butterflies and good attendance at our events. For me, the Burren is a gloriously happy place in May, when the delicate sylph-like Wood White, the cryptic Dingy Skipper, the showy Brimstone and startlingly orange Pearl-bordered Fritillaries are available.

This “juice and joy” to quote Gerard Manley Hopkins needs our intervention to continue. We need to love and respect the Burren, and help it to continue to provide a home to its inhabitants.

By controlling scrub at Fahee North, we are maintaining open, unshaded flora-rich habitats for a vast assemblage of moths, butterflies and many other insects. Even the cut scrub comes in handy-the caterpillar of the very rare moth, *Telechrysis tripuncta* feeds on dead wood as do other invertebrates.

Without man's intervention, much of the Burren would be under woodland resulting in a large loss of biodiversity. Without the work of the volunteers, it is likely that the endangered Marsh Fritillary butterfly would be lost from Fahee North.

The butterfly can't thank you, but I can. Thanks to all our volunteers and members for your help and company.

Jesmond Harding

# Research

## Achievements 2020

2020 is year two of a **four year research project** which looks to evaluate the impact of Burrenbeo Trust's work and how it might be shared with other communities. The initial phase of the project involved an online survey and analysis of feedback received from Burrenbeo Trust participants. This phase has provided insights into the strengths and weaknesses of Burrenbeo's programmes and this will be used to inform the subsequent research phases.

Looking to Burrenbeo's **community stewardship mission**, over half (54%) of respondents reported that responsibility for protecting local heritage and environment lies with the local community or each individual themselves. However, only 45% of respondents felt like they have a say in what happens in their local place and only 23% regularly participate in local conservation activities. By contrast, participants felt that Place-based Learning programmes would encourage action on local issues (96%) and that individual actions could bring about positive local change (93%). Emphasis was also placed on the presence of community organisations – indicating that organisations such as Burrenbeo Trust are vital for increasing engagement with community led conservation.

While people's **reasons for participation** on Burrenbeo programmes were diverse, the most prominent were a desire to learn, thinking it would be enjoyable and wanting to take action. Feedback analysis showed that people engage because the programmes are active, fun and include outdoor and sociable elements.

The research to date suggests that availability of Place-based Learning programmes has **benefits for the wellbeing of people and place**. Providing opportunities for people to learn and take action in an enjoyable and sociable outdoor setting facilitates action on local heritage and environment issues to the benefit of our places and communities into the future.

Many thanks to those who contributed to this research and the Irish Research Council for providing funding.

**Aine Bird, Research Officer**

# Information Provision

## Achievements 2020

2020 began with enthusiastic participation in our monthly **heritage walks** with an average attendance of over 50 people. Similarly, the **Tea Talks** were also rewarded with a full houses each night in the village hall in Tubber.

But the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing restrictions on gatherings that came into effect in March 2020 meant that any further scheduled events had to be cancelled. This prompted Burrenbeo in conjunction with Farming for Nature to launch '**Wild Wednesday Webinars**', a well-received series of seven weekly online talks on Farming, Nature and Heritage.

Similarly, our two annual festivals, **Burren in Bloom** and the **Burren Winterage Weekend** had to go virtual. Their online format however, allowed for greater participation from viewers all across the country as well as many viewers tuning in from different parts of the world. Recordings of all online events have been made available on our YouTube Channel.

From August, we re-started our monthly **Tea Talks** virtually with themes ranging from Irish Curlews, to Stone Walls of the Burren and Limestone Landscapes from other parts of the world. In compliance with new guidelines and strict limit on numbers for live events, our **monthly walks** re-started with butterfly expert Jesmond Harding in September and with woodland expert Ray O'Foghlú in October.

This year we also used our **social media channels** (Facebook and Twitter) to carry out themed information campaigns such as **#FlowerADay** (daily posts on the Burren's flowers during Spring), **#BurrenHeritage** (daily posts on the Burren's cultural, built and natural heritage in the month leading up to the Heritage Week in August) and **#FarmingHeritage** (regular posts on the Burren's farming heritage in the run up to Burren Winterage Weekend in October).

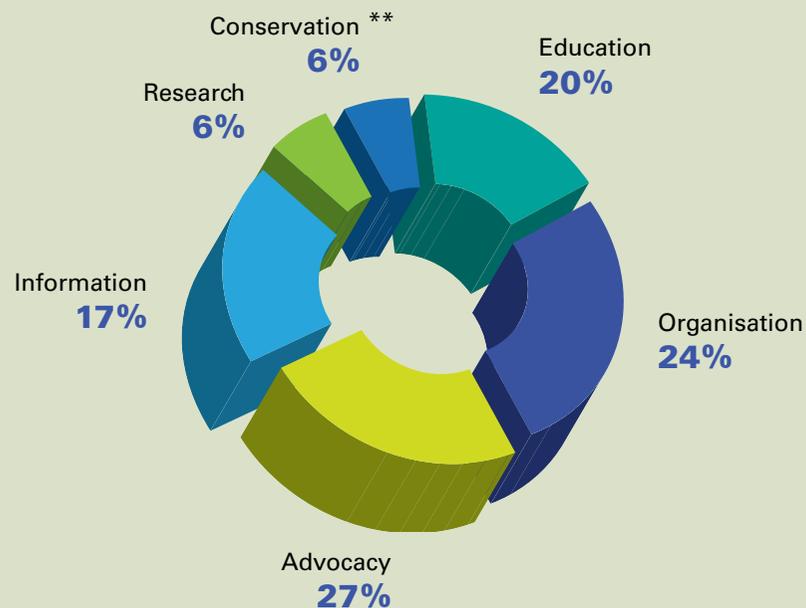


# Financial Overview

## Expenditure

Our total expenditure in 2020 amounted to **€122,000**. An estimated 60% of this amount was spent locally in accordance with our policy of supporting local providers.

Expenditure was split between the following programme sectors in 2020:



Operational expenditure was as follows:\*

- Wages & Revenue (58%)
- Event costs i.e. speakers fees, venues, marketing (22%)
- Rent, electricity, heating, etc. (8%)
- Accounts, bank charges and insurance (5%)
- Communications (5%)
- Stationery etc. (2%)

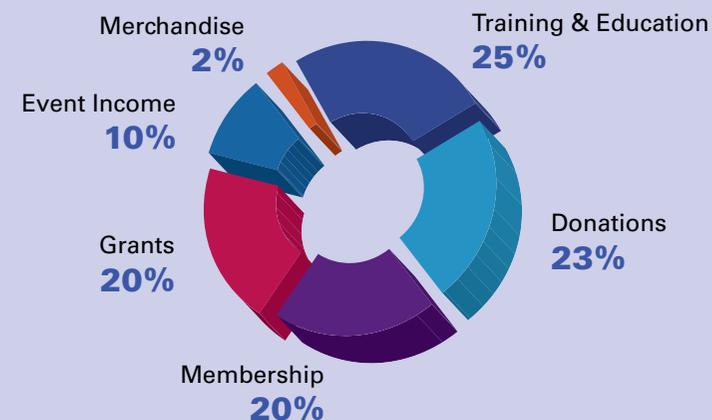
\* This report was prepared in November and therefore figures have been projected until the end of December based on monthly averages.

\*\* Conservation has the highest contribution in kind which is reflected in its lowest financial cost to the Trust.

## Income

Our total income for 2020 was **€166,000**. The Burrenbeo Trust funds its work programme through a variety of sources including grants, donations, events, membership fees and merchandise sales. 2020 has been a very good year for the Trust with higher than usual donations.

Below is the breakdown of the different funding streams (% of income):



- **Training and education (25%)** Burrenbeo Trust held an online symposium on place-based learning, and a place-based learning training course. This year the Trust is also running biodiversity training funded through GRD which will continue into 2021 providing extra training for local communities.
- **Donations (23%)** Various businesses and individuals have very generously supported programmes within the Trust in 2020 and donations are the highest this year since the beginning of the Trust.
- **Grants (20%)** In 2020 we applied for 20 different grants. We were successful with 10 applications. Grants ranged from €400 to €16,000.
- **Members (20%)** Membership fees in 2020 bought in one fifth of the necessary income to fund the organisation.
- **Event Income (10%)** Burrenbeo Trust runs various events throughout the year that have an entry cost i.e. walks, talks, Burren in Bloom, Winterage Weekend, etc. These all raise necessary funds for the Trust but unfortunately many were cancelled or held online thus resulting in a reduced income for 2020.
- **Merchandise (2%)** The sale of Burrenbeo field-guides through local businesses and the sale of Field Guides, Burren cards, our Insight magazines and our Áitbheo tool kits through our online shop found on our website.

A full and complete audit of the 2020 accounts will be available at the AGM in June 2021.

# Who Supported Us in 2020

## Grants & Programme Sponsorship

The funders listed below supported the work of the Trust specifically towards a certain programme. Grant and sponsorship funding income ranged from €400-€35,000.

### GRANTS

#### The Heritage Council

**GRD/LEADER** (Áitbheo Community Training)

**Social Innovation** (Áitbheo online)

**Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine** (Winterage Weekend)

**EPA** (Burren in Bloom)

**FBD** (Winterage Weekend)

**GRETB** (Áitbheo Heritage Training)

**Clean Coasts** (Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers)

**Clare County Council** (First aid training)

**Clare County Council** (Learning Landscape Symposium)

**Community Support Scheme, Galway County Council** (Learning Landscape Symposium)

## Burrenbeo Trust Benefactors 2020

Burren IFA  
Burren Perfumery  
Burren Programme  
Daire Ó Criodáin and Mary Queally  
Dr John Duncan  
Clodagh and Michael Lynch  
Tom Arnold  
Ian and Carmel Beaney  
Sue McMahon

Michael and Joan Houlihan  
Congella McGuire  
Fintan O'Toole  
Carol and Linda Wellings  
Fionnuala Ward  
Joan Bingley  
Sandra and Chuck Rooney  
Mary Tubridy

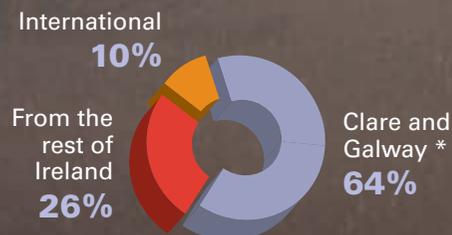
Burrenbeo Trust received a further large donation from members who wish to remain anonymous and lots of smaller donations throughout the year.

## Members

Burrenbeo Trust is a membership organisation with a wide geographical spread. There are 700 current memberships with the Burrenbeo Trust. 285 of these memberships are for more than one person (i.e. couple or family). We also have 1 Schools member and 38 Business Friends.

\* 31% of our total membership are from the Burren.

### Membership breakdown



## Funding in kind

Burrenbeo Trust has run several events and activities throughout 2020 and without voluntary input to help run these events smoothly and payment in kind we would not have been able to achieve so much on such a limited budget.

Our volunteers have as usual been amazing covering various roles from guiding walks to providing information and first aid support at events, generally carrying out all those other essential tasks that are rarely recognised but vital for events to work.

This year, we estimate that approximately €25,000\* has been given to the Burrenbeo Trust in voluntary hours. It's nearly impossible for us to convey the gratitude that we feel to all those who have helped us out so a huge thank-you to all of you – you know who you are.

If you've been too busy to help out this year don't worry – we appreciate that you are thinking of us and there will plenty of other chances to help out in the coming year.

\*Note the above estimate excludes the work of the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers.

## Membership Report

A huge thank-you to all our members who are supporting us through 2020 and into 2021. In such a strange year when our income streams from our events have been decimated, it is heartening to continue to have support from all of you.

Not only do our members help to support us financially, they also form a large part of the Burrenbeo Trust community which is of vital importance to the Trust. We appreciate all of your support shown in any way – volunteering time, following us on social media and sharing our posts, attending our events, spreading the word, etc.

This year, most of our membership communication was via email as we were advised to work from home and therefore didn't have access to print letters to post. This has resulted in a reduction in our postage costs and again helped save on administration time.

Our members are a valuable part of the Trust community and as such if you have any suggestions or comments about how we can improve our services to you please do let us know.

THANK-YOU to all our members for being with us throughout 2020 and we look forward to continuing to work with you in 2021.

**Kate Lavender,**  
Conservation, Membership and Education,  
Burrenbeo Trust

# Business Friends 2020

We have 38 Burrenbeo Business Friends that renewed their membership or joined up throughout the year. We are grateful to the support they have given us. Please support those that support us!

## Gold Business Friends

**Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark**  
**Burren Perfumery, Carron**  
**Burren Programme, Carron**  
**Burren Smokehouse, Lisdoonvarna**  
**Doolin Ferry Company (O'Brien)**  
**Gregans Castle Hotel, Ballyvaughan**  
**Lahinch Family Medical Centre**  
**(Dr Duncan)**

## Silver Business Friend

**Sleepzone Hostel Burren**



In the early days of the Burrenbeo charity I was an active member and involved in the volunteer programme. I spent a lot of time in the Burren throughout my college career studying Environmental Science, briefly working with the Burren Programme for farmers and later undertaking a PhD focussed on a rare heathland habitat in the Burren. I have always had a deep awe of the Burren, not only for its flora and fauna but so many aspects of the area are remarkable – the quietness of it, archaeology, remoteness, geology, its farming history, past and present, and of course on a wider scale the landscape and the way it changes throughout the seasons. The Burrenbeo Trust has done an incredible job of raising awareness about the Burren region and through their school programmes instilling an understanding and respect of the Burren and of natural habitats in general to the next generation. As a small family-run business we feel it is so important to give back to the local community and becoming business members is a great way for us to support this wonderful local charity and we will continue to do so. The botanist and the chef...

**Sarah and Cillian Hanrahan,**  
**Coole Park Tearooms,**  
**Gort, Co. Galway**

We moved to the Burren in 2013, and immediately found new friends at the annual Winterage festival walk. That's where we first learned about Burrenbeo and the tremendous work the Trust does to raise awareness of this precious landscape. We started our own business, based from home here in a secluded valley in the heart of the Burren, and since 2016, we have been a proud business friend of Burrenbeo.

We love the fact that the Trust is so inclusive. It creates a true sense of place and pride offering place based learning to everyone from school children, to adult community groups, and those with disabilities. It connects local organisations such as the Burren Farming Programme for the future sustainable management of the region. It organises events, encouraging visitors from near and far to learn more and experience the magic of the Burren in all seasons. There is no doubt this place based learning promotes a sense of belonging, and an appreciation for the Burren. In these difficult times as we seek to navigate our way through climate change and the pandemic, the activities of the Trust contribute positively to the mental health and wellbeing of our rural community. As a business, and a proud member of this community, it is our responsibility to learn more about the Burren, and seek to protect and nurture this sensitive environment as custodians for those who follow. The Trust does not receive any core funding. We hope as a business friend that our contribution ensures that the conservation and advocacy work continues.

**Brian O'Briain, Anam Coffee, Kilcorney**

## Business Friends

**Aillwee Caves**  
**Airmid Natural Irish Skincare**  
**Anam Coffee**  
**Ballyvaughan Fanore Walking Club**  
**Burren Outdoor Education Centre**  
**Burren Vets**  
**Burren Yoga Retreats**  
**Caherconnell Fort and**  
**Sheepdog Demonstrations**  
**Clare's Rock Hostel**  
**Clooncouse Country Cottage**  
**Coole Park Tearooms**  
**FBD Insurance**  
**Fitzpatrick's Supervalu, Ennistymon**  
**Hanne T. Fisker Photography**

**Hazelwood Lodge**  
**Healing Harvest, Kinvara**  
**Irish Natural Stone**  
**Kinvara Guesthouse**  
**Martin Kiely Burren Photography**  
**Mount Vernon**  
**Ocean's Edge B&B**  
**Quinn's Craft Shop**  
**St. Tola Irish Goat Cheese**  
**Station House B&B, Ennistymon**  
**StoneCutters Kitchen**  
**Sunny Meadow Farm**  
**The Health Store, Galway**  
**Wetland Surveys Ireland**  
**Wild Honey Inn**

## To live in the shelter of one-another

It's been a discombobulating year unheralded in the recent experience of our civilisation. As social beings we have been required to keep distance from our friends and from wider society. Such a sanction, normally reserved for those in prison, has become our common lot.

For Burrenbeo, committed to connecting people and place, the notion of separation is anathema. The enforced disconnection required by the Covid-19 echoes the growing disconnection of our civilisation from our innermost selves, from our fellow humans and from nature. Seen in this context the Trust's focus on 'connection' feels ever more important in a world confronting the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and many other symptoms of dissociation that have come to characterise our way of living on the earth.

The current pandemic reminds us of the Chinese saying to 'never waste a good crisis'. So might there be a gift in this moment if we could but see it? Might it be the need to rediscover the simple lesson - implicit in the Burrenbeo mission - of the profound interdependence of all life on our planet?

The challenge for Burrenbeo and others is to grow a critical mass of people with the experiential understanding of interdependence so that we reach a 'tipping point' - or what I like to call the 'Ubuntu Threshold' - that will shift our trajectory on to a sustainable path. The African term 'Ubuntu' beautifully captures the concept of interdependence, 'I am because you are'. It also echoes the Irish saying 'Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine' - 'we live in the shelter of one another'.

Our wellbeing and our survival may well depend on re-learning how to live in the shelter of one another. This is the domain of Burrenbeo's work.

**Martin Hawkes**  
Chair of Directors



## Organisation



**Trust Coordinator**  
Annalisa Murphy  
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**Research and Impact**  
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**Education, Conservation and Administration**  
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**Community Programmes and Education**  
Mary Dillon  
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**Trust Secretary**  
Dr Brendan Dunford

### Executive Committee

all of the above plus:

Dr David Drew  
Mary Howard  
Dr Martina Moloney  
Dr Sharon Parr  
Karen Sorenson  
Michael Lynch

### Directors

Shane Casey  
Sadie Chowen  
Ristead Crimmins  
Michael Davoren  
Martin Hawkes (Chairperson)  
Mary Howard  
Daire Ó Criodáin  
Elaine O'Malley

### Patrons

Tom Arnold  
Olive Braiden  
Gordon D'Arcy  
Michael Davoren  
Julie Feeney  
Mary Hawkes Greene  
Michael Houlihan  
Mary Angela Keane  
Michael Longley  
Ann Madden Le Brocqy  
Patrick McCormack  
Michael Viney  
Bishop William Walsh  
Stephen Ward

### Founding Patrons (Deceased)

David Bellamy  
Seamus Heaney  
Ann O'Connor Dunford

### ...And all of you, our members and other supporters

Without the extra voluntary help of all our members and supporters we would not be able to do what we do; a heartfelt thank you to all who have helped us out over the last year. We are truly grateful for this extraordinary contribution from the community.

The Burren has been part of my life for more than fifty years. As a Trust member, Board director and volunteer I am continually impressed by the hard work and achievements of the staff and volunteers.

Burrenbeo Trust works to raise awareness of the Burren's unique biodiversity, geology and cultural heritage and encourages a pride of place in the Burren. This is achieved through education (Place based Learning), conservation (Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers), cooperation with local communities, farmers and businesses and celebration through the Trust festivals, walks and talks.

The Burren is an outdoor classroom but due to Covid-19 restrictions many activities are online. Burrenbeo continues to stimulate appreciation of the Burren to a national and international audience.

**Elaine O'Malley, Burrenbeo Trust Board of Directors**

# How to Get More Involved

## As an Individual

- Join Burrenbeo Trust if you haven't already done so. This can cost as little as €2.50 a month depending on the category.
- Be an advocate by spreading the word to your friends and family about the organisation. Encourage them to become members.
- Support our events as much as possible – come to our walks, talks, training events and community festivals.
- Let us know if you have professional skills you may be able to volunteer that can help us further our aims (i.e. marketing, fundraising, heritage talk etc.).
- Make a donation to the Trust – every little helps. You can ask for it to go towards a specific programme or event. Or why not go a step further and become a Burrenbeo Benefactor (see below).
- Subscribe to our free monthly e-newsletter to find out about the news and events that are happening in the region. You could then forward this newsletter onto your contact list to keep them in the loop.
- Join the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers and get involved in the growing community of active conservation volunteers. It's free to register with this group.

## As a Business

- Become a business friend. Rates are as little as €15 a month. By doing this you are feeding directly into the heritage education and conservation work of the region.
- Highlight the events that are happening in the Burren through your social media and website.
- Consider making a more substantial contribution as a Burrenbeo Benefactor (see below).

## As a Burrenbeo Benefactor

As a Burrenbeo Benefactor you or your company can contribute to a range of pioneering projects that need support. We can tailor your level of involvement relative to the scale of support you wish to offer. All donations over €250 are tax deductible, so your money goes further. Suggested support options include:

€300+ (price will vary depending upon the size of the school chosen) **Sponsor a local school** Giving each student a copy of Shane Casey's newest book in the Burren Tails series will doubly benefit the Burrenbeo Trust as the book is a fundraiser where all proceeds go directly to the Trust

€500 **Young Burren Ambassador Bursary** Support the future of Burren with this bursary

€1000 **Áitbheo Secondary** Place-based education scholarship for teenagers that delivers local Place Heroes through active stewardship

€2500 **Áitbheo Primary** Place-based education scholarship for a whole classroom of primary children that delivers local Place Heroes through active stewardship

€5000 **Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers** Training and upskilling of up to 300 conservation volunteers

€7500 **Event Sponsorship** Examples include the Winterage Weekend which highlights farming and biodiversity or the Learning Landscape Symposium weekend which actively drives place-based learning nationally

€10,000 **Burren as a Learning Landscape** Invest in the development of a model to build thriving communities & landscape

€25,000 **Place-based Learning Nationwide** Develop a model to build thriving communities & landscape nationally



## Support Form

I would like to make a donation to the Burrenbeo Trust of:

I would like this to go towards the following programme:

NAME
ADDRESS
PHONE
EMAIL

NAME ON CARD	
CARD NUMBER	
EXPIRATION DATE	CVV NUMBER
SIGNATURE	



For payment by cheque, please fill out the form, make your cheque payable to Burrenbeo Trust and return to Burrenbeo Trust, Glebe House, Glebe Road, Kinvara, Co. Galway. Donations can also be made online via our website.



# burrenbeo trust

connecting people and place

The Burrenbeo Trust is an inclusive organisation for anyone who wants to be involved.  
We survive on the generosity and support of our community.

**We hope to achieve a lot more in 2021  
with your help**

**Burrenbeo Trust**

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