

Burrenbeo Trust Strategic Plan 2021-2023

Introduction

Burrenbeo Trust is an independent charitable organisation dedicated to its mission of connecting all of us to our places and our role in caring for them. Based in the flagship heritage landscape of the Burren, Burrenbeo Trust works to raise awareness of the significance of the Burren and to empower and encourage local communities to act as stewards of its priceless heritage. Building on lessons learned over the past two decades, Burrenbeo also advocates for 'place-based learning' across Ireland as a means through which communities can learn more about their place and their role in actively caring for it.

This document outlines a Strategic Vision and 3-year Plan for the Burrenbeo Trust. It is based on consultation with members, staff and directors of the Trust. Given the uncertain times we live in, it will be reviewed on an annual basis and will inform the drafting of Annual Work Plans to deliver on its aims.

Our Vision

That the Burren is an internationally recognised exemplar of community stewardship whereby farmers, local businesses, local and visiting communities and other stakeholders all make a positive contribution to the care of this unique landscape – and to have fun and build new relationships while doing so!

By the end of this Plan, in late 2023, our Vision is that Burrenbeo is ever more deeply embedded in the Burren, continuing to deliver innovatively and impactfully for the heritage and communities of the region. Our vision also sees Burrenbeo empowering and inspiring communities right across Ireland and beyond to engage proactively with the exploration, understanding and conservation of their own places and our shared planet.

Our Values

Burrenbeo Trust holds the following values in the pursuit of its Strategic Vision and Goals:

- To be guided always by what is best for the Burren
- To pursue sustainability in all its forms in all that we do
- To value our people – staff, members, volunteers, donors and others
- To carry out our work with respect, integrity, professionalism and transparency and in accordance with best governance practice
- To be inclusive, embrace diversity and to work in partnership where possible

Our Team

Name	Job title <i>and key roles</i>
Aine Bird	Burrenbeo Trust Co-ordinator Overseeing Trust Staff and Activities. Governance (Board etc) and Compliance. Place-based Learning - with a focus on Research, Development and Impact Scaling.
Kate Lavender	Education and Conservation Officer. Co-ordinating Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers. Delivering Áitbheo courses in the Burren. Outreach work. Compile Annual Report. Supporting Trust Co-ordinator.
Pranjali Bhavé	Communications Officer Updating website, social media, e-newsletter etc. Organising Members Walks, Talks, Webinars etc. Organising Burren in Bloom, supporting the Burren Winterage Weekend. Managing the Burren Pine Project.
Grainne Barron	Education Officer Developing on-line resources for schools and communities. Organising the annual Learning Landscape Symposium. Delivering Áitbheo in and beyond the Burren.
Mary Dillon	Communities Officer Developing and delivering Community Place-based Learning Programmes, supporting delivery of schools based programmes.
A.N. Other	Admin Officer Managing Finance and Membership, Office Management.
Brigid Barry	Project Manager Farming for Nature project
Brendan Dunford	Volunteer, Secretary Strategic Planning. Supporting Staff and Board. Organising Winterage Weekend & School. Fundraising. Outreach. Supporting Farming for Nature Project.

Our Finances

Based on estimates of (pre-Covid, 2019) expenditure, the delivery of the Strategic Goals as outlined below will require an annual budget in the region of **€170,000**. This will vary depending on a number of factors, in particular the extent to which our ambitions for national outreach are realized.

The (annual) projected sources of income to meet this expenditure for the period of this Strategic Plan include (**estimated value**):

- Heritage Council Support **€45,000**
- Fundraising – Pine Project **€40,000**
- Membership **€30,000**
- Donations **€25,000**
- Educational services **€15,000**
- Event income **€10,000**
- Merchandise **€5,000**

Strategic Goals 2021-2023

Annual Work Plans will be developed to achieve these Goals.

1: To create an efficient, impactful, grounded and resilient organisation

To continue our development as an inclusive, independent, accountable and transparent charity which respects and supports all those who are involved in its work.

- Support our Staff, the heart of our organisation
- Ensure good governance, compliance and accountability
- Value and support our members, patrons, volunteers and donors
- Secure sustainable sources of funding to enable medium-long term planning and impact
- Ensure access for staff to comfortable office space and all necessary equipment
- Continue to Plan Strategically but to adapt as necessary
- Support Local Product and Service Providers

2: To promote, enable and support community stewardship in the Burren

To engage the communities of the Burren in further understanding and appreciation of their unique landscape and their role in its care (note: educational work is covered under 3 below)

- Host monthly Member Heritage Walks
- Host monthly Heritage/Landscape 'Tea Talks' and/or Webinars
- Organise Monthly Outings for the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers
- Host the annual Burren in Bloom Natural Heritage festival (May)
- Organise the annual Burren Winterage Weekend (October)
- Organise one-off outreach events in person/online
- Explore the feasibility of organising a new event to celebrate the Archaeological heritage of the Burren
- Host a conservation volunteering event bringing together volunteers from around Ireland
- Develop local ecological restoration projects in conjunction with farmers and landowners

3: To better connect communities with their place and their planet, and their role in its care

To develop, implement and disseminate place-based learning programmes in the Burren and beyond and to become the recognised National leader in place-based learning and community stewardship.

- Implement Áitbheo Primary Schools Programme in the Burren.
- Implement Áitbheo Secondary Schools Programme in the Burren.
- Facilitate Áitbheo Community Stewardship Programmes across Ireland, including in the Burren
- Host Áitbheo Heritage Educator Training
- Develop, share and update Áitbheo Online Courses and Resources
- Research Impact of PBL initiatives and integrate findings into future initiatives
- Host the annual Burren Learning Landscape Symposium (March)
- Host visiting groups to the Burren, focussing on (ideally, fee-paying) farmers, educators, public servants and students

4: To provide information about the Burren across a range of media

To act as a source of high quality, easily accessible and up-to-date information on: the Burren, its communities, heritage and conservation; Place Based Learning; the work of the Burrenbeo Trust

- Provide comprehensive, up-to-date information on the Burren through the Burrenbeo Trust family of websites
- Maintain and enhance our growing presence on social media
- Prepare an Annual report and share it with members, funders and others
- Prepare and share monthly e-newsletters with Members
- Distribute Field Guides, books and other relevant information materials
- Engage with local, national and international media to share relevant information (e.g. re events, initiatives)

5: To advocate for the Burren and for community stewardship here and elsewhere; to build strategic alliances in order to do so more efficiently and effectively

To work strategically with others to advance our key objectives – place-based learning and community stewardship; sustainable farming; the conservation of the Burren and its role for learning

- **Build Alliances to advocate for the conservation of the Burren and better integrate work programmes**
- **Build Alliances to advocate for Place Based Learning and Community Stewardship**
- **Embed PBL into the formal education system in Ireland**
- **Influence the national debate on our climate and biodiversity emergencies and our response to them**
- **Continue to Support the Farming for Nature Initiative**
- **Continue to develop the Burren’s potential as a learning landscape**
- **Continuously look for opportunities to evolve and innovate**

Burrenbeo Trust Strategic Plan 2021-23 ¹						
Goals <i>(What we plan to achieve)</i>	Objectives <i>(Actions to reach goals)</i>	Timeframe			Team member	Actions
		'21	'22	'23		
1: An efficient, impactful, grounded and resilient organisation <i>To continue our development as an inclusive, independent, accountable and transparent charity which respects and supports all those who are involved in its work.</i>	(a) Support our Staff, the heart of our organisation.	X	X	X	AB, BD	Hold regular monthly team meetings (minuted); Conduct annual reviews; Prepare staff handbook; Ensure any issues arising are resolved fairly and promptly, in line with agreed procedures. Offer staff opportunities for training and continued professional development.
	(b) Ensure good governance, compliance and accountability.	X	X	X	AB, BD, Board	Hold regular (at least quarterly) Board Meetings; Publish Accounts and Annual Reports (ARs); Monitor and evaluate the work we do; Continue Work to comply with the Charities Governance Code and to follow agreed procedures. Ensure compliance with best practice with environmental and health and safety standards.
	(c) Value and support our members, patrons, volunteers and donors.	X	X	X	AB, KL, PB	Provide regular updates incl. E-Newsletters and ARs; Deal promptly with Member's concerns in line with complaints procedures; Reward Contributors (e.g., speakers, leaders) where sponsorship is available.
	(d) Secure sustainable sources of funding to enable medium-long term planning and impact.	X	X	X	AB, ALL	Apply for relevant grants incl. as partners for EU funding applications; Source donations; Sustain/grow merchandise (books etc); Develop fundraising ideas (e.g., pine project); Provide paid services (time permitting); Grow membership; Grow event income and sponsorship.
	(e) Ensure access for staff to comfortable office space and equipment	X	X	X	KL, AB	Enable comfortable home/office working space for Staff; Ensure all staff have the equipment they need to carry out their work. Enable remote/hybrid working arrangements and review future office needs.
	(f) Continue to Strategically plan but to adapt as necessary	X	X	X	BD, AB	Prepare 3-year Strategic plan and Annual Work Plan in consultation with staff, board and members; review and revise these plans annually.
	(g) Support Local Product and Service Providers	X	X	X	KL	Favour local (Clare-Galway) suppliers for goods and services; otherwise, adopt a 'buy Irish' policy (subject to compliance with public procurement requirements where they apply).

Goals <i>(What we plan to achieve)</i>	Objectives <i>(Actions to reach goals)</i>	Timeframe			Team member	Actions
		'21	'22	'23		
2: Promote, Enable and Support Community stewardship in the Burren <i>To engage the communities of the Burren in further understanding and appreciation of their unique landscape and their role in its care (note: educational work is covered under 3 below)</i>	(a) Host monthly Member Heritage Walks	X	X	X	PB	Organise, Promote and Host a Monthly Walk with a heritage theme. Plan events well in advance, ensure availability of Leaders, Volunteers etc
	(b) Host monthly 'Tea Talks' and/or Webinars – prioritising members	X	X	X	PB, BD	Organise, Promote and Host a Monthly Talks/Webinars aimed at Trust members at home and abroad. Plan calendar of events well in advance Ensure advance availability of Leaders, Panellists etc; Post Webinar events on You Tube;
	(c) Organise Monthly Outings for the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers	X	X	X	KL	Help Organise (with support from the BCV Committee) and Promote Monthly Conservation Outings (including Health & Safety Training Event); Ensure advance availability of trained Leaders;
	(d) Host the Burren in Bloom Natural Heritage festival (May)	X	X	X	PB, BD	Organise, Promote (update website etc) and Host BiB; Secure Sponsorship (EPA?), Partnership (AIPP?); Ensure advance availability of Leaders, Speakers etc; Post event highlights on You Tube;
	(e) Organise the Burren Winterage Weekend (October)	X	X	X	BD, PB	Organise, Promote (update website) and Host WW; Secure Sponsorship (DAFM, FBD), Partnership (Burren Programme, BEN); Ensure advance availability of Leaders, Speakers etc; Post event highlights on YT;
	(f) Organise one-off 'outreach' events in person/online:	X	X	X	PB, AB	Organise and promote events to mark specific occasions throughout the year – e.g., Dawn Chorus Walk, Family Picnic, Heritage Week events (August); Ensure advance availability of Leaders, Speakers etc
	(g) Explore the feasibility of organising a new event to celebrate the Archaeological heritage of the Burren		X	X	BD, MD	Assess the demand for, and capacity to deliver, a new event to celebrate the Burren's archaeology. Seek partners (NUIG, CCC, GCC?) and sponsors, consider budgets and logistics (venue, format, human resources, timeframes (e.g. July-August).
	(h) Host a conservation volunteering event bringing together volunteers from around Ireland		X		KL	Organise an event for networking and skills sharing/development among Irish conservation volunteering community. Format, location etc to be decided in conjunction with BCV committee. Look to secure funding.

	(i) Develop local ecological restoration projects in conjunction with farmers and landowners	x	x	x	PB, AB, KL, BD	Building on success of Burren Pine Project, look to continue engaging farmers and landowners in ecological restoration projects where funding is available.
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Goals <i>(What we plan to achieve)</i>	Objectives <i>(Actions to reach goals)</i>	Timeframe			Team member	Actions
		'21	'22	'23		
3: Place Based Learning: Connecting people with their place and their planet and with its care <i>To develop, implement and disseminate place-based learning programmes in the Burren and beyond and to become the recognised National leader in place-based learning and community stewardship.</i>	(a) Implement Áitbheo Primary Schools Prog. in the Burren	X	X	X	KL, GB	Deliver Áitbheo (AB) in at least 4 Burren Primary Schools annually
	(b) Implement Áitbheo Secondary Schools Programme in the Burren	X	X	X	KL, GB	Deliver AB in at least 2 Burren Secondary Schools annually
	(c) Facilitate Áitbheo Community Stewardship Programme with communities across Ireland, including in the Burren	X	X	X	AB, BD, MD, GB	Deliver AB Communities (school and other community groups) Programme in 10 non-Burren Communities (2021), 20 in 2022 and 40 in 2023; Review and Report; Continually Refine model for future use; Organise an AB community course for the Burren in 2022. Work with National Partners (Heritage Council, GAA etc) to realize these goals.
	(d) Host Áitbheo Heritage Educator Training	X	X	X	KL, GB	Deliver at least one AB 'Teacher-Training' course annually. Review and adapt accordingly and in line with 3(c) above
	(e) Develop, share and update Áitbheo Online courses and resources	X	X	X	GB	Continue to develop and share on-line learning resources for a range of learning institutions (1 st – 3 rd level) and community groups, including for example our PBL best practice manual. Review and adapt accordingly and in line with 3(c) above;
	(f) Research Impact of PBL courses and integrate findings	X	X	X	AB	Apply and share findings from AB PhD research work. Carry out participant surveys on PBL work with other groups. Formally review national pilots under 3(c) above using Logic framework models.
	(g) Host the annual Burren Learning Landscape Symposium (March)	X	X	X	GB, all	Organise, Promote (update website) and Host LLS. Secure Sponsorship (LA's?), Partnership (HC?); Ensure advance availability of Leaders, Speakers etc; Post event highlights on You Tube;

	(h) Host visiting groups to the Burren, focussing on (ideally, fee-paying) farmers, educators and students	X	X	X	KL, GB	Host groups who are visiting the Burren – this will be done based on availability of staff, priority level of group (teachers and farmers among key groups) and ability to contribute to costs.
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Goals <i>(What we plan to achieve)</i>	Objectives <i>(Actions to reach goals)</i>	Timeframe			Team member	Actions
		'21	'22	'23		
4: Information Provision across a range of media <i>To act as a source of high quality, easily accessible and up-to-date information on: the Burren, its communities, heritage and conservation; Place Based Learning; the work of the Burrenbeo Trust</i>	(a) Provide comprehensive, up-to-date information on the Burren through the Burrenbeo Trust family of websites.	X	X	X	PB	Update website content regularly on our main sites: www.burrenbeo.com , www.burreninbloom.com www.burrenwinterage.com ; Address design/functionality issues in conjunction with Trebania; Review update requirements for main BBT site; Ensure hosting remains active; Reply promptly to all emails received (AB); ensure high levels of cyber security;
	(b) Maintain and grow our strong presence on social media	X	X	X	PB	Post updates regularly on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Linked-In; Post video content on our YT Channel; Source interesting materials from members for content use;
	(c) Prepare an Annual report and share it with members, funders and others	X	X	X	KL	Publish an Annual report in hardcopy (for members) and on-line for the broader public; Include new material from contributors as well as summary of income and expenditure;
	(d) Prepare and share monthly e-newsletters with Members	X	X	X	PB	Prepare and distribute monthly e-news updates to the BBT Mailing list
	(e) Distribute Field Guides, Books and other information materials	X	X	X	KL	Distribute Field Guides and other materials (e.g. Calf and the Cuckoo book) to local shops and sell via our on-line shop
	(f) Engage with local, national and international media to share relevant information (e.g. re events, initiatives)	X	X	X	PB	Prepare Press Releases around upcoming news and events; Distribute to Media Lists; Directly contact local radio and newspapers re content to share.

Goals <i>(What we plan to achieve)</i>	Objectives <i>(Actions to reach goals)</i>	Timeframe			Team member	Actions
		'21	'22	'23		
5: Advocacy, Alliance and Partnership <i>To work strategically with others to advance our key objectives – place-based learning and community stewardship; sustainable farming; the conservation of the Burren and its role for learning</i>	(a) Build Alliances to advocate for the conservation of the Burren and better integrate work programmes	X	X	X	AB, BD,	Build on the work of the Burren Community Charter to engage with Key Partners including: The Burren Programme, The Burren IFA, The Burren EcoTourism Network, Clare and Galway County Councils. Integrate activities with the new Burren Programme 2023-2030. Work more closely with CARO re climate change issues.
	(b) Build Alliances to advocate for Place Based Learning and Community Stewardship	X	X	X	AB, BD	Engage with Key Strategic Partners in the PBL arena, including: The Heritage Council, The NCCA, the EPA, the NPWS, the NMS; NUI Galway, UL, An Taisce, Eco Unesco,
	(c) Embed PBL into the formal education system in Ireland	X	X	X	AB	Work with the NCCA to develop a short course on Place Based Learning for the Junior Cert Curriculum.
	(d) Influence the national debate on our climate and biodiversity emergencies and our response to them	X	X	X	AB, BD	Seek Opportunities to Address upcoming Citizen Assemblies on Education and Biodiversity and relevant Oireachtas Committees.
	(e) Continue to Support the Farming for Nature Initiative	X	X	X	KL, BD	Provide Administrative, Advisory and Staff support for the work of the Farming for Nature Initiative.
	(f) Continue to develop the Burren’s potential as a learning landscape	X	X	X	All	Host groups of Students (Public Servants, Teachers, Farmers, Farm Advisors, Third Level Students etc) to learn in the Burren and about sustainable development and land use; Build up database of local farmer-trainers, venues and itineraries; Build Curricula for students; Revisit 2014 LL Feasibility Study report;
	(g) Continuously look for opportunities to evolve and innovate	X	X	X	All	Be aware of emerging trends, opportunities and challenges - in the Burren and beyond. Embrace change and respond to it in an innovative and inclusive way.