



TAKING ACTION FOR PLACE

Annual Report 2021

burrenbéotrust
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, 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

We hardly need reminding of the significant challenges and changes that the world has encountered over the past two years. It is interesting to consider the potential long-term impacts of the changes we have been forced to make to adjust to the reality of COVID-19.

In many ways, lockdowns forced us all to engage in place-based learning – to explore and assess our immediate surroundings. For those of us lucky enough to live in and around the Burren, it perhaps increased our appreciation of our area, and for those that were longing to be here it may have highlighted the human need for healthy, thriving landscapes and communities.

The forced migration to an online environment has brought the work of Burrenbeo to a wider geographic audience and allowed supporters to participate from afar, but the return to in-person events was also very welcome. While information can be shared very well online, it does not recreate the important sense of community and opportunity for socialising, which in person events facilitate – and nothing beats being out experiencing the place that you are hearing about.

We are delighted to return to many Burren-based events, including our **Members' Heritage Walks**, and **Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers' (BCV)** events, as well as our **Áitbheo** school programmes and most recently, the **Burren Winterage Weekend**, which included the **Farming for Nature** ambassador awards. The easing of restrictions arrived too late for **Burren in Bloom** and the **Learning Landscape Symposium**, which were both held very

successfully online again this year. In 2022 we hope to continue to deliver a blended range of events, maintaining some online events and combining them where possible with in-person events.

We also have some new and very exciting projects, which have started in 2021, and will continue into 2022. The **Heritage Keepers** programme, delivered in partnership with the Heritage Council will pilot place-based learning programmes with communities throughout Ireland and investigate the feasibility of spreading the Burrenbeo Trust model beyond the Burren region. The **Hare's Corner** initiative will see woodlands, orchards and ponds developed in lands around Clare, returning small patches of land to nature (including the hares!) as was traditional.

As always, we are hugely grateful to the event leaders and volunteers, our members, business members, donors and benefactors, and our funders who make the work of Burrenbeo Trust possible. Please continue to support our work through membership, volunteering and donations. While we face into extreme climate and biodiversity challenges and uncertainty around COVID-19 restrictions, the importance of connecting local communities, places and heritage is more important than ever. The growing demand for events and programmes such as those delivered by Burrenbeo Trust is very positive and it will hopefully result in a renewed sense of care and responsibility for our shared environment and heritage.

Áine Bird

**Burrenbeo Trust Coordinator
December 2021**

The Organisation in Numbers

This year:

- 233,000 euro** is the amount that Burrenbeo Trust had to raise this year. As our programmes expand so does the number of staff needed to coordinate and deliver them. This is still a shoestring budget to deliver our wide range of programmes, is a testament to the value for money that the organisation provides and also reflects how hard our staff work to keep everything running.
- 28,049** 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 includes our Burren in Bloom and Burren Winterage Weekend festival websites.
- 13,205** is the total number of **followers on our social media sites** including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.
- 2,246 attendances were recorded** in total for 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.
- 812** attendances have been recorded in total from our **monthly walks** and **winter tea talks** (some of which were online).
- c.750 individuals, couples, families and businesses** are currently members of the Burrenbeo Trust.
- 38 Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers** made up **68** attendances at 5 conservation events this year. This adds up to approximately **544** days donated to the region in active conservation.
- 30 key projects** and areas of work were coordinated and delivered by the Trust this year.
- 17 grant applications** were submitted this year by Burrenbeo Trust with only 12 being approved. It is as always difficult to fit heritage, environment and sustainable communities into grant requirements.
- 9 7 staff members** currently work at the Burrenbeo Trust office amounting collectively to just 136 hours a week to coordinate and deliver the wide range of projects the organisation runs today. **2 other staff** members are based in Cork running the widely acclaimed Farming For Nature Programme, under the umbrella of the Burrenbeo Trust.

A phrase I heard while I was at the COP26 in Glasgow was this - if you want to go somewhere fast, go alone; but if you want to go the distance, bring the team. Certainly when it comes to action on biodiversity, there is nothing more powerful than a community working together for a common cause.

The Burrenbeo Trust epitomises this in all its forms by working with local communities and farmers to deliver huge environmental benefits.

These Burren based projects are well established now, and widely recognised and acknowledged as a leading example of how cooperation projects can work.

I had the privilege of a day trip to the Burren during the summer, when Brendan and his Burrenbeo and Burren Farming Programme team showed me all the wonders of the Burren. It really is such a special place. So peaceful, and in some ways isolated, yet so alive with flora and fauna.

I met with some of the farmers involved in the project. They outlined to me their initial reservations, but how the programme has enhanced their farms, and improved their knowledge and appreciation of their unique karst landscapes. In some cases, farm productivity improved as they took a different approach to the way they managed their land.

I also heard all about the new EIP project, The Hare's Corner, which will support Clare farmers to set aside part of their land for nature, either through creating a small woodland, pond or orchard. This will be a really interesting project to follow, because if it works in Clare (which I have no doubt it will!), we can look at replicating it across the country. How exciting would that be?

That strong sense of place is all important in delivering sustainable rural communities - and we need more of that across the country, particularly in relation to habitat and heritage conservation. Taking a landscape level approach can help.

Sharing that knowledge with others is often the greatest gift of all; to inform and to enable other communities to do the same.

Senator Pippa Hackett

Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine



Goals for 2022

In 2022 the Burrenbeo Trust aims to continue strengthening their current programmes and in addition focus on the following:

- To make our **Áitbheo** education programme available to communities across Ireland by working with our partners in the Heritage Council to pilot the **'Heritage Keepers'** programme.
- To grow the impact of our **Farming for Nature** initiative by expanding our network of Ambassadors and providing them with the platform to have their voices heard at this time of ecological crisis.
- To help farmers, landowners, and community groups in Clare and elsewhere to do their bit for nature by rolling out **The Hare's Corner** project as widely as possible.
- To plant 5 new nursery sites in the Burren to help restore and protect the endangered **'Burren Pine'** and to use all resources generated from pine sponsors to support the work of the Trust.
- To strive to improve the quality and impact of all that we do and to do so in a transparent manner, adhering to the highest standards of governance.



Education

'I think it's important to have the conversation about the amount of impact humans have made on their places... and to take what I have learnt and use it throughout my life'

Achievements 2021

Aimee, Áitbheo Primary Participant

The beginning of 2021 saw us back into lockdown again and hence no access to deliver **Áitbheo Primary** to any schools. From September, with lockdown lifted, we're thrilled to be working with almost 100 pupils from Kinvara (2 classes), Inagh and Ennistymon National Schools.

25 Transition Year pupils from Gort Community College received scholarships for the **Áitbheo Secondary** course in the early part of 2021 following their course introduction field trips and after completing their Place Action project. The students graduated as Laoch Áite (place heroes). Seamount College in Kinvara saw just over 60 of their TY students also completing the course and graduating.

Our 5 day in person **Áitbheo Training** course for teachers and community educators in July shared our tools for building place based learning into education programmes and school curricula. The course sold out very quickly being one of the few offered in person at that time.

For the second year in a row our **Learning Landscape Symposium** (the 10th one we've run) was held online with 440 people attending over 4 days of online presentations and workshops. We are really hoping that 2022 sees us running it back in person again.

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

Reaching Out

As we approach the end of another year, media reports seem to be awash with negative commentary around our global environmental and health emergencies. Feelings of frustration seem pervasive, as does a feeling of helplessness among many. While recognising the scale and urgency of the challenges at hand, here at Burrenbeo we believe in the power of positive energy, in realizing the meaningful impact that each one of us can make in tackling these seemingly intractable issues; starting right here in the Burren but setting an example that can inform and inspire change further afield.

For example, for almost two decades now, Burrenbeo have been educating and empowering the local community to take ownership of their place and its care. We are now taking the learnings from these 'Eco Beo' and 'Áitbheo' programmes and, in partnership with the Heritage Council, sharing them with 20 Irish communities under the new 'Heritage Keepers' programme. Likewise, inspired by Burren farmers, we are highlighting the positive role that Ireland's farming community can play in tackling biodiversity loss and climate change by growing a network of 'farmers for nature'

across Ireland and Europe; it is our great privilege to host these real 'conservation heroes' annually as part of the Burren Winterage Weekend.

We are also responding to the urgent environmental challenges by taking direct action: our Conservation Volunteers are planting – and maintaining - hundreds of native pine trees annually as part of an ecological restoration initiative, while through the Hare's Corner Project we are supporting the building of ponds and the planting of mini orchards and native woodlands, thereby expanding 'networks for nature' in Clare and beyond.

In doing this work we are driven by the belief that, at this time of crisis, the Burren can offer a beacon of hope – because of the inherent values and reputation of the landscape itself, but also because of the collective efforts at a local level to protect it. We will need all the help as we rise to these great challenges, so please join us – as a member, donor, or volunteer – and let's see what we can achieve together.

Brendan Dunford, Trust Secretary



After almost a year and a half of Zoom and Teams you can imagine how happy I was to hear that there was a summer course for teachers that we could actually do in person. Better yet this course would involve going out and about in the Burren every day. I signed up for it as soon as I heard about it and the first week in July headed off to Kinvara raincoat, wellies and waterproofs at the ready.

I figured I'd survive spending the morning indoors if I stocked up on a cup of coffee on the way to keep me awake. How wrong can you be! No coffee needed at all. Gráinne and Kate had us up and moving inside and outside. We had to figure out a timeline going back millions of years, make models, work through questions, ideas, solutions with partners and groups, and many, many more highly enjoyable and at the same time highly educational activities. The morning flew by and every afternoon off we went exploring new parts of the Burren I had never seen before and even more surprising going to parts of the Burren I had often visited before and finding out something completely new there.

You've probably gathered by now that I enjoyed every minute of it but the icing on the cake was I also came away with so many ideas and a new way of thinking about how I could bring our own locality alive for the class I would be teaching this year. As they say 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating' and having experienced it for myself I felt confident that I could take the ideas and activities into my own work.

I wasn't the only teacher that felt like this. We all agreed that the course was an antidote to the heaviness of dealing with a pandemic and a climate crisis. Reconnecting to 'Our place' left us all with a feeling of hope and what a treasure that is in 2021 for any teacher to have for themselves and for their students.

Una Ní Gháirbhith
Heritage Trainers Course Participant 2021



EXPLORE AND ENHANCE YOUR PLACE

We are delighted to introduce to you our new programme, Heritage Keepers. This a national place-based learning and stewardship initiative that is in partnership with the Heritage Council. It is a scaling up of our Áitbheo programme, which the Burrenbeo Trust have delivered to schools and communities in Counties Clare and Galway for almost two decades.

As Ireland's leading advocate for place-based learning with a strong focus on empowering communities to act as stewards of their heritage we want to reach a bigger audience. Under this pilot initiative, we will work with 20 participant groups around Ireland. These will be chosen to reflect a range of different geographic communities as well as a range of group types. Interactive workshops will help familiarise participants with the concepts of place-based learning and community stewardship, and how these might apply to their particular setting. Participants will be supported to explore and discover their local place and heritage, facilitating learning and critical thinking around local built, natural and cultural heritage as well as modules on community engagement, land use practice, conservation and, ultimately, community stewardship. Where possible, a primary and secondary school and community group in the same area will be partnered to complete the programme simultaneously.

As befitting a pilot, we have formed an advisory committee, made up of people from various backgrounds. To gauge what



works best we will use different delivery methods for different groups in order to assess the most efficient and impactful. Some participants will work 100% online, others taking a blended approach. Some courses will be delivering directly to groups by Burrenbeo, others will use a local facilitator. In addition to working with schools and communities in their local setting we will be inviting teachers and community facilitators to a weekend in Kinvara where they will get to participate in the 10 hour programme.

The Programme culminates in each group planning an action or series of local actions which they will undertake to complete with support from the Burrenbeo Trust and members of the Heritage Council Network, as well as through provision of easy-to-access micro-grants to get the plans off the ground. Local 'Place Days' will be encouraged so our new stewards can highlight their local heritage and their work to protect it. We hope to highlight the work of participating groups and schools in Heritage Week 2022.

Heritage Keepers was launched in November 2021 and national rollout will begin in January 2022. Ideally, we are looking for a good geographical spread of participating groups and schools. If we don't get to your area this time round, please don't worry, as we are hoping to grow and expand the programme in the years to come.

Advocacy

Achievements 2021

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

The 10th **Burren Winterage Weekend** (20th-24th October) was an amazing weekend of high nature value farming workshops, farm walks, keynote talks, farming for nature awards, artisanal cheese and beef tasting events, a children's writing workshop, poetry reading and music, all culminating with the flagship event of community cattle drive. Most of the events took place in-person in Kinvara, Co. Galway and its neighbouring Burren farms while some were broadcast online via Zoom.

We continue to be a partner in the 2021 **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 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 and the Burren Eco-Tourism Network and others.

Walk Community

I first visited the Burren in 1975. The drive around Black Head and the subsequent moonscape vista along the coast became etched on my memory. Subsequent visits revealed many more intimate locations and it seemed that there was a surprise at every turn. I became fascinated with the geology and natural history of the area.

Relocating here in 2019 opened a new perspective on the Burren - its people.

Burrenbeo Trust walks, showcase the knowledge and passion local people have for the place they call home and their willingness to share that experience. From farmers, geologists, botanists, and many other experts in natural history, the walks cover an eclectic mix of topics conveyed to members in an outdoor learning experience. On these walks I have learned much about the Burren, its people and landscape. I have encountered storytellers, musicians, singers, poets, and philosophers, all rich with a memory of past and a vision for the future as well as a great cheese scone recipe!

Come along on a monthly walk, leave the mundane behind, and enjoy Burren magic at its best.

Ian Beaney,
Burrenbeo Trust member and
volunteer 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. Community groups from Gort, Oranmore, Ardahan, Kinvara, Claregalway and Woodford were successful in their applications to take part. The programme was community-led with our approach being 'by the community, for the community'. Because of Covid-19 restrictions the entire training was delivered online during early 2021.

Groups followed the Áitbheo programme. Each group took a fresh look at their places, including the geology, archaeology, history, land use and ecology of their local areas. At the end of the programme the community groups created a local plan with an emphasis on protecting and enhancing biodiversity. Burrenbeo then delivered targeted skills training to allow community groups to obtain the knowledge and abilities that they needed to implement their plans.

Burrenbeo were delighted to work with 6 fantastic groups, and we wish them best of luck with implementing their plans.

Mary Dillon, Community Engagement Officer



Burren Winterage Weekend

This 10th Burren Winterage Weekend featured a wide range of farming, heritage, and cultural events, most of which took place in-person in Kinvara, Co. Galway and its neighbouring Burren farms while some were hosted online via Zoom.

In-person events included a number of walks led by a variety of Burren farmers. The Kinvara Community centre was the venue for farm poetry reading by poet Jane Clarke, music by John Faulker, a Farming For Nature film night, national Farming for Nature Ambassador awards, and a two-day 'School' for those interested in issues around sustainable farming. Other events included children's author Shane Casey's workshop on creative nature-writing, an introduction to winterage meats, traditional artisan cheese tasting and the Burren Food Fayre.

A short series of online events was also held to connect with people further afield. Over 400 people attended the flagship event of the festival, the Community Cattle drive partaking in Ireland's most ancient pastoral tradition by accompanying Burren farmers Frank and Mary McCormack as they herded their cattle on to their upland winterage pastures.

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



Farming for Nature

'The Farming for Nature awards and the profiling of the farmers/their farms is setting the footprint as to how our Irish landscape will look in the future. It does what it says on the tin, integrates farmers into the wider community ecologically.'

Jim Cronin, Farming for Nature Ambassador, winner of the 2020 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. Now in its 4th year, we have 66 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 continue to develop 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
Brigid Barry, Project Manager, Farming For Nature
Contact: info@farmingfornature.ie

Burren in Bloom

The 16th edition of Burren in Bloom, the annual celebration of the rich biodiversity of the Burren, took place online this year over 5 evenings between the 18th to the 22nd of May. This year, we were delighted to be partnering with the National Biodiversity Data Centre's All Ireland Pollinator Plan to specially focus on the important role of community stewardship in biodiversity actions.

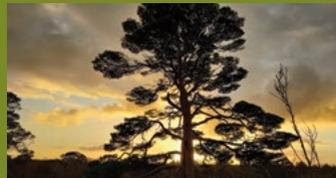
The first evening saw six community groups who had recently completed a biodiversity training programme with Burrenbeo Trust launch biodiversity plans for their local areas. On the 19th of May we heard the stories of two inspirational communities both of whom have done outstanding work for biodiversity in their places. The last evenings consisted of short presentations by a variety of speakers followed by more in-depth talks on 'Writing About the Burren: the jewel in the ecological crown of Ireland' with naturalist and author David Cabot, 'Gems of the first water – Burren orchids' with orchid specialist, Brendan Sayers and 'Farming Vs Rewilding for Biodiversity' with ecologist, author and campaign officer with Irish Wildlife Trust, Pádraic Fogarty. On an average 150 people attended each of the evening sessions online.

Active Conservation

Achievements 2021

Even after all this time we're still not quite back to normal hence the reduced number of events for a second year in a row. The fact that we're back up and running again is something to celebrate and there has certainly been a heightened sense of enjoyment on the events that we have managed to organise and lots of new people joining us for the first time.

5 events were organised this year (and 1 first aid training weekend) for the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers with 68 attendances in total, so a huge thank-you to all who've been out with us. We've worked with some amazing 'experts' and our fabulous volunteer committee has done a great job keeping things moving.



In November 2020 Burrenbeo launched 'The Burren Pine Project', a new initiative to help restore an 'almost lost' native pine tree to the Burren through individual and business sponsorships. The beautiful *Pinus sylvestris* was initially thought to have died out in Ireland around 1,500 years ago, but investigations by scientists at Trinity College Dublin found that an isolated population of native pine trees survived at a remote site in the Burren, Co. Clare. These trees are the only confirmed stand of native pine trees in Ireland, are extremely rare and of high conservation value. Our ambition at the Burrenbeo Trust is to help restore these pine-dominated woodland communities in the Burren by planting several small 'mini-forests' across the region which will act as 'nurseries' for the future expansion of this endangered species across Ireland.

The Burren Pine Project offers a chance for us all to bring back an important 'lost' species to Ireland's natural flora, to further enhance the already special biodiversity of the Burren and to invest in the future of the region through the community and conservation work of the Burrenbeo Trust. We are proud to say that in one year since launching, we have planted 5 mini-woodlands containing 480 Burren Pine trees mixed in with 1200 other native Irish trees. This has been made possible through generous individual and business sponsorships and the hard work and commitment of Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers. It is our aim to plant 5 more Burren Pine mini-woodland sites in the year 2022.

To learn more and to help us reach our goal, visit <https://burrenbeo.com/the-burren-pine-project/> or scan the QR code



Burren Archaeology and Monuments

The Burren is a diverse area with a dense range of archaeological monuments dating from the prehistoric to the Medieval period into early modern times. The preservation of the monuments in the Burren is unique due to the traditional farming practices and the fact that there was very little tillage on the upland winterages. However, in recent times, due to changing farming practices, there has been increased scrub encroachment and, in many cases, the archaeological monuments have been completely inundated with scrub. Engagement with the farmers through the Burren Programme is dealing with the problem and the work of the Burren Conservation Volunteers (BCVs) has greatly assisted with the clearing of scrub from some of these monuments.

Clearing the scrub from archaeological monuments is necessary to preserve them into the future, otherwise irreparable damage can occur, or some monuments can become lost over time. Scrub clearing has been a part of the BCV programme for a number of years and many monuments have been preserved through their work.

In addition, although curtailed by Covid-19 restrictions, the BCVs participated in a limited amount of excavation and post excavation work on the stone axe production site at Doolin during 2021. The BCVs play a vital role in the ongoing work at this site which is bringing vital new information on the Mesolithic hunter gatherers of Co. Clare.

Preservation through awareness is one of the key factors in protecting archaeological monuments into the future and it is evident that this is important to the BCVs. Their time and effort in protecting these monuments must be commended and should continue long into the future.

Elaine Lynch, Field Monuments Advisor Programme

Research

Achievements 2021

The Irish Research Council funded **employment-based PhD research project** being conducted by Trust staff member Áine Bird, which looks to evaluate the impact of Burrenbeo Trust's work and how it might be shared with other communities, continued in 2021 making significant and interesting progress. Having previously completed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Burrenbeo's programmes, in 2021 five groups around Ireland participated in **online workshops** aimed at encouraging place-based learning and facilitating community stewardship. Pre and post workshop questionnaires were used to assess the impact of the programme. Feedback was extremely positive with participants reporting a desire to learn more and take action in their local area, and even more promising were the findings of the questionnaire's completed 6 months after the programme – where participants reported on the **actions taken** following the programme. Reports on this research can be viewed on the Burrenbeo Trust website. The new **Heritage Keepers** programme builds on and further develops this research project.

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



Information Provision

Achievements 2021

2021 began with the continuation of our online '**Limestone Landscapes**' series through which we heard from experts on the ground on the ecology and management of limestone areas in Sweden, Yorkshire UK, Slovenia, Kentucky USA and Newfoundland Canada.

In April we began **Wonderful Wednesday Webinars**, a series of monthly online talk for members on various aspects of the Burren's heritage. The themes included 'Discovery of the native Scots Pine in the Burren', archaeological investigations into Turlough Hill, the story of Caherconnell Cashel, the legacy of the Tim Robinson map archive, butterfly habitat management and bats of the Burren.

With the easing of Covid related restrictions we were able to resume our monthly walks from July. With the voluntary help of local specialists, **walk participants explored various Burren sites** of natural and cultural importance such as Flaggy shore for marine life, Corcomroe Abbey, Dromore woods, Slieve Carran and various Burren farms.



The Hare's Corner Project

In August of this year, Burrenbeo Trust launched, 'The Hare's Corner', a new pilot project in Co. Clare to help landowners make a little more space for nature - by creating mini-woodlands, ponds, and orchards on their land. 'The Hare's Corner' refers to an old farming expression for an awkward section of a field which wasn't intensively farmed and so was 'left to nature'. It is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) through The European Innovation Partnerships Initiative (EIP)/Locally led schemes, by the EU Recovery Instrument Funding under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2022 as well as the Clare County Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

We were delighted to be joined by Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Senator Pippa Hackett, some of the local farmers, and representatives of Clare County Council and Irish Seedsavers to help us launch the project on August 23rd.

We received 165 applications from the initial call for expressions of interest from landowners in Co. Clare. These applications are being screened remotely and where possible through in-person visits, for site suitability for the three biodiversity measures currently offered through The Hare's Corner.

We expect that as the first phase of works of the project, 27 new ponds and over 50 new mini-orchards of native Apple trees from Irish SeedSavers will be created and at various locations across Co. Clare by the end of this year. The mini-woodland element of this project will see a mixture of 8,000 native trees including the native Burren pine trees planted across multiple sites in Co. Clare next year.

Participation in the Hare's Corner will come at no cost to the landowner and assistance with site assessments, permissions, training and costs towards materials and works will be provided through the project.

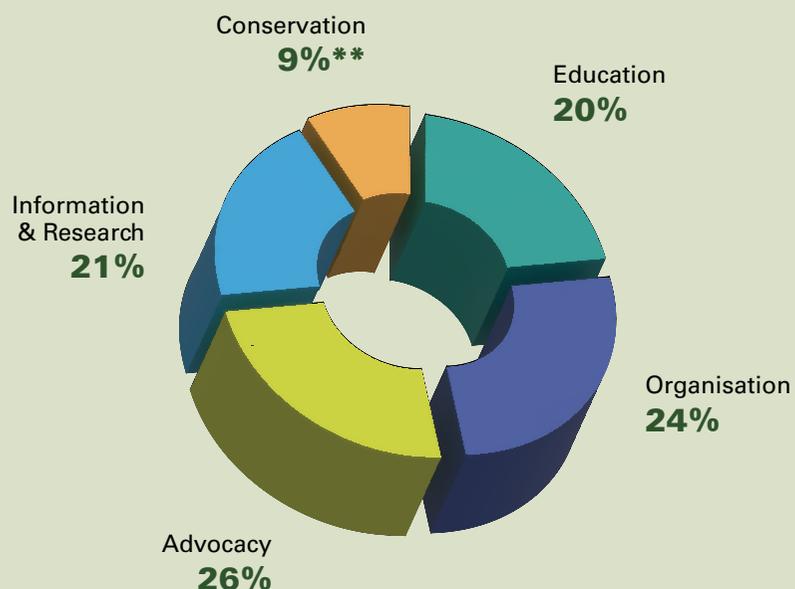
The Hare's Corner is designed to be a simple, hassle-free way to support our farmers and landowners in responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis we find ourselves in. While the project is currently limited to Co. Clare, we hope the success and learnings from the project will help us expand its scope to other counties in future. Further information on the project is available on burrenbeo.com/thc

Financial Overview

Expenditure

Our total expenditure in 2021 amounted to **€233,000**. An estimated 61% of this amount was spent locally in accordance with our policy of supporting local providers.

Expenditure was split between the following programme sectors in 2021:



Operational expenditure was as follows:*

- Wages & Revenue (59%)
- Event costs i.e. speakers fees, venues, marketing (21%)
- Rent, electricity, heating, communications, etc. (9%)
- * Stationery and equipment (7%)
- Accounts, bank charges and insurance (4%)

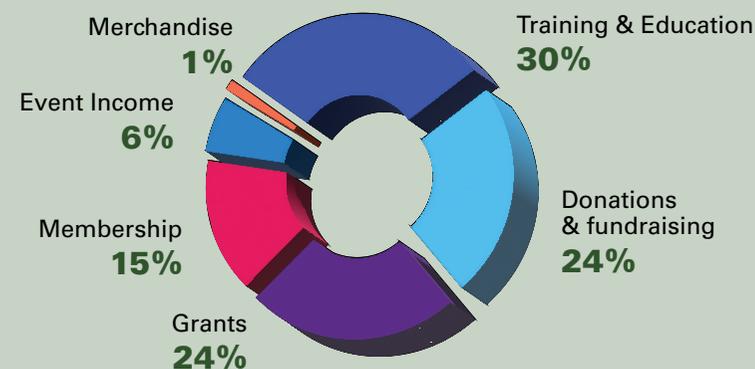
* This report was prepared in November and therefore figures have been projected until the end of December based on monthly averages.

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

Income

Our total income for 2021 was **€333,000**. The Burrenbeo Trust funds its work programme through a variety of sources including grants, donations, events, membership fees and merchandise sales. 2021 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 (30%)** Burrenbeo Trust held a training course for teachers bringing place-based education to the classroom. This year the Trust is also beginning to work towards a national roll out of its education programme which will take place in early 2022.
- **Grants (24%)** In 2021 we applied for 17 different grants. We were successful with 12 applications. Grants ranged from €400 to €45,000.
- **Donations and fundraising (24%)** Various businesses or individuals supported specific programmes within the Trust during 2021 and our newest fundraiser the Burren Pine Project is not only a positive step for local biodiversity but bringing in much needed funds for the Trust.
- **Members (15%)** Membership fees in 2021 still continue to be a highly important income stream for Burrenbeo Trust.
- **Event Income (6%)** Burrenbeo Trust has seen a huge reduction in event income this year due to the fact that many of our events continued online and were run for free.
- **Merchandise (1%)** 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. This is lower than usual due to many local businesses who stock our merchandise being closed during lockdowns.

A full and complete audit of the 2021 accounts will be available at the AGM in June 2022.

Who Supported Us in 2021

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-€45,000.

GRANTS

The Heritage Council

Bord Bia

Clare County Council

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

European Innovation Partnership (EIP)

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Galway County Council

Galway Rural Development

Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRET B)

Rethink Ireland – GLAS communities fund

Thank-you to our Burrenbeo Trust Benefactors 2021

Tom Arnold

Brendan Burgess

Burren IFA

Mr and Mrs Costello

Dr John Duncan

EI Electronics

FBD

J. Fine

Michael and Joan Houlihan

V. Keane

Niamh Lennon

Michael and Clodagh Lynch

Miriam Mooney

Sandra and Chuck Morrell Rooney

Sunflower Fund

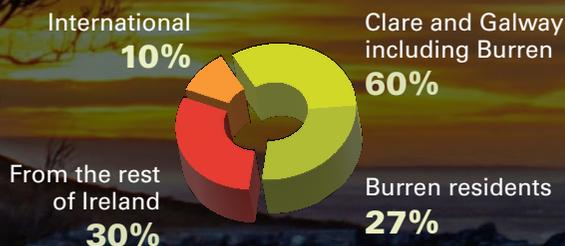
Carol and Linda Wellings

Burrenbeo Trust received a further large donation from members who wish to remain anonymous and lots of smaller donations throughout the year. Donations ranged between €5 and €20,000 and were used for core funding of the organisation unless a specific programme was requested.

Members

Burrenbeo Trust is a membership organisation with a wide geographical spread. There are just over 750 current memberships with the Burrenbeo Trust. 307 of these memberships are for more than one person (i.e. couple or family). We also have 38 Business Friends.

Membership breakdown



Funding in kind

Burrenbeo Trust has run several events and activities throughout 2021 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 signing people in at events and first aid support to making tea and coffee, generally carrying out all those other essential tasks that are rarely recognised but vital for events to work.

This year, we estimate that approximately €20,000* has been given to the Burrenbeo Trust in voluntary hours (this is lower than previous years as so many events were online). 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

We had budgeted for a tight year for membership income and were incredibly surprised and humbled at how many members continued to renew their membership and how many new ones joined us. In uncertain times like these having such a great community of members supporting us is one of the things that keeps us going.

Our members are amazing. Not only do they help keep us financially afloat, but they also form an incredible community supporting us through a whole variety of different ways – volunteering time, following us on social media and sharing our posts, attending our events, spreading the word, etc.

Having members paying by recurring payment is helping to reduce administration time and costs which we greatly appreciate as the ever-expanding list of programmes we carry out take up more and more staff time. Communicating with members via email is also helping us to reduce administration time and costs and appears to be working successfully.

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 – without feedback we cannot grow and improve.

THANK-YOU to all our members for being with us throughout 2021 and we look forward to continuing to work with you in 2022.

Kate Lavender,
Membership, Education and Conservation
Burrenbeo Trust

Business Friends 2021

Burrenbeo Trust do a vital job in educating people about the beauty and the biodiversity of the Burren, as well as highlighting the fragile nature and the need for us to look after this natural resource in a sustainable way.

The Burren Yoga and Meditation Retreat was setup in 1999 and the Burren was chosen as an ideal place for people to come and have a retreat.

We spend a lot of time in the Burren on our retreats, and the conservation of this unique area has always been to the forefront of our mind.

We are very grateful that the Burrenbeo Trust does such a great job of letting people know about the Burren, as well as providing information about this area that we live in. Their work in highlighting the importance of conservation and protection of the landscape and the livelihoods of the people within it is very congruent with our own values.

We are proud of our Burrenbeo membership, and we hope that they will inspire many more people to connect to this special landscape, it's biodiversity, it's exceptional history both ancient, more recent and unfolding and that together we can all help to protect this amazing but fragile environment.

Dave Brocklebank,
Burrenbeo Trust Business Friend

We have 39 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
Gregans Castle Hotel, Ballyvaughan
Lahinch Family Medical Centre (Dr Duncan)

Silver Business Friends
Sleepzone Hostel Burren
Scales Coaches, Ennistymon

There is no place like the Burren. It is a timeless landscape vibrating an ancient call of belonging. Of stillness. Of whispering rocky landscapes, sideways rain, gentle breezes to wild storms, colourful flora and fauna just getting on with life. All intrinsically connected. The Burren calls us present to ourselves and to the beauty and rawness of the natural world, which fundamentally are us too. Although we are merely brief visitors counted in Burren years, our impact on the landscape has been significant, perhaps not always as custodians. And this is where my support for Burrenbeo Trust comes into play; from a deep urge within to humbly respect, honour and be a guardian of the Burren. Burrenbeo Trust has a profound and genuine ethos and shares their insights about this flowering desert. They are on many levels keepers of nature within the Burren and beyond. I have been a Business Friend for more than 8 years, long before I even had a business to be a Business Friend with. My hope is that the important and tireless work of Burrenbeo Trust continues to be supported in their effort to protect nature on this beautiful blue marble we call Earth.

Hanne T. Fisker Photography, www.htfisker.com

Business Friends

Aillwee Caves
Airmid Natural Irish Skincare
Anam Coffee
Ballyvaughan Fanore Walking Club
Burren Centre
Burren College of Art
Burren Outdoor Education Centre
Burren Farm Experience
Burren Vets
Burren Yoga Retreats
Caherconnell Fort and Sheepdog Demonstrations
Clare's Rock Hostel
Clooncouse Country Cottage
Doolin Ferry Company
Doolin2Aran Ferries

Fitzpatrick's Supervalu, Ennistymon
Hanne T. Fisker Photography
Hazelwood Lodge
Healing Harvest, Kinvara
Hylands Burren Hotel
Irish Natural Stone
Martin Kiely Burren Photography
Maura Kiely Leave No Trace Ireland
Mount Vernon
Ocean's Edge B&B
St Tola Irish Goat Cheese
Station House B&B
StoneCutters Kitchen
Sunny Meadow Farm
Wetland Surveys Ireland
Wild Atlantic Lodge



As world leaders convene for the Conference of the Parties – COP 26 – in Glasgow in November 2021 there is a palpable sense of urgency. By now it's evident to all but the most myopic that human civilization is on a trajectory towards disaster in terms of climate, biodiversity and other threats to so-called 'safe planetary boundaries'. Even if a course-correction is effected at this late stage there is no avoiding major damage to the biosphere on which our survival as a species depends. Either way it's going to be a wild ride and there's no avoiding the need for action on a local and global scale.

Climate anxiety is now a condition affecting large swathes of the younger population and, as the prospect of climate impacts become a real and present danger, it's beginning to dawn on the elders that environmental damage is something whose consequences will be felt by all, not just future generations. Confronted with this reality there is a temptation to bury one's head in the sand and pretend it's not happening or that it's not man-made. For others the response is to throw one's hands up in despair or succumb to paralysing anxiety in the face of a challenge which seems beyond the capacity of individuals to impact.

The third choice is to become part of the solution, recognizing that future resides in the agency of individuals joining with other individuals to play their part in their own contexts. In the words of the cultural anthropologist Margaret Meade: 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.'

The work of Burrenbeo Trust is testament to Margaret Meade's words. By doing the local work which was its to do - 'opening eyes to the living Burren' – the Trust has demonstrated the power of the local to provide solutions that have relevance everywhere in 'connecting people and place'. Solutions to global challenges will be crafted one person at a time as minds are opened to our interdependence with the earth and with each other, a central understanding of the Trust's vital work in place-based education. And as each child assumes agency in caring for their place anxiety, is replaced by the conviction that he/she has a vital role to place in securing the future.

Now is the time for action and the Trust is answering the call with the growth in ambition of its mission for place-based education commensurate with the call.

Martin Hawkes, Chair of Directors

Organisation



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Trust Secretary
Dr Brendan Dunford

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Shane Casey
Sadie Chowen
Ristead Crimmins
Michael Davoren
Brendan Dunford (Secretary)
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 Brocquy
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.

When out herding on our farm, an important role is to 'stand in a gap'. It may not appear to be a very active role, and the cattle barely glance at you as they amble past, but without it, things can go awry very quickly.

The Burrenbeo Trust has always been blessed with volunteers willing to 'stand in gaps', whether it's manning the tea and coffee station, directing traffic, or checking attendance details. And it's only with their help, that we have the smooth operation of events such as the Winterage Festival, Learning Landscapes Symposium, Tea Talks, and many more.

Some like to get stuck in with the Conservation Volunteers or the Burren Pine Project, while others bring new ideas that deliver the Trust's Vision. And perhaps the most important action of all is simply being a member and encouraging others to join.

The Burrenbeo Trust always welcomes active participation, and there are no upper or lower limits to that – no willing soul is ever turned away!

**Shane Casey,
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. This 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:

Comments/notes

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.



burren**b**eotrust

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 2022
with your help**

Burrenbeo Trust

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