

Communities for Heritage - Speaker Biographies

Morning skills session

Deirdre Bennett, Horticulturalist.

Deirdre is a trained Horticulturalist and Naturopath, lives in the Burren with her family and are working on their own garden. Having a garden gives one the privilege of observing on a daily basis the interconnectedness within nature - the plants, soil, insects, birds and seasons and our part in that. My short talk will hopefully give some insight and ideas into planting for pollinators for you or your community. Deirdre has worked with numerous Tidy Towns groups on creating pollinator friendly areas.

Paula Carroll, Cuimhneamh an Chláir’.

This workshop will introduce you to the work of ‘Cuimhneamh an Chláir / Clare Memories’, the Clare Oral History and Folklore Group. It will outline how they approach oral history gathering in Co. Clare and give you broad tips on how to go about collecting oral history yourself. There will also be information on further oral history training by Cuimhneamh an Chláir this Autumn.

Mary Dillon, Community Office, Burrenbeo Trust

Magnificent Meadows - managing grassland for nature. One of the best and most successful ways for communities to promote biodiversity is by converting part of their grass areas to meadow. Burrenbeo Community Officer Mary Dillon will give us top tips on how to manage grassland so that it is of maximum benefit to nature and looks great to boot. Follow her tips and in no time you too will have a Magnificent Meadow.

Féidhlim Harty, Aquatic specialist, and **Karen van Dorp**, Hare’s Corner coordinator, Burrenbeo Trust

Have you been thinking about digging a pond but don't know how (and where) to start? We got you covered! Building a pond is one of the best things you can do to boost biodiversity and with some simple tips and tricks you will be on your way. During this session you will view a pre-recorded information session with aquatic specialist Féidhlim Harty, which will cover various construction scenarios and some do's and don'ts of digging a pond. This presentation will be followed by a Q&A session with Karen van Dorp, who has been accompanying Féidhlim in the field for the past year during pond site assessment visits for Burrenbeo's project The Hare's Corner.

Afternoon field trips

Mitch Corbett, Nursery/headquarters Manager, Hometree

Hometree is a native tree charity. During this field trip we will be looking at 3–5-year-old trees that have been planted in the past 2 years, here in Ardnaculla south, Ennistymon. They range from Geulder rose, Native Scots pine to Oak. We will walk the site, see the forests that have been planted and also have a close look at the hundreds of thousands, of Native saplings that were sown with organic methods in May 22.

Elaine Lynch, Archaeologist and Field Monument Advisor for Clare

This **field trip** will explain how local communities can get involved with their local archaeological/heritage sites. It will run through getting permissions and ensuring the proper channels and guidelines are followed. It will show you how to record monuments and what equipment is needed before heading out to a site. It will also run through how to record grave plots and explain the importance that this information can provide to a local community and what can be achieved by doing this work.

Pat O’Connor, Waterways specialist

This **field trip** will focus on enhancing local waterways. Pat is a geologist, ecologist, and short story writer from Castleconnell, Co Limerick. For the last fifteen years he has worked with the Castleconnell River Association to rehabilitate parts of the lower Shannon and its catchment streams. Castleconnell was formerly world famous for salmon fishing, but fishing had been banned due to falling stocks. As a result of community effort, stocks have recovered sufficiently for fishing to recommence, and in 2021 Castleconnell River Association received the “Salmon Hero award” from Salmon Watch Ireland, for its role in the recovery.

He has worked with communities throughout Co. Clare and is currently working with communities in East Clare on a major community-based river restoration project, in partnership with local landowners and LAWPRO.

Afternoon indoor workshop, presenting community groups will include:

Anne Brindley and John Smyth,

Mountain Meitheal West (a branch of Mountain Meitheal Ireland <https://www.mountainmeitheal.ie/>) is a group of volunteers whose aim is to maintain and protect our fragile environment in hill, mountain and wilderness areas. Projects involve water management, path and trail repair, light maintenance, stone pitching among other activities. In Co. Clare, we have worked on the Black Head/Fanore/Gleninagh loops, the Carran loop, Ballyvaughan Wood loop.

Kate Lavender, Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers (BCV)

The BCV were set up in 2010 to meet an identified need for hands on the ground conservation work in the Burren. Since their inception they have grown greatly in number, are managed by a volunteer committee and are constantly looking for new projects to become involved in.

David Murray, Gort River Walk Development Group

2019 saw the formation of this group with its two main aims of protecting the Gort River Walk and developing an amenity close to the centre of Gort town. They envisaged a wonderful local amenity and wanted to implement a best-practice approach to trail development.

Frank O'Grady, Kilnaboy History Group

The group started out as a graveyard maintenance team trying to refresh the rather neglected graveyards. From there they evolved to take on several new projects such as.

1. The mapping and cataloguing of the graveyards.
2. Publication of a book with graveyard details and local history.
3. Arranging the erection of information signs at both graveyards
4. Developing a river walk with Burren Geopark
5. Work on Cabhail Mor in conjunction with S P A B (society for the protection of ancient buildings.)
6. Organising traditional lime building and pointing classes.