THE BURREN COMMUNITY CHARTER

Part I

Prepared by
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For the Burren Community Charter Management and Advisory Groups

The Draft Burren Community Charter

Preamble

The Burren Community Charter (The Charter) is an agreement between the people who live and work in the Burren and the organisations that have responsibilities for the region, to safeguard this place, its people and its heritage while supporting the local economy and enhancing the community life of its residents.

The Charter brings a wide range of communities, organisations and agencies together to forge a common approach for the future management of the Burren, defining the role that each of these groups aspires to play within this approach and identifying how it can be implemented.

This Charter is a living, evolving agreement by the people and for the people of the Burren and our place. It focuses on what we can do together as opposed to what can be done for us. This Charter is a dynamic agreement that will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Values

The Charter recognises that:

- the Burren is a unique and exceptionally rich natural and cultural landscape.
- the local community must be central to decision making with regard to the management of the Burren.
- positive work has been undertaken in the Burren in recent years but we need to build on this work in a more integrated and forward-looking way.
- all signatories to the Charter wish to work in partnership to secure a more co-operative, productive and sustainable future for the Burren landscape and its people.

Vision

The Charter has a vision of the future of the Burren:

- where a high quality of life is enjoyed by all;
- where the natural, built and cultural heritage of the area is protected and improved;
- where respect for the environment and economic development go hand in hand;
- where there are ample opportunities for people to live and make a living;
- where there are recreational and educational opportunities for residents and visitors alike;
- where people work together for shared benefits and to resolve differences as they build a better future.

Delivery

Substantial progress has already been made in consulting stakeholders about what they see as the main challenges, opportunities and actions that the Burren Community Charter should address. Based on this input the Charter will develop realistic Action plans on the basis of 2 basic criteria:

- those which can be progressed through local co-operation;
- those which will require additional resources and will take time to achieve.

Commitment

All communities, organisations and agencies who can subscribe to the values and vision of this Charter, and thereby to building a sustainable future for the Burren and its people, are encouraged to sign up to this Charter. They are thereby committing themselves to collaborating with others towards fulfilling this vision and undertaking the actions relevant to their own group.

Next Steps (2012)

1. Continue meetings of the Management Committee in its existing form to provide momentum to drive the project forward.
2. Invite representatives from relevant community groups to join Charter Advisory Committee and continue quarterly meetings.
3. Collate all comments to draft Charter document and prepare final document ready for signature, launch and circulation.
4. Develop themed action plans for the Charter which contain timeframes, budgets, roles and responsibilities.
    - Burren Winterage Weekend
    - 'One Stop Shop' resource centres
    - Audit of heritage education courses
    - Oral recordings on Burren agriculture traditions.
5. Pursue funding opportunities for the continued development of the Charter and its associated Action plans.
6. Develop and implement a communications strategy for the Burren Charter.

(Further details on the Burren Community Charter process and progress to date can be found in Part II of this document.)

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

AEOS	Agri-environment options scheme
BBT	Burrenbeo Trust
BEN	Burren Ecotourism Network
BC	Burren Connect
BCV	Burren Conservation Volunteers
BFCP	Burren Farming for Conservation Programme
CCC	Clare County Council
CLDC	Clare Local Development Company
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
FMA	Field Monument Advisor
FIW	Fáilte Ireland West Ltd.
GCC	Galway County Council
GRD	Galway Rural Development Company
GMIT	Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
Burren IFA	Irish Farmers Association (Burren branch)
IRO	Ireland Reaching Out project
NMS	National Monuments Service
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NUIG	National University of Ireland, Galway
REPS	Rural Environment Protection Scheme
RRO	Rural Recreation Officer
SD	Shannon Development Ltd.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Burren presents many aspects to many people – a home and a resource of inestimable value for the communities who live here, a unique national treasure for the people of Ireland and a landscape of international importance to all who value mankind's rich heritage.

The conclusions drawn from wide-ranging experience over many years is that the management and development of this unique resource would benefit more from an integrated approach. This new approach would be developed by the people and communities of the Burren and not imposed from outside.

It is this belief that brought together four Burren based organisations – the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme (BFCP), the Burren Connect Project[1], the Burrenbeo Trust and the Burren IFA – to work in conjunction with the Heritage Council, Galway County Council and Clare County Council, to develop a Community Charter which will support communities, sustain heritage and develop local business, farming and tourism in the Burren.

The proposal, developed by the partners listed above, is for a grass roots, participatory approach aimed at bringing a wide range of sectoral interests together to forge a common vision ('The Burren Community Charter') for the future of the Burren, to define the role that each of these sectors and communities aspire to play within that vision and identify how this vision could be implemented.

This document is an output of that collaboration and the result of an extensive community consultation process undertaken to identify the current issues affecting the lives of the Burren community and their landscape. It outlines actions that would be undertaken at local, regional and national level to address these issues and identifies a way forward for the future management of the Burren as determined by the people who live and work in this special place and know it best.

1.2 Who are the organising partners?

The Burrenbeo Trust Limited is an independent, registered charity, which employs one person fulltime and three people part-time and depends heavily on the efforts of a team of volunteers. Funding is raised through membership and various one-off grant schemes. It is Ireland's very first landscape charity. **Its aim is to promote and support the sustainable management and use of the unique Burren landscape and heritage in an accessible, inclusive and effective manner.**
Richard Morrison is a Director of the Burrenbeo Trust and he represents the Trust on the Burren Community Charter management group. The Burrenbeo Trust provides administration services to the Burren Community Charter project and **Brigid Barry and Áine Bird**, Trust employees, have been involved as Charter project administrators.
The Burrenbeo Trust:

- promotes education and awareness with regard to the Burren regionally, nationally and internationally,

[1] In September 2011 Burren Connect succeeded in gaining Global and European Geopark Status for the Burren & Cliffs of Moher. From 2012 Burren Connect will be operating as the Burren & Cliffs of Moher Geopark.

- engages the younger generation through experiential learning and outdoor activities, including the award winning Ecobeo educational programme,
- empowers local community and contributes to improved visitor management and enhanced visitor experience in the Burren, through the provision of stimulating, high quality, globally accessible information,
- founded and continues to support Ireland's fastest growing conservation volunteer group, the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers,
- supports research on the future sustainable management of the region.

The Burrenbeo Trust operates an information centre and office in Kinvara. www.burrenbeo.com

The Burren Farming for Conservation Programme (BFCP) is a **unique agri-environmental programme designed to conserve and support the heritage, environment and communities of the Burren.** It is based on the findings of the BurrenLIFE Project (2005-2010) and is jointly funded by the Dept. of Agriculture and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). It is based in the Old Schoolhouse in Carron. **Dr Brendan Dunford** is the programme manager and he represents the BFCP on the Burren Community Charter management group.

The stated objectives of the BFCP are to:

- ensure the sustainable agricultural management of high nature value farmland in the Burren
- contribute to the positive management of the Burren landscape and the cultural heritage of the Burren
- contribute to improvements in water quality and water usage efficiency in the Burren region.

Funding of €1m per annum for the 143 farmers currently in BFCP is provided by the Dept of Agriculture, Food and Marine Article 68.1 (a) (i) of Council Regulation (EC) 73/2009. The administration of the programme is funded by the NPWS (of the Dept of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht). www.burrenlife.com

The Burren IFA is the main **representative body for the farmers of the Burren**. The Burren IFA group was established in 1995 as a local branch of the national organisation (the Irish Farmers Association) in order to represent the unique interests of Burren farmers at national level. The group was involved in the negotiation of the Burren REPS agreement in 1995, and continues to play a leading role in the development of agriculture in the region, especially in conjunction with the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme (BFCP)**.**

Michael Davoren represents the Burren IFA on the Burren Community Charter management group.

The Burren Connect Project is based in the offices of Clare County Council in Ennistymon. **Carol Gleeson** is the project manager and she represents Burren Connect on the Burren Community Charter management group. **The aim of the Burren Connect project is to achieve sustainable visitor management and environmental protection in the Burren region** through the development of:

- ecotourism
- information and training
- traffic management
- conservation
- education
- research
- development of trails
- the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark

The project works in conjunction with local stakeholders and community groups and is supported by Clare County Council, Shannon Development, the Geological Survey of Ireland, National Parks and Wildlife Services, National Monuments Services, Fáilte Ireland, the Burrenbeo Trust and the Burren Connect Advisory Committee. www.burrenconnect.ie

Clare County Council is responsible for the provision of services in the administrative area of County Clare, excluding the Ennis and Kilrush urban areas. **Galway County Council** is responsible for the administrative area of County Galway, excluding Galway City and Ballinasloe Urban District. The County Councils act as custodians of the environment and through their planning and environment policies seek to enhance their county, while protecting its unique character and atmosphere. They play an active role in the development of their county's industrial, business, community, social, arts, environmental, tourism, heritage

and cultural affairs.

Within both County Councils, a Heritage Officer position is supported through the Heritage Council. **Congella McGuire,** County Clare Heritage Officer and **Marie Mannion,** County Galway Heritage Officer represent their respective County Councils on the Burren Community Charter management group.

Project **work carried out by the Heritage Officers** includes:

- Awareness raising, appreciation, and enjoyment of heritage
- acquisition of knowledge through survey and research
- promotion of best practice in heritage conservation and management.

They also assist and advise on the heritage implications of current and future policies and work programmes across different departments within the local authorities. These include County Development Plans, Functional Area Plans, Local Area Plans and other land use policies, i.e. wind farm policy, village design statements, landscape character assessments. Data collection, (from both existing and new sources) is an important part of their work as baseline heritage data is increasingly required for Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental Assessments and Appropriate Assessments. See: www.clarecoco.ie www.galway.ie

The Heritage Council is an independent state-sponsored body which has a statutory responsibility to propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage.

The Council works to

- Promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in the national heritage
- Facilitate the appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage
- Co-operate with other bodies in the promotion of its functions
- Promote the co-ordination of all activities relating to its functions.

It achieves this through heritage policy development, infrastructure support and grants provision, working to an agreed strategic plan. The Council headquarters are located in Kilkenny city.

The Heritage Council provided funding, guidance and advice to the Burren Community Charter between November 2010 and December 2012. www.heritagecouncil.ie

1.3 What is the Burren Community Charter?

The Burren Community Charter proposes a voluntary agreement between the people who live and work in the Burren and the organisations that have responsibilities for the region, to safeguard this place, its people and its heritage while supporting the local economy and enhancing the community life of its residents.

The Charter proposes to bring a wide range of communities and sectors together to forge a common approach for the future management of the Burren, defining the role that each of groups aspire to play within that approach and identifying how this approach can be implemented.

The Charter will be a living, evolving agreement by the people and for the people of the Burren and our place, focussing on what we can do as opposed to what can be done for us.

1.4 The guiding principles of the Burren Community Charter

The Burren Community Charter recognises:

- that the Burren is an exceptionally rich natural and cultural landscape

- that the local community must be central to decision making with regard to the management of the Burren
- the wish of all signatories to the Charter to work in partnership to secure a more co- operative, productive and sustainable future for the Burren landscape and its people

1.5 The Burren Community Charter vision

The Burren Community Charter sets out a vision for the Burren

- Where a high quality of life is enjoyed by all
- Where the natural, built and cultural heritage is protected and improved
- Where respect for the environment and local economic development are compatible
- Where there are recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike
- Where dynamic, engaged, sustainable local communities work together for shared benefits as they build a better future.

1.6 Structure of this document

The remainder of this document is divided into four sections:

- identifying the landscape
- assessing the landscape and setting objectives
- the draft Burren Community Charter and
- the next steps.

These first two sections partially address steps 3-5 of the requirements identified for implementing the European Landscape Convention (Diagram 1) in terms of the Burren Landscape. If implemented, the Burren Community Charter could act as a model for the implementation of the proposed Irish National Landscape Strategy at local level.

Information Bite

The Council of Europe's **European Landscape Convention** (the Florence Convention) was published in 2000 and came into force in Ireland on 1 March 2004**.** Its aim is to promote landscape protection, management and planning and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues. The Convention emphasises the right of people to identify with their landscape and to exercise their duty of care for it. As a party to the Convention, Ireland has agreed to this aim and to define landscape quality objectives, while fully involving the people concerned in the decisions that affect their area. The Heritage Council is actively involved in the Advisory Group established by the Minister of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (now Dept of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht) to develop a **National Landscape Strategy for Ireland**. The draft strategy is currently under review (Dec. 2011).

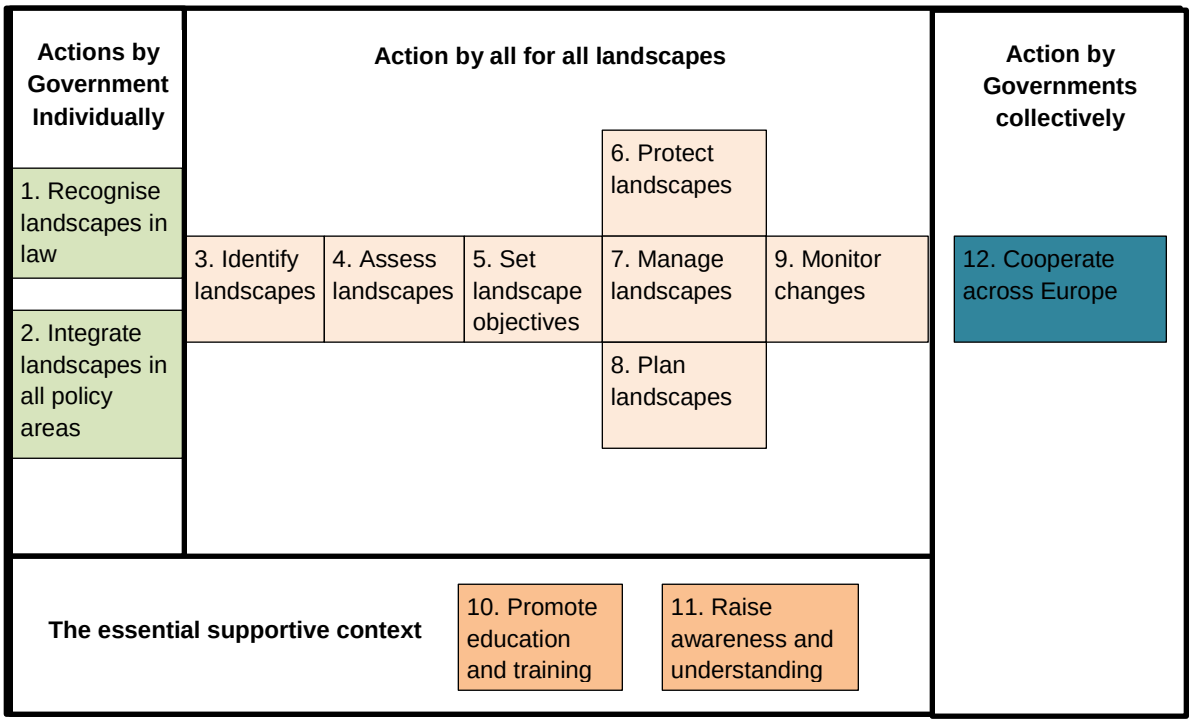


Diagram 1: Requirements for implementing the European Landscape Convention (after www.landscapecharater.org.uk)

2. THE PROCESS

2.1 Introduction

The Burren Community Charter process began in October 2010 with an application for funding to the Heritage Council from the organising partners, detailed in Section 1. Following the approval of funding the Management group began to meet on a regular monthly basis to plan and develop the process.

2.2 Management

Richard Morrison (Burrenbeo Trust) was selected as chairman and Brigid Barry (Burrenbeo Trust) as secretary to the management group. Burrenbeo Trust was selected to provide administrative services to the Charter process, with Brigid Barry acting as project administrator. Zena Hoctor (an independent rural development consultant based in Kinvara) was contracted as project manager and chief researcher.

The Management group [2] met approximately once a month between October 2010 and December 2011. This included twelve management meetings, two meetings to discuss the draft charter document and one future planning meeting. There were seven Management meetings in 2012.

The Advisory Group [3], composed of representatives from a wide range of sectors – farming, tourism, rural development, heritage, community, planning etc., meet on a quarterly basis, convening five times between November 2010 and December 2011.

2.3 Community Consultation

A comprehensive process of community consultation was undertaken to inform the public of the proposed development of a Burren Community Charter, to engage them in the process and to identify the aspirations and concerns of the Burren community. A timeline of the events undertaken is provided in Diagram 2.

Community Events

Between June and August, 2011 the Burren Community Charter took a stand at the agricultural shows in Ennistymon, Corofin and Gort and at the Ballyvaughan Farmers Market. At each of these community events

- Burren Community Charter information leaflets and stickers were distributed,
- Charter team members (wearing Charter T-shirts)informed the public with regard to

[2] Management Committee Members; Richard Morrison , BBT (Chair), Carol Gleeson, Burren Connect, Michael Davore, Burren IFA, Brendan Dunford, BFCP, Congella McGuire, Heritage Officer Clare County Council, Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer Galway County Councilm Brigid Barry, Charter Administrator.
[3] Advisory Committee included representatives from the Heritage Council, Clare County Council, Galway County Council, Shannon Development, National Parks and Wildlife Service, National Monuments Service, Dept. of the Environment, Failte Ireland, Clare Local Development Company, Galway Rural Development and the IFA.

the Burren Charter process,

- invited the public to write their comments on postcards and post in box,
- invited the public to record their contributions on flip camera in the specially designed Burren Charter 'talk box'
- invited the public to post their contributions on our facebook page or post to www.burrenbeo.com
- invited the public to attend a local 'family event' being planned for their locality

An estimated 600 people were informed of the process through these events.

Family Events

The community events were followed with Sunday afternoon 'Burren Charter Family Events' where more in-depth consultation was undertaken through round table discussions. Refreshments and children's art activities were included. These events took place in Lisdoonvarna Pavilion (June 26th), Tubber Hall (July 31st) and the Michael Cusack Centre Carron (August 14th).

Community written submissions and comments

To supplement the feedback obtained through the community and family events, a synopsis paper of issues identified through the consultation process was compiled and circulated to 30 community groups in September 2010 along with an invite for submissions.

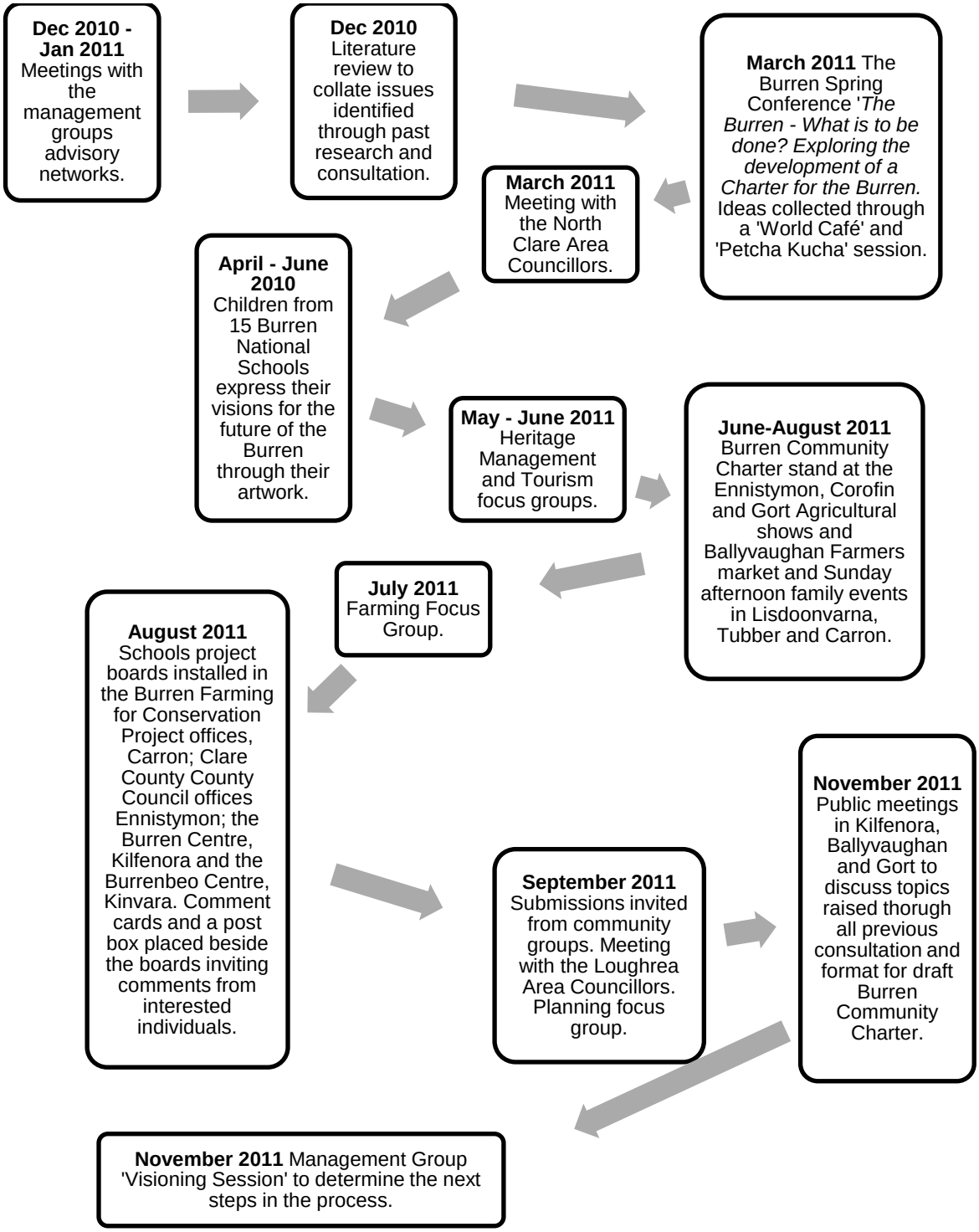
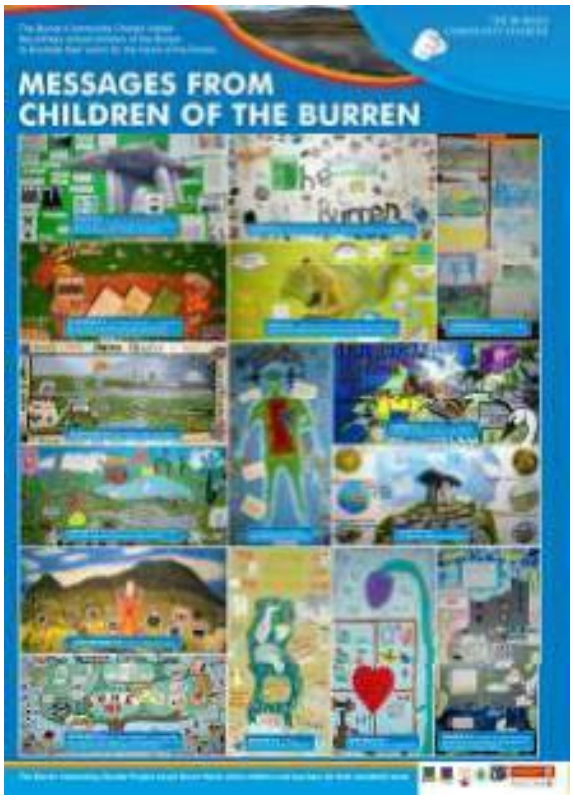


Diagram 2: Timeline of community consultation events undertaken as part of the Burren Community Charter process.

2.4 Publicity

- 3,000 copies of the Burren Community Charter information leaflet were printed and distributed through the community events and through various shops, offices, meetings etc.
- A circular email advertising the community, family events and public meetings was sent to local community contacts through the Burren Charter community database, the Clare and Galway Community and Heritage Forums, County Heritage networks, libraries, the project partner's networks, the advisory group and the SE Galway IRO network.
- Hard copy letters detailing community events and meetings were posted to over eighty community groups, elected members, interested individuals and circulated to parents through the fifteen schools participating in the schools board's project.
- A promotional poster was printed and posted in shops, pubs, post offices, tourist offices, visitor centres, schools in the localities relevant to the consultation events as they occurred.
- Events were announced through the local church masses, services and parish newsletters.
- Facebook and web pages were uploaded and updated regularly.
- Press Releases were prepared and circulated to *The Connaught Tribune, The Galway Advertiser, The Clare People, The Clare Champion, The Galway Independent* and Galway Bay FM and Clare FM.
- Three live interviews were broadcast on Clare FM.
- A range of 'What can U do?' T-shirts, postcards, stickers and banner was designed and produced. A specially designed 'talk box' was constructed for community events.
- Monthly coverage of events and progress was carried in the Burrenbeo Trust newsletter.
- An overview of the Burren Community Charter project was presented at the European Geopark evaluation event in the Michael Cusack Centre, Carron on August 2nd and to the Ireland-UK Limestone Pavement Biodiversity Group on September 2nd, 2011.
- An article on the Charter was published in the Irish Examiner newspaper on August 8th, 2011.
- RTE coverage of the Ballyvaughan Cultural Night (September 23rd, 2011) focussed on the display of Burren Community Charter boards by the local national schools.
- An updated Buren Community Charter sheet was developed and printed for the November round of public meetings.



Promotional materials produced for the Burren Community Charter process. From top left (left to right): Information poster; consultation paper for November public meetings and schools boards poster.

3. IDENTIFYING THE LANDSCAPE

3.1 Geographic Location

What is the Burren and where exactly is it? These are questions often posed by visitors when looking for directions. The answer given depends on the perception of the person asked. A person whose family has lived in the area for many generations may say it's the area between Kinvara and Ballyvaughan, to the north-west of Abbey Hill. A geologist may define it as the karst Carboniferous limestone bounded to the south by the Namurian shales and to the east by 'the scarp at 60m altitude from Kilnaboy north to Corranroo' (Drew, 1997). A botanist may concentrate on the hot-spots for viewing the specialised flora; while the archaeologist may radiate his/her view outwards from well known sites such as Poulnabrone. A marine biologist may introduce the visitor to the fantastic shorelines and underwater world that stretches out beyond the land. The tourism person may direct the visitor to the wealth of visitor centres, accommodation, food, art, craft, recreational activities and the attractions of the various villages and towns of the region.

The Burren is a geographical area whose borders have never been officially identified. It is located along Ireland's mid-western coast, lying across two counties, Clare and Galway. Unlike a County, it is not an administrative region and so has no official outline on a map. Bounded by Galway Bay to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the west, the southern limit is usually defined by the expanse of Namurian shales running from Doolin in the south west, looping around Lisdoonvarna and onward to Corofin via Kilfenora. The eastern limit is more difficult to define as the terraced hills give way to the vast expanses of low-lying pavement known as the 'Gort lowlands' which stretch as far east as Gort, and as far north as Ardrahan or beyond, in Co. Galway. It is estimated that the Burren uplands region (rising to a height of 300m) occupies 367 square kilometres (Dunford & Feehan, 2001), while the Burren lowlands to the east cover a further c.200 square kilometres.

For the purposes of developing a Burren Community Charter, it was decided to concentrate on the area delineated in Map 1. This area covers:

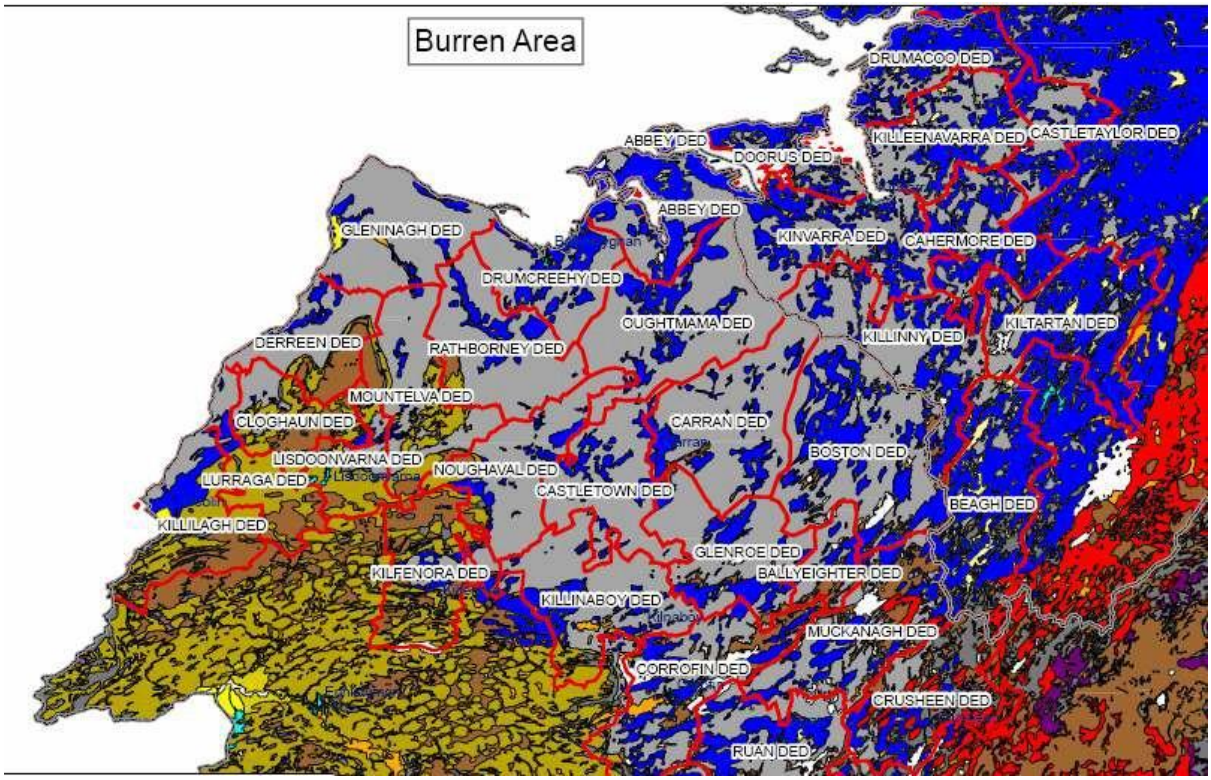
- sections of two counties – Clare and Galway,
- 32 Electoral Divisions (EDs) – 11 of which are in Co. Galway[4] and 21 in County Clare.
- 720km2 (29% in County Galway; 71% in County Clare)
- upland, lowland and coastal landscapes.

3.2 Landscape and Heritage

The Burren is often referred to as the land of the fertile rock. Formed some 340 million years ago at the bottom of a warm, shallow sea, the fossil-rich layers of limestone that characterise the Burren have been modified by millions of years of glacial, tectonic, solutional and human processes. The result is a wonderfully rich, undulating

[4] The eastern boundary of the area is the N18 road. Therefore sections of some of the County Galway EDs to the east of this line are not included.

series of swirls, tiers, cliffs, caves, hollows and bare pavements, classical features of what is described as a 'karst' landscape.



Map 1: Burren Community Charter project area

In terms of ecological wealth, this landscape supports an enormous diversity of habitats including limestone pavements, orchid-rich grasslands, limestone heaths, turloughs and hazel scrub. Twelve Annex 1 habitats listed in the EU Habitats Directive are found in the Burren. As part of the Natura 2000 Network, five Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) covering

47,000 hectares have been designated: Galway Bay Complex, Ballyvaughan Turlough, The East Burren Complex, Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex and Moneen Mountain. Over 70% of Ireland's 900 native species of flora are found here i.e. in less than 0.5% of its area. Several hundred square kilometres of species-rich unimproved limestone grasslands are found in the Burren. The curious mixture of Arctic-Alpine and Mediterranean species, and calcicole (lime-loving) and calcifuge (lime-hating) species, as well as the wealth of orchids - 22 of Irelands 27 native orchid species all add to the diversity.

Feral goats (*Capra hircus*), foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), hares (*Lepus timidus*), rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) pine marten (*Martes martes*), woodmice (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) red squirrels (*Sciurus vulgaris*), pygmy shrews (*Sorex minutus*), badgers (*Meles meles*), stoats (*Mustela ermina*), bank voles (*Clethrionomys glareolus*), mink (*Mustela vison*), the common frog (*Rana temporaria*), the smooth newt (*Triturus vulgaris*), the slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) and the common lizard (*Lacenta vivipara*) are all found in the Burren. Over seventy species of land snails have been recorded in the area.

All of Ireland's seven native bat species are found here, with a very significant population of the lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposiderus*). Almost all (except two) of Irelands thirty butterfly species occur here, with two more or less limited to this area - the pearl bordered fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*) and the brown hairstreak (*Therla betulae*). One moth species, the Burren green (*Calamia trideus*) has its only station in the British Isles here. Seven bird species listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive are found in the Burren.

The Burren has been aptly described as one 'vast memorial to bygone cultures' by the cartographer Tim Robinson. Neolithic portal tombs, court tombs, wedge tombs (over eighty in total), Bronze Age fulachta fia, cist graves, ancient hut sites, mound walls, Early Medieval ringforts (some five hundred in total - mostly stone 'cahers'), Early and Late Medieval church sites, tower houses, thousands of miles of stone walls and a fascinating array of farming structures and vernacular architecture attest to the rich built and cultural heritage of this landscape.

From an agricultural perspective, the Burren uplands were primarily associated with the practice of 'winterage'. Hardy native breeds of beef cattle were used to graze upland grasslands between the months of October and April, requiring scarcely any dietary supplement prior to their removal to finishing grass elsewhere. The ecological significance of this tradition is immense. Wintering animals removed all the litter and grasses that would otherwise inhibit herb growth and limit plant species diversity, without damaging these plants during their flowering season.

Recent changes in agricultural policy have meant that the Burren has seen the increasing 'marginalisation' of upland grasslands, often manifesting itself in the form of hazel-scrub encroachment. Agriculture has become increasingly concentrated in lowland areas that are more amenable to modern farming systems, while less adaptable and accessible upland areas are becoming increasingly neglected, as their feeding capacity is displaced by that of imported fodder. The Burren Farming for Conservation Programme is working to increase the understanding of the relationship between land management practices and the natural, built and cultural heritage of the Burren.

3.3 Settlement

Traditionally the Burren would have been viewed as a predominantly rural society. Most economic and social activities would have occurred at a very local level, centred on the local shop, pub and post office. In recent years the social and economic life of the Burren has radiated outwards. The population has increased and large numbers of people, who now live here, work elsewhere, commuting daily to the large urban centres of Galway, Shannon and Limerick. Large numbers of visitors pass through the region every year and a significant tourism industry has developed.

The main settlement nodes create a necklace around the edges of the Burren. Ballyvaughan, Bellharbour, Newquay, Kinvara and Ballinderreen lie along the northern shoreline; Fanore and Doolin on the west; Lisdoonvarna, Kilfenora, Kilnaboy, Corofin and Ruan to the south and Crusheen, Gort and Ardrahan along the busy N18 routeway

to the east. The only exceptions are Carran, Boston and Tubber, small clustered settlements, which are located in the centre and east.

3.4 Population

The most recently available complete set of population statistics at ED level are from the 2011 Census. For the 32 EDs included in the Charter area, the estimated population in 2011 was 18,534 people. (Appendix I). The 11 EDs within County Galway had a population of 10,241 in 2011, while the population of the 21 EDs in County Clare amounted to 8,293. Therefore, over half the population (55%) lived in just under one-third of the land area in 2011.

Ireland experienced a population growth of 30% in the twenty years between 1991 and 2011, while County Clare had a growth rate of 29%. The overall growth rate of the EDs within the County Clare Burren area was 23.6%. i.e. below both the county and national average. In contrast, the County Galway Burren EDs showed a phenomenal growth increase of 67.9% between 1991 and 2011 far exceeding the average Galway County population growth of 38.9%.

When examined at micro level, population growth was above the county average in several of the County Clare Burren EDs which are located in the vicinity of villages and towns, showing an increasing settlement pattern around existing urban areas. These consist of Crusheen (108% growth), Killilagh (46.7% growth), Drumcreehy (58%), Corrofin (44%) and Gleninagh (54%). The ED of Drumcreehy includes Ballyvaughan village and the ED of Gleninagh is adjacent. The ED of Killilagh includes Doolin village.

Again in the Galway Burren, population growth was mainly centred on the urban areas - Gort, Ardrahan and Kinvara. The ED showing the largest growth rate was Castletaylor, near Ardrahan (on the N18 routeway) which experienced a massive growth rate of +149% between 1991 and 2011. These are areas within commuting distance of Galway city which could account for the growth in population.

In stark contrast the more rural EDs, show a population decrease between 1991 and 2011. When mapped the EDs with population decrease stretch in a line across the centre of the study area from west to east, with the largest decreases evident in the upland areas of the west and centre, Mountelva (-24%), Dereen (-20.4%) and Oughtmama (-14.6%) followed by the lower area to the east of Boston (-2.7%). Muckanagh ED to the north of Crusheen shows a decrease of -1.8%, while Lisdoonvarna shows a high decrease of -9%.

These statistics clearly show an increasing urban settlement pattern with the main population growth being in the vicinity of the existing villages and towns and particularly concentrated along the main road corridor in the east of the Charter area. In stark contrast, the more rural areas across the centre of the area are becoming increasingly depopulated.

3.5 Economy

The economy of the Burren has seen a steady shift in recent years from one based primarily on agriculture and associated industries, to one in which the professional and services sector play an increasingly large role.

Census criteria changed from 2006 and 2011 which precludes direct comparison. However, Professionals accounted for the largest occupation category in the region in 2006 at 17.2% of the working population, up slightly from 16.7% in 2002 and remaining high at 17.2% in 2011 (Table 1). The building and construction sector was the second largest employer with a rise of 3.6% employed in this category between 2006 and 2002. This is an expected rise due to the increase in this industry during the 'Celtic Tiger' years – but it is likely to have fallen dramatically since then. Perhaps a section of the 7.5% employed in Process, Plant & Machinery in 2011 could be attributed to the Building and Construction area.

The biggest decrease in employment, between 2002 and 2006 was in the agriculture, farming and fishing sector with a dramatic decrease of 5.4%. It is difficult to establish which of the occupations listed for the 2011 data would incorporate agriculture, faming and fishing. The decreasing trend in agricultural employment is very significant in the context of the future evolution of the Burren landscape. This was recognised in a recent report (Consultative Committee on the Heritage of the Burren, 2001):

'*Given that the conservation of the Burren is dependent on the maintenance of relatively extensive farming, we may be reaching a critical situation – where the numbers available to carry on the necessary extensive management practices may be simply not available'*.

Occupation 2011		**Occupation 2006/2002**	**2006**	**2002**	**%change 2002-2006**
Professionals	1541 (17.2%)	**Professionals**	1480 (17.2%)	1117 (16.7%)	+32.5%
Skilled Trade	2046 (22.8%)	**Building and construction**	1104 (12.8%)	615 (9.2%)	+79.5%
Caring, Leisure & other Services	553 (6.2%)	**Services**	1019 (11.8%)	722 (10.8%)	+41.1%
Elementary Occupations	669 (7.5%)	**Manufacturing**	1013 (11.7%)	725 (10.8%)	+39.7%
Sales & Customer Service	432 (4.8%)	**Sales**	918 (10.6%)	705 (10.5%)	+30.2%
Not Stated	778 (8.7%)	**Others**	890 (10.3%)	745 (11.1%)	-19.5%
Process, Plant & Machinery	672 (7.5%)	**Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry**	797 (9.2%)	975 (14.6%)	-18.3%
Managers, Directors & Senior Officials	714 (8%)	**Administration and Government**	534 (6.2%)	396 (5.9%)	+34.8%
Admin & Secretarial	704 (7.9%)	**Clerical and Office**	533 (6.2%)	400 (6.1%)	+33.3%
Associate Professional & Technical	863 (9.6%)	**Transport**	343 (4.0%)	286 (4.3%)	-19.9%
Totals	8972		8631	6686	

Table 1: Persons at Work by Occupation in 2011, 2006 and 2002 in the Burren Charter area by number and percentage. (Source: CSO Small area statistics)

A huge decrease in employment in the agricultural sector in the rural EDs becomes more evident when the EDs that form the central band across the Burren from west to east are examined in terms of the percentage of the workforce occupied in this sector between 2006 and 2002. In the Charter area as a whole, the percentage occupied in this sector decreased by 5.4% between 2002 and 2006; but at ED level there was a massive decrease of 34.1% in Oughtmama ED, 14.6% in both Mountelva and Carran and 11.7% in Boston. All EDs in the central Burren showed decreases in this sector far below the region average.

ED	% employed in agricultural sector 2002	% employed in agricultural sector 2006	% change in employment in AFF 2002-2006
Dereen	29.6%	22.5%	-7.1%
Mountelva	36.8%	22.2%	-14.6%
Rathborney	19.6%	12.3%	-7.3%
Noughaval/Castletow	39.3%	30.2%	-9.1%
Carran	31%	16.4%	-14.6%
Oughtmama	39.3%	5.2%	-34.1%
Boston	36.2%	24.5%	-11.7%
Killinny	30%	20.5%	-9.5%
Beagh	19.8%	8.7%	-11.1%
Kiltartan	20.3%	12.7%	-7.6%

Table 2: % change in employment in the agricultural sector in rural EDs in the Charter area 2002-2006

The overall figures for the region show an increase of 0.5% in employment in the professional sectors between 2002 and 2006. When the figures for this sector are examined for the EDs across the central band of the Burren, a huge increase of 16.3% in this sector occurs in Rathborney ED, which is south of Ballyvaughan; 5% increase in Dereen (where new settlement has occurred to the south of Fanore) and +1.1% in Kiltartan (on the N18 to the north of Gort).

Overall the percentage change in those occupied in the services sector increased by +1%. At ED level across the central Burren, numbers occupied in this sector was up, except in Kiltartan and Noughaval/Castletown. Mount Elva showed the biggest increase (10.7%) followed by Dereen (6.9%) – both of these EDs are close to Fanore, Ballyvaughan and the Ballyvaughan Valley – an area which contain major tourism attractions and cater for large visitor numbers. Employment in this sector is likely to be part-time and seasonal.

ED	% change in employment in the professional sector 2002-2006	% change in employment in the services sector 2002-
Dereen	+5%	+6.9%
Mountelva	-5.1%	+10.7%
Rathborney	+16.3%	+4.5%
Noughaval/Castletow	-10%	-5.5%
Carran	-3%	+2.5%

Oughtmama	-11.8%	+0.2%
Boston	-8.8%	+2.3%
Killinny	-2.3%	+3.6%
Beagh	-3.3%	+2.2%
Kiltartan	+1.1%	-3.0%

Table 3: % change in employment in the professional and services sector in the rural EDs of the Charter area 2002-2006.

Overall between 2002 and 2006, there was a dramatic decrease in employment in the agricultural sector especially in the rural EDs across the centre of the Burren; an increase in the professional sector in the EDs around urban centres and an increase in the service sectors, most noticeable in the EDs around the major tourism centre of the Ballyvaughan-Fanore area. Following further census comparisons can be made with the 2011 data presuming the same criteria are used again.

3.6 Education

12.9% of the adult population in County Clare had primary education only in 2011. In County Galway it was 15.7%.

Within the 21 County Clare EDs under consideration for the purposes of the Charter, 12.9% had primary education only in 2011, exactly in line with the County average. In the County Galway EDs, 13% of those who had completed their education had primary education only (below the County average).

However several rural EDs, within the Charter area show a much higher percentage of the population with primary education only. These are Dereen (30.6%), Oughtmama (16.7%), Mount Elva (16.7%) Ardrahan (16.7%), Noughaval/Castletown (18.5%), Glenroe/Ballyeighter (16%), Killinaboy (14.5%) and Boston (16.7%). These EDs with the exception of Ardrahan are located in a band across the centre and south of the study area.

In 2011, 34.9% of the national adult population had completed third level education (advanced certificate or higher). The proportion of Clare's population with third level education in 2011 was 34.1% and 34.9% for County Galway.

Just over 39% of the population in the Galway EDs of the Charter area had completed third level education in 2011 (above the County average), while the figure for the County Clare EDs was 35.3% (also above the County average).

The EDs with the highest percentages of the population with third level education were Rathborney (45%), Doorus (54.9%), Kinvara (50.9%), Castletaylor (53.8%), Crusheen (45.4%) and Lurraga (43.5%). Mirroring the incidences of low education, the EDs across the central study area show a slightly below average percentage of population with third level education e.g. Dereen (29.4%), Mountelva (30.3%), Noughaval/Castletown (28.9%), Glenroe/Ballyeighter (29%), Kilfenora (30.9%), Killinny (27%) and Lisdoonvarna (32.7%).

There are 24 primary schools in the Charter area; 10 in County Clare and 14 in County Galway. In 2011, pupil numbers were in excess of 100 in Kinvara (241), Gort Convent

(155), Ballinderreen (140), Corofin (133), Crusheen (104), Lisdoonvarna (103) and Ardrahan (102) in 2010/2011. Three of the more rural schools had numbers below 20 - Boston (12), Tubber(18) and Fanore(12).

There are three second level schools within the Charter area – Gort Community School (741 pupils), Seamount College Kinvara (243 pupils) and Mary Immaculate School, Lisdoonvarna (300 pupils).

3.7 Transport

Public transport is extremely limited within the Burren study area and people are largely dependent on private transport to move around the area. Bus Eireann operates public passenger routes around the fringes of the area i.e. along the coastal route from Galway through Kinvara, Ballyvaughan and Fanore to Doolin and the Cliffs of Moher and between Ennis, Kilfenora and Corofin and on the N18 routeway between Galway and Limerick. Internally there is no public transport system. Irish Rail operates six daily train services on the Western Rail Corridor between Ennis, Gort, Ardrahan and Galway City all year round.

Information Bite

Clare Accessible Transport (CAT) is a not-for-profit company, which operates a community bus service designed to support communities and increase options at a local level, while opening up access to the National Transport Network. Transport is provided on low floor buses between many of the inland villages of the Burren to the towns of Ennis and Gort on one day per week. A Saturday service is provided between Ennis and Corofin, Friday services between Aughinish, Kinvara, Tubber, Boston, Carron, Bellharbour, New Quay and Gort and Tuesday services between Ballyvaughan, Lisdoonvarna, Ennistymon, Corofin and Ennis. www.catconnects.ie

Transtourism is a EU funded project which aims to improve and promote public transport to rural tourism areas. The Burren Connect/Geopark project is part of an international group that are focusing on encouraging visitors to use public transport to explore their tourism destinations. The partners on this project are
Sweden: Swedish Transport Administration, Municipality of Harjedalen, Destination Lofsdalen Ltd,Destination Funasdalen Ltd
Iceland: Icelandic Tourism Research Centre
Scotland: HITRANS (Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership)
Northern Ireland: University of Ulster, Action Renewables
Ireland: Clare County Council (Burren Connect/Geopark Project)

For the Burren, the project is developing an iphone/android application which promotes existing public transport services (including Car Pooling) and highlights the tourism services that offer incentives to visitors who use public transport. It will also conduct research into public transport usage, will measure savings on CO2 emissions and will feed into national and regional policy on public transport. For further information please visit www.transtourism.eu and www.burrenconnect.ie
Transtourism is an Interreg project. Interreg is an initiative that aims to stimulate cooperation between regions in the European Union. It is financed under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The current programme is Interreg IV, covering the period 2007–2013.

3.8 Conclusions

The Burren is a unique and wonderful landscape, full of diversity and interest. It is a landscape that can refresh the mind, body and spirit. Many people are drawn to the Burren and held there without ever quite understanding why. The mysticism of the Burren has found expression in the books of local poet John O'Donohue, in particular the best selling *'Anam Cara'* or 'soul mate'. It is these qualities that make the Burren a very

special place in which to live.

However, those who live in rural areas know only too well the challenges involved: the decrease in employment in the agricultural sector, dependency on seasonal and part-time employment, the need to commute longer distances to centres of employment, the lack of public transport, depopulation and the related closure of local shops, schools, post offices and pubs, the increase in settlement around towns and villages and the related problems in service infrastructure provision. The hard facts and figures presented in this section firmly show that these are challenges that currently face the Burren community.

4. ASSESSING THE LANDSCAPE AND SETTING THE OBJECTIVES

4.1 Introduction

Through the comprehensive community consultation process undertaken between March and October 2011, a list of challenges currently facing the people who live and/or work in the Burren was identified. At the public meeting held in Kilfenora, Ballyvaughan and Gort in November 2011, the attendees were asked to review these challenges, identify any gaps, make additions, prioritise the list in order of importance and make suggestions for a way forward. In this way, the local community of the Burren assessed their own landscape in terms of the challenges they face and set objectives by identifying actions which could be undertaken to address some of these challenges. This section of the document lists those challenges, relevant actions that are currently being undertaken at local level and suggestions for what could be done now and into the future. The challenges identified, current local initiatives and suggestions for what can be done are listed under six groups, two of which are divided into sub-groups (Local economy and Access).

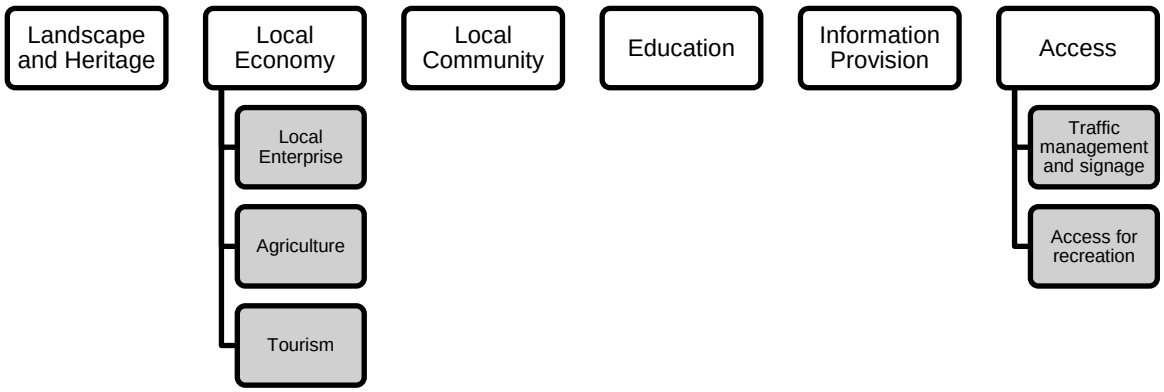


Diagram 3: Layout of groups and subgroups.

Throughout the text 'Information Bite' boxes are inserted to provide background information with regard to challenges raised and support groups that are active in the region.

4.2 Landscape and Heritage

Challenges identified

A. Land Management

- Future management of the Burren must be inclusive of both landscape and seascape.
- Management of the feral goat population needs to be addressed.
- Localised land management issues that need to be addressed include groundwater quality, control of scrub regrowth, flytipping, litter at popular fishing

sites, farm plastic recycling, burning of waste, maintenance of roadside hedges/verges/stone walls and seasonal flooding in the East Burren.

- There is a limited understanding of development plan processes and lack of engagement by local communities in the processes can lead to local opportunities being missed.
- Heritage Management resources are seriously overstretched and this can lead to delays and stresses and threaten the planned work of local projects.
- There is a need to streamline liaison between agencies and landowners

Information Bite

Natura 2000 is an EU wide network of nature protection areas comprising Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the 1979 Birds Directive. The aim of the network is to assure the long- term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats..

Much of the Burren has been designated as part of the Natura 2000 Network. Five Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) covering 47,000ha have been designated: Galway Bay Complex, Ballyvaughan Turlough, The East Burren Complex, Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex and Moneen Mountain. They contain a variety of habitats, including limestone pavements, grasslands, limestone heaths and hazel scrub. Many of these habitats, e.g. limestone pavements, orchid-rich grasslands and turloughs are priority habitats under the Habitats Directive and are accorded the highest level of protection.www.npws.ie

- There is pressure on the infrastructure, archaeology, biodiversity and geology of the Burren due to inappropriate recreational, agricultural and developmental activity.
- There is a need for an overall vision and strategy for the management of the Burren.

B. Heritage Management

- Marine and coastal heritage is a great natural resource that needs to be more highly valued, developed and protected as part of the Burren heritage.
- There is a need for systematic approaches to habitat and archaeological mapping and the compilation of this and other information within existing heritage databases. It may also be necessary to consider a method of integrating such databases or even looking at the feasibility of a single integrated database.
- There is good work occurring on the ground – e.g. Field Monument Advisors, Geopark geologist, Biodiversity Officers, Heritage Officers individual surveys and community projects. This work needs to be integrated and the landscape looked at as a unit.
- More information needs to be provided to landowners with regard to archaeological monuments on their land.
- Current heritage legislation is adequate; but practical implementation can create challenges.
- Legally the large numbers of previously unrecorded archaeological monuments recognised in recent years have no official protection.

Information Bite

The Burren has been on the tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage Site Status since 1992 (updated in 2010). www.whc.unesco.org

Current local initiatives

The Burren Code was developed under the Burren Tourism and Environment Initiative and is included on all information leaflets, publications and signage produced by Burren Connect and many other locally based groups. Burren Code leaflets in seven languages are stocked in all Burren visitor centres and Burren Connect information points

The Burren Code:

Support the principles of the Burren Code to help safeguard this important landscape:

• Leave the limestone pavement as you find it*

• Preserve natural habitats and leave wildflowers undisturbed.

• Take care not to damage monuments, walls and buildings

• Respect landowners, their property and their livestock

• Park and camp in designated areas

• Leave no trace of your visit, take nothing but memories.

*Limestone Pavement is listed as a "Priority Habitat" in the European Habitats Directive, 1992, and is protected by law.

The Burrenbeo Trust Conservation Volunteers (BCVs) were established in February 2010. The BCVs address key Burren conservation issues on a monthly action day basis, under expert supervision and training. Scrub cutting in areas of orchid-rich grassland, beach clean ups, archaeological excavations and mapping ancient settlements, stone wall building, dismantling of mini-cairns and the management of important areas for the breeding of rare butterflies number among their activities to date. www.burrenbeo.com

Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN) undertakes an active conservation programme which includes clean-up days each spring and autumn. These have included the removal of rubbish and recently built mini-cairns on land along the Coast Road. www.burrenecotourism.com

The Burren Farming for Conservation Programme (BFCP) has been involved in the implementation of best-known management practices on 143 farms covering an area of 13,256 hectares of the Burren. This includes 39% of the Black Head/Poulsallagh Complex SAC, 60% of Moneen Mountain SAC and 38% of the East Burren Complex SAC. This area also includes 1,196ha of state-owned land (Burren National Park and Slieve Carron National Nature Reserve). The average area of SAC and Annex I habitats per farm was 92.7ha, only 64.7% of which is deemed eligible under SPS rules.

Farm plans are drawn up under the programme to include new feeding systems, redeployment of existing livestock and targeted scrub removal. Work has also been on-going to increase the understanding of the relationship between land management practices and the natural heritage of the Burren. www.burrenlife.com

In September 2011 UNESCO awarded **Global Geopark status to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher.** The Global Geoparks network was established to help support local communities to sustainably develop their local economy through the promotion of geological heritage and the encouragement of ecotourism initiatives. The involvement of many Burren visitor and education centres, businesses, schools, and communities proved to be an essential contributory factor in achieving the designation. The development of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher project has been co-ordinated by Burren Connect since 2009. www.burrenconnect.ie/geopark

X-PO is a self-sustaining cultural hub and gathering point for local clubs in the Kilnaboy community. Situated in the former post office it was set up to actively engage rural audiences by giving space and time to review, recall and renew core values and priorities. It focuses on the challenges in rural community life of - how to retain a sense of belonging, how to include incomers and how to provide for the youth. Since its inception, this community driven and managed project has undertaken the compilation of archives of local knowledge, the establishment of historical mapping and research groups and the provision of space for community activities such as dancing, singing, acting, art, Irish conversations and exhibitions. www.x-pokilnaboy.blogspot.co

The County Galway Digital Graveyard Mapping Project is training community groups to digitally map, transcribe and photograph the memorials in their local graveyards. A map board of the information is placed at the entrance to each graveyard to assist people visiting find their family plot.

All the information is also uploaded to Google Earth and made accessible via Galway County Council's website. This system allows interested individuals worldwide to undertake a virtual tour of the graveyard, discover their relatives burial place and view a photograph of the grave and the memorial inscription. www.galway.ie

The Heritage Council in conjunction with eight Local Authorities, including **Galway and Clare County Councils,** commissioned **a coastal heritage audit** in spring 2010**.** Co-ordinated by the Heritage Council, the project has a technical advisory group including the Marine Institute, National Parks and Wildlife Service, National Monuments Service, National Museum, Environmental Protection Agency, Geological Survey of Ireland, the Dept. of the Environment. It also has links to other projects within the Irish Spatial Data infrastructure. The Heritage Council provides 75% of the project funding.

Using a GIS approach, this project has been auditing heritage related datasets, assessing gaps in data and collating the data into a planning assessment mapping tool, known as the **Heritage Map Viewer.** This is a web-based data viewer focusing on the heritage of the coastal and inland counties and offshore resources around Ireland. The user can create cross disciplinary views from over 200 data sets - crossing over administrative (county) boundaries, subject boundaries, and the land-sea boundary. It uses web services to access live data where possible, thereby increasing data reliability. It acts as a "one stop shop" or a discovery tool, as it provides access to heritage data along with contextual data from a very wide range of sources. As it is available over the web, the viewer allows easy access to GIS data without the need for additional software.

The national and international policy context within which the project partners are working include, *inter alia*: the Water Framework Directive, and the Marine Strategy Directive, the Floods Directive, Birds and Habitats directives, planning legislation, National Monuments legislation, and the forthcoming National Landscape Strategy, County Development Plans, and Regional Planning Guidelines.

During 2011 the partners concentrated on exploring the potential applications of this viewer with colleagues in planning, and community services. It has been found to be very helpful in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment (especially for scoping, and examining potential cumulative impacts). It has also assisted in scoping out potential tourism products focused on heritage.

At present the use of the viewer is restricted to the project partners and data providers, due to data sharing restrictions. It is intended that data sharing agreements be put in place to allow wider public access, as sixteen other counties wish to join the project during 2012.

What can be done?

Land Management

- Increase number of staff available in the Burren to support Heritage/landscape issues
- Establish a joint local working base for all Burren Heritage staff
- Increase opportunities for dialogue and face-to-face meetings between landowners and heritage professionals to plan farm works and to provide information.
- Undertake long term research to inform the future development of the BFCP.
- Maintain dialogue between all stakeholders with regard to current contentious issues.
- Achieve agreement on a feral goats' management plan and its implementation.
- Explore the possibility of utilising the local authorities' summer student scheme, graduate intern programmes, the Rural Social Scheme, Tús Scheme, Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers and Burren Ecotourism network conservation programme etc. to tackle localised land management issues.
- Support the work of the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers and the Burren Ecotourism Network Conservation programme.
- Develop an action plan between the Local Authority, NPWS and landowners to manage roadside hedges.
- Increase awareness raising among the local community of strategic landscape planning, the cumulative impact of development and the economic value of landscape to the local economy.

Heritage Management

- Include marine and coastal heritage in all future awareness raising, information provision and educational activities.
- Advocate maintaining the FMAs and Geopark geologist on a more permanent basis.
- Develop a locally based integrated heritage database into which all relevant data is uploaded and make it accessible for use by all interested individuals.
- Support the expansion and integration of local community heritage projects.
- Ensure adequate heritage skills training is available.
- Prioritise research themes for heritage management.

INFORMATION BITE

The Field Monument Advisor (FMA) Scheme is dependent on year to year financing and employment is part-time. Because of this, it does not achieve its full potential. In general, the FMAs areas of operation are widespread and only allow for one visit to each farm. Ideally the best practise for the FMAs is to have the ability to return to the farm a few times and give feedback to the landowner.

The County Clare FMA is currently working closely with the BFCP and this model has enabled the FMA to concentrate on a set group of farmers. The County Galway FMA is working in the Kinvara, South Galway Area and works closely with the Clare FMA.

An application was made to LIFE (the European financial instrument for the environment) by Burren Connect in July 2011, to establish a project aimed at the reconciliation of tourism development with heritage conservation in the Burren (document can be downloaded at www.burrenconnect.ie). The application was successful and a number of pilot actions will be set in motion.

4.3 Local Economy

4.3.1 Local Enterprise

Challenges identified

- There is a need to develop sustainable employment which will allow people the privilege to live and work in the Burren.
- The communities of the Burren should be encouraged to support/buy local produce and utilise local services and facilities.
- There is a need to build on, support and strengthen networks within local social, economic and environmental sectors e.g. tourism, food production in order to collaborate in the sourcing of funding and resources.
- The marine resource is underutilised in terms of enterprise development in the Burren.
- Unreliable broadband, mobile phone and other services limit the work of local businesses as do the limited services available in the local area (food, banking, post etc).
- A Burren brand should be developed and marketed to identify and promote the area and its produce (food, crafts etc.) It should be used as a tool to promote sustainable living in a protected landscape as a model for Europe.
- Local resources should be utilised to create small business opportunities e.g. use of hazel for wood fuel, production of local gates for farm use, stone wall building, development of local crafts, foods, etc
- A Burren web portal with access to **all** information for the region – e.g. services – businesses, transport, facilities, service providers, maps & other info should be developed.

INFORMATION BITE

In 2007 Burren Connect put together a **proposal to develop a brand identity for the Burren** which would portray a clear, identifiable, immediate connection to the Burren on a National and International level. It was envisaged within that proposal that the brand would be used on a variety of materials and for a number of purposes. A public consultation process was organised by Burren Connect to discuss the branding proposal. The result of this consultation was a very strong feeling against the development of a Burren brand. The issue has not been approached since

Current local intiatives

Weekly **Farmers' Markets** are held in Kinvara, Ballyvaughan, Doolin, Gort and Ardrahan between April and October, providing local producers with the opportunity to sell their goods directly to consumers. Both the Kinvara and Ballyvaughan markets meet the criteria of the 'Code of Good Practice for Farmers Markets' as assessed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM). **Christmas markets** are also held in Kinvara, Ballyvaughan and Doolin selling local crafts and produce.
www.kinvara.com/farmersmarket www.ballyvaughanfamersmarket.ie www.clare.ie/farmersmarkets
www.facebook/com/ardrahanfarmersmarket

Websites such as www.burren.ie and www.burrenbeo.com and www.clare.ie all provide maps and up-to-date information on services, events, activities and attractions in the Burren.

Gort Chamber of Commerce is a local organisation of businesses whose goal is to further the economic interests of the town. Local businesses are members, and they elect a board of directors or executive council to set policy for the chamber. www.gortchamber.com

The **Burren Slow Food Festival** and the **Clare Harvest Banquet** are annual events which source and showcase locally produced food products. **Slow Food Clare** is a member of the international Slow Food organisation which is a non-profit, eco-gastronomic member-supported organisation. Slow Food is working to help communities around the world regain control of their local food system supporting small-scale farmers and artisan producers in order to eat better, protect the environment and maintain cultural diversity. www.slowfoodclare.com

Galway County Council has established a brand and website for craft and food producers in County Galway called **Made in Galway**.www.madeingalway.ie

What can be done?

- Carry out an audit of food, drink, arts and crafts producers in the area with the end focus of producing a Burren directory and development of a Burren producers network.
- Provide supports to explore the possibilities for the use of local resources for enterprise development.
- Develop a 'one-stop shop' in the Burren which will provide support, advice and facilitation for enterprise development and market the Burren in terms of all its services, facilities and attractions, not only to promote tourism but to attract enterprise.
- Develop a Burren web portal to include all local businesses, services and facilities.
- Revive and explore the idea of developing a Burren brand.
- Advocate for improved communications and infrastructure across the Burren.

Information Bite

The **LEADER Programme** in County Clare is operated by Clare Local Development Company www.cldc.ie and in County Galway by Galway Rural Development Ltd (www.grd.ie). LEADER's role is to stimulate new innovative ideas and offer practical support to businesses, farm families and community groups in getting their ideas off the ground.

The current programme provides attractive incentives for the start up of new micro-enterprise projects. Support is available for farm-diversification projects into non-agricultural activities, food enterprises, opportunities in rural recreation and rural-tourism.

For community and voluntary groups, there are opportunities to develop new and existing local facilities and services, as well as pursuing projects in village renewal and development. Environmental projects, including energy conservation and renewable energy, and the conservation of rural heritage.

County Enterprise Boards (CEBs) were established in Ireland in 1993 to provide support for small businesses ('micro-enterprises') with 10 employees or less, at local level. They provide advice, mentoring, training supports and direct grant-support to new and existing enterprises and promote entrepreneurship, capacity building and women-in-business at local level, to micro enterprises in the commercial sphere. CEBs are co-funded by the Irish Government and EU Structural Funds. www.clareceb.ie www.galwayenterprise.ie

4.3.2 Agriculture

Challenges identified

- There is insufficient funding to cater for the current demand for the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme and uncertainty over future funding.
- Young people are moving away from the Burren due to lack of employment (seasonal or full time) and difficulties in obtaining planning permission to build new houses or to redevelop abandoned or other buildings on their family farm, opportunities need to be developed to help them stay in the area.

- There is a lack of supports for on-farm diversification and poor infrastructure for families contributes to a general apathy which limits the level of engagement needed for success.
- There is an elderly farming population, many with no successor. Younger farmers are often part-time and not attracted to the isolation of a farming career. The costs for a young person to take over a farm are prohibitive, especially with no early retirement scheme.
- Daily farm work is hampered by huge levels of bureaucracy, which discourages necessary work and adds to overall costs.
- There are conflicts between some existing policies – e.g. aspects of the Single Farm Payment system encourage agricultural development, while the Habitats Directive encourages conservation. This results in the farmer receiving mixed signals.
- There is scope for better communication between farming and tourism to avoid conflicts.

Current local intiatives

The Burren Farming for Conservation Programme (BFCP) is a **unique agri-environmental programme designed to conserve and support the heritage, environment and communities of the Burren.** It is based on the findings of the BurrenLIFE Project (2005-2010) and is jointly funded by the Dept. of Agriculture and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It is based in the Old Schoolhouse in Carron.

Year 1 of the BFCP officially ended on April 30th 2011. Final payments totalling €692,735 were issued to 117 farmers in June 2011. Year 2 of the programme has been shortened to an 8-month year in order to realign BFCP with the calendar year. The number of farmers participating in the BFCP has increased from 117 in year 1 to 143 in Year 2, with 31 additional places being offered by DAFM and 26 of these being taken up. The total amount of funding allocated to these farmers was €997,461. The average payment per farm was €6,975 (range €710 to €14,997) which is an increase of 23.4% on the Year 1 allocation.

Farm plans are prepared for each farmer by one of 12 trained BFCP advisors (down from 15 in year 1). BFCP Payments fall under three main measures - Measure 1: the production of species rich grassland, Measure 2: Site enhancement works (including scrub removal) and Measure 3: Protection of designated land and other areas of Annex 1 habitat. Most of the budget is allocated to Measures 1 and 2 as many farmers receive Measure 3 payments through the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPs) or Agri- Environment Options Scheme (AEOS)

Farmer training, liaison and support is an essential part of the work of the BFCP. Five information evenings were held in four locations in May 2010; four training events were held in Carron, Fanore and Tubber in August and December 2010 and three part-time training courses have been delivered. Attendance at one of the three parts of this annual training course is mandatory (otherwise a 10% penalty might apply). Four dates were made available for each part of the course (12 events in total) including mornings, afternoons, evenings and nights, during the week and at the weekend. The course was held in the NUIG centre Carron, with field trips to Deelin, Carron. The exceptionally high levels of attendance (>95%) at these courses, combined with very positive feedback, attest to the success of these courses and the high level of engagement with the programme. www.burrenlife.com

The Farm Heritage Tours Co-op is a good model of a locally created on-farm enterprise which is bringing an extra income to Burren farmer while utilising the heritage resources present on the land and increasing education and awareness of conservation and heritage issues among the local population and visitors (for further detail see information bite under 4.7.2. – Access for Recreation) www.farmheritagetours.com

What can be done?

- Collectively advocate for sustained and increased funding for BFCP

- Develop a one stop Burren shop (and helpline etc) to offer support, advice and assistance to the farmer.
- Develop and deliver a farm accounts/form filling computer course geared towards farmers.
- Explore the designation of the Burren as a 'Landscape Feature'
- Increase opportunities for farmers in the areas of conservation, tourism and enterprise to supplement farm income.

Information Bite

To receive the single farm payment farmers must comply (known as cross-compliance) with the two main conditions. Firstly, Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) which aim to protect public, plant and animal health, the environment and the welfare of animals and secondly, Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) standards where farmers are required to maintain soils, habitats and landscape features.

Under the GAEC, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) has designated all hedgerows and drains as landscape features. All land under these features will be eligible for payment under the Single Farm and the Disadvantaged Area schemes. Land under scrub and bare rock continue to be ineligible for both schemes.

In the Burren, scrub and bare rock constitutes a large proportion of the land. Therefore the farmer is incentivised to remove these features in order to make his/her land eligible for payment. Removal however is prevented under Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation. If bare rock and scrub were included as 'landscape features' for the Burren region, this would help to protect the landscape and benefit the local economy.

4.3.3 Tourism
Challenges identified

- Adventure tourism is a growing market and there is huge potential for the further development of ecotourism and marine tourism.
- There is a need to build on and strengthen local tourism networks so that they can work together in promoting each other and the Burren and when seeking funding, training resources etc.
- The East Burren has the potential but is largely under developed in terms of sustainable tourism economic activity.
- There is often a lack of recognition of the 'ripple effect' within the local economy from tourism.
- The local community should support and utilise local tourism enterprises, events and activities.
- There is a perception that the short stay and day tripper markets provide very little local economic benefit.
- Longer stay integrated packages need to be developed and supported.
- More attention should be paid to how visitors get to the Burren e.g. access through Shannon Airport and through Gort and Ardrahan train stations.
- Safety features need to be provided at well utilised fishing spots.
- Tourism can place environmental pressure on the Burren's road infrastructure, monuments and natural attractions. This needs to be managed.
- The Galway Burren is not sufficiently promoted as a visitor destination.

Current local intiatives

The **Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN)** is the product of ongoing co-operation over a 3 year period between the Burren Connect project, a variety of state organisations and a group of Burren-based tourism businesses. 18 Burren business members underwent a rigorous training and assessment programme, as part of a pilot project for the first national ecotourism certification programme. The accredited Network members offer visitors the opportunity to engage with the protected landscape of the Burren in a manner which is sustainable both in terms of environment and community. Accommodation, food, farming, outdoor activities, culture and heritage are all part of the package. Tourism businesses involved in the network are committed to local produce, conservation actions and sustainable communities, as well as to continuing high standards in sustainability. Clare Local Development Company has recently funded an animation programme to grow and develop the network. www.burrenectourism.com

Galway East Tourism Marketing Limited is a community-based tourism company, with one full-time Manager and a Board of Directors. The company was set up in consultation with representatives from the tourism industry and various statutory agencies e.g. Fáilte Ireland, Ireland West Tourism, Galway County Council and Teagasc. The aim of the company is to implement an integrated marketing strategy for the Galway East region (which includes the Galway Burren) designed to increase awareness of the area as a holiday destination. www.galwayeast.com

Ireland Reaching Out is an Irish-government sponsored project. Instead of waiting for people to come to Ireland to trace their ancestry, local communities are identifying those who emigrated from their parish, tracing their descendants and inviting them to visit their ancestors' birthplace and/or join in the on-line genealogical research. The Ireland Reaching Out project is currently operating on a pilot basis with 19 parish communities in south-east Galway, including those of Ardrahan/Labane, Gort, Kilmacduagh, Kiltartan and Beagh, all of which are in the Galway Burren. This project has now expanded nationwide. www.irelandxo.org

The Clare Roots Society was formed in 2006 as an amateur family history, genealogy and heritage group in County Clare. The Society meets once a month and has over 100 local members. In addition, there are overseas cyber-members who participate actively in Society activities. Many of these members of the Clare Diaspora are organised formally or informally in active local groups which, in turn, run their own Clare-oriented genealogy projects with their own mailing lists and newsletters. The wealth of genealogy resources on the **Clare County Library website**, the **Local Studies Centre** in Ennis and the very active Clare Roots Society all strengthen the potential to promote County Clare as a genealogy tourism base. It is hoped that County Clare will become part of the 'Ireland Reaching Out Project' in the near future. www.clareroots.org

Plans to carry out a resource audit with the aim of **identifying the potential for sustainable tourism enterprise in the East Burren** followed by an action plan identifying the facilities, supports and structures required to develop these resources in conjunction with the local community, are to be undertaken as **part of the Geopark programme**. This type of development indicates how the Geopark designation will impact positively on the local economy. Included in this work will be the development of signage and interpretation at Lough Bunny with linkages to existing visitor attractions e.g. Coole Park and Dromore Woods. www.burrenconnect.ie

Several **locally organised events and festivals** take place throughout the Burren region, often on an annual basis. These events bring large numbers of visitors into the area, providing added local economic benefit through the provision of accommodation, food, drink, services and facilities. The **Burren in Bloom Festival,** organised by the Burrenbeo Trust and the Burren College of Art, takes place throughout the month of May each year and in 2011 it had an estimated attendance of 1,000 people. The **Burren Marathon** is held in Ballyvaughan each May. Organised by the Ballyvaughan-Fanore Walking group it attracted over 2,500 people to the North Clare area in 2011 and the local business community estimates that it generated in the region of €300,000 over the weekend. In June, the An Post **Tour de Burren** cycle race takes place. An estimated 300 cyclists took part in 2011. The **Great Burren Run** held in Fanore in July, the **Burren Peaks Walking Festival** in September and the **Burren Charity Challenge** in December all add to the Burren adventure tourism product and the local economy. Cultural events, such as the **Russell Memorial Weekend** in Doolin each February, **Corofin Tradition Festival** in March, **Fleadh na gCuach** in Kinvara in May, **the Brazilian Festal,** Gort in June, **Crinniú na mBád**, Kinvara in August, **The Lady Gregory Autumn Gathering**

at Coole Park in September , the **Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival** also in September and the **Cooley-Collins Festival of Traditional Music** in Gort in October all attract large numbers of visitors to the region. Heritage celebrations, such as the **Burren Rocks Festival** and **Heritage week** result in several locally organised events and activities happening throughout the region.

What can be done?

- Encourage networking between all tourism service providers within the Burren to make better use of available resources.
- Develop a local multiplier case study to demonstrate the impact of local tourism initiatives on the local economy.
- Support and resource the Burren Ecotourism Network in their promotion and development of conservation actions, environmental standards and long stay eco-holiday packages.
- Expand the 'Ireland Reaching Out' diaspora project from SE Galway to include the Clare Burren.
- Explore opportunities for the development of more cycling and walking trails throughout the Burren, with trailheads at access points such as Gort railway station.
- Improve integration between regional and local tourism agencies.
- Collectively advocate for sustained and increased funding for Burren Connect and expand its remit into the Galway Burren.
- Wild Atlantic Drive initiative.
- Audit of what is currently available.
- Training for Local Providers.
- Promote local culture, music, song and folklore.
- Increase use of internet for marketing.
- Target Coach Tour Operators to encourage them to use local restaurants, pubs, cafes etc.

4.4 Local Community

Challenges identified

- Community voices must be heard in the future management of the Burren.
- Encourage and increase opportunities to build the growing recognition among local residents of belonging to a Burren community.
- Administrative structures and organisations are based on the county structure – there needs to be a collective vision with regard to the Burren as a landscape unit.
- Need to develop opportunities to maintain the population/communities of the Burren
- Need to recognise positive social and economic impacts of so-called 'commuter communities' on a local area.
- Depopulation in the more rural areas of the Burren is resulting in closure of schools, shops, an increase in empty houses and a decrease in community amenities such as medical facilities and other services.
- The social and economic needs of people living in the Burren must be recognised as well as the wider landscape conservation issues.

- Where resources and staffing are short within agencies, develop mechanisms which allow local community involvement in Burren conservation, marketing, education etc. activities.
- There is a need for the provision of more civic spaces and public facilities within the villages e.g. picnic areas, dustbins, toilets etc for both tourism and community purposes.
- There is a need for a good standard of services and utilities to be provided within settlements.
- There is a need to examine the carrying capacity of the various Burren villages and towns to sustain/increase their populations.

Current local intiatives

There are approximately 80 **voluntary, community-led organisations** in the Burren. These include community councils, development associations, tidy towns committees, agricultural show committees, historical societies, sports clubs, festival committees, farmers markets, etc.

The membership of these organisations indicates the wealth of social capital present within the Burren community. Very often members are elected by their peers to various positions on a committee, demonstrating **community level democracy and governance**.

Many of the members are responsible for the planning, organisation and delivery of community social events and activities in community centres, village halls etc. and often for the maintenance and management of that community facility, demonstrating **managerial and organisational skills.** The Burren Centre at Kilfenora, is owned and managed by Comhar Conradh na Boirne – a community developed co-operative with shareholders. This co-op was established to improve the socio-economic profile of the area. Lisdoonvarna Fáilte Ltd. operates the Pavilion Hall, Cois Ceim Community Crèche, a community playground, the community sports field, Astro-Turf Facility, 10 acres of parkland, the twin wells, spa wells and pump room, Maiville House and 50 acres of land at Gowlauns. on behalf of the community of Lisdoonvarna.

The innovative re-use of the old post office at Kilnaboy by the local community shows the potential for the transformation of derelict and underused property to house community facilities and services and to promote **community regeneration.**

Ballyvaughan Community Development and Kinvara Development Association have been involved in developing community plans.

What can be done?

- Continue awareness raising of the Burren as a landscape unit covering parts of North Clare and South Galway.
- Examine GCC and CCC policies, especially with regard to planning and explore the possibility of harmonising policies for the Burren.
- Develop projects in which the children and young adults of the Burren can become actively involved.
- Identify, value and use the talents and skills of local residents and provide opportunities to develop new skills. Match the capacity of these skills with those of professionals working in the Burren to support conservation, marketing, education and service delivery.
- Encourage local community organisations to develop community action plans to feed into the future development of the Burren Community Charter.
- Encourage and harness volunteerism.

4.5 Education

Challenges identified

- There is a rich repository of local knowledge among residents of the Burren and this should be tapped into in the development of educational and training programmes.
- Burren studies should be part of the primary school curriculum.
- The Burren has great potential to be a national centre for field studies.
- Education programmes are needed for landowners and those directly affected by heritage legislation.
- There is a gap in environmental heritage knowledge among many of the groups whose work impacts on the built and natural heritage.
- Additional staff and financial resources are required to develop and provide this education at local level for a variety of audiences.
- There is a need for the development of sustained awareness raising and skills training programmes in relation to the conservation of the heritage of the Burren, in order to manage change.

Current local intiatives

A Biodiversity Training programme for local authority staff was developed by Galway County Council and the Applied Ecology Unit at NUI, Galway as a pilot programme in 2010. It was funded jointly by the Heritage Council and Galway County Council. It is an accredited one-year course to Certificate level. Participants spend one day per month in lectures and up to 2-3 days per month on project work. The allotted time is divided equally between the participants own time and County Council work time. Group projects have led to members of the various sections of the local authority working together e.g. water, planning, environment. This has led to cross learning and a very useful exchange of information between the course participants and the course tutors e.g. ecologists becoming more aware of planning laws etc. The Certificate course went national in 2011 and participants from nine local authorities are now involved. Staff from Galway and Clare Councils make up approximately half the participant numbers. Building on the strength of this programme a **MSc (Master of Science) in Biodiversity and Land use planning** course was initiated in 2011. There are currently 15 participants on this course from various local authorities. www.galway.ie www.clarecoco.ie

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark project in conjunction with the Burren Outdoor Education Centre delivered an adult 5 evening course entitled **'Understanding the Burren Landscape'** in both March 2010 and 2011. A third course is planned for 2012. This course provides an insight into the ancient geological history of the Burren, and its evolution through time until the most recent ice sheets retreated some 12,000 years ago. It is designed for an audience with no prior knowledge of earth history or the Burren. www.burrenconnect.ie/geopark

The Friends of Coole are a voluntary group who work in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Galway County Council, Galway Rural Development, Galway Education Centre, Fáilte Ireland West and the community of Gort to deliver an annual Winter and Spring Programme of free Cultural events at Coole Park. The programme showcases locally based artists and provides lectures on locally based topics. Included in the programme are talks, workshops and walks on aspects of heritage, music, dance, literature and drama. Children's activities include a bi-annual Schools Arts and Heritage education programme and a series of outreach children's workshops in arts and heritage. Two short training courses for adults in 'Reading the Landscape' were delivered in 2009 and 2010. In 2010/2011 a Certificate course in Local History was delivered as an outreach programme from N.U.I. Maynooth. This course was part funded by Galway Rural Development under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas. www.coolepark.ie

The Burrenbeo Trust ran 2x 2 day Heritage course for adults in 2010 (June and October) and a 2 day (over 2 weekends) **'Best Practice in Conservation Heritage Management'** workshop in November 2011. The aim of this workshop is to support and utilise the knowledge gained from the BCVs fieldwork and to upgrade the potential benefits of this work. www.burrenbeo.com

The Ireland Reaching Out Project delivered an **educational programme titled 'My people, my place and my heritage'** in early 2011. Included in the programme were modules on map reading, archaeology, built heritage, industrial and engineering heritage, natural heritage, genealogy, local history, folklore, myth and legends of south-east Galway. The programme included class based lectures and field trips. A web- based heritage training pack for south-east Galway, aimed at the local community, is currently being developed based on the educational programme. www.irelandxo.org

The Burren Outdoor Education Centre (BOEC) offers several **field studies** programmes. Expert tuition and equipment is provided for Leaving Cert students doing their geography fieldwork investigation and ecology studies for the biology syllabus. Similar studies are also available for Junior certificate level students. National school students are offered a choice of ecosystems to explore from limestone pavement to rocky seashore to woodland, including map reading and orienteering, all of which compliment the science and P/E section of the new primary curriculum. All activities and field study options are also available as taster sessions for adult groups, as well as specialist courses in mountain training, cave training, sea kayaking/kayaking and first aid. www.boec.ie

Each year since 2003, **Burrenbeo** has been delivering **a unique heritage learning programme called 'Eco Beo'** to primary school children in the Burren. The theme of the Eco-Beo education programme is **'My Burren Heritage'.** The objective of the course is to instill among the children of the Burren, the future custodians of the landscape, a sense of informed pride, ownership and responsibility for their heritage. Eco-Beo opens up the Burren's vast and varied heritage to the students, giving them and their parents and teachers a unique insight into the Burren's world famous karst landscape. The course offers each child a hands-on, fun learning experience. So far, Burrenbeo has graduated over 700 young Burren experts. These future guardians of the Burren have successfully completed **an intensive 20-week course** delivered within school term. Throughout the twenty week course, participants learn about various aspects of the Burren - its animals, plants, monuments, landscape and culture - through a series of colourful classroom presentations. This is complimented by weekly quizzes, e-newsletters and assignments delivered by professional course tutors, all of whom are experts in their individual areas. Students are taken on Burren field trips, where they have the opportunity to put their newfound knowledge to the test. Following completion of Eco-Beo, the children are well able to interpret, communicate and potentially protect the heritage of their special home- The Burren. These courses are made possible with a mix of funding from individuals, national awards, school fundraising and individual Burrenbeo volunteers.

The Burrenbeo Trust launched an **on-line education portal** in November 2011, to support and strengthen its Eco-beo programme. www.burrenbeo.com

In 2008, Burren Connect joined an international education project called the **Northern Environmental Education Development (NEED) Project,** which aims to raise the awareness of geological heritage and its potential as a basis for the development of sustainable tourism.

Through the NEED project, Burren Connect has produced a series of geo-education resources known as the 'Stone, Water and Ice' series. This includes

- an illustrated booklet on Burren geology highlighting the nine publicly accessible Geosites aimed at the general public and tourism businesses,
- a schools and visitor centres education pack (including a teachers booklet, teachers resources, geology info sheets, students activity sheets and maps),
- a scientific guide for specialists,
- a Z card map and information brochure on the Geosites and Geo-education centres of the Burren and
- a large map/information panel for Burren visitor and education centres. www.burrenconnect.ie

A schools conservation and education programme was carried out in 2010 in partnership with Mary Immaculate Secondary School Lisdoonvarna and Fanore National School, based on the monitoring and evaluation of the **Burren Connect Conservation project at Fanore Dunes.** The main aims of this programme were:

- To heighten awareness of the importance of the Fanore Dunes ecosystem and to encourage the local community to care for their unique landscape feature.
- To encourage appreciation of this important habitat by primary and secondary school students through active engagement in monitoring biodiversity change throughout a one year period and submitting collected data to the National Biodiversity Data Centre.
- To make recommendations on the future management of the dunes based on the findings. Fanore National School Project

What can be done?

- Establish a network of all agencies involved in educational work in the Burren to review the current programmes being delivered with the view to preventing overlap, making more efficient use of funding resources and identifying gaps in delivery.
- Support, promote, expand and integrate community educational projects.
- Investigate the possibility of the 'Ecobeo educational programme' becoming part of every Burren National School's curriculum.
- Training for local residents and providers.
- Harness opportunities associated with field-trips and international training and education in the Burren.

4.6 Information Provision

Challenges identified

- Practically focused and consistent information on the conservation of the Burren needs to be provided (online and offline) for local people, visitors and practitioners.

Information Bite

The provision of signage, logo and size at the Burren interactive information points will be reviewed and amended as necessary as part of Burren signage plan to be implemented in 2012.

- Different audiences will need different types of information.
- Additional staff and financial resources are required to develop, package and present this information for a variety of audiences.
- Local community based awareness raising initiatives need to be resourced and developed to enable people to become local champions/ambassadors (e.g. the Reaching Out project in South East Galway, the X-Po in Kilnaboy and the Farm Heritage Tours).
- Need to increase awareness of the nine Burren interactive information points.
- Avoid the danger of over-interpretation. Some visitors just like to explore the unknown.
- Local people trained as guides can provide the best form of interpretation.

Current local initiatives

The Burrenbeo **Trust** website provides a visitor information section which includes an **interactive map, downloadable multilingual Burren factsheets, information on the towns and villages of the Burren, transport, attractions, activities, accommodation, places to eat, entertainment and shopping in the Burren.** They also produce a **monthly e-newsletter** which includes a calendar of Burren events. A CD-ROM titled 'Images of the Fertile Rock' provides a journey through the Burren landscape describing aspects of the landscape, heritage and culture of the region. Each year Burrenbeo Trust produce a full colour, magazine **'Burren Insight'**. Each month they provide talks on local topics and walks exploring various aspects of the Burren led by guest lecturers. www.burrenbeo.com

The **Burren Connect Project**, in conjunction with Burrenbeo, developed and designed an interactive **information CD**, with sections on geology, landscape, flora, fauna, archaeology, history, agriculture, landuse, culture and community. The aim of each section is to provide the user with enough information to answer the usual questions posed by visitors to the region. Though the primary audience for this CD is Burren tourism businesses, this CD is of use to local schools also. Free copies of this CD have been circulated to Burren Businesses and Burren Schools www.burrenconnect.ie

The **Burren Passport**, a concise booklet guide to the Burren, was initiated by a group of local businesses working with the Burren Connect Project. It offers readers a taste of Burren-specific information written by various experts on the subjects of geology, archaeology, agriculture, history, flora, fauna, folklore and culture, as well as the festivals and events that are relevant to the local towns and villages. It also contains information about Burren-based activities, local produce and crafts, places to eat and drink, visitor centres, recommended reading, useful contacts and websites of interest. www.burrenconnect.ie

The **Burren Connect Project** has nine **Information Points** located in visitor centres and tourist offices throughout the Burren. They offer access to over 70 websites, with the host site www.burrenconnect.ie , providing comprehensive information on Burren community events, accommodation, attractions, services plus an extensive range of publications, CD's, maps and free Burrenbeo fact sheets, Enfo fact sheets, the Burren Code and leaflets, as well as linkages to other Buren related websites.

The **Burren Spring Conference** is an annual event held in the Burren College of Art, Ballyvaughan. The mission statement of the conference is to provide a space where knowledge and ideas about the Burren may be shared, and practical actions undertaken to sustain this unique place, its communities and culture. The weekend conference deals with many local issues regarding the landscape, community life and economy of the Burren and brings together local community members, visitors and academics to discuss these issues. In 2011 the conference explored the issue: 'The Burren – What is to be done? Exploring the development of a Charter for the Burren.

Throughout the Burren are several **visitor centres** which provide general information on the region and specific interpretation on aspects of the heritage and landscape of the Burren. Most run on a seasonal basis, mainly from March to October. They include Coole Park and Gardens Gort, the Burrenbeo Trust Kinvara, Vasco Eco- information centre Fanore, Ballyvaughan tourism information and visitor centre, Doolin Cave, Aillwee Cave and Birds of Prey Centre, the Burren Centre Kilfenora, the Burren Perfumery Carron, the Burren Smokehouse Lisdoonvarna, the Corofin Genealogical Centre, the Burren National Park Centre Corofin, Caherconnell Stone Fort, Dunguaire Castle Kinvara, the Kiltartan Gregory Museum and the Michael Cusack Centre, Carron.

What can be done?

- Create a forum where the operators of Burren based visitor centres and tourist information points can meet to discuss the materials they promote, how it is delivered and how they could best integrate and network their marketing and promotional activities.
- Support service providers to act as agents for the distribution of high quality Burren information.

- Create and develop further guiding courses.

4.7 Access

4.7.1 Traffic Management and Signage

Challenges identified

- There is a lack of public transport and where it exists; there is a lack of awareness with regard to location of stops and arrival/departure times.
- The Burren needs a sustainable, integrated transport system linked to accommodation, bicycle hire, trails etc.
- More off road and loop walking, cycling and horse riding trails should be developed.
- Large coaches can cause traffic disruption and delays on the minor roads and within the villages during the tourism season. The use of smaller buses should be encouraged.
- There is a perception that coach tours pass through on the main routes and bring very little local economic benefit.
- Lack of off road parking facilities can lead to major traffic delays during the summer months. This is particularly acute in the area around Blackhead.
- There is a lack of parking facilities within some villages.
- Inappropriate parking can cause gate blockages and access problems along the road for other vehicles and landowners.
- Gateways to the Burren need to be defined and clear, understandable signage provided at entry points to highlight where the Burren is and what it is. Link signage to a Burren brand.
- Internal signage around the Burren could be improved.
- There is a lack of signage at lesser known monuments.
- The issue of NRA signage along the N67 has been raised.

Current Local Intiatives

Nine viewing points with information boards have been established in safe off-road pull-in areas throughout the Burren.

Burren Connect finalised the purchase of land to develop pull- in parking areas at Blackhead on the R477 and an application to Fáilte Ireland infrastructural funds in 2009 for 75% to develop these areas (provision of walls, surface drainage and signage) was approved in December 2011.

A further area was identified as requiring lay-bys, boundary wall repairs and public access routes at Ballyryan, but the area is held in commonage and 100% agreement has yet to be reached with landowners to accept and implement the proposals.

In recent years **Burren Connect** have been working in conjunction with Clare County Council, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), the National Monuments Service (NMS) and local landowners on a **traffic management strategy for the Burren.**

Elements provided under this strategy have included;

- a proposed signage plan,
- a car and coach park at Poulnabrone,
- safe off-road viewing areas at several popular scenic spots,
- a strategy for the coast road between Ballyvaughan and Doolin,
- discussions with coach operators on a self-regulated one way system and alternative transport options.

Burren Connect co-ordinated the development of **a template for visitor signage** for each of the main visitor centres and towns and villages as part of the Burren Signage Plan. The signage plan is currently being revisited to address issues raised during the NRA N67 signage programme

Project Complete

Discussion with coach drivers to develop a voluntary, self-regulated, one-way traffic system have proved difficult but are on-going.

Burren Connect is working with **Clare Accessible Transport** to provide environmentally sustainable public transport option for people living in and visiting the Burren

Burren Connect is currently working on an **Interreg project on transtourism,** which involves an audit of transport services around the Burren, with the aim of linking it all up and making it more efficient for people to travel by public transport. It will encourage businesses to give discounts to individuals that arrive by public transport. Local partners include the taxi drivers, bus operators and the Burren Ecotourism Network. The project will link into public transport development in the whole mid-Western region (Galway, Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary).

What can be done?

- Continue to seek co-operation of Coach companies and local businesses in development of one-way system.
- Explore the development of community based car pooling systems within local communities.
- Develop a forum for resolution exploration with regard to the purchase of land at Ballyryan between the landowners, the local community, Burren IFA, Clare County Council and Burren Connect.
- Support the development and implementation of the Burren Signage Plan.
- Ensure the entry points to the East Burren are given equal cognisance in the Burren Signage Plan and are suitably signposted.
- Promote and develop safe cycling and walking routes as an alternative way to explore the Burren.
- Wild Atlantic Drive.
- Upgrade road network where appropriate and possible.
- Improve parking in villages.
- Investigate potential for a ‘rural transport initiative’ – Trans-Tourism.

4.7.2 Access for Recreation

Challenges identified

- General tourism publications promoting sites, very often do not state that the site itself or the access route to it, are on private land and the tourist assumes it is public access.
- In some cases walking guide books and maps have been developed, which indicate trails across private land without any prior consultation with the landowner.
- The boundaries of the National Park are not clearly defined and it is difficult for the visitor to know whether they are on private or public land, when exploring the edges of the Park.
- Access for recreationalists needs to be addressed with correct and legal information provided with regard to the liability of the landowner/recreationalists, establishment of rights of ways and which areas are accessible to recreationalists.
- Information needs to be provided and awareness raised with regard to (for example):
    - respecting landowners' property e.g. fences, walls etc.
    - the dangers of walking across land when stock is present– especially in spring time when calving is taking place.
    - the dangers of bringing dogs on walks through farmland.
    - respect for archaeological monuments.
- There is a need to explore further opportunities for developing recreational trails.
- The link between the farming and tourism sectors could be further strengthened.
- The possibilities of establishing a locally based access agreement between landowners and local recreational businesses, which currently enjoy access through the goodwill of the landowners, without establishing rights of way, needs to be explored.

Current local intiatives

The Farm Heritage Tours Co-op was set up by a group of Burren farmers who came together to interpret their land and promote their traditions. They offer a number of farm based walks, guided and interpreted by the farmer on whose land the walk is located. The ecology, geology, built and cultural heritage and farming traditions of the area are explored. The co-operative venture is run under an eco-policy. The Farm Heritage Co-op was initiated with the support of Burren Connect and is a member of the Burren Ecotourism Network www.farmheritagetours.com

In recent years several looped **walking trails** have been developed in the Burren. These include **trails at Ballyvaughan, Blackhead, the Caher Valley and Carron.** There are an additional five marked walking trails in **the Burren National Park** and the long distance way-marked **Burren Way**. **The Clare Trails Strategy** was launched in September 2011 and it will form the blueprint for all trails development in the county over the next three years. It is the result of work carried out by the Clare Trails Steering Group supported by the county's **Rural Recreation Officer** (RRO). www.shannonregiontrails.ie

All maps, information panels and publications produced by the Burren Connect project, the Burrenbeo Trust and the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme include **the Burren Code** and only highlight sites with agreed public access.

The Ballyvaughan-Fanore Walking Club founded in March 2006, started off with a membership of 13, which has now grown to over 150 members. The club meets on a weekly basis, observing a good practice guide and walking on privately owned land only when they have obtained the permission of the landowner. The Ballyvaughan Fanore Walking Club were sponsors of the Burrenbeo Trust Ecobeo programme in two

local primary schools - Fanore NS and Ballyvaughan NS – in 2011. The Club are the organisers of the annual Burren Marathon, with support from the Clare Sports Partnership and Logues Lodge, Ballyvaughan.

Burren Connect applied successfully for funding to Fáilte Ireland's infrastructural programme in 2011 for the **development of a series of heritage trails (walking and cycling)** leading from several of the Geopark sites. These trails will highlight the local geological, botanical, natural, historical and cultural features of the areas, encouraging visitors to learn more and stay longer. Burren Connect will work on the development of these trails in collaboration with local landowners and development organisations.

What can be done?

- Support the Farm Heritage Tours Co-op and encourage linkages with other local educational, recreational and tourism groups.
- Promote existing public walking trails and support work of Rural Recreation Officer and the Walks Scheme and expand where funding permits.
- Research and map all the 'green roads' within the Burren that have public access and publish a guide to these routes.
- Facilitate a discussion forum between landowners and local businesses that require access to land, with the objective of seeking an agreement and setting up a pilot project for one year. Consider using 'Permissive Access Agreements (as used on Mayo Greenway)
- Recommend that all tourism publications only carry information on sites with access agreements and an agreed code of conduct for recreationalists.
- Develop a heritage trail between Cahercommaun and the Michael Cusack Centre, directing the visitor to park at the Michael Cusack Centre and walks across the half mile trail to Cahercommaun.

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APPENDIX I: Population by ED

Breakdown of population by ED (1991-2011) (Source: CSO)

County	Rural	ED	1991	1996	2002	2006	2011	% change
Galway		Ardrahan	312	343	375	480	546	75
		Beagh	480	487	547	603	719	49.8
		Cahermore	273	266	337	454	517	89
		Castletaylor	229	248	386	486	570	149
		Doorus	422	401	517	684	748	77
		Drumacoo	710	746	867	997	1239	74.5
		Gort	1408	1450	1809	2782	2636	87
		Killeenavarra	371	399	439	651	741	98
		Killinny	401	390	391	399	430	7
		Kiltartan	622	627	648	670	739	19
		Kinvarra	871	879	945	1160	1356	55.7
Clare	Ballyvaughan	Abbey	358	368	385	442	445	24
		Carran	101	98	82	115	106	5
		Derreen	127	116	124	110	101	-20.4
		Drumcreehy	315	428	448	476	497	58
		Gleninagh	103	130	145	132	159	54
		Lisdoonvarna	943	980	917	900	858	-9
		Mountelva	123	123	96	98	94	-24
		Oughtmama	144	137	135	129	123	-14.6
		Rathborney	81	80	101	104	91	12
		Noughaval/Castletown	195	189	189	184	205	5
	Corrofin	Boston	296	290	284	287	288	-2.7
		Corrofin	863	919	982	1114	1239	44
		Killinaboy	316	346	353	330	347	9.8
		Muckanagh	326	288	267	283	320	-1.8
		Ruan	592	652	627	688	723	22
		Glenroe/Ballyeighter	149	166	163	179	206	38
	Ennistymon	Cloghaun	143	158	202	211	206	44
		Kilfenora	379	372	361	409	463	22
		Killilagh	486	553	731	815	713	46.7
		Lurraga	257	314	203	263	245	-4.7
	Ennis Rural	Crusheen	415	412	520	720	864	108

APPENDIX II: Persons at work by Occupation 2002, 2006 and 2011

Persons at work by occupation 2011

ED	Admin & Secretarial	Associate Professional & Technical	Caring, Leisure & Other Service	Elementary Occupations	Managers, Directors & Senior Officials	Process, Plant & Machinery Operatives	Professionals	Sales & Customer Service	Skilled Trade	Not Stated	Totals
Abbey	13	23	6	8	18	11	25	6	79	17	209
Carran	1	4	1	3	4	4	7	3	19	6	52
Dereen	4	4	2	3	5	3	9	4	12	4	50
Drumcreeh	16	22	8	29	31	12	36	11	36	29	230
Gleninagh	6	15	3	1	8	5	10	4	25	4	81
Lisdoonvar	27	13	39	41	23	25	41	19	70	91	389
Mount Elva	4	5	2	1	0	1	7	1	18	4	43
Noughaval/	13	6	1	7	5	4	5	1	48	9	99
Oughtmam	8	3	4	2	2	4	9	5	25	8	70
Rathborney	3	8	3	3	6	1	6	1	19	1	51
Boston	13	8	9	9	9	8	27	6	60	10	159
Corrofin	44	60	44	50	32	30	87	34	121	54	556
Glenroe/	7	7	11	5	5	5	12	5	33	11	101
Killinaboy	14	10	20	18	10	16	17	12	44	15	176
Muckanagh	10	10	11	5	12	11	23	8	62	20	172
Ruan	29	31	22	15	24	25	51	18	100	17	332
Crusheen	46	66	30	22	41	34	92	22	89	24	466
Cloghaun5	5	3	4	3	13	3	10	5	36	3	85
Kilfenora	16	14	8	17	19	11	26	10	52	23	196
Killilagh	25	32	14	23	53	8	58	15	73	74	375
Lurraga	15	9	2	8	10	5	17	4	42	8	120
Ardrahan	17	20	18	22	16	25	46	13	51	4	232
Beagh	32	29	27	33	27	23	56	21	81	20	349
Cahermore	20	30	14	13	21	26	43	15	63	9	254
Castletaylor	23	38	22	20	23	15	80	15	39	14	289
Doorus	24	47	22	28	28	27	116	12	60	4	368
Drumacoo	42	74	23	40	51	49	138	26	90	21	554
Gort	93	109	93	154	84	153	155	79	243	174	1337
Killeenavarr	22	37	23	15	24	40	92	8	67	22	350
Killinny	20	11	16	15	16	17	26	8	72	15	216
Kiltartan	31	40	16	20	21	40	51	17	90	23	349
Kinvarra	61	72	35	36	73	31	163	24	127	40	662
Totals	704	863	553	669	714	672	1541	432	2046	778	8972

Persons at work by occupation 2006

ED	AFF	Manu - facturing	Building and Constructi	Clerical and Office	Admin and Govt	Tran-sport	Sales	Pro fessionals	Service	Others	Totals
Abbey	34	19	22	12	21	5	27	33	22	13	208
Carran	9	0	7	3	5	3	1	11	4	12	55
Dereen	11	2	6	1	3	2	5	5	7	7	49
Drumcreehy	12	21	12	18	19	8	28	37	46	28	229
Gleninagh	11	5	7	2	4	4	16	10	1	5	65
Lisdoonvarna	15	18	39	17	8	12	30	41	102	77	359
Mount Elva	10	3	5	2	1	0	4	7	6	7	45
Noughaval/	26	6	6	5	6	2	5	16	3	11	86
Oughtmama	16	9	3	2	5	0	4	7	3	9	58
Rathborney	7	2	1	3	5	1	13	6	16	3	57
Boston	35	16	10	7	8	4	11	16	10	26	143
Corrofin	39	60	47	43	35	36	67	90	48	54	519
Glenroe/	21	9	7	9	5	1	8	15	6	10	91

Killinaboy	14	20	23	6	8	11	17	31	13	10	153
Muckanagh	35	18	13	6	11	4	13	19	14	24	157
Ruan	26	48	37	21	21	19	36	58	34	33	333
Crusheen	29	46	27	29	46	14	47	82	28	50	398
Cloghaun	9	10	11	8	8	3	7	12	25	6	99
Kilfenora	27	21	14	8	11	7	14	26	14	39	181
Killilagh	42	33	44	29	26	16	55	91	84	40	460
Lurraga	21	13	18	9	2	3	15	19	37	17	154
Ardrahan	14	27	24	10	13	11	19	49	20	1	188
Beagh	25	35	37	25	20	15	33	40	26	31	287
Cahermore	31	30	28	14	15	7	27	46	14	19	231
Castletaylor	17	30	28	22	22	8	31	58	23	3	242
Doorus	24	30	35	23	33	12	33	103	25	19	337
Drumacoo	42	62	40	31	32	25	58	88	55	18	451
Gort	45	268	381	70	57	47	158	154	185	217	1582
Killeenavarra	28	40	36	22	27	17	23	88	31	24	336
Killinny	41	21	29	11	5	16	13	24	20	20	200
Kiltartan	41	38	39	24	14	15	41	59	18	35	324
Kinvarra	40	53	68	41	38	15	59	139	79	22	554
Totals	797	1013	1104	533	534	343	918	1480	1019	890	8631
	9.2%	11.7%	12.8%	6.2%	6.2%	4%	10.6	17.2	11.8%	10.3%	

Persons at work by occupation 2002

ED	AFF	Manu-facturing	Building and Construction	Clerical and Office	Admin and Govt	Trans port	Sales	Pro-fessionals	Service	Others	Totals
Abbey	38	16	13	6	13	3	15	24	15	18	161
Carran	13	2	3	2	2	1	5	8	2	4	42
Dereen	16	2	5	4	2	3	5	5	4	8	54
Drumcreehy	10	12	14	16	9	10	33	34	38	39	215
Gleninagh	15	3	5	2	3	3	6	14	4	6	61
Lisdoonvarna	14	39	34	23	18	13	39	37	99	90	406
Mount Elva	14	3	2	1	1	2	1	7	1	6	38
Noughaval/	35	3	7	1	6	5	3	12	8	9	89
Oughtmama	24	6	3	4	3	0	5	5	3	8	61
Rathborney	10	0	0	1	9	1	9	6	12	3	51
Boston	46	13	15	9	5	3	6	20	6	4	127
Corrofin	57	49	35	21	29	29	53	74	44	51	442
Glenroe	24	5	9	5	2	3	5	14	3	3	73
Killinaboy	21	23	16	6	7	11	7	21	8	38	158
Muckanagh	40	14	6	6	9	5	12	13	12	8	125
Ruan	24	37	32	19	16	11	43	61	27	32	302
Crusheen	33	29	24	18	17	14	37	48	27	10	257
Cloghaun	13	7	8	5	7	1	4	10	15	5	75
Kilfenora	34	15	6	15	7	8	19	28	9	19	160
Killilagh	43	18	38	19	17	11	35	49	53	65	348
Lurraga	23	13	13	7	4	0	8	12	6	9	95
Ardrahan	15	14	15	8	8	11	10	38	14	5	138
Beagh	48	32	36	15	10	10	29	30	16	17	243
Cahermore	32	24	20	10	10	10	16	29	11	8	170
Castletaylor	22	30	21	16	19	8	28	37	19	5	205
Doorus	27	27	24	15	14	12	23	62	28	17	249
Drumacoo	50	50	33	25	29	14	52	80	41	21	395
Gort	28	121	64	52	47	29	106	124	103	178	852
Killeenavarra	36	23	15	9	11	14	9	47	12	8	184
Killinny	49	22	25	7	4	9	15	27	12	19	189
Kiltartan	62	34	28	25	17	17	28	52	26	16	305
Kinvarra	59	39	46	28	41	15	39	89	44	16	416
Totals	**975**	**725**	**615**	**400**	**396**	**286**	**705**	**1117**	**722**	**745**	**6686**

APPENDIX III: Relevant Agencies and Contact Details

Heritage Council Áras na hOidhreachta, Church Lane, Kilkenny www.heritagecouncil.ie	**Clare County Council** Áras na Contae an Chlair New Road Ennis Co Clare www.clarecoco.ie	**Galway County Council** Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway www.galway.ie
Shannon Development Shannon Town Centre Shannon Co. Clare www.shannondevelopment.ie	**National Parks and Wildlife Service** 7 Ely Place Dublin 2 IRELAND www.npws.ie	**National Monuments Service** Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Custom House Dublin 1 www.archaeology.ie
Dept of Environment Custom House Dublin 1 www.environ.ie	**Failte Ireland West Ltd** Aras Failte Forster Street Co.Galway www.failteireland.ie	**Clare Local Development Company** Westgate Business Park, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co Clare. www.cldc.ie
Galway Rural Development Mellows Campus, Athenry, Co. Galway www.grd.ie	**Burrenbeo Trust** Main St Kinvara Co Galway www.burrenbeo.com	**Burren Farming for Conservation Programme** Old School House, Carron, Co. Clare www.burrenlife.com
The Burren Connect Project Ennistymon Area Office, Co. Clare www.burren.ie	**Burren IFA** c/o Michael Davoren Kilcroney Carron Co.Clare	