



STAYING ROOTED, BRANCHING OUT
Annual Report 2022

burrenbēotr**ust**
connecting people and place



Our Mission and Our Work

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

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

ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

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

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Where communities can thrive through working sustainably with the landscape.

Our Approach

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

To strengthen our engagement with Burren communities to generate a sense of informed pride in local heritage and landscape through community stewardship and place-based and community-based learning.

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

To develop models of best practice for community stewardship and place-based and community-based learning as a means of sustainable conservation, and to roll out nationally programmes that support this.

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

Through these avenues:

Learning
Advocacy
Active Conservation
Research

I have had the pleasure of being part of the Burrenbeo Trust team since 2012, when I joined the organisation, originally as Communications Officer (sharing a role with my colleague Kate Lavender). In the ten years that I have been involved, I have seen much change, for both Burrenbeo and the context in which it operates. The team has grown and changed over the years; we've lost some much-missed colleagues and friends and gained others. The financial situation within which the Trust operates has also seen peaks and troughs; we have had some very lean years and our planning is mindful of the prospect of those times returning in the future. We have added new programmes and areas of work and have made the difficult decisions to move on from others when needed. Meanwhile, the local, national, and international context has been changing remarkably around us. These changes include a growing awareness of the climate and biodiversity crises which we face, financial recession, changeable political realities, global pandemics and much more besides. It is testament to the wonderful team of staff, volunteers, supporters, and the wider community that support this organisation, that given all of this, Burrenbeo Trust has not only survived, but thrived.

With this growth and expansion however, the need for organisational self-reflection and strategic planning is even more important. With this in mind we recently revisited our aims and objectives to consider the specific needs of the Burren, and where and how we can meet them, given our resources and capacity. As a result, we will be looking to strengthen

our programmes that best deliver for the Burren and its community, both by increasing team capacity and by streamlining resources where it makes sense to do so.

As we reflect on the year that was and its many wonderful events – Burren in Bloom, the Burren Winterage Weekend (including the Farming for Nature ambassador awards), the monthly walks and webinars, etc., and consider them alongside the active conservation projects which we and others have carried out around the Burren and further afield through the work of the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers, the Heritage Keepers Programme, the Hare's Corner and the Burren Pine Project – it is apparent that our mission of connecting people to their places and identifying their role in caring for these places, is being well met. We look forward to continuing to support individuals and communities working to protect and enhance their local built, natural, and cultural heritage.

None of this would be possible without the event leaders and volunteers, our members, voluntary directors, business members, donors and benefactors, and our funders to whom we are truly grateful. In 2023 we look forward to building on all that has been achieved to date, continuing to adapt and evolve, and ultimately working together towards sustainable conservation of the Burren and its communities.

Áine Bird
Burrenbeo Trust Coordinator
December 2022

The Organisation in Numbers

Since the beginning:

- 10,487** People have attended the educational monthly heritage walks and winter talks series since 2009. Our Burren in Bloom festival and Winterage Weekend have attracted **21,022** people since 2010.
- 2,113** Young Burren Experts have graduated from our free 8-week Áitbheo (previously named Ecobeo) heritage programme in local primary schools since its inception in 2003.
- 576** Individuals have worked, for free, at **172** events with the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers to carry out active conservation projects in the region since 2010.
- 370** Place Heroes have graduated from our Áitbheo Secondary active place-based learning programme.
- 220** Grants were written to over 60 different funding bodies since 2009 in order to keep this organisation going. **131** were successful.
- 192** Monthly snapshots have been sent out to a growing base of Burrenbeo subscribers with news and events from the region since 2007. Currently **3,366** people receive this free each month.
- 192** Primary school teachers and heritage educators from across Ireland have trained on our place-based education courses since 2014; this is central to spreading our model of place-based learning nationally.
- 43** Burren farmers have led walks across their land in the Burren for Burrenbeo Trust in order to raise awareness of this exceptional landscape with its unique story since 2008. A further **148** heritage experts have also given their time for free to raise awareness through walks and talks for the organisation.
- 14** Years ago, the Burrenbeo Trust was launched as a landscape charity building on the educational work of Burrenbeo Teoranta started by Brendan Dunford and Ann O'Connor in the **9** previous years.

This year:

- 393,000** Euro is the amount that Burrenbeo Trust had to raise this year. As our programmes expand so does the number of staff needed to coordinate and deliver them. This is still a shoestring budget to deliver our wide range of programmes, is a testament to the value for money that the organisation provides and also reflects how hard our staff work to keep everything running.
- 29,000** Is the total number of users of our websites this year with over **100** pages of information on the Burren's natural, built, and cultural heritage. This includes our Burren in Bloom and Burren Winterage Weekend festival websites.
- 13,205** Is the total number of followers on our social media sites including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.
- 1,267** Attendances were recorded in total for our public events this year celebrating the Burren and learning from it, including the Learning Landscape Symposium, the Burren in Bloom festival, Heritage Week events and the Burren Winterage Weekend.
- 1,060** Attendances have been recorded in total from our monthly walks and Wonderful Wednesday Webinar talks.
- c.849** Individuals, couples, families, and businesses are currently members of the Burrenbeo Trust.
- 91** Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers made up **192** attendances at **13** conservation events this year. This adds up to approximately **1,150** hours donated to the region in active conservation.
- 20** Key projects and areas of work were coordinated and delivered by the Trust this year.
- 13** Grant applications were submitted this year by Burrenbeo Trust with **10** being approved.
- 8** **6** staff members currently work at the Burrenbeo Trust office amounting collectively to just over 136 hours a week to coordinate and deliver the wide range of projects the organisation runs today. **2** other staff members are based in Cork running the widely acclaimed Farming for Nature Programme, under the umbrella of the Burrenbeo Trust.

I've had the privilege of reading my poetry at the Winterage Festival over the past three years, firstly online with the Lake District farmer & writer James Rebanks and subsequently in Kinvara and Corofin Community Centres. I grew up on a farm in south Co. Roscommon and I still remember my first visit to the Burren with my family. We were fascinated by the wildflowers, the dolmens, the limestone pavements but most of all by how the cattle survived on the hills through winter. Years later it's an honour to contribute to the work of the Burrenbeo Trust. I value and admire how the multiple projects draw together farmers, local communities, ecologists, other experts and lovers of the Burren to protect this unique landscape and find solutions to the most crucial problems of our time.

In keeping with the ethos of Burrenbeo, poetry can engage hearts and minds in the work required to protect threatened habitats and species. Poems bear witness to love and loss, putting us in touch with what is most precious in our lives. Listeners are drawn to the music of the language and the rhythm of the lines but also to hearing their own lives reflected there. Writing and reading poetry helps us slow down, pay attention, look more closely at what is around us. Whether praising the natural world or lamenting its destruction, poetry reminds us of our interdependence with all living things.

I've found it particularly moving to be part of the ancient tradition of Winterage. There's a palpable sense of community, excitement and hope among all the generations gathered on the Sunday morning at the end of October. We walk uphill following the cows, talking and laughing, meeting old friends, making new friends. Children run back and forth, adults use hazel sticks for balance among the rocks, elders lean on the young for support. We're engaging in a ritual that is simple and yet somehow sacred; honouring the land, the animals and a way of life that sustains both people and nature.

Jane Clarke
Irish Poet and author of *The River, When the tree falls* and *All the way home*.



Goals for 2023

In 2023 the Burrenbeo Trust aims to continue strengthening their current programmes, in particular focusing on the following:

- Looking to meet the **needs of the Burren**, while recognising our role in sharing models for community stewardship.
- Building a network of **Heritage Keepers** working to protect, enhance and celebrate local built, natural and cultural heritage.
- To support as many farmers, landowners, and community groups as possible with knowledge, and funding to build ponds, plant woodlands, orchards and more through **The Hare's Corner**.
- To build on the **Burren in Bloom** and **Winterage Weekend** programmes so that they engage a wider community (and include related Burren schools programmes).
- Consider wider opportunities for **volunteer** involvement and support within the Burrenbeo work programme.
- To strive to improve the quality and impact of all that we do and to do so in a transparent manner, adhering to the highest standards of governance.

Remaining rooted, acting out

As another year draws to a close, our growing Burrenbeo family – of staff, members, volunteers and supporters – has much to be proud of. We've welcomed so many people to this, Ireland's ultimate 'learning landscape', in 2022 – Winterage weekenders, Burren in Bloomers, Communities for Heritage, Study Groups, Volunteers – and given them the opportunity to meaningfully engage in, and contribute to, this wonderful place. We've worked closely with the local community – farmers, educators, businesses – to enhance and protect the Burren's heritage through conservation volunteer events, our pine restoration project, our tea talks, monthly walks and much more.

As well as our work on the home front, Burrenbeo has increasingly been reaching out to other communities in other places: To landowners across Co. Clare through The Hare's Corner Project; To schools and community groups across Ireland through the Heritage Keepers programme; To farmers across Ireland and indeed Europe through the Farming for Nature Ambassadors initiative. We've done this because we recognise that we have a lot of ideas and experience to share with others, and because there is an increasing demand for such ideas at this time of Climate and Biodiversity crises.

Something else that we can all be proud of at Burrenbeo is our deliberate move from awareness to action across many of our work programmes. Our volunteers are now planting rare Burren pine trees across the Burren and actively managing these nursery sites. Our Hare's Corner project supports (through advice and micro-funding) small-scale but meaningful 'spaces for nature' across the county. Our place-based learning programmes like Heritage Keepers now support groups (through planning and funding) across Ireland to carry out actions which will enhance their place.

Looking ahead, we are both daunted by the challenges, and excited by the opportunities, that lie before us. We will continue to do our very best to honour and sustain the wonderful landscape, heritage and communities of the Burren – our heart, our home – while reaching out as much as our resources allow to support others elsewhere in any way that we can. That way we feel we can be true to our cause while helping the Burren realize its destiny as a place of learning and inspiration.

Brendan Dunford, Trust Secretary

Learning

Achievements 2022

Áitbheo Primary was delivered to 201 pupils from 4 local schools during the 2022/23 school year and 285 local national school students were taken on a fun filled field trip to the Burren, exploring and learning about such an important place.

Our five day in person **Áitbheo Training course** for teachers and community educators in July shared our tools for building place based learning into education programmes and school curricula. This proved very popular this year and spaces sold out quickly.

Our latest education programme, **Heritage Keepers**, saw us working with 5 national schools, 4 secondary schools, 10 community groups, 9 teachers and 25 community facilitators across Ireland, in our Heritage Keepers pilot.

We returned to in person for our **11th Learning Landscape Symposium** with almost 80 people attending over 2 days of workshops and field trips.

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

Our **members monthly walks** and online '**Wonderful Wednesday**' talks continue to be hugely popular with the walks constantly being booked out and online attendance at the talks staying high.

We held our first ever **Communities for Heritage** event at the end of August to celebrate all the important work on the ground carried out by volunteer groups and Heritage Keeper schools and groups across Ireland. A variety of skills training workshops were held with plenty of much needed networking opportunities and culminated in a community feast.

Find out more about our education programmes here <https://burrenbeo.com/our-work/learning/>

'I feel more confident that I could help make my place better. I feel more interested in my place and that I can help out more.'

Maia, Áitbheo Primary Participant

'I am important to my planet because I can make a difference.'

James, Áitbheo Primary Participant

'I think I am important (to my planet) because my actions can make a difference. Even if I do something small like picking up some rubbish it will still make a difference.'

Hollie, Áitbheo Primary Participant



EXPLORE AND ENHANCE YOUR PLACE

<https://burrenbeo.com/hk>



This a national, place-based learning and stewardship initiative being carried out in partnership with the Heritage Council. It is a nation-wide roll out of a modified version of our tried and tested Aitbheo programme, which the Burrenbeo Trust has successfully delivered to schools and communities in Counties Clare and Galway for almost two decades.

As Ireland's leading advocate for place-based learning, with a strong focus on empowering communities to act as stewards of their heritage, Burrenbeo Trust has made the move to reach a larger audience and to move the education programme from a local to a national level. Under a pilot initiative in 2022, we worked with 5 primary schools, 4 secondary schools and 10 community groups from around Ireland. Schools and groups were chosen to reflect a range of different geographic communities as well as a range of group types. Participants completed 10 hours of workshops (online or in person) in which they explored their built, cultural and natural heritage and created an action plan to enhance part of that local heritage. The workshops also investigated community engagement,

land use practice, conservation and, ultimately, community stewardship.

In addition to this, we also worked with 9 teachers and 25 community facilitators who in turn were intended to deliver the programme in their local area.

The resultant, funded actions which groups completed included an extensive oral history recording project, a local heritage trail developed by school children, publications on local legends, monuments and biodiversity and a day long community celebration of a local hero. The projects, planned and delivered by the schools and communities, and funded by the Heritage Council, displayed a range of meaningful actions undertaken for the conservation and celebration of Ireland's heritage.

Participants were invited to take part in the 'Communities for Heritage' event in August. Here they had the opportunity to network with like-minded groups from all over the country.

After a successful pilot in November, Heritage Keepers have put out a call for participants to take part in the 2023 programme.

Our group from the Comeragh Uplands in County Waterford participated in Heritage Keepers in spring 2022. We explored the natural, cultural and built heritage of the Comeragh mountains and its environs, why and how they must be preserved and passed on to future generations. Participating for the group was engaging, informative, and enjoyable, particularly the learnings from the other participants. A critical realisation and learning outcome was how the cultural heritage shaped the farming and rural community and is an integral part of who and what we are.

The objective of our project was to share the upland farmer's knowledge, experiences, heritage, and ambitions with children from six local primary schools towards the end of the spring lambing season. The children were invited to visit local farms where the farmers told them how the mountain has shaped who they are and their pride in what they do. They showed how they manage their mountain flocks and elements of the mountain's unique natural heritage. The visit positively energised the farmers, the school children, and the teachers - it was a win-win outcome for all. It reminded and encouraged everyone involved to proactively engage in securing a sustainable succession for future generations of upland farmers and broader Comeragh communities.

Thanks to you all at the Burrenbeo Trust, the Heritage Keepers programme and the Heritage Council for encouraging us and helping make it happen.

Owen Catron
Comeragh Uplands Group
Heritage Keepers participant





Learning Landscape Symposium

The Burrenbeo Trust held its 11th Learning Landscape Symposium on the 17th -19th June, 2022. As always, the Learning Landscape Symposium focused on the theme of connecting people with their places, under the overall theme of 'From Learning to Action'. The aim of the event is to make us aware of, and identify with, our role going forward in the care for our landscapes and our communities. Workshops and talks are delivered to provide attendees with practical tools to bring back to their own settings.

This year's symposium featured an online opening talk by a keynote speaker, an opening night with 5x12minute talks, workshops, fieldtrips, a film screening and a networking walk. The symposium investigated ways to explore the different natural, built and cultural layers of a landscape, and how to move from learning about our landscapes to actually taking actions to enhance our places, as well as ample opportunity to network with individuals that work in same sector. The event brought together place-based educators, environmental educators, heritage educators, academics, teachers, outdoor guides, parents and people with an interest in place-based learning

to meet likeminded individuals and to explore the concept of place-based learning a bit more.

Based in Kinvara, Co. Galway, this event enabled delegates from across the country to have open engagement, exchange ideas and experiences, whilst hearing from a varied source of place-based educators in a relaxed atmosphere. Fieldtrips into the Burren provided additional inspiration to those who want to find new and innovative ways to take action for their place.

Speakers included the key note presenter Miles Richardson, Catherine Cleary (Pocket Forests), Kathy Kirwan, Ray Ó Foghlú, Michael Gibbons, Kate Egan and Paula Carroll.



Walk Community

I grew up in Limerick City, and all I heard about was Kílkee! A beautiful place for a holiday, no doubt, swimming in the Pollock Holes and walks to George's Head, but everything in such a small, crowded place – a fishbowl! When I had my own children, I ventured north and discovered Bishop's Quarter, and they loved the space to play on the beach, and the sand dunes to jump about on (probably not good for the dunes!), but for the driver the day out began once we turned right after Ennis! Quiet roads that brought us through Corofin, past Leamaneagh Castle and Poul nabrone, the first view of the sea as we descended to Ballyvaughan. That was the central axis that brought us through the Burren, the road bordered by walls of stone and the flat hills of bright grey limestone that glistened after the rain. Then Robinsons map was in the shops, and it showed a completely new world! Pouring over the detail through space as well as time, we began to wonder... why not see what that place is like, how long would it take to walk from there to there, could we climb that hill? There were endless possibilities, but what I have found from being a member of Burrenbeo is that there is no better experience of the Burren than being in the company of a local! The farmer who is so justifiable proud of his/her work, the archaeologist who is still thinking in medieval ways of doing things, the botanist who is in love with the beauty of the flowers and amazed that there is so much variety in one place. These people of the Burren are the greatest of the many treasures that are to be found here.

Mike Quirke, Burrenbeo Trust member and volunteer Walk Coordinator

Burrenbeo holds two members walks per month at various locations throughout the Burren. If you would like to attend please sign up for membership here <https://burrenbeo.com/product-category/membership/>

Advocacy

Achievements 2022

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

The Burren's annual celebration of its rich biodiversity, **Burren in Bloom**, returned in May 2022 with a range of guided walks, evening talks and family events to coincide with the UN International Day for Biological Diversity on 22nd May 2022.

The 11th **Burren Winterage Weekend** (26th-30th October) was an amazing weekend consisting of a multitude of events which mainly took place in person in Corofin, Co. Clare and its neighbouring Burren farms.

We continue to be a partner in the 2022 **National Farming for Nature Awards** - a new initiative to share stories of farmers across Ireland who are managing their land in a way that benefits nature. Farming for Nature is a project managed by former Burrenbeo Trust coordinator Brigid Barry.

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

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

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



Burren in Bloom

The Burren's annual celebration of its rich biodiversity returned in May 2022 with a range of guided walks, evening talks and family events to coincide with the UN International Day for Biological Diversity on 22nd May 2022.

This year, the festival started with an online talk on the evening of Thursday 19th of May on *'Nature as a partner - changing attitudes to nature and landscape'* with environmental philosopher Matthijs Shouten, Adjunct Professor in Ecology at UCC, and leader of the Dutch-Irish Bog Conservation Project in the 1970s.

Walks were organised to explore various elements of the Burren's biodiversity such as butterflies, lichens, plants of the turlough and seasonal wildflowers and orchids. Visits to Caher Bridge Gardens hosted by gardener Carl Wright and to a pond site with wetland specialist Féidhlim Harty enabled attendees to obtain advice on making space for nature on their own land.

Nearly all walks for Burren in Bloom this year were booked out weeks in advance with a noticeable demand for certain walks like the ecology and history of Lough Coole at Coole Park, butterfly walk with Jesmond Harding and lichen walk with Paul Whelan and Jenni McGuire.

Indoor events for Burren in Bloom included an 'Afternoon with Wild Rose' workshop at the Burren Perfumery, a wildlife art workshop for children with Gordon D'Arcy, an evening welcome session at Tully's bar in Kinvara with an introduction to the Burren flora and its conservation and a talk on 'Latvian meadows in bloom: nature and people' with guest speaker Solvita Rūsiņa, LIFE IP LatViaNature. Ecologists Richard Nairn and Jesmond Harding gave keynote talks on *'The magic of Ireland's native woodlands'* and *'The Irish butterflies and how they are dealing with a change in our climate'* on Saturday 21st of May in the Burren College of Art.

Sunday 22nd May brought an opportunity to revisit the location of the previous year's Burren Winterage Cattle Drive with a walk up to the winterage pastures near Boston to enjoy the arrival of the bounty of wildflowers made possible by the farming practice of winter grazing. Bugs and Blooms Family Fun on Sunday morning offered a chance for young participants to investigate the Burren's biodiversity through fun and games.



Burren Winterage Weekend

The celebration of 'Winterage' or the ancient and unique farming practice of out-wintering cattle in the Burren, is at the heart of the annual Burren Winterage Weekend festival which in 2022, took place in Corofin, Co. Clare and its neighbouring Burren farms.

Events included six farmer-led walks in the Burren, an evening Tea Talk on farming and archaeology, a day-long conference or 'Burren Winterage School' on the theme of Education for Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, Farming for Nature Networking Day, the National Farming for Nature Awards, book reading with authors Jane Clarke and Ryan Dennis, transhumance cheese tasting, a butter making workshop and a children's creative nature-writing workshop.

An online talk on Thursday 27th Oct by Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire focussed on 'Recognising Food as Part of Ireland's Intangible Cultural Heritage' and kicked off this year's celebration.

The annual Farming for Nature network day held on Saturday 29th October was a day of farm walks and panel discussions, followed by the annual Farming For Nature Ambassador Awards. This event allowed participants

to come together to celebrate farmers across Ireland who are striving to work alongside nature, and to share ideas on how these great custodians might best be supported at a time of great challenge and opportunity.

Corofin hall, where all the in-person events took place, also hosted a digital display of photographs of farmers, livestock and landscapes from across Europe that are part of the global heritage of Transhumance. At the 'Transhumance cheese tasting' event, traditional food conservationist Max Jones presented stories and tastings of ancient foods from Italy and Ireland, sharing the common thread of transhumance and how the secrets of the past hold the key to the future of food. Attendees engaged with farming life in literature at the 'Book reading' event with two acclaimed writers; poet Jane Clarke and author Ryan Denis.

The flagship event of weekend, the Community Cattle Drive on Sunday 30th Oct, welcomed 500 people to a Burren family farm, where they joined the O'Brien family in herding their cattle to the upland winter pastures. This year, for the first time, the Cattle Drive collaborated with the Burren Food Fayre offering samples of some of the best local food produce to the attendees.



Farming for Nature

'Through working with Farming for Nature I am amazed by all the larger more commercial farmers having those light bulb moments when they question all they were putting into their farm (not just fertilizer and chemicals but also labour) and weighing up what they get out of it in return – and then making the change and not looking back – less costs, better life, more time for the family.'

Mia O'Malley, Beef Farmer and Farming for Nature Ambassador, Co. Galway

'I am thrilled to win the FFN public vote award. It's so nice that so many people liked how I farm with consideration for nature. More importantly it's amazing to be part of an ever-growing network of FFN Ambassadors and like-minded people who are working together for nature – together can achieve a lot!'

Sean Condon, Winner of the 2022 Public Vote Award.

FFN is a project of the Burrenbeo Trust, established in 2018 and coordinated by Brigid Barry, former manager of the Burrenbeo Trust. It is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, An Bord Bia and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. While FFN ostensibly operates independently of the Burrenbeo Trust, the Trust provides administrative support for FFN, including managing project wages, transactions and governance. In addition, Burrenbeo provides oversight and mentorship to FFN on an ongoing basis through its Board, staff and volunteers.



Our 81 Farming for Nature Ambassadors

FFN has had a highly successful year in 2022, announcing 15 new Ambassadors, organising a wide range of events from farm walks to online Q&A sessions, workshops to award ceremonies, peer to peer knowledge exchange to providing funding for wildlife ponds. Its success is reflected in its growing audience and media profile as well as the instigation of FFN Ambassador programmes in Lithuania and Austria in 2022, with more to follow in 2023.

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

For more information go to Brigid Barry, Project Manager, info@farmingfornature.ie www.farmingfornature.ie

Active Conservation

Achievements 2022

Our Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers (BCV) have had a fabulous bounce back after the last couple of Covid years and have seen event numbers and attendances rise in line with people's enthusiasm to get back out into the Burren again.

In total, **13 different BCV events** were held including a **3 week long archaeological excavation** powered by volunteers. 91 different people have made up 192 attendances this year and 48 new volunteers came out with us for their first time.

We ran **2 first aid training courses** to continue to ensure that all our events have at least one qualified first aider present.

Through the **Pine Project**, we have planted 834 rare Burren pine trees along with 2,500 native companion species and are managing the planted sites with the help of the BCV.

50 ponds, 105 mini-native orchards, 100 mini-woodlands have been created in County Clare thanks to our **The Hare's Corner project**.

Over the last few years the BCV have removed over **14 tonnes of rubbish** from the Burren shores in conjunction with the Burren Shores beachcombing group and the Lisdoonvarna/Fanore sea anglers.



Looking back on the past year, I think it can safely be said that most of us are now archaeology scrub clearing experts! A huge thank you to Elaine Lynch, who has led more than half of our events this year. Under her guidance and supervision, the BCVs have cleared six Burren tombs from scrub. For those of you who know Elaine, it will come as no surprise that these events turned into proper archaeology lessons enjoyed by all! During the month of May, Elaine also organised an impressive three-week long archaeological dig of a hut site, which gave rotating teams of BCVs the chance to learn about all aspects of the work - how to excavate, take measurements, bag artifacts...even how to take aerial pictures with a drone. Big thanks to Mary Howard for coordinating this event too.

Apart from the all the fantastic archaeological happenings, the BCVs were once again involved in successful Beach Clean days in April and September. Hundreds of trees have been planted by the BCVs for the Pine Project and in July we had a hardy team out at the Dromore bat site to remove a lot of plastic and Snowberry. Yellow rattle seed was collected and sold in packets as a fundraiser for the BCVs, and in August we celebrated all local community conservation action during the Communities for Heritage weekend, where the BCVs showcased their work and participated in training workshops and networking events.

What's in store for 2023? The BCV committee has prepared a rolling calendar that looks at least as promising as the one we had for 2022. With a good variety of scrub clearing, beach cleaning, site maintenance, seed collecting, graveyard recording, celebration events and walks, our work represents the diversity of our beautiful Burren itself.

Last but not least, I want to thank the BCV committee members (Margaret Duffy, Ritchie Jones, Kate Lavender, Eileen O'Connor, Mike Scanlon and Wendy Smith (Sec.)) for all their hard work and dedication. We are grateful to Eileen O'Connor for having been a fabulous Chair of the BCV committee for the last years, and welcome our new committee members Ristead, Louise and Tony!

On behalf of the committee
Karen van Dorp (Chair)

If you are interested in joining the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers, contact us at volunteer@burrenbeo.com. We would be happy to hear from you!

Find out more about our conservation volunteers here
<https://burrenbeo.com/our-work/active-conservation/>



the
burren
pine
project



The Burren Pine Project

In 2019, Burrenbeo Trust launched a unique ecological restoration project to bring back the Irish native pine from the brink of extinction. This project aims to plant 500 endangered Burren pine trees along with 1500 native companion species every year with the aim of creating nurseries for the native pine trees, the seeds from which will be a valuable resource for the future expansion of the species in Ireland, reducing its vulnerability to extinction.

Individual and business sponsorships for this project have, so far, enabled the planting of 834 endangered pine trees and 2,500 native companion species on 9 different mini-woodland sites. Volunteer site guardians look after each of these sites by visiting regularly, preparing site reports, sending updates, and carrying out any required management actions such as replacing failed trees, fencing or trampling back vegetation from around the young trees. Each team of guardians manage their site for three years from planting in order to allow the mini-woodland to properly establish.

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



The Hare's Corner Project

In August 2021, Burrenbeo Trust launched The Hare's Corner - a project that offers landowners practical and hassle-free support in enhancing biodiversity on their land through creation of habitats such as ponds, native orchards, and mini woodlands. By December 2022 this project will have supported the creation of 50 ponds, 105 mini native orchards, 100 mini woodlands and 30 'Planning for Nature' Reports in Co. Clare – a wonderful investment in the natural infrastructure of the County.

'The Hare's Corner' is co-ordinated by the Burrenbeo Trust, and is being funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) through The European Innovation Partnerships Initiative (EIP)/Locally led schemes, by the EU Recovery Instrument Funding under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2022 as well as the Clare County Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service through the LBAF fund. This has allowed us to optimise the use of funding

for work on-site as the cost of much of the ancillary work on engagement, publicity, best practice resource development, IT and accountancy work etc was shared. It also means that The Hare's Corner itself can be used as a funding vehicle for future environmental work on land in Clare and elsewhere.

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

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

Research

Achievements 2022

Since 2018, Burrenbeo Trust coordinator Áine Bird has been working on an Irish Research Council funded employment-based PhD research project, which aims to evaluate the impact of Burrenbeo Trust's work and how it might be shared with other communities. This project has allowed time for reflection on the impact which Burrenbeo Trust has had since establishment and also to consider how the learnings gained in the Burren might be shared with communities elsewhere – to the benefit of heritage and communities more widely. The findings of the initial phase of the research were published in the Journal of Environmental Education Research in 2022 and a subsequent paper is expected in early 2023 in the Journal of Irish Geography. The research has also informed Burrenbeo's work practice, particularly around programme evaluation and in the development of the Heritage Keepers programme. Reports on this research can be viewed on the Burrenbeo Trust website. Many thanks to those who contributed to this research and the Irish Research Council for providing funding. The expected completion date for the study is September 2023.



'There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.'

Victor Hugo

Victor Hugo's insight resonates nicely with the philosophy and work of the Burrenbeo Trust which has anticipated the needs of a world facing possible environmental collapse.

The Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity Loss has been hearing evidence on the biodiversity crisis affecting Ireland during the course of its sessions in 2022. In October it had the opportunity to hear the inspiring Burren story from Dr Brendan Dunford. What could the wider country learn from the models of environmental stewardship pioneered in the Burren over the past twenty years – place-based learning, social engagement through Tea Talks and the annual winterage festival, farming for nature ambassadors, the Burren Pine Project, The Hare's Corner with its ponds, orchards and woodlands and much more.

There is little doubt that this was one of the more inspiring contributions to the citizens assembly with its hopeful message of what's possible when imagination and innovation are matched by determination and a philosophy of respect not just for the landscape but for the people who inhabit the landscape. The challenge now is to move to scale by replicating the principles underpinning the Burren story nationally and more widely.

The good news is that this is already happening. The change in the Trust's tagline from the arresting 'Open your Eyes to the living Burren' to 'Connecting People and Place' signalled an intention to share experience rooted in the Trust's place-based focus with a wider audience. This is finding expression in the enlargement in the schools' programme *Áitbheo* into the Heritage Keepers programme which now, with the sponsorship of the Heritage Council, is being prototyped as a community as well as a school's programme across the country. While still in its early phase this has the capacity to grow with national impact.

One of the central features animating the Heritage Keepers programme is the recognition of the split that has arisen over recent centuries between humans and their environment – from being part of, to dominion over, nature. Changing this paradigm by helping to reconnect people with their place and a sense of responsibility for stewardship of place is central to all that the Trust does.

This is the powerful idea whose time has come and the ambition of Burrenbeo in the years ahead must be to propagate this understanding and the models that embody it.

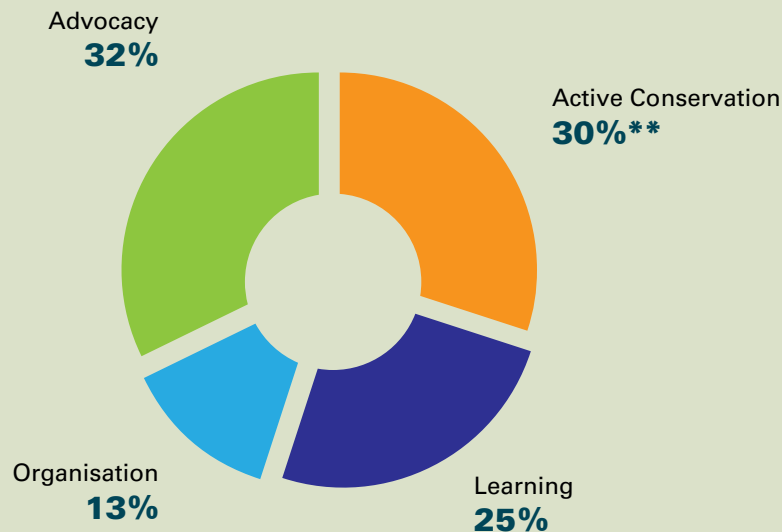
Martin Hawkes
Chair of Directors

Financial Overview

Expenditure

Our total expenditure in 2022 amounted to **€393,000**. An estimated 56% of this amount was spent locally in accordance with our policy of supporting local providers.

Expenditure was split between the following programme sectors in 2022*:



Operational expenditure includes the following:

- Admin costs (admin salary)
- Event costs
- Overheads
- Stationery and equipment
- Accounts, bank charges and insurance

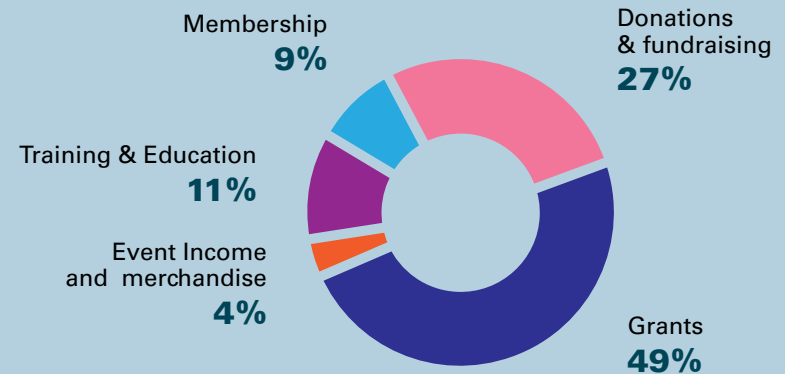
* This report was prepared in November and therefore figures have been projected until the end of December based on monthly averages.

** Conservation has the highest contribution in kind which is not reflected in its financial costs to the Trust.

Income

Our total income for 2022 was **€485,000**. The Burrenbeo Trust funds its work programme through a variety of sources including grants, donations, events, membership fees and merchandise sales.

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



- Grants (49%) In 2022 we applied for 13 different grants. We were successful with 10 applications. Grants ranged from €400 to €50,000.
- Donations and fundraising (27%) Our Pine Project continues to be successful in attracting people to help us restore a 'lost' native species in the Burren and our Hare's Corner project has had various sources donate to continue its roll out across County Clare.
- Training and education (11%) Burrenbeo Trust held a training course for teachers bringing place-based education to the classroom. This year the Trust is also continuing its national roll out of one of its education programmes.
- Members (9%) Membership fees in 2022 still continue to be a highly important income stream for Burrenbeo Trust. Membership income and numbers have been steadily increasing for the last 10 years.
- Event income and merchandise sales (4%) include the sale of Burrenbeo field-guides through local businesses and the sale of Burren field-guides, Burren cards, our Insight magazines and our Áitbheo tool kits through our online shop found on our website.

A full and complete audit of the 2021 accounts are available on our website here <https://burrenbeo.com/the-trust/about/governance/>

Our fully audited 2022 accounts are due to be put on our website once they have been completed during the summer of 2023.

Who Supported Us in 2022

Grants & Programme Sponsorship

The funders listed below supported the work of the Trust specifically towards a certain programme. Grant and sponsorship funding income ranged from €400-€50,000.

GRANTS

The Heritage Council

Bord Bia

Heritage Council partnership

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Clare County Council

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Galway Rural Development

National Rural Networks

Monaghan County Council

Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB)

Thank-you to our Burrenbeo Trust Benefactors 2022

NTR Foundation

Brightwind

Analog

PayPal

Rita Davern

T&G Arnold

Estate of Mary Curtin (decd.)

Vincent Keane

M&E Davoren

Burren IFA

EI Electronics

FBD

Niamh Lennon

Michael and Clodagh Lynch

Sunflower Fund

Carol and Linda Wellings

Copytype

Maverick Communications

Wilderness Ireland

Gregans Castle Hotel

Int. Assoc. for advancement of

Gestalt Therapy

Suzie and Robert Heiney

Haeckels Accounts

Sandra and Chuck Morrell Rooney

Burrenbeo Trust received lots of smaller donations throughout the year from various people for which they are truly grateful. Donations ranged between €5 and €50,000 and were used for core funding of the organisation unless a specific programme was requested.

Funding in kind

Burrenbeo Trust has run several events and activities throughout 2022 and without voluntary input to help run these events smoothly and payment in kind from some of our experts and event leaders, we would not have been able to achieve so much on our limited budget.

Our volunteers have as always been completely amazing covering various roles from guiding walks, to signing people in at events, first aid support to making tea and coffee, caring for pine woodland sites to helping set up venues - generally carrying out all those essential tasks that are rarely recognised but absolutely vital for events to run smoothly.

This year, we estimate that over €30,000* has been given to the Burrenbeo Trust in voluntary hours which is a huge voluntary input into the Trust and demonstrates the vast amount of support that we receive from our Burrenbeo Trust community. It's nearly impossible for us to convey the gratitude that we feel to all those who have helped us out so a huge thank-you to all of you – you know who you are.

If you've been too busy to help out this year don't worry – we appreciate that you are thinking of us and there will plenty of other chances to help out in the coming year especially as we have new plans afoot for 2023 to create a new volunteer category for event support and management.

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

For me the publication by Teagasc in 2002 of Brendan Dunford's "Farming and the Burren" was a watershed; it scientifically established the essential relationship between farming practices in the Burren and the richness of its floral diversity and of course all of the underlying biodiversity that this represented and supported. This publication put the custodians of the Burren landscape, its farmers, front and centre of the story of the Burren's uniqueness. It both credited and challenged the farmers of the Burren in their role as front line guardians of this wonderful heritage.

Since its inception the Burrenbeo Trust has worked to forge a hugely significant bond with the farming community of the Burren for the preservation of this wonderful natural resource. This essential relationship between the custodians of the Burren landscape and what has been internationally recognised as of such importance has continued to inspire the work of the BBT; one only has to look at such initiatives as the Winterage Festival, The Hare's Corner, Farming for Nature and the Burren Pine Project to see this. This relationship has also provided the impetus for a broadening of the Trust's focus whereby it has started to bring the lessons learned in the Burren to the national, and indeed the international, arena. Long may that continue. To that extent the insights gained through Brendan Dunford's work at the turn of the century are as relevant today as ever, particularly where the debate about the protection of biodiversity has tended to become polarised.

On a personal note, I want to acknowledge the amazing imagination, dedication, and passion shown by employees, directors and volunteers of the Trust, past and present. It has been one of the greatest privileges of my life to have been able to work with you all and to learn so much in the process. Go gcumhdaí Dia sibh.

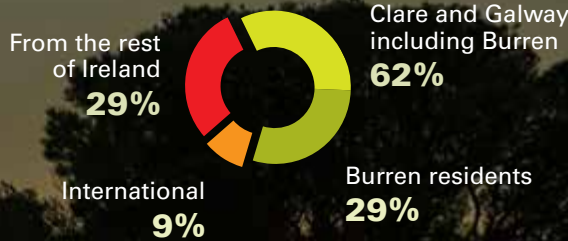
Risteard Crimmins

Burrenbeo Trust Board of Directors

Members

Burrenbeo Trust is a membership organisation with a wide geographical spread. There are just under c.840 current memberships with the Burrenbeo Trust. 364 of these memberships are for more than one person (i.e., couple or family) and 47 Business members are included.

Membership breakdown



Membership Report

Our membership community is continuing to grow year on year and is nearly 2/3rds larger than when I first started working for the Trust just over 10 years ago. With that increase comes extra work and the move to a paperless system late this year has dramatically helped with reducing some of that burden. The response from all our members has been pleasantly positive and supportive – not only are we now using less resources on membership packs/letters/membership cards, but we have freed up some staff time to put to use in some of those areas that don't get as much time as they deserve.

Again, we had budgeted for a tight year for membership income and yet again our members supported us above and beyond expectations. The membership income is vital in keeping Burrenbeo Trust going financially as we can use it on the programmes where it is most needed (unlike other sources like grant income that can be very specific in its spending requirement), but we value our members far more highly than the income they bring in. Our members are an amazing, important part of the Burrenbeo community supporting us through a huge variety of different ways - volunteering time, following us on social media and sharing our posts, attending our events, spreading the word, etc. It goes without saying that the Trust would not be half the organisation that it is without its members.

Our members are such a valuable part of the Trust community and as such if you have any suggestions or comments about how we can improve our services to you please do let us know – without feedback we cannot grow and improve.

THANK-YOU to all our members for being with us throughout 2022 and we look forward to continuing to work with you in 2023.

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

Business Friends 2022

We have 47 Burrenbeo Business Friends that renewed their membership or joined up throughout the year. We are grateful to the support they have given us. Please support those that support us!

Gold Business Friends

Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark | Burren Perfumery, Carron | Burren Programme, Carron
Burren Smokehouse, Lisdoonvarna | Gregans Castle Hotel, Ballyvaughan | Inis Environmental Consultants
Lahinch Family Medical Centre (Dr Duncan) | OBI Wealth Management



Silver Business Friends

Irish Natural Stone | Sleepzone Hostel Burren
Scales Coaches, Ennistymon



Business Friends

Aillwee Caves | Airmid Natural Irish Skincare | Anam Coffee | Ballyvaughan Fanore Walking Club
Bouleevin Events | Burren Centre | Burren College of Art | Burren Outdoor Education Centre
Burren Farm Experience | Burren Vets | Burren Yoga Retreats | Caherconnell Fort and Sheepdog Demonstrations
Clare Jam Company | Clare's Rock Hostel | Coole Park Tearooms | Fitzpatrick's Supervalu, Ennistymon
Gaia Talent | Hanne T. Fisker and Hanne's Cottage | Hazelwood Lodge | Healing Harvest, Kinvara | Hotel Doolin
Hylands Burren Hotel | Kinvara Guest House | Leave No Trace Ireland, | Martin Kiely Burren Photography
Moher Cottage | Mount Vernon | Ocean's Edge B&B | Private Tours Ireland | Slieve Elva B&B
St. Tola Irish Goat Cheese | Station House B&B | StoneCutters Kitchen | Sunny Meadow Farm
The Health Store Galway | Wild Atlantic Lodge | Wild Honey Inn



Organisation



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Conservation, Membership and Outreach
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Communications and Events
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Administration
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The Hare's Corner
Lee Worrell
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Farming for Nature Coordinator
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Farming for Nature
Lucy Bowler
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Trust Secretary
Dr Brendan Dunford

Directors

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

Patrons

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

Founding Patrons (Deceased)

David Bellamy
Seamus Heaney
Ann O'Connor Dunford

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

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

We would also like to offer extra thanks to directors Risteard Crimmins, Mary Howard and Elaine O'Malley who are sadly stepping down from the board. Their hard work and dedication has been outstanding over the past years and they will be sorely missed.



How to Get More Involved

As an Individual

- Join Burrenbeo Trust if you haven't already done so. This can cost as little as €2.50 a month depending on the category.
Link to membership
- Be an advocate by spreading the word to your friends and family about the organisation. Encourage them to become members.
- Support our events as much as possible – come to our walks, talks, training events and community festivals.
- Let us know if you have professional skills you may be able to volunteer that can help us further our aims (i.e. marketing, fundraising, heritage talk etc.).
- Make a donation to the Trust – every little helps. You can ask for it to go towards a specific programme or event. Or why not go a step further and become a Burrenbeo Benefactor (see page 30).
Link to donate
- Subscribe to our free monthly e-newsletter to find out about the news and events that are happening in the region. You could then forward this newsletter onto your contact list to keep them in the loop.
Link to sign-up to Newsletter
- Join the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers and get involved in the growing community of active conservation volunteers. It's free to register with this group.
Link to volunteer



How to Get More Involved

As a Business

- Become a business friend. Rates are as little as €15 a month. By doing this you are feeding directly into the heritage education and conservation work of the region.

Link to business membership

- Highlight the events that are happening in the Burren through your social media and website.
- Encourage another business to join up in 2023.
- Can you make introductions to further our charity's profile?
- Can you connect us to someone you know that could contribute professional voluntary help towards the work of the Burrenbeo Trust?
- Make a donation - every little helps!
- Consider making a more substantial contribution as a Burrenbeo Benefactor (see the following).

As a Burrenbeo Benefactor

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

Link to Burrenbeo Benefactors

Suggested support options include:

- €300 Burren Book Sponsorship**
Provide copies of the Calf & Cuckoo (30) and Burren Field Guides (10) for a local school
- €500 Burren Fieldtrip**
Support a local school to enjoy a day exploring the Burren with Burrenbeo (includes bus hire)
- €1,000 Heritage Keepers project grant**
Provide grant for local action projects through the Heritage Keepers programme
- €3,000 Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers**
Training, upskilling and equipment for up to 300 conservation volunteers
- €5,000 Burren Pine Project**
Planting of 50 or more Burren pine trees along with native companion species through our unique ecological restoration project
- €7,500 Event Sponsorship**
Examples include the Winterage Weekend, Burren in Bloom or Communities for Heritage
- €10,000 Burren as a Learning Landscape**
Invest in the development of a model to build thriving communities & landscape
- €15,000 The Hare's Corner Project**
Invest in our biodiversity initiative that helps landowners make more space for nature
- €25,000 Heritage Keepers**
Invest in the national roll out of our place-based learning model to build thriving communities & landscape nationally



burren**b**eotrust

connecting people and place

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

**We hope to achieve a lot more in 2023
with your help**

Burrenbeo Trust

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