

AN TAIOSCE NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 2
FEBRUARY 2011

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EDITION**

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MEMBER OF OCEANS
2012**



An Taisce
The National Trust for Ireland

"Election plus" edition

Welcome to our latest issue, we have bought forward publication because of the forthcoming election. While we do not wish to endorse any particular party or candidate we have bought together some issues in relation to environment and heritage that you may wish to ask your candidates about. We would ask you to take these replies into account when you come to consider how you will cast your vote in the forthcoming election. You as An Taisce's members know well how essential your advocacy is for our voiceless and vulnerable environment and heritage

Notice of Annual General Meeting

In accordance with section 11b of our Constitution we are taking this opportunity to announce that the **An Taisce A.G.M** will take place in The Tailors Hall, Dublin on **Saturday, June 11th 2011 at 11.30a.m.**

Notice of any motion proposed to be made at a General Meeting shall be delivered to the Honorary Secretary of the Company thirty clear days before the meeting at which the motion is to be proposed and shall be circulated with the notice convening the meeting. Such notice shall be signed by the Proposer and one Seconder, being Members of the Company, and no motion shall be entertained by a general meeting unless notice thereof has been given as aforesaid.

Further announcements will be circulated to members in due course.

The Pillar, the E Word and our Politicians

If you are affected right now by unemployment, loss of earnings or loss of hard earned savings, then the economy is going to be in the forefront of your considerations regarding who you should vote for in the upcoming General Election.

However, the long term sustainability of employment and a thriving society depends on having a healthy environment. Our society (and economic system) is entirely dependent on the fundamental resources of healthy soils, clean water and air, a stable climate, and a healthy biodiversity. Without these natural services, the elaborate social structures and economic systems that we have created cannot function. No value is put on them, and their protection and enhancement features nowhere in the media coverage of the elections. Let's change that.

There is almost no mention of the environment in the vast majority of the party manifestos.

An Taisce was one of the leading groups behind the formation of The Environmental Pillar of Social partnership in 2009, The pillar has set up a website on the theme of 'The E word', asking our politicians to talk about 'The Environment'.

Have a look at what party spokespersons have to say in response to the Pillar's questions, and who was not available to respond: <http://theEword.org>

The Environmental Pillar has also put together a [crib sheet](#); of some of the main environmental issues, again we are encouraging you to include these questions in person when you talk to canvassers on your doorstep.

Climate Chaos Candidate Commitment

BREAKING NEWS AND GOOD NEWS FROM: AN BORD PLEANÁLA – DONAGHCUMPER ZONE A REFUSED.

CONTACT US

PAST ARCHIVES

**JUL 2010
AUG 2010
SEP 2010
OCT 2010
NOV 2010
DEC 2010
JAN 2011
FEB 2011**

An Taisce Shop here

A Message from the Chair

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continuing support.

We could not do what we do without the practical commitment of those who support An Taisce financially and through voluntary effort. Unfortunately going into 2011 we face a major funding crisis which severely threatens our operations.

We thought it might be appropriate to provide a tangible but symbolic gift in return for your donation which you can give to someone who values our heritage as you do. Though intended as a Christmas gift catalog of symbolic gifts, our 'Treasury of Gifts' is still available to you. The recipient of your gift will receive a certificate outlining the significance of your donation choice, enclosed in an An Taisce Christmas Card.

We hope that some of these ideas in An Taisce's 'Treasury' of gifts appeal to you as a novel way to support An Taisce and maintain our ongoing contribution to Ireland's built and Natural heritage.

Your support is genuinely



An Taisce has been active in campaigning for progress towards a strong climate bill. In 2010 some progress in Irish climate policy occurred and we want to make sure that progress is built on as a result of this next General Election.

An Taisce is part of the environmental coalition "Stop Climate Chaos". Some 86 of the 183 TDs who were in the Dáil last year signed the group's "Climate Commitment" supporting a strong climate law and a plan to make Ireland's financial contribution to addressing climate change separate and additional to overseas aid. By the end of the year the Government had decided that 2010's climate money would be mostly additional to overseas aid, but they made no decision about this year or beyond.

As many of you will be aware the Government produced a Climate Change Response Bill for consultation earlier this year, and a further bill was also drafted known as the Joint Oireachtas Committee bill. We invite you to read our submission in response to the consultation on the Government Bill. [Click here to read or download our submission from our home page.](#)

Many thanks to all who contributed directly and indirectly in a very animated and impassioned debate. In brief while a climate bill was welcomed, there was very serious issues with what was proposed in the Government bill and indeed what was omitted. There was great unanimity in the disappointment with many aspects of the bill and concerns over the quality of the foundation it would provide. Additional concerns were raised that if the bill was defeated that vested interest lobbies would take the credit for defeating the bill and this would mean no party would be likely to touch such a bill for years.

In the end of the day the debate became academic - as it became clear before the consultation period concluded that the Government's Climate Response Bill would not be progressed by the current Government. However having on record a submission supporting a climate bill was considered to be important in the context of the extraordinary opposition mobilised in various lobbies and the volume of submissions and interventions orchestrated with organised lobbying of politicians.

Now the essential requirement is to make sure that the momentum isn't lost because of the Election and that the new Government and Dáil move quickly to pass a strong climate law and also enshrine best practice on climate finance for good. We urge you to remind candidates and parties how important climate change is to you by hearing about it from you either on the doorsteps or by emailing or ringing them. Help us make sure everyone running for election to the Dáil commits in writing to these policies by asking canvassers and candidates who call to the door the following:

Ask candidates and canvassers on your doorstep three simple questions

1. Will they and their party seek and support the passing of a fair and effective climate change law this year?
2. Will they and their party seek and support a plan ensuring that Ireland's financial contribution to addressing climate change is separate from and additional to the overseas development aid (ODA) budget?
3. Will they sign the Stop Climate Chaos "Candidate Commitment" to show they are serious on the issue?

A 'signature campaign' is being run by the Stop Climate Chaos Umbrella Organisation of which An Taisce is a member.



**General Election 2011
Candidate Commitment**

Climate Change is real and happening now. The effects of climate change are already being felt throughout the world and it is our duty to address them.

Your support is genuinely appreciated in these trying times because it our joint strength that makes it possible for us to continue to protect the environment of Ireland for the people of Ireland.

Charles Stanley-Smith, Chair An Taisce The National Trust for Ireland

[An Taisce Shop here](#)

Important

Please note these gifts are intended as symbolic reflections of how your donation supports the work of An Taisce. Where subscriptions do not match required expenditures or critical needs are identified - actual contributions will be allocated where most effective to sustain our operations.

[An Taisce Shop here](#)



Download a few copies of The Candidate Commitment to have to hand.

Tailors' Hall hosts second Back Lane Parliament



Members of the Claiming Our Future movement last week staged a re-enactment of the 1792 'Back Lane Parliament' in An Taisce's wonderful Tailors' Hall, Dublin ([click here and scroll down for images](#)) to demonstrate that the absence of equality and environmental proposals in the election debate was effectively disenfranchising large parts of civil society.

The movement announced that its local groups would be holding at least 20 public meetings across the country to quiz election candidates on their policies for creating an equal and environmentally sustainable Ireland with real opportunities for people to participate in the political decisions that shape their lives.

Claiming our Future activists from around the country read out the group's six priority policy demands, which were established by 1,000 participants at Ireland's first 'citizen's parliament' last autumn. They said many Irish people today felt the same sense of disenfranchisement that prompted Wolfe Tone to convene the 18th century Back Lane Parliament to petition for voting rights for Catholics. This is because the election is taking place after the Budget and IMF-European Commission agreement and because the policy platforms put forward by the political parties have so far failed to substantively address equality and environmental sustainability issues.

The event also saw the publication of a summary of Claiming Our Future policy priorities, based on equality and environmental sustainability, which it is sending to all party leaders.

Charles Stanley-Smith of An Taisce said: *"The voices of those who seek environmental sustainability are not being heard. Economic growth continues to be the accepted wisdom with no proposals from the political parties about unsustainable resource use, capping emissions or improving public transport. The disenfranchisement of this voice diminishes our chances of emerging from crisis."*

Claiming Our Future is made up of individuals like Charles and many of our members and organisations that believe the economic crisis is an opportunity to reassert the progressive social

values of equality, sustainability, inclusion and human dignity. Initially developed by Is Feidir Linn, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, environmental groups, the TASC think tank and Social Justice Ireland, it now involves a much wider range of organisations including community groups, youth groups, environmental groups, trade unions, rural networks, social justice groups and organisations representing older people, global justice, migrant workers, students, cultural initiatives, women, people with disabilities and social media.





Niall Crowley Claiming our Future 2011 and Wolfe Tone 1792.

Claiming our future priorities:

- **A sustainable alternative to the boom and bust economy**
- **A more equal society**
- **Political reform**
- **Decent and sustainable jobs**
- **Radical reform of banking and public service**

Access to the Countryside by Roger Garland of Keep Ireland Open.

Roger has been a member of An Taisce for 55 years and is chair of Keep Ireland Open.

There are many serious access problems all over the country involving the closure of traditional walking paths by fencing, hostile notices and sometimes hostile landowners.

This lack of reasonable access to the countryside means a diminution in the rights of our citizens and our visitors, and reduces the amenity and tourism potential of Ireland for local and international tourists. In many ways, the uncertainty as to whether or not a particular route is open to public access - exacerbates matters. Apart from Coillte, whose forests are, in general, open to access, and the National Parks, all other land, even upland commonage, is privately owned and walkers are regarded as trespassers and can be summarily ejected without any recourse. This unsatisfactory situation leaves us at the bottom of the European league table for access rights.

KIO's main object is to lobby for legislation to bring us into line with Europe. We have now been campaigning for about 15 years but have precious little to show. There was breakthrough last year when we successfully lobbied the Government to provide for mandatory listing of public rights of way in county development plans. Set against that is the legal precedent set by the so-called Glenree case which decided that rights of way had to be dedicated in writing by landowners it's going to be precious little use to us. What we in KIO think is reasonable would be to provide that an access route which was open to the public without let or hindrance for, say, seven years would constitute a right of way.

Clearly what's needed is for Rights of Way to be dealt with by legislation rather than by individual cases. Accordingly we are making this an election issue and would ask you to do this as well.

KIO are asking you to please collar the candidates on the doorstep with the same questions we asked the parties centrally

- 1. Are they willing to promote legislation which would ensure reasonable access to the countryside for recreational users?**
- 2. Given the threat of the privatisation of Coillte are they committed to ensuring that Coillte's 'open forest' policy will be continued?**

We have received replies from a number of political parties which we have published on our website www.keepirelandopen.org

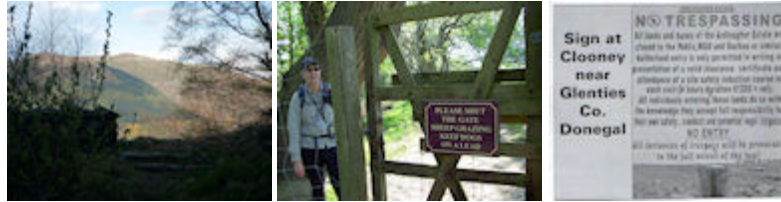
The following is a brief summary of the parties who responded to questions:

- Greens: We are committed to examine the introduction of legislation for recreational walkers to have access to the countryside.
- FF and FG: No response/relevant comment
- Labour: Supports a balanced approach to make our countryside accessible for recreation that respects the interests of landowners. We have published legislation* (*Access to the Countryside Bill 2007. not prioritised by Labour and consequently it was never debated in the Dáil.) - and will work with stakeholders to open up the countryside and our coastline for recreation and tourism in a legislatively sustainable way.
- Sinn Fein: Supports, in general, the right of access by people to rural amenities.

In view of the possible privatisation of Coillte, we asked for a commitment that the present open forest policy would be continued. The response were:

- Greens, Labour and Sinn Fein: Opposed to sale:
- FG: No relevant comment.
- FF: under consideration.

For further information contact Albert Smith Ph 2862311 Or 086 87589



An Taisce adds: Access brings responsibility – but a win-win is possible for all!

Find out what is in the parties' manifestos on the environment

Simply go to <http://theword.org/in-the-manifestos/> for summaries on the main parties' stances on combating climate change, governance and enforcement, human health, natural resources and biodiversity, sustainable economics and sustainable living. An Taisce is gravely concerned at lack of positive focus on the environment as our most critical resource in this election, and the extent of push-back proposed on the legislation which protects it.

An Taisce to pursue Judicial Review over Corrib Gas Pipeline

Further to the decision by An Bord Pleanála to grant permission in January to the latest Corrib gas pipeline application, our chair, Charles Stanley-Smith in commenting on the decision stated:

"An Taisce was very disappointed with An Bord Pleanála's decision. An Taisce considers that the implications of this decision go far beyond the Corrib gas pipeline and have major repercussions for the status of implementation of European Directives in Ireland. In this instance An Taisce has concerns both in relation to Irish and European Law"

He continued:

"An Taisce has decided to pursue a judicial review in relation to the Corrib Pipeline Decision "

"I am all too aware of the economic pressure people are under in Ireland today, and of the implication of asking them for funds to support this campaign. However the environment is without question our most important resource and is fundamental to indigenous industries in Agri-Food, Tourism and the Equine sectors, which between them employ in and around 450,000 people. An Taisce is committed to protecting that environment for current and future generations both as a moral imperative but also from the point of view of our sustainable economic development"

We are most fortunate and grateful to our legal team who have committed to working on the JR on a pro bono publico basis. However An Taisce will need to raise funds to assist with the considerable costs associated with preparing for and mounting a Judicial Review of this scale. Given the issues in question are of national significance, An Taisce is seeking support on a national level to pursue this case, through a number of planned events nationally. These started in Mayo last week. This was in acknowledgement of the long and hard campaign already fought over so many years by so many there to uphold the rule of law and address issues with proposals, and to acknowledge that for these primary stakeholders – it is not only the environment that is at issue – it is their home.

We hope to be able to release final details for events in Galway, Cork and Dublin shortly. In addition to a presentation by An Taisce regarding our involvement and rationale for the JR, we are most fortunate and grateful that Director Risteard O'Domhmaill has agreed to allow us show the multi-award winning documentary film "The Pipe" - to add to the interest to a number of special fundraising and awareness evenings. An Taisce would like to congratulate Risteard and his producer Rachel Lysaght on their most recent award the 'George Morrison Best Documentary Feature' from the IFTA's. Check out the website: <http://www.thepipethefilm.com> - it is a truly extraordinary work and an incredibly honest depiction of the complexities arising!

If you can't make it to one of the special An Taisce showings you can make a donation to this campaign in 3 ways:

1. Simply by going to our home page www.antaisce.ie and following the links or go direct to the dedicated site corribjr.antaisce.ie, and make a donation using a credit or laser card through our [Corrib Webstore](#),
2. Send a cheque made out to: "An Taisce Corrib Appeal Deposit Fund" and post to: An

Taisce Corrib JR, An Taisce, The National Trust for Ireland, The Tailors' Hall, Back Lane, Dublin 8 Please ensure you include your own name and address – so we can acknowledge and record your donation properly.

3. Donate at your bank via transfer to : Account No. 75375931, Sort Code: 900017, Account Name: An Taisce Corrib Appeal Deposit Fund, Branch: Bank of Ireland, College Green, Dublin 2.

The implications for our environment and to the exchequer of non-compliance with the law are of great concern to An Taisce. There is no need to compromise the environment for short term interest. Ireland's record in Europe for compliance with environmental law is of major issue. Just this February 16th 2011, The European Commission issued a press release to say it is taking Ireland back to the European Court of Justice for failing to implement an earlier ruling concerning developments that may harm the natural and man-made heritage of the countryside. Two years after the judgment, Ireland has still not adopted legislation to address the issue. On the recommendation of Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik, the Commission is referring the case back to Court and asking it to impose fines – this is likely to amount to millions of Euro.

An Taisce's efforts ,through this judicial review and our other engagements are focused to protect the environment and also minimise Ireland's exposure to avoidable actions and compliance proceedings, which will only serve to further penalise the burdened taxpayers of this country and further compromise essential services which could better use such monies. Your action and donation assists us in this regard and we hope will help to keep Ireland's decisions compliant with the law – so both the environment and its citizens win.



You can donate on-line right now at: [On Line Corrib Appeal](#)

Ireland to be fined €4000 a day for failing the

environment

The European Commission has this week announced that it will be returning to the Courts seeking fines against Ireland for not adopting legislation to protect our countryside heritage. It is estimated that the Irish government will have to pay millions of Euro. Fines are being sought because Ireland has not yet complied with a ruling delivered in November 2008 which found that the thresholds applied here for undertaking Environmental Impact Assessments were too high and do not take account of sensitive environments. This has led to systemic losses of wetland habitats, losses of biodiversity and destruction of archaeology which could have been avoided if Environmental Impact Assessments were applied properly.

The EIA Directive and regulations are designed to ensure that projects which are likely to have a significant effect on the environment are assessed in advance so that people are aware of what the likely impacts are and how to avoid them.

The fines should not come as a surprise, we have sent as the multiple warnings to the Irish Government over the years about this case, most recently in March 2010. More than two years after the judgment, Ireland has failed to adopt any legislation to resolve the issue. The fine is being sought is for the failure to implement the first court ruling, at a rate of thousands per day for the period between the first Court ruling and the second Court ruling.

Apart from the immediate legal cost, the ecosystems services provided by nature to the Irish exchequer are worth at least €2.6 billion per annum*. Anja Murray, our Natural Environment Officer, says "healthy natural ecosystems provide us with food, with clean water, with flood prevention services, fertile soils and pollinators necessary for maintaining agricultural productivity". Ireland has long been the worst offender in the EU for breaching European environmental laws.

An Taisce and others organisations ENGO community have been seeking to rectify this situation by promoting improved compliance with the Water Framework Directive, the Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive, the EIA Directive and regulations, yet Ireland has been prosecuted by the courts for failure to implement and comply with every single one of these directives, on several counts each.

Ian Lumley, our Heritage Officer has stated that in the interest of Ireland's environment our common heritage, the commission's intervention in seeking fines is welcome. He believes that this may help to bring about a situation in which the environment is actually protected in Ireland. Fines are a last resort for showing that the short sightedness of greedy developers and lobby groups in bed with incompetent authorities will no longer tolerated. Protecting the environment, as laid out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, is in everyone's interest, financially, socially, and environmentally.

Environmental groups in Ireland are pursuing a number of further complaints of failures to correctly apply Environmental Law in Ireland. This includes continued accommodation of turf cutting in protected bog habitats, failure to subject forestry licencing to appropriate assessments of environmental impact, and continued failures under planning enforcement.

Click on these links to find the article covered in the [Cork Examiner](#) and the original press releases from the commission in [2010](#) relating to a final warning and the most recent in relation to pursuit of fines in [2011](#)

*The Economic and Social Aspects of Biodiversity, Government of Ireland, 2008

An Taisce - newest member of Oceans 2012

An Taisce has recently joined Oceans 2012. This is a Europe wide campaign to press for an end to overfishing as supported through the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The CFP is to be reformed in 2012 and it is important to have a strong position in the debate and to counter the pressure of the industrial fishing industry to continue with damaging fisheries practices. There are many different environmental and other groups across Europe and in Ireland involved. We consider membership of this campaign to be of benefit to us and the future of the CFP and that participation in this campaign will address many of the major problems experienced in the last round of the CFP and will push for 'fair and equitable use of abundant fish stocks following scientific advice'. The Oceans 2012 team have been involved with a film called 'End of Line' which some of you have seen. We can organise a viewing of this if anyone is interested.

Signing up to this campaign will help us to formulate our fisheries policy and we will keep you updated about this.





Go to www.ocean2012.eu for more information.

Breaking News and Good News from: An Bord Pleanála – Donaghcumper Zone A Refused.

An Bord Pleanála have refused permission for a second major ill-conceived development proposal in Celbridge at the Donaghcumper Demesne. In a most welcome and far-sighted decision by the Board the reasons for refusal were in summary: given the historic settings and protected structures of Donaghcumper and Castletown; the impact on the historic and planned relationship between Castletown and Celbridge; impacts on other architecturally significant structures and amenity; the impact on the Liffey valley which would be contrary to the development plan; inadequacy of surveys pertaining to annex IV species protected under the Habitats Directive to show there would not be adverse impacts on the ecology.

The decision is likely to be available shortly on the Board's website at: <http://www.pleanala.ie/casenum/236613.htm>

Great credit is due to a number of local groups and organisations who engaged to appeal the decision to grant permission by Kildare County Council, and who have been vindicated on appeal. An Taisce is glad to have supported such efforts with its own appeal.

Your views are important to An Taisce. Please don't hesitate to send us any feedback on content, format, etc. of this newsletter, and if there are any topics in particular that you'd like to see covered, we'll do our best to get them in.

Sincerely,

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Preserving our built and natural heritage for future generations