



An Taisce

The National Trust for Ireland

An Taisce Newsletter

Volume 5 Issue 2

March 2013

INDEX OF EZINES SINCE NOV 2012

Welcome to An Taisce's March 2013 ezine

Please share widely! We have improved printing from Netscape or Internet Explorer Browsers but it is over 40 pages long - so please print it double sided or 2 pages per sheet.

We have also provided a magnify facility for some images - if a + symbol appears when you roll over an image - click on it and it will magnify.

Full articles

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Notice of AGM

An Taisce's AGM will be held on Saturday 8 June 2013 in the Heritage Council Headquarters in Kilkenny City. The business of the AGM will be held as usual in the morning. The Kilkenny Local Association is arranging a programme of events including talks and local walks on the day which will appeal to a wide range of interests of members, their families and friends. The programme is still under construction, and we will have firm details for the following eZine.



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Dún Laoghaire Association Report

Dún Laoghaire Association will be celebrating 40 years since its foundation. There are a number of events in the calendar below celebrating this anniversary.

Apart from the celebrations the vital work of the Association continues:

- We will prepare a database of 'Buildings at Risk' in Dún Laoghaire. If you know of any heritage buildings which have been abandoned and are gradually going derelict, please take a photograph and e-mail it, with

details of location, history etc. to: praesidiumdl@gmail.com.

- The planning Committee keeps alert as to irregularities in submissions to the County Planning Office.
- We are in the process of creating an information panel for the Booterstown Nature Reserve. During the recent stormy weather thousands of waders sought refuge in the shelter of the new islands and fed on the nutrition in the mud. Volunteers will be very welcome to help with the clean up at 2pm on Sunday 21st of April.
- We have been taking an active role in the SOS (Save Our Seafront) Campaign to keep Dublin Bay Oil Rig Free. Providence Resources surrendering its Foreshore Licence to drill for oil in Dublin Bay may just be a face saving exercise, a battle won but not the war. We must remain vigilant.

Perhaps the Bards amongst our readers can add a verse or two to the following ditty:

OILY BUSINESS

In Dublin's fair city

Where the Bay is so pretty

We first heard of oilrigs

Polluting our shores

So we formed a committee

To keep Dublin Pretty

Crying cockles and mussels

Oh dead oh dead OH

With apologies to Molly

Plagiarised by Mumbles (alias V Heywood) & Jo Callanan MMXII

We have lost one of our most committed members, Dr Jack Durand. Our Association was so privileged to work with him; he always generous with his professional knowledge and took part enthusiastically in all our events. He will be sorely missed.

The Dún Laoghaire Committee members are:

- Mairead Mehigan Planning & Executive Committee Chair;
- Sarah O'Connor Secretary/Treasurer;
- Alison Carter Trees Event & Environment Chair;
- Avril Larmour,

- Veronica Heywood BMAC Chair;
- Rebecca Jeffares in an advisory capacity.

An Taisce

The National Trust for Ireland

Dun Laoghaire Branch

Events Calendar 2013

April 2013	Sunday 21st	2.00 pm	Boooterstown Nature Reserve Clean-up: Meet at Dart Station car park. Bring boots and gloves. Tea afterwards in the Punch Bowl.
May 2013	Wednesday 8th	8 pm	AGM at St Patrick's Hall, Monkstown Zoe Devlin will speak about her book Wild Flowers of Ireland. Refreshments.
July 2013	Tuesday 16th		Outing by coach to Russborough First stop is June Blake's garden near Blessington, for visit and coffee. Guided tour of 'Russborough', the Palladian mansion by Richard Cassels, and its art treasures; see the 3D exhibition. Access to view the ongoing work of the RHSI on the garden restoration. Cost €50 per person to include coach, teas and admissions. Lunch in Russborough at own expense. Enquiries: 01-289 4203.
August 2013	Sunday 13th	2.30 pm	Heritage Week Booterstown Nature Reserve. Celebrating An Taisce, Dun Laoghaire's 40th anniversary. Meet at Viewing Point opposite Trimleston Avenue for guided tour of bird life, plant life and ecology.
September 2013	Sunday 22nd	2.00 pm to 4.30 pm	Meet at Rathfarnham Castle forecourt for tour of historic Castle Demesne, including Castle grounds, Ely Gate, Badgers' Glen and Ice House. Led by Rebecca Jeffares. Travel between locations by car. Donations accepted. Enquiries: 087 9537959 or reb.jeffares@gmail.com.
October 2013	Sunday 13th	2.30pm	Boooterstown Nature Reserve Foreshore Clean-up. Meet at Dart Station car park. Bring boots and gloves.
December 2013	Friday 6th	11:30 am	Christmas lunch to celebrate the 40th anniversary of An Taisce Dun Laoghaire. Meet in the Members' entrance hall of the RDS for a short history of the RDS and tour of main rooms and art works, led by John Holohan. Two course lunch in the Members' Dining Room. Lunch and tour €25. Numbers limited, early booking

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Reminder

Please forward articles, reports and general ideas for the eZine to ezine@antaice.org

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An Taisce Kerry Association

We hold our monthly meetings in Meave O'Donnell's house, 15 Denny St., Tralee, at 8.00 o'clock on the first Thursday of the month and all members are welcome to attend. Please drop in the next date that suits you as the more people attending, the more we can do for Ireland's heritage.



At our March meeting, we dealt with a number of planning issues and we would welcome your views on the following :

1. Kerry County Council is compiling a list of Public Rights of Way in the county, which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational activity. In particular they are interested in the following :
 - Location of public rights of way, including maps.
 - Issues associated with a right of way.
 - Any other information that would be of assistance.

Please send any information you may have to M. O'Donnell at the above address or by e-mail to catherinemcmul@eircom.net.

You may also send the information directly to M. Enright, Planning Policy Unit, Kerry County Council, County Buildings, Tralee, email menright@kerrycoco.ie but please make sure to send us a copy also. This is a very important issue as many traditional rights of way have been lost over the years because the public did not claim their rights.

2. Kerry County Council are also preparing to review the Kerry County Development Plan and will be publishing a notice in the local press towards the end of March inviting the public to make submissions as to what they would like to see in the new plan. The present plan can be viewed on the Council's website (kerrycoco.ie) or as a hard copy in the public libraries. Submissions can be made to Kerry County Council but do send us a copy also.
 3. Last, but not least, for those of you living in north Kerry, the Local Area Plan for Listowel/Ballybunion is being reviewed. As above, the present plan can be seen on the website and in the local public library. Submissions must be submitted before 4.00 pm on Thursday 4th April and should be addressed to Noell O'Connor, Planning Policy Unit.
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Dublin City Local Association AGM

Calling all Dublin City members! We will be having our AGM in the Little Museum on Stephen's Green (at the junction with Dawson Street) on Thursday 14th March. After meeting at the Museum at 5 p.m. and having a tour of its objects of Dublin and of the people, we will have the AGM until 7.45 p.m. Come and enjoy the local exhibits in the Little Museum!

Delisting Protected Structures



Notes from the Northwest Local Association When the Sligo County Development Plan (CDP) was being revised in 2011, our Secretary spotted by chance that the revised Register of Protected Structures (RPS) omitted several buildings which had been listed previously. No mention was made of the proposed delistings in the drafts of the CDP or the revised RPS which were issued for public consultation, or in the final versions adopted by the Council. The only way to find out from the public documents which buildings were to be delisted was to go through the previous and proposed RPS and match each building off on both. Of course few people other than An Taisce members would be painstaking enough to do so!

Under the Planning and Development Act 2000, Section 55 prescribes the procedure for listing and delisting protected structures. The planning authority has to give notice of the proposal to the owner or occupier of the building, to the Minister, and to the public by placing a notice in a local newspaper, giving the opportunity for anyone to make a submission in regard to the proposal, which must be considered by the authority before making its decision. However, Section 55 only applies to changes that are to be made at any time other than in the course of preparing its development plan. Section 54, strangely, allows a planning authority to list or delist as part of its development plan process without any of the notifications or opportunity for submissions required at other times by Section 55. As we found with Sligo County Council, this can be used to obfuscate the details of proposed delistings. Anyone reviewing draft Development Plans should beware of this loophole. Members who are involved with Planning and Development SPCs could request that proposed delistings be explicitly detailed in draft plans, preferably with reasons justifying the delisting on objective heritage value grounds.

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Clare Association

At the AGM on 9th May 2012 it was suggested *“that, due to the lack of laws protecting the walkways in Ireland, that we, with other like minded organisations, run a campaign to protect and map the existing walkway in Clare and assist in adding to them.”*

Recreational hiking and walking is the most popular outdoor pursuit in Ireland and outnumbers participations in GAA, Golf with Biking and swimming coming second and third.

It was decided by all present that this should go ahead in autumn by us taking the initiative and invite all the other like minded groups to join us.

On Wednesday 27th March at the Temple Gate Hotel after the Clare Association of An Taisce AGM there will be an open discussion on the above suggestion from last year. *“A campaign to protect and map the existing walkway in Clare”*

Since this suggestion was put forward, there has been a change in the guidelines from the Department of the Environment and Local Government. These guidelines now put the obligation of the Local Authority (Clare County Council) to map and list all public pathways in their Development Plans.

The purpose of the meeting is to consult on these ideas and try and get an Umbrella Group working together to

this objective including a public talk by Roger Garland of “Keep Ireland Open” some time this spring to lunch the campaign and means of funding for the campaign.

Professor Kevin B Nowlan RIP



Professor Kevin B Nowlan who died on Feb. 4th. 2013 was one of Ireland's leading advocates for heritage protection and served as An Taisce president from 1983 to 1987. He will be remembered for his authoritative presence and great speaking voice at lectures, public meeting and planning hearings over the last half century. His greatest cause was the preservation of Georgian Dublin against dereliction, road widening and inappropriate development.

President of An Taisce The National Trust for Ireland, 1983-1988, Professor Emeritus of Modern Irish History UCD, he was a member of the Royal Irish Academy and a Honorary Member of the RIAI. He was also active in the Irish Georgian Society where he was Vice President, The Dublin Civic Trust, the Alfred Beit Foundation, the Upper Lesson Street Residents Association and many more civic and heritage organisations.

During his period as President of An Taisce in 1986, the 40th anniversary was celebrated and Kevin wrote an inspiring article entitled "*This is true Patriotism*" describing the work of An Taisce which was re published in the history of An Taisce by Valerie Bond and others, "The First Fifty Years". In it he argued forcibly that An Taisce as the true defender of Ireland's inheritance both natural and manmade is the embodiment of patriotic effort and ought to receive the tangible support of all in society.

Kevin was a member of the Tailors Hall Fund Ltd which was set up in 1966 as a coalition of interested organisations (including An Taisce) and some individuals to rescue The Tailors Hall from dereliction and demolition. In 1969 it achieved by community effort the very first restoration of a historic building in Ireland, long before any other organisation including the city or state became active in the restoration of historic buildings.

Following restoration as President of An Taisce he was the person who received the keys to the building from the fund on behalf of An Taisce in 1984 and prior to that he was instrumental in negotiating its transfer to An Taisce to be used as its National Headquarters, to be held in trust on behalf of the people of Ireland.

In 1979 An Taisce was given The Grove in Morehampton Road to hold in perpetuity for the citizens of Dublin as a wildlife sanctuary by Kathleen Goodfellow in her will largely through Kevin's efforts due to his involvement in the Upper Lesson Street Residents Association.

In 1985 An Taisce entered into the Castlehyde Agreement to safeguard Castlehyde Co Cork (now Michael Flatley's home) from adverse development along with Cork County Council.

Of Prof Kevin B Knowlan it can be truly said *'if you want my monument look around you'*; for his legacy includes not only the ownership in trust for the people of Ireland of The Tailors Hall and The Grove by An Taisce but also the current appreciation of the importance of historic Dublin, but also a balanced view of our past and the many organisations dedicated to the care of the heritage of Ireland in which he was active and which were strengthened by his efforts.

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Maurice Bryan RIP

Maurice Bryan, a long time An Taisce Council member previously living in Rathfarnham Dublin, was a leader in the protection of Booterstown Nature Reserve starting with the campaign to rid the Bay and Booterstown of the 6 lane Eastern Bypass.

Maurice died peacefully on 5th February and his memorial service will be on the 21st of March at 11am in Saint Columbus' Church, Church Road, Swords.

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Letter to County Councils on Herbicides

Andrew Jackson, sends a letter to all County Councils on the use of Herbicides - based on work by North Tipperary Association

Dear Local Authority,

Excessive use of chemical herbicides and pesticides



Nenagh River Walk

We are writing to bring to your urgent attention the problem of excessive use of chemical herbicides and pesticides in Ireland, which was the subject of a recent case study by An Taisce in North Tipperary - sample photos are pasted below and attached.

As well as being unsightly, such use of herbicides and pesticides is particularly harmful to flora and fauna, including humans, contributing to the destruction of our currently struggling biodiversity. We appeal to all Local Authorities to cease this damaging method of maintenance.

Please find attached:

- Photographs of the excessive use of chemical herbicides in Nenagh and environs;
- A case study regarding Stuttgart City Council, Germany, which has stopped the use of all chemical pesticides and artificial fertilisers in public areas; and
- A case study regarding alternative methods for ivy removal.

We would be grateful to hear your comments regarding these issues, including examples of existing good practice.

We would further be grateful if you would share this letter with relevant colleagues.

We hope that you share our concerns and that you will develop and adopt, where this is not already the case, green maintenance strategies which could become an example for Local Authorities throughout Ireland.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider the environmental impacts of the above-mentioned actions.

Yours faithfully,

Andrew Jackson

Natural Environment Officer An Taisce The National Trust for Ireland

Download the letter and attachments [7.Excessive use of herbicides and pesticides - An Taisce - with attachments.pdf \(2MB\)](#)



Dromineer

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Reminder

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Environmental Pillar submission on EPA Consultation re TOR for Fracking Research

The EPA recently put out a call for submissions on the Terms of Reference for Research that it is to undertake on Fracking.

The EPA call states: *"The EPA is holding a public consultation for research on Environmental Impacts of Unconventional Gas Exploration & Extraction. Interested parties are invited to submit written comments by 8th March 2013. The public consultation, which is in line with the EPA's policy of openness and transparency, will ensure that this programme of research delivers a thorough and robust examination of the issues."* [See here ...](#)

The Environmental Pillar (of which An Taisce is a member) recently made a submission on this.

Environmental Pillar submission on EPA Consultation re TOR for Fracking Research

8th March 2013

1. This research should not just be aimed at answering the question: can we undertake Fracking in Ireland without causing environmental damage here, and without increasing Ireland's Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.

The research should also address the question of the environmental impact of the extraction of global shale gas reserves for the agreed target of containing global warming to 2C. Total GHG emissions must be one of the points that feature in the study. If all global reserves of shale gas extractable through fracking are burned what are the estimated GHG emissions and what would the impact of that be on the 2C target?

Methane leakage in production should be a part of this equation.

The latest scientific calculations suggest we can only burn 20% of total fossil fuel reserves globally, if we are to give ourselves a decent chance of avoid exceeding a 2 degree temperature rise. Therefore it makes sense to determine which 20% of fossils are burned having regard to, among other factors, the GHG burden. These questions must be part Ireland's political decision-making process around shale gas extraction by fracking. And therefore it is imperative that the EPA research provides the independent evidence base to inform that decision-making process.

Moreover, given Ireland's high carbon dependence, the study should also examine how shale gas production would impact on the public perception of the urgency of replacing fossil fuels.

2. The range of the draft TOR is far too narrow.

The key questions for this research limit the range of the research to very narrow though important concerns. Viz:

1. Can this technology be used whilst also fully protecting the environment and human health?
If the answer is yes, then:
2. What is best environmental practice in using the technology?

In order to fulfil the purpose of the research in enabling the two Governments to decide on whether to allow fracking to be permitted, the full range of socio-economic-environmental issues need to be identified and base line studies done to identify and measure the scale of likely impacts. It is not good enough only to look at best practice in mitigation of potential impacts as described in B2 (page 6). Instead the work packages must cover the following:

- a. The full range of potential environmental impacts as defined in the EIA Directive, during build-up, operation and decommissioning, on:
 - i. human beings, fauna and flora;
 - ii. soil, water, air, climate and the landscape;
 - iii. material assets and the cultural heritage;
 - iv. the interaction between the factors referred to in points i, ii, or iii
- b. The economic impacts, short and long-term on the local economies
- c. The social impacts resulting from potential community conflict and the industrialisation of rural communities.
- d. The regulatory environment.

3. Whilst the text used regarding conflict of interest in Para 6 of the draft TOR is helpful, it doesn't remove the

responsibility of the EPA in seeking contractors that have a track record of independence.

The research produced needs to be above reproach.

Whilst recognising that the researchers may be drawn from limited pools of expertise, it is essential that at the least the team leaders in each work package are seen to be free of links with fossil fuel industries, and to have demonstrated their independence.

What is really going on?

An introduction to Access to Information on the Environment

The **Access to Information on the Environment Directive** is a very powerful tool in preparing a response on an Environmental Matter, be that a proposed planning application or one in process, or a broader consultation exercise, or if considering Judicial Recourse.

In general it is more powerful than the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts and generally less costly - although a cost may be levied. There are limitations to the information to which you are entitled - as they need to conform to what is defined in the Directive as "Environmental Information"

Below are some basic tips on making an AIE request below which I hope will be of some assistance:

You need to:

- Provide your name and contact details and site the provisions under which you are requesting the information. You can download a template request from [here](#).
- Be specific about the information you want, and separate your requests into small requests. Large and complex requests may be used to justify delay in providing the information you request.
- Specify the format in which you want the information. Electronic is the least costly and more environmentally friendly!
- Request an Acknowledgement of receipt of your request and details of who is dealing with it.
- Provide contact details for any clarifications required.
- Specify very broadly the information you want - i.e. emails and attachments, files and post-it notes

attached, database records, minutes of meetings, records times and dates of un-minuted meetings etc.

- Note and have recorded the date on which you make your request. Remember the timeframes for appeals are quite strict. See links below for further information
- You will find the AIE officers email and contact address on a Department's or Agencies website - it can be hard to find - often you need to ring or email the FOI officer and ask them.
- Remember - if they don't reply to you within 4 weeks - you should consider this a default refusal and should immediately request an internal review, you need to do that within 4 weeks of the decision/ actual or inferred
- Always check the text of the original directive as there are issues with the Irish regulations.

If refused or ignored, an internal review is the first stage of the appeal and you have to request this before you can go to the Info Commissioner. You may be advised by the body you have requested information from that your request is so large and complex that they need 2 months to reply - but the general obligation is to reply to you as soon as possible and no later than 1 month.

In general, as a rule of thumb I always appeal - even if only to check the completeness of the response given.

You are not required to explain why you want the information, nor should you - as it can be used against you. The internal appeal or the Appeal to the Commissioner is different, as you may consider it useful to address this in responding to the clauses they've used to refuse the information requested.

Below is a link to the Directive and a DECLG info page with links to the Irish regulations purportedly implementing the directive and the guidelines and some useful info.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:041:0026:0032:EN:PD>

<http://www.environ.ie/en/AboutUs/AccessToInformationontheEnvironment/>

DCC promise to move on the Dereliction of Aldborough House

Aldborough House near the Five Lamps on Portland Row, Dublin 1 is the most important endangered historic building in the city. The legal provisions for its maintenance as a Protected Structure are not being enforced.



Built for the Stafford family just before the Act of Union in 1801, it is second in size only to Leinster House. It has an impressive classical facade and interiors which run around a central stairwell.

From the mid 19th century until the early 20th century, it was in state ownership in use by the Post Office and latterly by Telecom Eireann who maintained it to a high standard.

Following sale by Eircom, two planning permissions were granted for office and medical centre use which have not proceeded. In the current property market these schemes are unviable.

Land Registry information reveals that the property is registered with Aldborough Developments Ltd of which 100% ownership was taken by Ely Property Ltd in 2007.

For the last 4 years the neglected and abandoned state of the building has been a concern to heritage and conservation organisations.

Section 58 Planning and Development Act 2000 places a duty on owners and occupiers of protected structure to ensure that the site is protected from 'endangerment'.

Instead, the building has been left open to thieves and vandals with a fire having occurred on 18th February 2013. Fortunately, the action of the Dublin Fire Brigade prevented serious damage from occurring.

The most recent Land Registry record is the holding of a charge on the property by the Governor and Company of The Bank of Ireland on 19th May 2006.

The prime responsibility now lies with Bank of Ireland to secure the future of the building.

In view of the years of repeated maintenance and security failure, the cost of restoring the building has significantly increased. The most viable prospect of securing its future would be vesting with a trust to secure its use for social, cultural and community uses. An Taisce is advancing proposals to secure this.

Having brought this to the attention of Dublin City Council, An Taisce is heartened to have been informed by them that "in light of the change in onsite circumstances it is now proposed to initiate legal action under Planning & Development Legislation."

An Taisce understands that action will be taken against the Bank which effectively owns the building having had a charge on it since 2006.

An Taisce firmly supports the action now being taken by Dublin City Council, who appear to not want to see a repeat of the 2011 disastrous destruction by arson of Belcamp House in Fingal - which notably occurred after security was removed.

Greening the CAP - Please sign this e-action



"We are in the throes of the debate on CAP reform. Environmental objectives are coming under ever more pressure. The EU Commission has set out a clear vision which provides that public goods, such as the sustainable use of soils and food safety, should come hand in hand with public money.

But it's a vision under threat from intense lobbying from agri-business interests across a range of member states, including some from Ireland. Against this backdrop, An Taisce is working closely with the European Environmental Bureau and kindred organisations across Ireland and Europe to push MEPs for real reform. The petition below is a key part of this campaign".

Following a talk at the last Council meeting in February An Taisce has been one of more than 270 NGOs who signed up to an open letter to our MEPs regarding reform of the Common Agricultural Policy to ensure that it is fair and supports respect for the environment.

Members may also like to take this a step further and be part of the large group of people who individually ask MEPs for a change in the CAP!

You can sign and promote the e-action <http://www.farmingfornature.eu> and ask MEPs for a real reform of the CAP! All the member organizations and partners of the European Environmental Bureau are already promoting this Europe wide (where it goes to the heads of political groups, rapporteurs and shadows of the CAP dossiers) and in some dedicated countries: France, Germany, UK, Spain, Italy, Romania, Poland and Sweden.

The emails always contain our 4 key policy demands:

1. **ENSURE** all farmers undertake good farming practices, respecting the environment in return for CAP direct subsidies (so-called 'greening')
2. **REJECT** illegal double subsidies, proposed by the AGRI Committee which would pay farmers twice for carrying out the same activity
3. **REINTRODUCE** requirements for farmers to comply with EU laws on the environment, food safety, animal and public health when receiving EU subsidies
4. **SUPPORT** High Nature Value and organic farming systems

We hope you can all sign up to this petition and spread it wider!

We see that slowly MEPs are changing their behaviour and feel they need to answer on our messages, **let's keep up the pressure and get to more than 100 000 people signing the campaign!** There are already more than 40K

If you would like to contact your own MEP you will find their email address on the website: <http://contact.ie/national-politicians/all-irish-meps>

There will also be a day conference on the issues in Dublin on April 14th - *Sealing the deal on a greener CAP*

Organised by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

Ash Suite, Croke Park Conference Center - Jones's Rd, Dublin 3, Ireland

9:00- 18:00 April 10, 2013

Followed by a cocktail reception.

We hope that you will be able to join us for this informative conference and engaging discussion.

If you would like to attend, please register at the following link by April 3rd at the very latest:

<http://bit.ly/UezfqL>

The European Environmental Bureau's seminar on 7th Environmental Action Plan



Following its Board meeting and a working lunch hosted by Environment Minister Phil Hogan, the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) - Europe's largest federation of environmental organisations, of which An Taisce was a founding member - held a full-day seminar on 12 February 2013 in Newman House on St. Stephen's Green, with organisational assistance provided by An Taisce. The subject of the seminar was **“Will the EU’s Seventh Environmental Action Programme (7EAP) help us to *‘live well’, within the limits of our planet?*”** (with or without the comma!). In brief, the general consensus was: no, not as currently framed.

The EU's environmental action programmes set the framework for future environmental policy work in the EU (including new legislative proposals), and are therefore hugely important documents. The 7EAP, which is currently in draft but may be agreed during Ireland's Presidency, is to cover the years from now until 2020. If something is mentioned in the programme, there's a good chance it might be taken forward; even better if concrete commitments are included with attached deadlines, as was the case with the first four action programmes, covering the years 1973-1992, when EU environmental policy was expanding rapidly.

Unfortunately, the policy dynamics have weakened significantly since 1992, and there seems little appetite at present for bold moves. On the contrary, in fact, with recent media reports suggesting that Catherine Day - the EU's most senior civil servant - has been blocking various environmental proposals, believing that the European Commission's work should focus at present on *“growth and the euro”*.

Jacqueline McGlade, Executive Director of the EEA, gave the keynote address at the EEB seminar, entitled *“Late lessons from early warnings, implications for the 7EAP”*. Professor McGlade highlighted the need to integrate a diverse set of problems: e.g. putting a value on natural capital; improving the evidence base for policy; addressing social inequities; improving access to and processing of data and information; responding to future disasters. She highlighted the fact that independent efforts will be insufficient, and that governments cannot handle these challenges alone. Much must be done to improve public participation, she added, both in decision-making and in terms of information gathering and dissemination, including by way of social media. Jeremy Wates, Secretary General of the EEB, thanked Professor McGlade - who is leaving the EEA in May - for her huge contribution to EU environmental policy over the past ten years.

There followed a presentation by John McCarthy, Assistant Secretary at Ireland's Department for the Environment, who stressed the “narrative” nature of the 7EAP, which Ireland hopes to retain. Lawyers in the room reflected that talk of a “narrative” sets alarm bells ringing, because it appears to connote a document lacking concrete commitments and timelines, which is largely true of the draft 7EAP.

Next came four presentations and discussions regarding issues of particular interest, to inform the finalisation of the EEB's briefing paper on the 7EAP. Andrew Jackson, An Taisce's Natural Environment Officer, spoke on the first thematic priority of the draft 7EAP, *"To protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital"*. He noted in particular the yawning gap between the content of the "unambitious" draft 7EAP and the reality of what seemed likely to unfold in the coming years: namely, a concerted attempt to weaken EU biodiversity policy, most likely led by the UK, which plans to renegotiate its relationship with the EU. The EEB and NGOs at the national level should play a central role in resisting this, he argued.

Next, David Healy of Friends of the Irish Environment and Feasta spoke on the second thematic priority of the 7EAP, *"To turn the EU into a resource-efficient, green and competitive low-carbon economy"*. He stressed the importance of knowing where we want to get to before deciding how we get there, and the importance of leaving room for experimentation. He also highlighted the first recommendation of the Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress: *"When evaluating material well-being, look at income and consumption rather than production"*.

Michael Ewing of the Environmental Pillar spoke on the third thematic priority, *"To safeguard EU citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well being"*, highlighting some of the major health challenges facing the EU, including nanoparticles and endocrine-disrupting chemicals, stressing also the links between environmental health and mental health.

Finally, Suzanne Kingston, a barrister and lecturer at University College Dublin, spoke on *"Maximising the benefits of EU environmental legislation"*, highlighting, amongst other things: the "dangerously vague" proposed "partnership implementation agreements" between the Commission and Member States; ongoing attempts to decentralise enforcement of EU law to the national level, which should be resisted in circumstances where major access to justice issues remain at that level; and the draft 7EAP's overwhelming focus on Member States' duties, neglecting to consider, for example, improving Aarhus Convention compliance by the EU itself.

Each session was followed by a group discussion, which fed in to the final draft of the EEB's briefing paper, which was completed and ready to go a few days after the seminar. All in all a very successful trip to Dublin by the EEB, with lots of input from An Taisce.

EPA's new iPhone app



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have launched a new iPhone App, See it? Say it!, to help people to report environmental pollution in their towns and villages.

The new App makes it easy for people to report a pollution incident the moment they see it. Using the App you can now take a photograph of the pollution incident, input GPS location coordinates, add a summary description of what you want to convey and your contact details and this will automatically be sent to the relevant local authority for follow up.

This App compliments the 24 hour nationwide environmental complaints phonenumber - 1850 365 121 - which is already in place. So, you can now report issues such as backyard burning, flytipping, water pollution, odours and littering by using the new iPhone App or by phoning the complaints line.

David Flynn, EPA Programme Manager, said: *"We want to make it easy for people who 'See Something' to 'Say Something'."*

This App is another way for people to report environmental pollution incidents and we hope they will download and use the App's simple reporting methods to protect their local areas. The App is currently available for iPhone customers and the EPA hopes to extend this to Android phones.

The existing environmental complaints phonenumber is also available 24hrs a day, 7 days a week and all calls are answered by dedicated staff who pass the reported information to the relevant body for follow up such as local authorities, the Gardaí or the EPA."

Joe Crockett of the County and City Managers' Association (CCMA), said: *"The CCMA greatly welcomes the development of the mobile App. The inclusion of GPS co-ordinates and photo imagery – and accurate information on location - will greatly assist the Environment Enforcement Officers to rapidly respond to reported environmental complaints."*

The Local Authorities urges the public to make use of the new App and to continue using the National Environmental Complaints Line as their help is critical in assisting the Local Authorities to tackle the minority of society who recklessly endanger the environment by inappropriate and illegal activities".

You can download the App now from the iTunes App Store (search iTunes for: 'See it Say it') or visit <http://goo.gl/gOJMa>.

Then, if you spot environmental pollution or dumping, simply:

- open the App,
- take a photograph,
- add a few simple details including a contact number and
- submit the complaint.

The app will send the complaint details to the relevant local authority and will make it easy for those investigating to locate the problem.

To find out more about making an environmental complaint visit the EPA website at:

<http://www.epa.ie/whatwedo/enforce/report/>.

The new EPA Advisory board members

Chairperson Ms. Laura Burke, Director General, EPA



Appointees from Prescribed Bodies

- Dr. John Cuddihy (nominated by Directors for Public Health of HSE)
- Mr. David Ball (nominated by the Irish Environmental Network)
- Dr. Sharon McGuinness (nominated by the Health and Safety Authority of Ireland)
- Mr. Pat Farrell (nominated by the Irish Farmers Association)
- Ms. Deirdre Lyons (nominated by the Industrial Development Agency)
- Cllr. John Sheahan (nominated by the Association of County and City Councils)
- Prof Colin O'Dowd (nominated by the Royal Irish Academy)

Ministerial Appointees

- Mr. Martin Hogan
 - Dr. Aine Ryall
 - Ms. Elaine Nevin
 - Ms. Elizabeth Delahunty
-

An interesting website for Dublin cyclists.



<http://cyclingindublin.com/2013/02/03/what-should-dublin-quays-look-like-part-one/>

Here's how Aran Quay might look.

Irish Food Products – A Historical Perspective



The Agricultural History Society of Ireland and Irish Environmental History Network are pleased to announce a joint conference to be held in Hotel Kilkenny from 14-15 June, 2013.

The conference theme will be *"Irish Food Products – A Historical Perspective"*.

In the 1960s, A. T. Lucas, former Director of the National Museum, stated that *"... from prehistory to the close of the 17th century, corn and milk were the mainstay of the national food."*

The conference will bring to bear perspectives from archaeology, history, folklore, palaeoecology, geochemistry and archaeobotany, to review the basis for Lucas's proposition, and whether it is still seen to be broadly correct.

A preliminary programme and registration details are given below. All are welcome.

FRIDAY 14th June: 15.00-19.00

Registration/tea and coffee: 14.00-15.00

Liam Downey (University College Dublin) and Ingelise Stuijts (The Discovery Programme) Introduction lecture
'Overview of current knowledge'

Session 1: Dairy products

David Dickson (Trinity College Dublin): Dairy products in former times

Jessica Smyth (Bristol University): The origins of dairying in Ireland

Patricia Lysaght (University College Dublin): Folklore associated with food products in Ireland

Dinner 20.00-22.00 hrs

SATURDAY 15th June: 9.00-15.00

Session 2: Cereal products

Michael O'Connell (NUI Galway): Cereal production in ancient Ireland: evidence from the fossil pollen records

Susan Lyons (University College Cork)/Meriel McClatchie (University College Dublin): Cereal production in past and nutrition value

Mick Monk (University College Cork): From field to food in Ireland's past: the processing and nutritional value of cereals with particular reference to oats

Session 3: Meat products

Finbar McCormick (Queen's University Belfast): Archaeological evidence for meat consumption

Regina Sexton (University College Cork): Meat products in former times

Fiona Beglane (Sligo IT): Archaeological evidence of meat use and its nutritional values

Niamh Daly (University College Cork)/Jacqueline Cahill Wilson (Discovery Programme): Application of geochemistry: Isotope analyses using Strontium, Oxygen, Carbon and Nitrogen

Closing session

Colin Rynne (University College Cork): Industrial archaeology with particular regard to brewing and distilling

Lunch: 14.00-15.00

Excursion: St Francis Abbey Brewery, Parliament Street, Kilkenny: 15.30-17.00 hrs

Conference Costs (including tea/coffee and lunch on Saturday): Non-members: €60 // Members: €50 // Students: €30 // Optional: Conference dinner 14th June €30 in Hotel Kilkenny // Optional: Excursion costs: €8

Hotel Kilkenny offers a special rate for conference delegates (available until 14th May)

Friday 14th June: €70 (single) €100 (double/twin) including breakfast

Saturday 15th June: €70 (single) €100 (double/twin) including breakfast

OR €120 if taking a 2 night stay in a single room

To register – contact <mailto:aghistoryireland@gmail.com> or send details to

Eoin Flaherty, 2.09 Iontas, National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, National University of Ireland
Maynooth, Co. Kildare

Mortgage-related issues in a crisis economy



Mortgage-related issues in a crisis economy: Evidence from rural households in Ireland, by Enda Murphy, Mark Scott School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Policy, Planning Building, Richview, University College Dublin, Dublin 4, Ireland

The recent economic crisis has demonstrated the extent to which households are exposed to the financialisation of advanced economies. Much of the debate surrounding the reasons for the crisis has centred on the role of neoliberal policies and particularly lax mortgage lending practices among financial institutions. This paper explores how neoliberal ideas were applied to property and development during the Irish house-building boom. Drawing on questionnaire survey data across five case study locations, it examines the mortgage practices of rural households during the boom period and their existing conditions in the current burst. In addition, the impacts and consequences of the neo-liberalisation of the rural mortgage market for rural households within the context of the failure of these policies, a major housing crash and a neoliberal policy fix based on severe austerity measures is examined. Our results point towards the extreme hardship and stress being felt by rural households and highlight, through the lens of rural housing, the extent to which the practices and consequences of neoliberal policy in the mortgage arena are varied spatially in rural areas.

The article can be downloaded for a fee at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718512002771>

This research is consistent with CSO data – see [Roof over our Heads](#). *'in particular, our results show that most respondents own their own homes without a mortgage and only a relatively small minority, particularly when compared to national figures, have mortgages.'*

The Census finds that those areas with highest amount of one-off's also have highest number of households where there is no mortgage - seems to suggest a high degree of financial autonomy i.e. access to land, favourable tax breaks etc - this would support other data that demand for new 'one-offs' has remained resilient.

irishenvironment.com blog-site

Listen to an interview with Siobhan Egan from Birdwatch and see other articles on the irishenvironment.com blog-site

Fish Discards - An Taisce Press Release

An Taisce welcomes deal on fish discards but calls on countries to match ambition of the European Parliament

An Taisce welcomes the agreement reached late February by Minister Coveney and other EU Fisheries Ministers to tackle the scandal of discards, which is the current practice of dumping over quota or non quota catches, but notes with disappointment that the agreement fails to match the ambition of the reforms proposed by the European Parliament on 6 February, with an overwhelming democratic mandate of 502 to 137 votes. As Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, one of the leading campaigners for a more sustainable EU fisheries policy noted, *“What they agreed last night is weaker and harder to enforce than the ban our MEPs in the European Parliament voted for, with a huge majority, three weeks ago.”*

Resistance to an ambitious deal is said to have come mainly from France, Portugal and Spain, which won some concessions, including the continuing ability to discard 7-9% of catches in certain circumstances. The deal on discards, insofar as it goes, is proposed to be phased in over four years. Andrew Jackson, Natural Environment Officer of An Taisce The National Trust for Ireland said *"We urge Minister Coveney to continue the fight and push in the coming weeks to ensure that the EU's Member States match the European Parliament's ambition to end overfishing and restore fish stocks."*

An Taisce Press Release

Climate Change Bill - An Taisce Press Release

Government is trying to run from the science - but it cant hide from it.

The employment growth in the green economy, so desperately needed, will not be happen with such a lame bill.

The Heads of the Climate Change Bill agreed at Cabinet today represent a gutless reaction to tackling Ireland's greenhouse emissions problem. The lack of targets means that this is a toothless bill.

On a per capita basis Ireland is one of the worst greenhouse gas emitters in the world and bears a responsibility, more than most, to address this.

Professor John Sweeney, President of An Taisce The National Trust for Ireland stated *"After procrastinating for over a year by the expedient measure of commissioning the NESC Secretariat (not the full NESC Council) to deliver supportive recommendations, the proposals will completely lack substance or any significant effective steps to address the scale of the issues concerned."*

He continued *"A bill with no sectoral targets provides carte blanche for polluting sectors to continue without fear of sanctions. It is particularly disappointing to see such a non event of a bill emerge after both parties in government, together with all the opposition parties, endorsed an effective target-led bill a few short years ago. Today, even this ambition has been sacrificed to the lowest common political denominator of inaction worthy of an episode of 'Yes Minister'."*

The cave-in by government ministers is indeed spectacular. While in opposition the Tanaiste Eamon Gilmore had also a very different view of what a climate bill should contain:

"Both the Labour and the Green Party gave pre election commitments that carbon reduction targets would be statutorily based, in a climate change bill, similar to that being introduced by the Labour Government in the UK. If there is to be all-party agreement on the targets, then what is the apparent reluctance to the bill?"

Indeed! - what has removed the political backbone from this topic is not clear; but the current exercise reflects a carefully orchestrated downgrading of political priorities to suit the vested interests who have lobbied successfully for this toothless exercise.

At a time when those planning our transport, industry and agricultural futures need clarity on how much of the national emissions cake they can reasonably be expected to account for in future years, the government has abrogated its responsibilities in the area and left matters to the law of the jungle.

Economic recovery depends on sustainable policies to promote Ireland as a country with vision and leadership in this area. The employment growth in the green economy, so desperately needed, will not happen with such a lame bill.

Neither will our trading partners in the developing countries, on whom we impose adverse impacts by our polluting activities, be impressed by the pointed refusal of this government to sign up to the target an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Sadly, today's missed opportunity will result in uncertainties for those considering investing in Ireland and will cost jobs and damage Ireland's already fragile national image abroad.

James Nix, Director An Taisce The National Trust for Ireland stated *"With this heads of bill, the government seems to be trying to run away from science. For better or worse science isn't something you can run away from: seeking to hide from the truth has never changed it."*

"This draft legislation has yet to become a reasoned-out response to reality", he said adding that:

"We can have dynamic, world-beating agriculture in 2030 and 2050 while lowering emissions. The key point is that it will be different from today. It will have more home-grown cereals, horticulture and a greater diversity of crops than we see now. A hard truth is that a path of productivism, with an over-concentration on red-meat and dairy produce, is not sufficiently diverse or health aware to be a sustainable future for farm families and their successors. The change that we need in the complexion of our agri-food sector is a challenge that we can rise to meet".

An Taisce also noted that the concept of *"Transition"*; should not be omitted from the Bill and its title. *"Transition"* should go back in. We know we need to move from high to low levels of energy consumption (and resulting emissions). What we don't need is to develop a discrete number of new low-energy sectors on top of an unchanged general picture.

[An Taisce Press Release](#)

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Reminder

Please forward articles, reports and general ideas for the eZine to ezine@antaisce.org

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eZines for Smartphones & Tablets, eBooks and Printing the eZine

It is estimated that very soon there will be as many viewings of webpages using Smartphones and Tablets as the conventional PC/Laptop and that Smartphones and Tablets will become dominant by 2014.

Recent eZines have been designed to work well on all three, PC, Tablet and Smartphone and are now produced using *"HTML 5 and a Responsive CSS layout"*.

There have been some major changes to webrowsers in recent times and we strongly suggest that you get as new a version of your favourite browser as you can - This does not work well in some earlier browsers - but life is too short to make up for their inadequacies. Please use a recent version.

This allows for different layouts to be used depending on the width of the device - it should 'collapse' to one column on narrow devices and it should be such that you get the 'whole item - text and images' in that column, without having to scroll left/right.

The font-sizes and images are automatically readjusted for the width. You will notice on smaller devices and smartphones that the layout is different in Portrait and Landscape mode - but all the articles are there in both.

In this issue to improve things, we introduce navigation at the article level, with links going to the previous and next article as well as to the index at the top. (This has also been retro-actively introduced to some of the previous eZines).

This has been tested and some Android devices and simulated on iPhones & iPads, but we would like feedback as to how they behave on these. ezine@antaisce.org

Some members have indicated that they like to print the eZine - (resource usage? - paper, ink etc) but you cannot take your laptop into the bath - so we have added pagebreaks so that it should print more tidily - however this only works in Internet Explorer and Netscape, probably works on Safari & Opera but for reasons only known to them does not work on Chrome.

We have also created the February Edition (and will soon create this edition) as an eBook - links to all eZines are here <http://www.antaisce.ie/Publications/eZines.aspx>. The links to the eBook versions are right at the bottom of the page - Again they work on Android devices and we would also like feedback on those from iPhone & iPad users.

The eZine is hosted on our website and although we send it to you as an email, we encourage you to link off to the website version as soon as you can, because very few email applications handle anything other than very basic webpages. If you have got this far and are still in your email please link to the webversion!

Contact Us

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.

You are being sent these eZines because you are a member of An Taisce - should you no longer wish to be sent these, please email

membership@antaisce.org

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Your views are important to An Taisce. Please don't hesitate to send us any feedback

Preserving our built and natural heritage for future generations