An Taisce
The National Trust for Ireland



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

An Taisce
The National Trust for Ireland

PROTECTING IRELAND'S HERITAGE,
SAFEGUARDING ITS FUTURE

AN TAISCE IS A MEMBERSHIP **CHARITY** THAT WORKS TO CONSERVE **IRELAND'S NATURAL** AND **BUILT** HERITAGE. WE ARE AN **INDEPENDENT** VOICE FOR THE **ENVIRONMENT** AND FOR **HERITAGE** ISSUES.

EDUCATION

Our Environmental Education Unit is responsible for developing and operating some of Ireland's most popular and successful environmental programmes and campaigns.

PROPERTIES

We own a range of heritage properties in trust, including historic buildings and nature reserves.

ADVOCACY

Our Advocacy Unit is dedicated to promoting the conservation of Ireland's nature and biodiversity as well as its built heritage.

Statement on non-political affiliation

Our members are all ages and come from all walks of life. The one thing we have in common is our concern for the environment and a shared passion to protect nature and our natural heritage.

In accordance with the guidance note (Feb 2018) issued by the Charities Regulator under section 14 of the Charities Act 2009, An Taisce has a charitable purpose only. An Taisce engages in political activities or promotes a political cause only where that relates directly to the advancement of our charitable purpose. An Taisce does not endorse any political party or candidate.

Registered in Ireland 12469
Charity No. CHY4741
EU Transparency Register no. 473905437651-60

Chair's Report



Philip Kearney,
Chair

The Board began 2020 with a two day 'retreat' to review An Taisce's objectives and strategy, hear from senior staff and make plans for the coming year. It was a valuable exercise in team-building and set the foundations for collaborative and effective work.

Less than a month later the first signs of the Covid pandemic appeared followed by the first lockdown in March. Full credit must be given to Dr Michael John O'Mahony, director of the Education Unit and Sinéad Owens, recently appointed Operations Manager, for their very professional response to that challenge. They organised almost seamless transitions to online service provision, working from home and virtual meetings that ensured the continuity of programmes and other work.

A noteworthy response to the public health crisis was the 'Treasuring Ireland' series of articles published on antaisce.org and curated by Prof John Sweeney. Many of the essays reflected the increased focus on and appreciation of the natural world that emerged during lockdown.

The review and substantial rewriting of the Constitution was led by the Hon Secretary, Stuart McCaul as described in his report. The process concluded successfully at an EGM in December where the new Constitution was approved by the members with a very strong endorsement. It brings An Taisce's governance and structures into line with contemporary legal requirements.

The Governance, Risk and Compliance Committee chaired by Olivia Rogers worked throughout the year to achieve compliance with the Charities Regulator's Governance Code. Unfortunately, due to work commitments, Olivia stepped down from the Board at the end of the year. Alison Hough BL, also stepped down at that point due to family and work pressures. We want to record our appreciation for their significant contributions to An Taisce. Late in the year we were very pleased to welcome a new Hon Treasurer, Aoife O'Gorman, a very experienced forensic accountant.

The recruitment of an interim CEO was the other very significant organisational change during 2020. For many years previously the need for a chief executive was recognised but seen as beyond the resources of the organisation. The new Board decided that it could no longer be postponed. The post was advertised internally. Gary Freemantle stepped down from his role as a Board member, went through a rigorous interview procedure and his appointment was approved by Council. Although it is a part-time role, Gary has been working almost full-time instituting a series of structural and other changes to achieve greater coherence across the organisation. This includes centralisation of services where appropriate, membership development and improving our internal and external communications.

The core work of An Taisce in advocacy, planning, conservation of the built and natural environment and environmental education in a wide palette of programmes continues in a healthy state staffed by outstanding, committed and well-qualified people. These activities are described in detail in the various sections of this Annual Report together with reports from our committees and local associations. Thanks are offered to all for their commitment. An Taisce continues its membership of a range of international and European bodies with specialist heritage and/or environmental missions including the International National Trusts Organisation, Europa Nostra, the European Environmental Bureau and the Climate Action Network.

In 2020 the Board decided to undertake a number of judicial reviews to question planning decisions that were thought to not meet national or European environmental standards. These decisions are taken after careful consideration and analysis including legal consultation. It is important for members to be aware that these legal procedures are cost-protected, i.e. An Taisce cannot be left liable for substantial legal costs. Legal representation is made possible through the generous support of pro bono lawyers who give their services without charge because of their commitment to the environmental objectives and mission of An Taisce.

The revisioning referred to in my report last year continues to provide a focus and urgency to all of this work. The inexorable increase in climate-related weather extremes and the multiplying reports of species loss and ecosystem destruction is the wider context informing and inspiring all our activities.

Philip Kearney,
Chair
An Taisce
chair@antaisce.org

Interim CEO's Report



Gary Freemantle,
Interim CEO

Despite many challenges, An Taisce has continued to advance with purpose during 2020. We were impacted by challenges such as the Covid-19 Pandemic, the hard work of beginning to restructure the Organisation and the challenges of reacting to and leading the way on Climate Action. Despite these, we continue to stay focused on our mission.

The pandemic has threatened many organisations in terms of viability and sustainability. This was also true of An Taisce. Despite the dreadful impacts of the pandemic both economic and human, An Taisce worked proactively to ensure we were able to continue to deliver on our commitments under the various programmes and to continue to show leadership on environmental issues. The excellent work carried out in our Environmental Education Unit led by Michael John O'Mahony to move our programmes online, coupled with the challenges of doing so while employees worked remotely was a difficult task ably met. To be able to do so for such an extended period of time was superb. Of course the input of the entire team here led by the programme managers was paramount to delivering this.

Advocacy and Head Office services also worked from home but managed a skeletal presence in Tailors Hall to ensure planning obligations and related matters were delivered upon. I am pleased to report that An Taisce operated and continues to operate within budget and that we are trading on a sound basis. This was in part down to availing of Governmental supports such as the Temporary Wage Support Scheme in a limited way and the minimising of costs during the period.

Another challenge we had to address during the year was the falling number of members which was a significant cause for concern. This demonstrated itself as two problems to be addressed, the slowing and ceasing of the loss of members and then the task of growing membership again. I am pleased to say we have responded well to both challenges and membership growth is increasing in a strong way.

A great deal of work was carried out to allow us to prepare and deliver accounts for both 2019 and 2020 despite the impact of Covid. Even with some delays last year, I am delighted to say that both sets of audited accounts are now available and details of these will be shared within the treasurer's report. An Taisce's accounts are SORP compliant and are audited regularly. SORP regulations determine the requirements for restricted funds, that is funds that are provided specifically to run those individual programmes. Our programmes which are funded largely by Government are subject to regular audit by Government and/or external auditors on behalf of the funders. Agreements with our Funders also detail the arrangements for oversight, monitoring and reporting in compliance with Government regulation and governance requirements (e.g. DPER Circular 13/2014, Public Financial Procedures, etc.) I am delighted to report that this continues to be the case with no issues arising.

A great deal of work is underway to reintegrate the organisation into a single fit for purpose entity, There is still much to do and while the impacts of the virus has hampered our work to some extent, we are working hard to build clear structures and collaborations within the organisation.

It is abundantly clear to me that the two strong pillars of Advocacy and Education can equally coexist within the organisation, with clear communication and high levels of organisational understanding. Part of this process continues to be the development of clear reporting linkages between the Board, committees and Operational Units to deliver transparent, compliant and efficient processes that meet the Charities Regulator's Governance Code and as we face the many challenges ahead. The impacts of agriculture and the need for us to find ways to work together with that sector to protect nature and livelihoods, plus the impacts of Data Centres on our climate and energy needs, as well as protecting our natural and built heritage are all key challenges. There will be challenges ahead, but we will continue to stand up for what is right using science, sound judgement and management action. Any legal actions undertaken by An Taisce continue to be undertaken strictly on a no foal no fee basis.

A lot of work has been done to review risks to and within the organisation and we have now compiled a comprehensive Risk Register to help us manage and mitigate those risks.

So in conclusion, we have navigated a challenging year successfully and entered 2021 in a strong position. We have and are building a strong team which is capable of withstanding those and any new challenges, while also planning for the future. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work and support of the Board, Michael John O'Mahony, Sinead Owens, Ian Lumley and all the senior team during the year. My thanks to each of them.

We look forward to meeting the upcoming challenges and securing a strong future for An Taisce in the years ahead.

Gary Freemantle,
Interim CEO
gary.freemantle@antaisce.org

Treasurer's Report 2020



Aoife O'Gorman,
Honorary Treasurer

I had the honour of being appointed Treasurer of An Taisce in November 2020. Many thanks go to Eric Conroy, previous treasurer, for his support since I took up the role. Thanks to all who contributed to the management and finance operations in An Taisce and for their contribution to An Taisce's finances all year.

Obviously 2020 was a year dominated by the global pandemic. So far An Taisce's finances have weathered that storm. While total income reduced in 2020, this reduction was in programmes where there was a corresponding reduction in activity levels and related costs. Hopefully both will return to pre-pandemic levels when it is safe to do so. In a limited manner, we availed of the temporary wage subsidy scheme administered by the Revenue Commissioners.

An Taisce's breadth and variety of funders is a key strength of the organisation. The management of these funds, ensuring that funding is utilised for the purposes for which it has been prescribed, is equally a key element of the financial operations. While An Taisce receives membership and donated income with few conditions attaching, its income is dominated by funding from government departments, state and corporate bodies subject to funding agreements with specific conditions and aims.

This income structure is one of two drivers of activities within the organisation, the other being volunteer time. Since joining An Taisce's Board I have been amazed by the volume and quality of volunteers' contribution to An Taisce. This allows An Taisce to operate in areas which are not covered by its funding. However accounting rules mean most volunteer contributions are not reflected in our financial statements so can only be highlighted here.

Non Covid-19 financial highlights for 2020 include:

- An Taisce benefited from a large and very generous legacy donation from the estate of Sean and Rosemarie Mulcahy.
- As reported in 2019's annual report, early 2020 saw the disposal of An Taisce's share portfolio, managed by Olivia Rogers and Eric Conroy.
- A new membership system was introduced in 2020 with a membership drive late in the year. The financial benefit of this will be seen in the 2021 results.
- Trial of a new aspect of the Green Schools Travel Programme which will see greater activity in this area in 2021.
- Receipt of funding for the Globe Clear Air programme.
- Delays to the completion of the 2019 financial statements which were completed in May 2021.
- Review of the income recognition methodology across all activities. This only affects the timing of when income is recognised, and the results of this review are evident in the 2019 financial statements.

I hope that we can continue to positively report on future years while maintaining the strong financial base established over the last few years.

Aoife O'Gorman
Honorary Treasurer
treasurer@antaisce.org

Honorary Secretary's Report



Stuart McCaul,
Honorary Secretary

I relied very heavily on Sinead Owens, our Operations Manager, throughout 2020. Former officers Charles Stanley Smith and James Leahy, and also Business Administration Manager, Dawn Parkinson, were a great source of historic context and important materials. I really appreciated their support.

There were seven An Taisce Council meetings and 17 formal Board of Trustee meetings in 2020. The Board meetings were well informed by invited staff, volunteers and supporters including Michael John O'Mahony, EEU Director; Dara Dever and Anthony Purcell, Education Programme Managers; Ian Lumley, Head of Advocacy; Elaine McGoff, Natural Environment Officer; Phoebe Duvall, Planning Officer; Kevin O'Farrell, Climate Committee Chair; Eric Conroy and Ruaidhri O Baoill, Audit Committee; and our lawyers, FP Logue & Co., and our auditors.

A great many members from all over the country thoughtfully shaped our new constitution, which provides a modern foundation for the growth and development of An Taisce. Although the work was technical, I really enjoyed meeting so many passionate members through the consultation process. James Leahy and Charles Stanley Smith had begun the process in 2015, and there were too many people involved in the intervening years to mention them all individually. However I do want to highlight the particularly significant investment of time and effort by Phil Kearney, John Sweeney, and Alison Hough in writing the content and helping to incorporate members' many thousands of inputs. 90% of members supported its adoption at our EGM in December 2020. The changed constitution was approved by the Minister for Enterprise and lodged with the Companies Registration Office (CRO) and Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) following our EGM in December 2020. An Taisce Council has been working more effectively since then.

The government extended to mid-2021 the annual reporting date for 2019 activities for all organisations including charities such as An Taisce. Therefore An Taisce did not need to file an Annual Return (B1) with the CRO in 2020, and so did not fully complete an AGM in 2020. Our Treasurer, Aoife O'Gorman, put the extra time available to great use in completing an especially thorough review of accounts going back over a decade. The 2019 accounts and the 2020 accounts will be laid before members at the 2021 AGM, and you can already see the 2019 and other accounts on our website.

Notwithstanding the government's flexibility on some deadlines, the compliance burden for charities like An Taisce continues to grow and there is still no state support for the associated effort. Statutory filings which did fall due last year, which were all made on time, included the annual submission to the Charities Regulator (CRA), a submission to the Register of Beneficial Owners, updates to the Lobbying Register, the EU Transparency Register, and of course the Revenue Commissioners.

Our Governance committee of volunteers, then led by Olivia Rogers, along with Prof John Sweeney, Gary Freemantle, and myself, also handled GDPR issues and several queries from the CRA. A small number of queries from the CRA originating in 2020 were answered to the satisfaction of the regulator.

A number of new policies were recommended and adopted by the Board to further our compliance with the regulator's Governance Code. These include our new Social Media Policy and a Code of Conduct in 2021.

Relying heavily on volunteerism, An Taisce managed to keep compliance costs to a minimum in 2020. As a result, An Taisce's members, donors and programme funders, who regularly audit our programmes, can be assured that their money overwhelmingly goes to support our frontline efforts for environmental education, advocacy and conservation.

Stuart McCaul,
Honorary Secretary
secretary@antaisce.org

Environmental Education Unit



Dr Michael John O'Mahony,
EEU Director

Introduction

The Environmental Education Unit (EEU) has been operating since 1993. 2020 was another busy year for the EEU even with the unprecedented and difficult circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020 the Swift's Alley Office was closed and all Swift's Alley staff (c.25) worked remotely from home in line with public health advice. In 2020 all programmes adapted and operated in line with all public health advice and requirements.

Currently, the EEU employs over 75 staff and operates 11 national and international environmental education and management programmes. The programmes are funded and supported by a number of Government Departments (e.g. DTTAS, DECC, DHPLG, DFA, DRCD) and Agencies (e.g. NTA, EPA, SEAI, Irish Aid, NPWS), Local Authorities, Utilities (e.g. Irish Water) and Foundations (e.g. Wrigley Foundation, JS Greene Foundation, King Baudouin Foundation).

Blue Flag & Green Coast Awards 2020

In 2020, over 4,800 beaches, marinas and sustainable tourism boats were awarded the Blue Flag in 49 countries around the world (see www.blueflag.global). In 2020, 80 beaches and 10 marinas in Ireland achieved the award (beachawards.ie). To be granted Blue Flag status sites must comply with a specific set of criteria relating to water quality, information provision, environmental education, safety, accessibility and environmental management.

The Green Coast Award is an award for beaches that meet the excellent standard for water quality as set out in the Bathing Water Directive but may not have or not require the necessary built infrastructure to achieve Blue Flag status (beachawards.ie). In 2020, 60 beaches in Ireland were awarded the Green Coast Award.

The 2020 Blue Flags and Green Coast Awards were presented at an online event in June 2020.

National Spring Clean Report 2020

2020 was the 22nd year of National Spring Clean (www.nationalspringclean.org), Ireland's largest and most popular anti-litter initiative. In 2020, due to COVID-19 restrictions the programme took place in June, July and August instead of the typical April timing of the programme.

In Summary for 2020:

- There were 5,513 clean-up events nationwide
- An estimated 2,900 tonnes of litter were collected
- Approximately 35% of the total amount of waste collected was recycled
- 250,000 refuse bags and 16,000 pairs of gloves were distributed

Green-Schools Report 2019-2020 academic year

There are currently 4,000 schools and education centres in Ireland registered for the Green-Schools programme (www.greenschoolsireland.org). 3,457 of these have been awarded the Green Flag. During the academic year 2019-2020, a total of 851 schools renewed the Green Flag and 53 schools were awarded their first Green Flag.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health restrictions all in person aspects of programme delivery were moved online for certain periods from March 2020. This resulted in an 83% increase in traffic on the Green-Schools website during the year. 199 teacher-training seminars were delivered to a combined audience of over 631 teachers in 34 locations during September to November 2019. Green-Schools also held a five-day EPV approved teacher-training online course for teachers in July 2020.

During Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, Green-Schools Officers around the country developed new and interactive activities under each of the Green-Schools

themes that students could take part in from within the home environment. The Green-Schools Stay Home project offered weekly activities for a 13-week period from mid-April until the end of the school term. The activities were suitable for a wide range of age groups, promised to be fun and educational and were designed to be completed individually by students or involve the whole family.

In the academic year 2019 – 2020 participating schools:

- diverted almost 4,400 tonnes of waste from landfill.
- saved over 25 million kWh of electricity
- reduced their water consumption by 165 million litres
- installed 621 new bird feeding stations in schools
- planted c.2,500 trees
- on average, biodiversity awareness and knowledge among students and staff increased from 26% to 84%.

Green-Campus Programme – Annual Update Academic Year 2019-2020

In 2020 the Green-Campus programme (www.greencampusireland.org) continued to grow with six new sites registering and three campuses awarded the Green Flag for the first time. Due to public health restrictions all Green-Campus activities were moved online in March 2020.

The six new sites that registered on the programme in 2020 were Dunboyne College of Further Education, Meath; Inchicore College of Further Education, Dublin; Templemore College of Further Education, Tipperary; South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital, Cork; St. John of God Hospital, Stillorgan; Waterford College of Further Education; IT Carlow (Wexford Campus); Teagasc Ballyhaise College; Dublin Business School. This brings the number of registered campuses to thirty-seven by the end of 2020.

In late 2020 Sligo University Hospital and Kinsale College were successfully assessed and awarded. DCU successfully renewed their award and included the All Hallows Campus.

The 2020 Green Campus Network Meeting in February had over 90 delegates from participant sites and representation from various stakeholder agencies such as the Conscious Cup Campaign, Queens University Belfast and the Union of Students in Ireland. Presentations were from Green Campus participants in Trinity College, Dublin, NUI Maynooth, TUD Tallaght Campus, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, NUI Galway and Letterfrack Further Education Centre. A workshop looking at what the Green-Campus Network would like to achieve by 2030 was held as part of the afternoon session.

In 2020 three virtual workshops took place between May and July. These included a workshop focusing on 'Staying Relevant in Changing Times'. This workshop was attended by 18 campuses.

National Climate Change Action and Awareness Programme 2020

The National Climate Change Action and Awareness Programme (NCCAAP) has been operating in schools and communities nationwide for over four years. While the initial Climate Ambassador training took place in January and February 2020, the programme then moved online due to public health guidelines. As outlined below, the programme continued to develop and grow despite the challenges faced. The key events can be summarised as:

- 164 Climate Ambassadors trained.
- 42 Network Gatherings were facilitated online.
- 397 Climate Actions were carried out by Climate Ambassadors.
- 585 Climate Communications were carried out by Climate Ambassadors.
- 165,630 people engaged overall.
- 1.94 million people reached overall.
- 12 Climate Ambassadors were awarded an Outstanding Achievement Award in November as part of the Climate Ambassador Awards.

The first Climate Ambassador podcast was developed in 2020 www.climateambassador.ie/podcasts/

New Primary School resource and accompanying lesson plans were developed and launched to schools – We Want Our Park Back https://greenschoolsireland.org/resources/storytime-we-want-our-park-back/

212 events were held as part of Climate Action Week 2020, reaching over 94,000 people.

32 teachers completed the EPV approved Online Climate Action Teacher Training Course.



Green-Schools Travel Report 2020

2020 saw participation levels in walking, cycling, scooting and other sustainable modes continue to grow. Despite the difficult circumstances caused by the COVID19 pandemic and consequent school's closures, schools on the Travel and Global Citizenship Travel themes continued engaging in the programme and promoting active travel by participating in different initiatives, even from home.

- 113 Schools were invited to participate in the Travel theme and 67 Schools were invited to participate in the Global Citizenship Travel theme
- 225 Schools were awarded the Travel or Global Citizenship Travel Flag in 2020
- Between the summer training course and the series of seminars held in autumn, the number of teacher attending was 165
- 735 School visits were carried out nationally by Travel Officers in 2020; 145 Walkability audits were carried out by Travel Officers in 2020
- 37 schools received scooter parking in 2020; 810 scooter parking spaces were installed nationally in 2020



Green Schools Travel - launch of School Zones

- 24 schools received cycle parking in 2020; 300 cycle parking spaces were installed, 250 of which with sheltered
- 73 schools received subsidised cycle right training; 2493 pupils received subsidised cycle right training
- 37 New tutorial / educational videos were created, together with 52 individual Website posts specific to new resources
- St. Colmcille's S.N.S, Kells, Co. Meath were awarded "Ireland's Travel School of The Year"
- Clean Air Week was promoted to 1,700 schools nationally and potentially reached c.200,000 members of the public through national media
- 1000 entries were submitted for the poetry competition between primary and secondary schools

Green Flag for Parks Award 2020

The Green Flag Award Scheme is an international standard for well managed public parks and green spaces that are freely accessible to the public. Internationally it now operates across 15 countries where 2,228 sites were accredited to Green Flag Award status in 2020.

In 2020 Irish Green Flag Award sites increased to 84 accredited public green spaces. These include; parks, gardens, national parks, historic graveyards, university campuses, and community gardens.

With the support of the Department of Rural and Community Development the Scheme also operates the Green Flag Community Award for our volunteer led green space projects. These have continued to grow in 2020 with 14 sites accredited. This has extended the programme to community gardens, community parks, allotments, and other community run green spaces.

Since 2017 the Pollinator Plan Award has also rewarded the best efforts of our Green Flag Award Scheme sites in delivering on the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.

Other 2020 achievements:

- 2020 saw the Green Flag Award expanded to Greenways.
- The first UNESCO Global Geopark in the World was accredited Green Flag status in Ireland.
- Ardgillan Castle hosted the 2020 Green Flag Award Ceremony. This was delivered online with an address by Minister of State for Community Development and Charities, Joe O'Brien TD.
- Maynooth Campus claimed the overall winner in the Pollinator Plan Award 2020.
- Derrynane Historic Park in Kerry was voted one of the top 10 Green Flag awarded Parks in the World after a Global People's Choice Vote.
- A Letter of Understanding was agreed with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to operate Green Heritage Accreditation in Ireland from 2021. Ireland will become the first country outside the UK to implement Green Heritage Site Accreditation.

Clean Coasts Programme 2020

Clean Coasts volunteer groups numbers have continued to grow in 2020 with c.1,400 groups registered with the programme. This is an increase in registrations of c.300 Clean Coasts groups in 2020.

As with all EEU programme activity in 2020 public health restrictions required a lot of the Clean Coasts work to be delivered via online platforms and formats.

12 Clean Coasts Roadshows (virtual and in person) events took place in 2020 along with 15 online events and webinars. Over 700 clean-ups took place around Ireland as part of the Big Beach Clean from September to December.

The Love Your Coast photography competition celebrates Ireland's amazing coastline through the following categories: Coastal Heritage, Coastal Landscape, People and the Coast, Wildlife and the Coast and Underwater. In 2020, over 1,050 entries were received, and the 40 best shots were shortlisted. Given the fact it was not possible to host the usual award ceremony in 2020 the competition and the shortlisted and winning photographers were printed in a 16-page pull-out section in the Irish Examiner on 14th November 2020.

The Ocean Hero Awards could not take place in 2020. The other Clean Coasts Campaigns of 2 Minute Beach Clean, Think before You Flush, Think before You Pour all continued to develop during 2020.

Young Reporters for the Environment Report 2020

The Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) is a four-step programme sponsored by the Mars Wrigley Foundation and the Department of Environment, Climate & Communications.

Participants identify a litter and waste issue in their locality and research a solution to it. They then communicate this as a journalistic piece in the form of an article, video or photo story and go on to raise awareness of their work throughout their school and local community.



In 2020 the programme was expanded on a pilot basis to include 15 additional Green Schools and 5 Green Campuses in addition to the 30 Litter Less Campaign Schools. Despite the challenges presented by Covid-19, over 80 entries were submitted from more than 120 students all over the country working in teams or by themselves. The winning video on rural litter was from Shane King of Mercy College Kilbeggan and was broadcast by RTÉ News2Day. The shortlisted and winning entries are available to view on the YRE Exposure website. (https://yreireland.exposure.co/)

GLOBE Report 2020

The GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) programme is a NASA supported international science and education programme that offers students the chance to participate in data collection and the scientific process and contribute meaningfully to our understanding of the Earth system and global environment (www.globe.gov). GLOBE was relaunched in Ireland in September 2017 by the EEU, with support from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

2020 posed challenges due to restrictions around the global coronavirus pandemic. There were prolonged school closures, restrictions on visitors to schools, modified classroom layouts and activities, and increased pressures on schools and teachers in response to the above events. Despite the circumstances, schools continued to engage with GLOBE to a very high level.

As part of the GLOBE programme in Ireland the EEU organises coordinates a national Air Quality campaign at schools and supports primary and secondary schools who wish to participate in GLOBE measurement protocols in their local environment. 191 schools have taken part in GLOBE Air Quality campaigns, 3,703 observations have been uploaded to the GLOBE website relating to atmosphere and biosphere protocols. 73 GLOBE members have been trained in GLOBE protocols.

During the 2020, a total of 165 schools participated in a GLOBE Air Quality campaign, with 25 schools taking part in both the autumn (2020) and spring/summer (2021) campaigns. In total, schools collected over 400 nitrogen-dioxide (NO_2) measurements over the two campaigns.



Clean Coasts group



Recording the Climate Ambassador podcast

Leaf (Learning About Forests) 2020

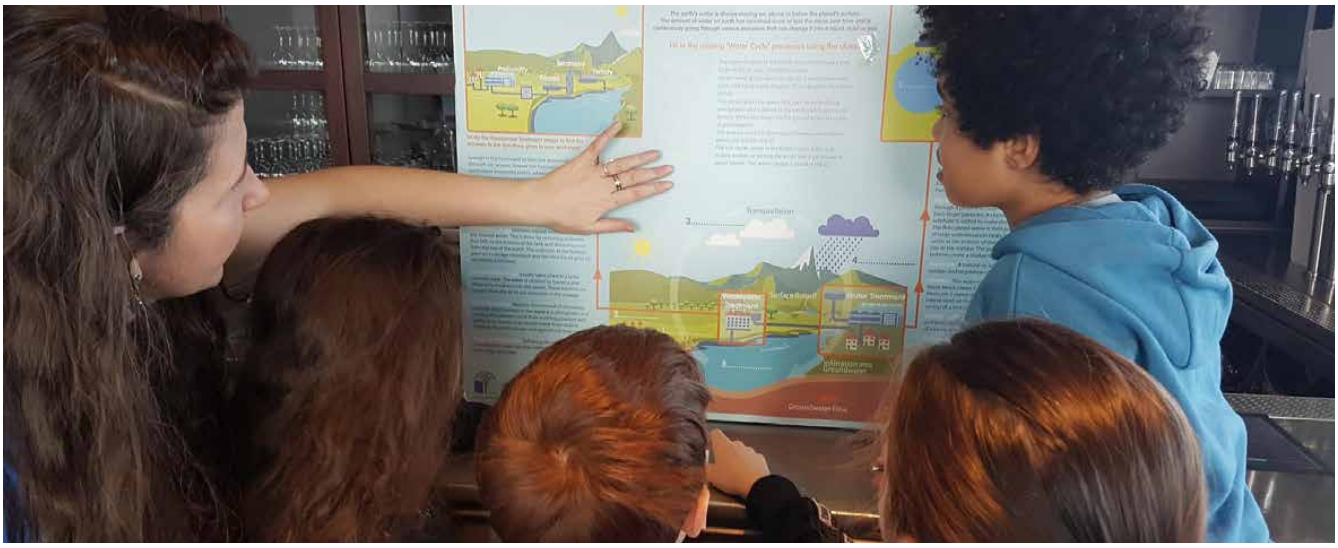
The aim of the Learning about Forests (LEAF) programme is to reconnect students with their environment, and to increase levels of awareness and knowledge about the key role forests play for sustainable life on our planet. This is achieved through interactive learning and field trips.

The public health restrictions in 2020 required the programme to move online and a number of events and workshop had to be postponed until 2021. During the academic year, Green-Schools and LEAF Ireland collaborated on a new Investigate Forests project, funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, to deliver 100 workshops to schools working on the Green-Schools Biodiversity theme, across Ireland. However, due to COVID-19 public health restrictions a number of these had to be postponed until 2021.

During 2020, 1,100 students actively participated in the programme. 400 trees were planted by the schools participating in the Coill Bheag Project. An Choill Bheag is an Initiative of LEAF Ireland. Choill Bheag is a small, dense, biodiverse native woodland habitat on the school grounds.

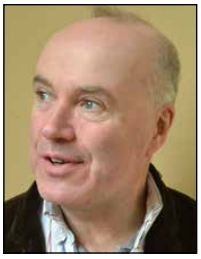
Neat Streets 2020

Neat Streets is a Litter and Waste education and action programme for secondary schools across Ireland. During the 2019/20 academic year the Neat Streets programme (https://neatstreets.org/) worked with 32 secondary schools. This represents a student body of 18,717 individuals. The Annual Neat Streets Conference took place on January 22nd 2020 and was attended by 100 representatives from 14 participating schools.



Green-Schools Water workshop photo (pre-Covid)

Advocacy Unit 2020 Report





Ian Lumley,
Head of Advocacy

Dr. Elaine McGoff,
Natural Environment Officer

Phoebe Duvall,
Planning and Environmental Policy Officer

Needless to say, 2020 was a year like no other, and it proved to be an exceedingly challenging one for us all. While much of the world slowed down, the workload for Advocacy didn't break stride.

Our bread and butter work continued to be our role as an independent statutory consultee for planning applications, infrastructure proposals, forestry licensing, aquaculture licensing and other projects with general environmental, ecological and cultural heritage impacts.

An Taisce's policy role also remained as important as ever. We responded to over 30 policy consultations in 2020 on a diverse range of topics including forward planning (County Development Plans), sustainable transport, energy, agriculture, marine policy, etc.

We assess all policies, plans and projects on how they advance sustainable development as well as health and wellbeing goals, in particular:

- Advancing climate action, clean air and energy initiatives, and the elimination of fossil fuels
- Protecting our biodiversity, habitats, and species
- Enhancing the quality of our water bodies for the benefit of both people and environment
- Improving the protection of landscape and cultural heritage
- Creating better connected communities with access to safe walking and cycling routes, green spaces, services and amenities
- Diversifying local food production compatible with local ecosystems.

Our goal in all of this work is also ensuring compliance with national and EU environmental law such as the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, Habitats and Birds Directives, Water Framework Directive, national climate mitigation policy, etc.

In addition to her day to day work, Elaine also successfully completed a part time Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law from Kings Inns. This has significantly strengthened the legal arguments in terms of advocacy, policy submissions and general contributions at multi-stakeholder groups.

In addition to her planning work, Phoebe drove the creation and completion of An Taisce's new website which went live in October. She also helped form the new social media committee and collaborated in creating content showcasing the work of the Advocacy Unit.

We were fortunate to have several very able volunteers and interns working with us in the Advocacy Unit over the course of the year. Eimhin Scott interned with Phoebe over the summer as part of his Masters in Environmental Policy and played a key role in assessing and responding to planning applications. Phoebe Tyrrell, Cait Gleeson and Andrew Lynch all joined us in our Natural Environment Office and did excellent work on our forestry licensing submissions. Also joining us in the autumn was Kevin Keane who brought important legal expertise to bear, particularly around our work on air quality. We are very grateful to them all, especially as they adapted with us in navigating virtual working.

Prescribed Functions

Despite the pandemic, planning applications continued to be lodged and referred to us at their usual rapid pace in 2020. Thanks to the combination of the Advocacy Unit and the dedicated work of our Local Associations' planning committees around the country, we made over 700 planning submissions encompassing proposals of all shapes and sizes - from small private developments, Strategic Housing Developments, electricity infrastructure, data centres, agriculture, quarrying, commercial buildings, road developments, etc.

Forestry submissions continued apace as well, with An Taisce making over 340 submissions on afforestation licence applications, and taking 13 forestry appeals,

12 on felling, and one on afforestation. Despite the persistent myth that public participation caused a timber shortage, less than 1% of licensing decisions were appealed nationwide.

Aquaculture has slowed significantly on previous years, and we responded to approximately 50 aquaculture licence applications in 2020.

We also lodged eight planning appeals with An Bord Pleanála, including one in relation to a large proposed data centre in Meath. We considered that the enormous energy demand of the facility and the associated climate impacts had not been adequately evaluated in the Environmental Impact Assessment.



Doughmore Beach at Doon beg, Co Clare

In March 2020, we won the very long-running planning appeal against proposed hard engineering coastal defence works which had the potential to damage a protected dune system at Trump International Golf Links in Doonbeg, Co. Clare. An Taisce had made extensive and detailed submissions throughout the process and were pleased to see our arguments accepted regarding protection of the dunes.

We had a more disappointing outcome in the appeal lodged in 2019 in relation to a proposed cheese plant in County Kilkenny without a proper assessment of the ecological and climate impacts of the milk production required to sustain the factory. However, in 2021 we asked the courts to review An Bord Pleanála's decision.

Policy: Some highlights from our 30+ submissions

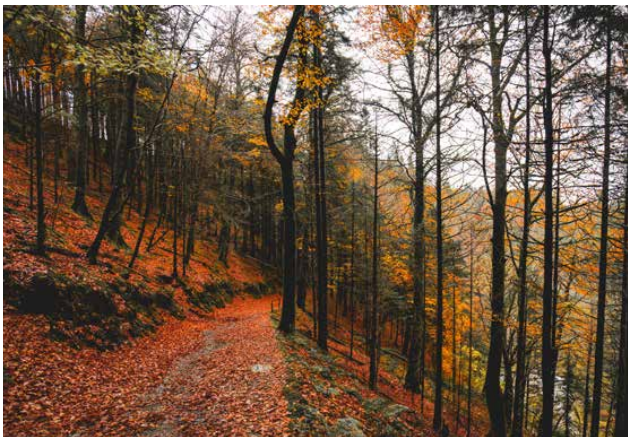
We started off 2020 with a strong submission to the Department of Heritage's Review of the Use of Peat in the Horticulture Industry. We highlighted the serious implications of continued peat extraction for both climate and biodiversity as well as failures to regulate extraction. We laid out recommendations for moving away from peat compost and resource-intensive plant production, and we are taking active part with industry stakeholders in designing more sustainable models.

In June we made a detailed submission to the Environmental Performance Review of Ireland being conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). We analysed current sustainable transport policy, namely the Smarter Travel policy, and the failures to date to achieve a modal shift away from private car use. This followed on from a report we made earlier in the year to a government review of Ireland's transport policies. We were pleased to see that many of our analyses and recommendations were reflected in the OECD's final report.

On the marine front, An Taisce responded extensively to the Draft National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). Essentially the oceanic equivalent of the National Planning Framework, the NMPF will lay out overarching policies for spatial and development planning in our marine area. Our submission focused on the need for a harmonised regulatory regime for the marine area with an emphasis on ecological protection, adherence to relevant EU Directives, and public participation in planning and consent processes. We also provided detailed recommendations on aquaculture, Marine Protected Areas, energy infrastructure development at sea, ports and shipping, fisheries, wastewater treatment, marine tourism, extractive marine industries, etc.

2020 was also an important year for agriculture policy, with An Taisce working extensively in collaboration with the Environmental Pillar, SWAN and Stop Climate Chaos, inputting to the work of the Agri-Food 2030 committee. This was a committee set up by the Department of Agriculture to draft the successor to the Foodwise 2025 agricultural strategy. The group was chaired by Tom Arnold, and featured heavy representation from large farming lobby and industry groups. The Environmental Pillar was offered one seat, and we were not permitted to choose our own representative. As such, Karen Ciesielski, CEO of the Environmental Pillar was our pre-ordained representative, and she worked tirelessly to collate extensive input from all three coalitions as the various chapters were put to the committee for input.

Ultimately, despite extensive input from the environmental sector, and multiple bilateral meetings, the draft was very weak on the environmental front and represented a business as usual approach, with a heavy reliance on bovine agriculture for export markets. In the Autumn of 2020 the 3 coalitions, who



were represented by Karen Ciesielski, made the decision to withdraw from the committee, to ensure we were not seen to endorse such a potentially damaging strategy.

At the end of 2020 all three coalitions were in the process of drafting up a set of recommendations for the Government to align agriculture with our environmental requirements, with a view to a Just Transition.

Legislation

We participated heavily in legislative processes in 2020, advocating for environmental protection as well as public participation in the planning and forestry licensing processes.

The Planning Bill

The problematic Planning Bill underwent public consultation at the beginning of the year, with significant proposed curtailments on the rights of the public and eNGOs to access justice. An Taisce campaigned on this and drafted a robust submission, but ultimately that Bill fell with the last Government and the process was put on hold.

The Forestry Bill

Shortly after taking office as junior minister in the Department of Agriculture Minister Pippa Hackett instigated a public consultation on a new Forestry Bill (Draft Agriculture Appeals (Amendment) Bill 2020) in the Autumn of 2020, drafted with the aim of speeding up the forestry licensing process. The Bill was hugely problematic, and echoed the provisions in the Planning Bill. It imposed fees on anyone wishing to make a submission on a forestry licence application, in addition to fees to take an appeal. In essence, it would act as a disincentive for the public and eNGOs to challenge problematic applications and decisions on foot of those applications, as opposed to addressing



Elaine McGoff and Phoebe Duvall

the root cause of the problem, which is a failure of the Forest Service to make legally compliant decisions.

An Taisce engaged with members of the opposition, and called on our members to respond to the public consultation, to no avail. The Bill passed into law as the Forestry (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 in October, with the Government accepting no amendments to the Bill. It was a very disappointing outcome for public participation in the forestry licencing process.

The Abstraction Bill

The General Scheme of the Water Environment (Abstractions) Bill 2020 came up for pre-legislative scrutiny before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing in the Autumn of 2020. The heads of this Bill had previously undergone public consultation in 2019. The Bill is being brought forward to put controls in place for the abstraction of surface and groundwater, and to bring Ireland into compliance with the Water Framework Directive. The proposals in the Bill were very weak, and proposed thresholds which were extremely high, so one would have to be abstracting enough water for over 9000 people daily before requiring a licence. Below that level abstractions would have to be notified to the EPA, but permission would not be required.

There were significant legal flaws in it, and An Taisce gave evidence before the JOC, as part of a Sustainable Water Network (SWAN) delegation outlining the issues. On foot of this the committee sought internal legal advice which confirmed our evidence, and the Bill was returned to the Department of Housing for redrafting. While it remains to be seen what the new draft will look like, this was a significant short-term win for advocacy.

The Marine Planning and Development Management Bill

An Taisce was invited to make a written submission to the pre-legislative scrutiny on the General Scheme of the Marine Planning and Development Management (MPDM) Bill, which was released in the late autumn. While the National Marine Planning Framework sets out planning policy for the sea, much as the National Planning Framework does on land, the MPDM Bill is to provide the legal framework for the planning consent regime for Ireland's marine area, similar to the Planning and Development Act.

The General Scheme of the Bill unfortunately did not include legal provisions for designating Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). An Taisce therefore highlighted the importance of designating MPAs prior to starting up a development planning regime for the marine area and potentially permitting development in the most ecologically sensitive areas prior to them having any protecting designation. We also contributed insights from the terrestrial planning system on issues such as enforcement and systemic failures to apply the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, which will have even more acute impacts at sea. The pre-legislative scrutiny was ongoing at the end of 2020.

An Taisce Representation

Elaine McGoff is representing An Taisce on several fronts, including

- Member of the Water Forum, a statutory multi-stakeholder engagement forum, set up to advise the relevant Minister on issues related to water quality
- Member of 'Project Woodland', a multi-stakeholder group set up by Minister Hackett to chart a way forward to fix the forestry licencing process.
- Steering Committee member of the Environmental Pillar for 2020-2021
- Member of the Board of Directors of the Sustainable Water Network (SWAN)

Ian Lumley also continued to represent us in a range of groups:

- Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Planning Group
- The Marine Spatial Planning Forum (which covers all aspects of the marine and coastal areas)
- The Peatlands Council
- Horticultural Compost Working Group
- Sliabh Beagh Fire Protection Group
- Alfred Beit Foundation
- Wexford Monument Trust

This is just a flavour of the work done by the Advocacy Unit in 2020, and we continue to punch far above our weight in terms of influence and output. We couldn't do it without the support of our various committees, Council, members and Local Associations. You help to shape and amplify our voice in advocating for the wellbeing of both people and planet.

National Cycling Coordinator's Report



Dr Damien Ó Túama
Cycling Advocacy Officer

2020 was a year of a seismic change in the active travel realm. This arose from two major intertwined events: firstly, the election in February and the creation of a new government with active travel to the fore and, secondly, the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic. Together they stimulated changes in transport discourses and conditions on the ground.

As campaigners we have spent many years highlighting the tiny sums spent on cycling and walking as a proportion of the total transport budget and we repeatedly referred to the 2016 United Nations' recommendation that 20% of national transport budgets should go on active travel. So it was a massive advocacy success to see the following text in the Programme for Government:

> *The Government will commit to an allocation of 10% of the total transport capital budget for cycling projects and an allocation of 10% of the total capital budget for pedestrian infrastructure. The Government's commitment to cycling and pedestrian projects will be set at 20% of the 2020 capital budget (€360 million) per year for the lifetime of the Government. (p13)*

The challenge now is to ensure that money is spent on *high quality* facilities. This means higher design standards and more enlightened professionals advancing all transport strategies and proposals.

The arrival of Covid-19 came as a strong external shock to all of our lives and our systems. Suddenly we could no longer squeeze into packed buses, trains and trams, and many of us recast our mobility habits and started to work from home. The official messaging from the HSE advised the population to walk and cycle, and Dublin City Council took the lead with the development of its *Covid Mobility Plan* and construction of quick-





to-build cycle tracks. Other Councils followed, and particular credit is due to Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council with its impressive ***Coastal Mobility Route***. Progress in other Local

Local Authorities have been more uneven, so An Taisce and Cyclist.ie continue to engage with Councils countrywide to support the reallocation of road space for low carbon transport and liveable spaces.

2020 also saw the creation of Cyclist.ie's *Vision for Cycling in Rural Ireland*, a document stressing the need to develop everyday cycling cultures outside of our cities and towns. Further work focused on seeking to shape the transport strategies of the regional cities and towns, and the Department of Transport's *Sustainable Mobility Plan.* We arranged high level meetings with the Minister for Transport, as well as officials from the National Transport Authority, Road Safety Authority, Garda Síochána, and Office of Public Works.

Damien Ó Tuama's position of National Cycling Coordinator, shared between An Taisce and Cyclist.ie, received a boost in late 2020 with a successful funding application to Rethink Ireland, and work continues in 2021 to secure a stronger funding base for the position. In short, cycling advocacy stepped up a gear in 2020 and we seized many opportunities to advance our work. As always, Damien is happy to hear from An Taisce members with an interest in active travel and transportation. Email: damien.otuama@antaisce.org









Natural Environment Committee (NEC)



Declan Murphy,
Chair, Natural Environment Committee.

In 2020 An Taisce became the proud owner of the vast Sliabh Beagh estate on the Monaghan - Tyrone border. This arose from the generous donation by the late Lord 'Paddy' Rossmore, owner of the former family estate. This is a 2800 acre site of extensive bogland, heath and forestry. There is an on-going cross-border ecological conservation and restoration programme on part of the estate, managed by Monaghan and Tyrone councils and others. It has obvious potential for eco-tourism in environmental activities including cycling, walking and birdwatching. Its environmental management includes controlled eco-grazing by light-weight organic Dexter cattle, NPWS management of a hen harrier site and collaborative management by a cross border group including Northern Ireland National Trust, the River Blackwater Catchment Trust, and Collaborative Action for Nature (CANN) an InterReg EU-funded body. Ian Lumley, An Taisce's head of advocacy has been hugely instrumental in facilitating this donation and in initiating contacts to create a joint Action Plan with the adjacent councils and the Northern Irish Forest Service (NIFS). There is a direct link from Sliabh Beagh to the NIFS park at Favour Royal in County Tyrone via the Ulster Way. The nearest large town is Monaghan at 13 km. but there is no direct public transport. The Sliabh Beagh Hotel at Knockatallon Village, Corlatt, Co. Monaghan (H18 H985) is a local community-owned hotel and meeting point. The site is a magnificent addition to An Taisce's existing properties and holds huge promise for future activities involving environmental and forestry education, cycling trails, nature study and many others. Lord Rossmore was voted an honorary life member of An Taisce at the November council meeting. Sadly he died in May 2021 aged 90 having lived a full and varied life. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam dílis.

The NEC meets approximately bi-monthly, and five meetings were held throughout 2020, two in-person meetings prior to lockdowns, and three on-line on Zoom. Committee meetings are generally attended by the Natural Environment Officer, Elaine McGoff, and by the Heritage Officer Ian Lumley. The An Taisce property at Gortlecka in Burren, Co. Clare, continues to have access difficulties due to it being 'land-locked' by a NPWS site. Our tenant organic farmer has a serious problem in moving her Belted Galloway cattle on and off site, where they are part of the management programme for controlling hazel growth on the limestone pavement. There are hopes that mediation will resolve the problem soon.



Jenkin's Lough and Sliabh Beagh, Credit David Bell

Our vast mountainous blanket-bog peatland site at Crocnafarragh in Co. Donegal borders the Glenveagh Estate and is managed to IUCN standards by NPWS for An Taisce on a very long lease. In recent years it has been invaded by rhododendron from the estate, and Ian Lumley conveyed our concerns to the management. The Mulroy Bay properties on Rough Island in Co. Donegal had illegal grazing by feral goats and sheep over the past couple of years. The Donegal Association arranged for the erection of a site notice stating An Taisce's ownership, thus protecting us against the possibility of an adverse ownership claim. It also stated the legal obligation to remove trespassing animals, and when this did not happen they arranged for their removal and disposal. It is hoped to plant native Scots Pine in the near future as part of a conservation restoration project. The 200 year old vernacular farmhouse at Killaha in Kerry had been abandoned a few decades ago and was donated to An Taisce in 2010. It was colonised and used as a maternity roost by lesser horseshoe bats, a protected species. During the year potential damage to the roof of the house from an adjacent tree as well as other issues were inspected and detailed by Ian Lumley and dealt with on our behalf by the local wildlife ranger, who has been most helpful over the years. However further extensive repair and conservation is needed and will require grant funding. Booterstown Nature Reserve had a rare avian visitor in spring, a whimbrel on passage migration. Property developer Paddy McKillen bought the adjacent Ash Castle site and applied for planning permission for a structure totally out of keeping with the Nature Reserve. An Taisce made a robust submission and at year end the planning decision had not been decided by the local authority. Pollution of the stream running into the reserve was traced and corrected. Anto Kerins joined the committee during the year and spoke about a mooted proposal to build a new Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Discovery Centre on Bull Island by Dublin City Council. This would be a misguided development on a relatively small and very important SAC and SPA site in a capital city, and if deemed necessary should be located on the mainland. However no formal planning application has been submitted or anticipated. Spectacular photos of a pair of sparrowhawks and their three chicks nesting in The Grove were taken by a local enthusiast - Gustavo Zoladz and appeared on the cover of our 2019 Annual Report.



Whimbrel

The year 2020 was a year like no other due to the pandemic, but fortunately the committee has continued. I would like to thank all members of the committee for their support, advice and encouragement. Over my years as chair I have learnt so much from them, and especially from Natural Environment Officer Elaine McGoff, from Heritage Officer Ian Lumley, and the various interns that worked for An Taisce at various times throughout the years. Operations Manager Sinead Owens was very helpful in organising the Zoom meetings and handling occasional tech problems, for which we are all most grateful.

Most of us members of the NEC are enthusiasts, not experts. We welcome new members and I hope that you will consider joining the committee for the coming year. It's always interesting, never boring and often fun!



Fox and Cubs at the Grove, by Gustavo Zoladz

Climate Committee Report



Kevin O'Farrell,
Chair Climate Committee
climatechair@antaisce.org

Entering its 6th year the An Taisce Climate Committee (ATCC) reflected on the ongoing shifts with the global pandemic of COVID-19 impacting everything most people were doing across the globe.

> "As we look out our windows from our isolation units we see the seasons changing and the rhythms of nature continuing, while in our hearts there is anxiety and amazement at the way our lives have changed in four short weeks. Thinking ahead more than a few days has become difficult, and our plans and hopes for the coming summer seem now to be just a mirage.
>
> Although the current outbreak has caught the world by surprise, emerging viruses have been a feature of the recent past. The overwhelming majority of such emergent diseases result from a crossover from animals to people, and signs are that this has increased in frequency in recent years.
>
> The narrative has changed. Neoliberalism died at the beginning of March 2020. People will not wish to go back to the past. A new role for civil society is now more than ever required to ensure this."
>
> John Sweeney
> Treasuring Ireland: Looking Beyond Our Living Room Window (14th April 2020)

Continuing to meet monthly, going fully virtual via Zoom from March, with strong attendance from 11 to 16 members and an average of 14. Over the year, guest speakers and observers from both across An Taisce and external allies also joined the meetings. For the Education Slot the committee hosted a wide range of external contributors including - Clodagh Daly on fossil fuel subsidies; Joao Camargo on the Glasgow Agreement; and Theo Cullen-Mouze of Fridays For Future.

The organisation of the committee remained unchanged with Kevin O'Farrell continuing as Chair, Ciara Beausang as Vice Chair, Ruaidhri O'Boyle as Secretary of the Committee, John Gibbons as PRO, and Phoebe Duvall as Deputy PRO. Attracting new members with a focus on diversity and inclusion is fundamental to the ATCC's outlook.

#GE2020 and the One Future campaign

An Taisce was among the founding members of the One Future campaign on 22nd January on Sandymount Strand. The aim of the campaign was to press election candidates for faster and fairer climate action and it was supported by a wide diversity of civil society organisations.

43 of the 160 TDs in the new Dáil signed the One Future Pledge before they were elected, including the leaders of 5 political parties: Sinn Fein, Green Party, Labour, Social Democrats, and Solidarity - People Before Profit.

This branded campaign made a significant difference in making climate action an election issue. As you can read above a lot was achieved by the trojan efforts of a small team supported by some very dedicated volunteers, including some members of ATCC.

From Programme for Government negotiations to forming the 33rd Dáil

During the general election campaigning and following the lengthy formation of the new government, the Climate Committee issued a number of press releases including highlighting that it was "The Climate Election" with the stark choices we now face are: Mitigation, Adaptation – or Suffering; all political parties must commit to deep and rapid emissions cuts in line with science and justice; and that holding a new Government to account on climate commitments was a top priority for An Taisce.

When on 15th June 2020 after weeks of negotiations, the programme for government was agreed between Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party, ATCC stressed the

need to place climate action at the heart of the incoming Government.

A key climate change action within the Programme for Government was the commitment to introduce a climate action Bill into the Dáil within 100 days, to provide the statutory framework for much stronger and effective climate measures. However ATCC was disappointed with the overarching long term "national climate objective", expressed as a form of "net zero by 2050" which is widely recognised as too late to represent an equitable contribution by Ireland to meeting the Paris Agreement temperature goals.

Virtual TD Lobby Day

For a number of years to mark key political moments the Stop Climate Chaos coalition, of which An Taisce is a member, organised events where constituents could meet their TDs. For 2020 the focus was the upcoming climate legislation agreed in the programme for government. These events usually took place in Buswells Hotel just across from Leinster House. With the public health guidelines around the pandemic, such a physical gathering wasn't possible. So on Monday, December 7th it all went online. During the very hectic day involving multiple simultaneous breakout rooms, over 1,000 people from across Ireland met over 100 TDs to call for faster and fairer climate action. It was among the biggest one-day lobbies of TDs ever held, with many coalition members' staff and volunteers helping keep the show going. A number of ATCC members contributed as facilitators, policy experts and technical support.



One Future - Sandymount Strand - 22 Jan 2020



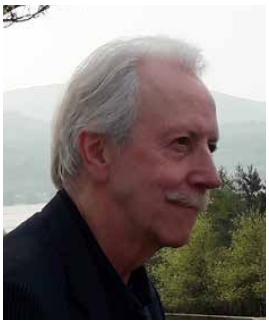
Media and communications

Throughout the year, ATCC issued press releases on many significant events. In addition to the aforementioned general election, statements also included the UK Court of Appeal ruling that the planned expansion at Heathrow was illegal on climate change grounds; the publication of the EU Commission's 'Farm to Fork' and Biodiversity strategies; and a call for the use of peat-free compost alternatives to horticultural peat. These releases and more are available at antaisce.org/news

Spurred on from a motion at the An Taisce EGM in late December, the committee issued a statement on the upcoming plans by the government to push through a vote to ratify the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Following significant civil society campaigning, the vote was postponed until the new year.

Communicating climate change is an important priority of ATCC and it was a welcome development when An Taisce formed a social media team in November, with ATCC Chair Kevin O'Farrell part of this team. Reaching new audiences via various channels is an important role to play for the organisation.

Monuments and Antiquities Report



Dr. Mark Clinton,
Chair Monuments & Antiquities Committee

An Taisce continues to receive a steady flow of reports and enquiries from concerned members, and increasingly from members of the public, regarding monuments in immediate danger. Extreme cases can involve sites where there is no planning permission and accordingly the authorities are totally oblivious to the threat. Sadly, in other cases the authorities are happy to accept minimum compliance with the current regulations. To give just one example, a Medieval wall recently discovered in Clondalkin will be properly excavated but subsequently removed. The hopes of the local residents who brought the discovery to the attention of An Taisce was to gain a new standing monument in their locale. These hopes and expectations are very rarely realised. The stated preference of the authorities, in relation to a newly discovered monument, is to have it ***preserved-in-situ***, i.e., intact and in place. This objective has become so illusory that it is rapidly becoming a fantasy.

The non-appearance, yet again, of the promised Amendment to the National Monument Act, leaves us labouring under the practically useless terms of the 2004 Amendment. It is imperative the Act is amended to give it the teeth necessary to protect Ireland's heritage. The State must act for and not just simply talk about the importance of heritage.Unless the myriad of anti-heritage aspects currently embedded in the Act are removed, the ongoing hypocritical cultural posturing of the Irish State will stand as a testimony to its apparent indifference.

Unsurprisingly, ringforts, due to their numbers, continue to figure large in our workload. These homesteads, of mainly 7th to 9th century date, are located in many areas of the Irish countryside. The great respect afforded to these monuments in the past, albeit often for superstitious reasons, is now largely long gone. This year we dealt with ringfort sites in counties Limerick, Cavan and Monaghan. At Mount Carmel in County Monaghan planning permission was sought to construct a house abutting a ringfort. The Council was informed by An Taisce that, given its location, under the terms of the National Monuments Act, two months' notice was required prior to any development work. The absence of this notification meant that work could not proceed.

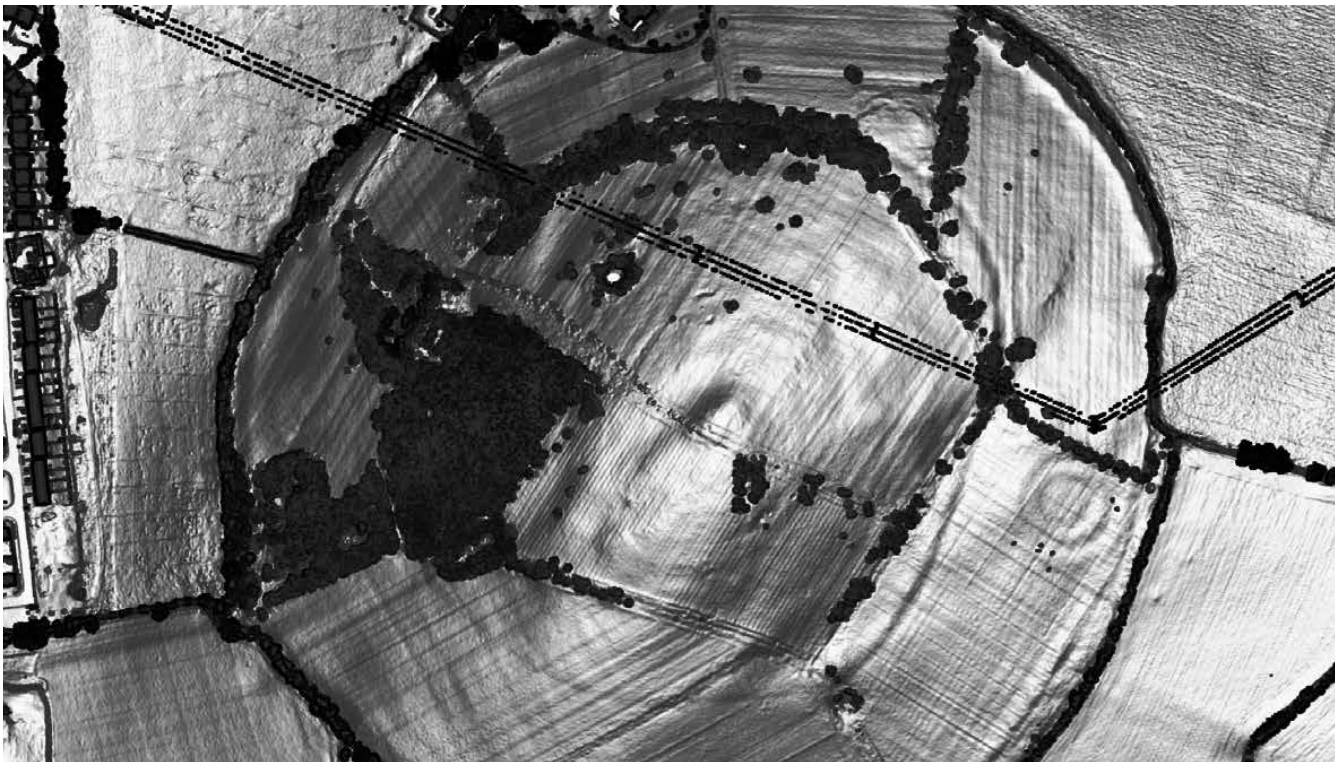
A brief perusal of either Lord Killanin's 'Shell Guide to Ireland' or Peter Harbison's 'Guide to the National Monuments of Ireland' will illustrate the accessible nature of monuments in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and beyond. Those days are gone. We have now reached the situation of even monuments that have been financially invested in by the State are inaccessible to the general public. Two examples that arose in 2020 were located at Kilteel and Punchestown in County Kildare.



Howth Castle CuriousIreland Credit



Standing Stone Punchestown Monuments Curious Ireland Credit



Kill Hillfort, County Kildare Courtesy of Dr. Stephen Davis

The sale of Howth Castle and Demesne is highly regrettable. The one family had held the estate over its history of 800 years. The hope would have been that the scenic, wooded, hilly terrain and historic building would end up in the hands of the local authority and/or the State. A perfect public asset on the doorstep of the capital. Its acquisition by private developers is thus very disappointing. An Taisce has objected to the first proposed development on the estate, noting, for example, the deficiencies in the archaeological report. The sale of the contents of the castle have been brought to the attention of the National Museum of Ireland. Amongst the castle's contents were 'The Great Sword of Howth', associated with the 12th century Almeric Tristam, but more likely to be 15th century in date, a rare portrait by Francis Bindon of Dean Jonathan Swift, a regular visitor to the castle, and furniture and books dating from the 17th century onwards.

The Early Ecclesiastic complex at Killashee in County Laois features an early church site, a Medieval church, a souterrain and a graveyard. The church was mentioned in the Annals. The placename is drawn from that of the founder – St. Usaille (Auxilius). He is mentioned in the 7th century ***Life of Muirchú***. A 'temporary' roadway installed to carry heavy equipment to a nearby construction site was positioned in close proximity to the ecclesiastic complex. As the report to An Taisce arrived at a late stage in the planning proceedings we could only urge the National Monuments Service to intervene and guarantee the protection and integrity of the site.

Encroaching development is also threatening the ancient ecclesiastical site at Tully in south County Dublin. The original name of the site was ***Tullach na nEpscop*** – 'The Hill of the Bishops'. This area would appear to have been a centre of Hiberno-Norse activity. In fact, the remains of a nearby house-site associated with this period has been discovered and excavated in recent years. The original Early Medieval roots of the church-site are evident in the presence of two surrounding ditched enclosures. T. It would be an outrageous proposition to allow mass modern construction works to get anywhere close to such an iconic historical/archaeological assemblage of monuments and landscape. A generous ***cordon sanitaire*** must be identified and enshrined at the earliest opportunity, if not by the relevant County Council, then by the Minister for Heritage.

A National Monuments Act, restored to the environmental heights achieved in legislation enacted during the tenures of Ministers Michael D. Higgins and Síle de Valera, would provide the robust legal framework desperately needed to afford our wonderful national portfolio of monuments and historic landscapes the protection that they warrant and demand.

Local Associations

Our Annual Reports usually contain detailed reports of local association activities for the year. As many 2020 events were affected by Covid restrictions we are unable to present the regular reports for all groups. For those associations involved in planning, work continued as normal throughout the year. But for many who would regularly hold walks, talks and events, the year was quieter. Technology came to the rescue of committees unable to hold their regular meetings with communications moving online.

As always, we are tremendously grateful for the work of our active local associations, volunteers giving of their time to protect and take care of their local area. If you are a member looking to get involved locally, either by joining an existing group or helping to set up a new one we would love to hear from you!

Profiles and Activities of Active Groups

Clare

Clare Local Association is very active locally in relation to planning and protection of local heritage. They assist in maintaining two important An Taisce properties, the Gort Weigh House and Gortlecka, our Burren property near Mullaghmore.

During 2020 they thought outside the box to plan online events such as lectures on climate change and biodiversity.

Clare Local Association can be contacted at: clare.antaisce@gmail.com

Cork

An Taisce Corcaigh, the Cork City local association, continues to actively submit planning and development proposals, mainly in the city centre area, to both the City Council and An Bord Pleanála. The City Council is actively promoting tall buildings in the eastern part of the city centre island and docklands, assisted by the Project 2040 planning guidelines which override the current City Development Plan 2015-2022. An Bord Pleanála confirmed permission for a 35-storey hotel in the middle of the city's historic Custom House and Bonded Warehouse complex (early 19th century), following appeals in 2020 by An Taisce and the Irish Georgian Society. This is a very regressive decision for one of the most important heritage buildings of its type in the country. Apart from compromising this unique setting, this building will dominate the entire city centre area as part of the Council's aim to create a city of European scale.

The local association also submitted to An Bord Pleanála in 2020 on a number of SHD proposals including large student complexes in the North Main Street, on Bandon Rd/The Lough, and a 25-storey apartment building on Albert Quay. The association made a submission on a proposed hotel on Brian Boru Street, to add to a number of hotels already approved in the city but not yet constructed. On a more positive note, the association supported amendments to a proposal to reconfigure the interior of the historic Queen's Old Castle building with a more suitable shopfront, as suggested by a third party who is also very active in planning. Overall, the scale of development in the city requires greater local input and we would welcome interested local volunteers with making planning submissions.

Cork Local Association can be contacted at: corcaigh@antaisce.org

Donegal

Donegal An Taisce Local Association is active in supporting and celebrating local wildlife, nature, and promoting walks among the public. The association continues to have representatives on the following bodies: The Donegal Co Council Heritage Forum, Donegal Local Development Company and the Errigal Stakeholders Group/ASCENT project. They caretake An Taisce's May McClintock Butterfly Garden in Letterkenny. Donegal activities for the year 2020 were heavily curtailed and halted by Covid 19. In place of nature walks, and to continue to raise awareness of local biodiversity, they sponsored 4 local initiatives (a) May McClintock Wildlife Friendly Garden Competition in association with Letterkenny Tidy Towns, (b) the production of the Ramelton Wildlife Walk Map and Brochure, (c) the Fairy Door Wildlife Trail at the woods at Convoy Castle, (d) The "Rewild your Child" section of NatureNorthwest website. These initiatives, and their many guided walks since 2015, were enabled by grants from Donegal County Council.

For the first time in 18 years they sadly could not publish the, "Treasures of Donegal", calendar 2020 for 2021 but are on track to publish one in 2022. The primary focus of these calendars is to celebrate the landscape, biodiversity and local history of Co.

Donegal. Each month features a landscape picture and, on a smaller scale, a photo and description of a species or item of note.

Donegal Local Association can be contacted at: donegal@antaisce.org

Dun Laoghaire

The Dun Laoghaire Local Association is an active group that assists in the protection of An Taisce's Booterstown Nature Reserve. Despite Covid restrictions, the association conducted two substantial projects in 2020 supported by the Local Authority Waters grant, a botanical study of the Booterstown Nature Reserve wetland carried out by Dr. Peter Foss and two summer drone films made by Irish Drone Consultants.



Booterstown cleanup

The association also held two successful clean ups in May and August with 25 volunteers collecting 23 bags of rubbish in total.

The association submitted a film of Booterstown Nature Reserve for National Heritage Week, showing again how local associations adapted and overcame COVID restrictions.

Covid restrictions greatly affected regular outdoor events. There was a 6 person clean up of Booterstown Nature Reserve on May 31st which yielded 6 sacks of rubbish which wasn't bad on a hot bank holiday Sunday with nowhere else to go!! This featured in the Dublin Gazette.

Clean up on The Autumn Clean up of Booterstown nature reserve and beach took place on May and October 11th. It attracted 19 volunteers and their labours produced 17 bags of rubbish.

The Booterstown Nature Reserve birds films are available at
https://youtu.be/OFNe-ssDCNw
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I.H-z6pJfAvw

Dun Laoghaire local association can be contacted at: dunlaoghaire@antaisce.org

Galway

The Galway Local Association has a core group of active members concerned about urban planning issues in the City of Galway.

The local association has been kept busy making submissions to some major developer-led projects that are capable of reshaping the centre of the city with little by way of prior public consultation. Long awaited developer inspired harbour developments, together with a very intensive brownfield development around Ceannt Station and in the Docks areas, that would see new building heights of up to 22 storeys, which are believed to be excessive in the heart of a medium sized medieval city where typical 5 storey buildings exist. Serious concerns have been voiced about the failure of officials to use Local Area Planning, and of leaving it to non-statutory developers' plans to lead, using their own plans is seen as not good for Galway!

Major infrastructural concerns still surround the proposed €1bn N6 Ring Road, or Bypass as it is being seen, would be likely to lead to more urban sprawl. An Taisce has also expressed concern about ineffective management of Storm Water Overflows - SWOs, leading to wastewater pollution leaking into Galway Bays SAC. A complaint has been lodged with the EPA.

An Taisce have made strong submissions to the formulation of a new Draft City Development Plan 2022-2028, while Tailors Hall have put in an excellent comment to the Draft County Dev Plans. The current focus on urban planning around Galway city has taken the eye off wider environmental issues, with a balance needing to be restored.

Galway local association can be contacted at galway@antaisce.org

Kilkenny

The Kilkenny Association currently has 38 local members and an active committee of six. We have representation on the Public Participation Network and on the Nore Vision Project.Our service to the local community is providing a voice for the natural and built heritage in local planning and contributing to education in this field. Much of the work of the Kilkenny Local Association is concerned with monitoring developments here through the planning process and ensuring that adaptations for modern use protect its rich character, historic structure and biodiversity. This includes the town centre with a rich medieval heritage consisting of a network of streets, laneways and public spaces, city walls, historic buildings and nine architectural conservation areas, and a green infrastructure that includes the River Nore and its tributaries, parks, trees and trails.

The association has a focus on ensuring Kilkenny is a liveable place for residents and is in favour of affordable housing and small local shops in the centre rather than proposed hotel developments.

The association follows restoration and conservation projects such as Evans Home, a former 18th century Barracks, which has been converted into the Butler Gallery, and Bridge House a slow moving restoration project by Neville Hotels. The association also takes a keen interest in the environmental impact of intensive agriculture in rural Kilkenny and is supportive of efforts by An Taisce to ensure EU environmental protection Directives are followed.



Evans Home, Butler Gallery Kilkenny

It is a triumph of conservation and conversion to new use in the city centre. The riverside garden between the Abbey Quarter and the River Nore has also been opened but will lack impact while the Abbey Quarter remains a boarded off building site. Building on brownfield sites in the city has not progressed but there have been proposals for large hotels and one got permission. We are not in favour of these due to increased traffic flow in the narrow city streets and over reliance on tourism as an industry. An alternative would be provision of affordable housing which would provide support for small local stores and create a much better sense of place.

This work continued during Covid restrictions on a virtual platform.

Kilkenny local association can be contacted at Kilkenny@antaisce.org

Limerick

Limerick Local Association is an active group with nine committee members. Despite the on-going restraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic, committee members continued to communicate by email, telephone and when possible in one-to-one, outdoor meetings.

The Association continued its advocacy and submitted observations to the Limerick planning authority on projects at 43-6 Cecil Street (20/1137); 2 and 3 Mallow Street, protected structures, (20/972); 46 Nicholas Street, protected structure (20/803); Aldi Supermarket, Upper Roches Street (20/395); student housing, St Gerard Street, (20/1142); Islamic Cultural Centre, Wickham Street, (20/1236); Shelburne House, protected structure, (21/245). The Association also made a submission on the Golf Links Road upgrade (part Vii), a project that would require the destruction of a protected early nineteenth century bridge. Two of these projects (46 Nicholas Street and Aldi, Roches Street) resulted in first party appeals to An Bord Pleanala to which the Association made a number of responses.

Submissions were made to Limerick City and County Council on Limerick Development Plan 2022-28 (Draft); to National Transport Authority on Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy; and to the Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform advising the grant of protected status to an endangered early nineteenth century toll house.

The Association continued its policy of engaging constructively with print and broadcast media that resulted in interviews and statements to the Limerick Leader, Limerick Post, Irish Examiner and RTE Radio 1. Members of the Association met with media and journalism students at University of Limerick and the Limerick Institute of Technology.

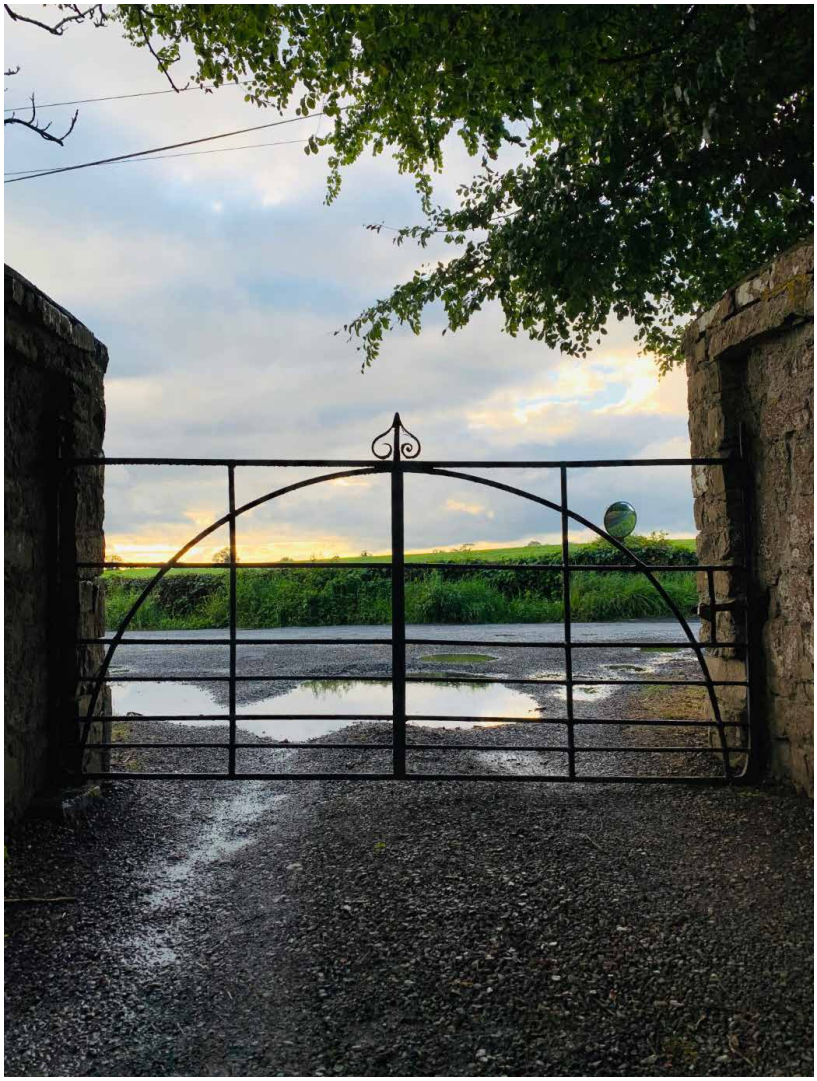
As part of its contribution to National Heritage Week, members of the Association led a well-attended 'Heritage Bike Ride' to a range of historic city sites (some of them endangered and the subject of on-going advocacy by the Association) on Friday 15 August 2020.

Limerick local association can be contacted at limerick.chair@antaisce.org

Meath

The Meath association has a small committee and our main activities are organising social and cultural events, working with the Boyne Navigation group through our representative Geoffrey Clarke, forwarding planning queries we get to Tailors' Hall and working with the Irish Environmental Network (IEN) on environmental issues through our representative Karen Mahon.

Every year until 2020, we planned four to five events running throughout late spring and the summer months including poetry readings and National Heritage Week. We concluded the year with a Christmas party which is generally held at Headfort House School.



1st prize in Meath Association photo competition. - Gateway Higginsbrook Co Meath - Camilla Gray Aug 2020

The venues are heritage properties including castles, ancestral homes, derelict and restored churches and gardens in Meath and the surrounding countries. We run the Ellison awards every three to four years. The awards commemorate Rev. Canon Ellison who was one of the founders of the Meath association and author of 'The Waters of the Boyne and Blackwater'. The awards are given to individuals or community groups who have renovated or restored old buildings or gardens.

we hosted the 'Archways and Gateways' photography competition with the aim of getting members and non-members to photograph the many old stone bridges, farm gateways and other masonry built objects including obelisks, castles, churches and vernacular buildings that Counities Meath and Louth have in abundance. We also wrote a piece for John Sweeney's 'Treasuring Ireland' series titled 'Oldbridge and its environs' which was on the An Taisce website and generated a lot of interest.

Meath Local Association can be contacted at: meath@antaisce.org

Properties Committee Annual Report 2020



Trish O'Connell,
Chair, Properties Committee
propertieschair@antaisce.org

The Properties Committee meets bi-monthly and is responsible for An Taisce's properties, a list of which can be found on the An Taisce website. The properties are diverse and many are of interest from an ecological and biodiversity point of view. For this reason, the Properties Committee overlaps to a large extent with the National Environment Committee which has a keen interest in the wildlife, flora and fauna of our properties, and some of our Properties Committee members also sit on the NEC committee. Declan Murphy, Chair of the National Environment Committee, has given an excellent report of the 2020 news of some of our properties in his NEC report, in particular a great introduction to our new property, Sliabh Beagh.

Sliabh Beagh was very kindly donated to An Taisce in 2020 by Lord Rossmore in Monaghan. The property spans both sides of the border with Northern Ireland and Head of Advocacy, Ian Lumley, has been very active in developing initiatives with groups there and putting structures in place for the future management of the property.

In January, **Morehampton Road Wildlife Sanctuary (The Grove)** featured in a documentary on climate change aired on RTE produced by one of our committee members, Geoff Power, called *Will Ireland Survive 2050?* We received many enquiries from parties interested in viewing the property – these ranged from a local secondary school who wish to have field trips to the site for 6th year biology classes and a local camera enthusiast, Gustavo Zoladz, who has been treating us to beautiful photos and night videos of the wildlife in the sanctuary. In the summer the gates to the property were painted - this was done in conjunction with the Upper Leeson Street Residents' Association (ULSARA) who asked us to split the preparation and painting costs with them.

We had a couple of meetings at the start of the year with **Booterstown Marsh** Advisory Group and Dun Laoghaire Local Association Executive in relation to An Taisce's response to the planning application that was submitted for the site adjacent to Booterstown Marsh. Many thanks to Phoebe Duvall, Planning Officer, who submitted a very comprehensive response to the planning application. Please see the Dun Laoghaire Local Association report for a full outline of the great initiatives taken in relation to Booterstown Marsh in 2020.

The staff returned to **Tailors' Hall** after the Christmas period in January to find evidence of trespassing on the High Street side of Tailors' Hall. We engaged with the local community guards who agreed to keep an eye on the site and gave us some tips to consider to deter the trespassers. We had two break-ins early in the year where some damage was done to the entrance gate on Back Lane and to the ground floor access which our caretaker Louis McGee was able to repair. In both cases we believe that opportunists entered the building but left pretty quickly when they found there was nothing of interest to steal.



Babes Bridge, River Boyne, Co Meath, part of An Taisce Boyne Navigation property, credit James Leahy



Mount Errigal from An Taisce property Crocnafarragh

Progress on the sub-lease for a restaurant/coffee shop facility on the basement floor of Tailors' Hall has been slow but is still moving. The sub-lease was sent to Dublin City Council (who owns the property) for approval early in the year. Fortunately Covid-19 has not dampened the operator's enthusiasm to pursue the lease. We had a couple of interesting revenue-generating rentals lined up for Tailors' Hall in 2020 but these had to be postponed due to Covid.

Progress was made on the **Boyne Navigation** in early 2020 with Staleen Lock (lock 3) being completed including the wash wall west of the lock. Design and environmental consultants were appointed by Meath County Council to scope the work for provision of a greenway and for the restoration of the Navigation. This study is a large investment from Meath County Council but unfortunately had to be put on hold during the pandemic.

2020 started off well for **Gort Weigh House** with debts for the improvement and renovation being cleared off and with sufficient funds to finish a few more. The structure (windows) were sealed with a long term project outstanding to restore the windows to their original state. The Burren Lowlands, a tourism group who rent out the Weigh House every summer as a tourist office, were considering renting April to end September but then the pandemic struck and they were not operational at all for the whole of 2020. This left the Clare Association with the electricity bills to pay for the year, as normally the Burren Lowlands covered the costs while they were there and the rental covered the costs for the winter months. An Taisce Head Office covered the costs since there was no rental income.

At the **Burren (Gortlecka)** property, during scrub cutting in February the committee noticed that winter-grazing cattle had kept the pathways clear without human assistance and had continued to assist in further opening up the grassy area in the southern tip of the land so they tidied that area up to make it contiguous.

In late 2020, repairs were done on the chimney and roof of **Killaha West**, our property which houses a bat roost. This was thanks to funding from NPWS.

Ian Lumley visited and surveyed some of our properties in 2020 and reported that tree planting was underway in **Kanturk Castle**. Further to a visit to the Donegal properties, Ian also took part in discussions in relation to invasive species involving NPWS, Coillte and An Taisce, resulting in the possibility of a new relationship with Coillte.

Ian has done tremendous work in onboarding the Sliabh Beagh property and developing relationships with authorities and local groups on both sides of the border and we are very appreciative of all the work he does, as well as his constant availability and willingness to provide sound advice. Many thanks also to our other committee members Veronica Heywood, Peter Wise, Geoff Clarke, Geoff Power, Declan Murphy. We would be delighted to welcome new members to the committee. If you have a general interest or you live anywhere near our properties we would love to see you!



Corlican Graveyard Co Wexford, credit IrishArchaeology.ie



Bog Cotton at Sliabh Beagh, Credit David Bell

MEMBERSHIP REPORT FOR 2020

2020 was what we might call a different type of year that brought many challenges for all. An Taisce was no different than any other charity or organisation which had to find ways to rise above the difficulties created by Covid. Working from home became the norm, and although we missed the interaction with colleagues, we soon learnt how to connect through Zoom. Council meetings, which bring delegates from all over the country together, were instantly transformed into virtual meetings. Even the most technically challenged among us learned new computer skills and buzz words such as wash your hands, zoom calls, webinars, and stay at home. Local Associations around the country showed brilliant adaptability and held virtual meetings and webinars organised by An Taisce. Our members/volunteers continued to work hard on programmes such as National Spring Clean and Clean Coasts, as well as getting involved in local heritage and development. For this we're extremely grateful.

Along with the challenges, the pandemic has also created opportunities such as reconnecting with family and friends, with nature, and with the beauty our country has to offer. Country walks and eventually staycations, when lockdown was lifted, gave us even more of an appreciation of the world around us, and the importance of climate action, biodiversity, and sustainability. Our Treasuring Ireland series of blog posts in Spring 2020 tapped into some of that "back to nature" sentiment, trying to make sense of the situation while recognising that the longer-term threats such as climate change are still very much present.

Our new CiviCRM system was rolled out successfully which helped in no small way to connect with our members more effectively. We continue to improve and streamline our membership and donation systems to make the member experience as transparent and efficient as possible.

Membership Development:

- New growth in overall membership
- New membership benefits were introduced including free access to the INTO properties in Northern Ireland, the UK and further afield. See www.into.org/places for details.
- Relaunch of a quarterly newsletter, full of news from all across the organisation
- A Student Membership Development plan was designed to bridge the gap that has arisen over the years in the age demographic of the organisation. This plan will be rolled out in 2021 and will see an influx of young people bringing new blood to An Taisce to support our existing membership
- Many lapsed members rejoined the organisation in 2020
- Volunteers were recruited to support the administrative/membership and fundraising teams.
- In 2021 we look forward to bringing you, the members, more benefits in recognition of your support.
- 2021 also sees more general member events online, as well as the opening of An Taisce Council meetings to observation by general members.

An Taisce would like to thank their members for the support received throughout 2020.

Membership is fundamental to funding An Taisce's critical work, preserving our independence as a voice for heritage and the environment in Ireland, and protecting the organisation's future. We simply could not do this without you.

We extend our deepest sympathy to anyone who lost a loved one as a result of the pandemic and we remember those members who passed away during 2020.

Your Membership Team



Sinead Owens,
Operations Manager



Annette McCaul,
Membership Volunteer



Dearbhla Ryan,
Marketing and Membership Development Officer

Social Media Links

Twitter - **https://twitter.com/AnTaisce**

Facebook - **https://www.facebook.com/AnTaisce**

Instagram - **https://www.instagram.com/antaisce/**

Each of the An Taisce Environmental Education Unit programmes are on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram under their own names.

How your Membership and Donations support us

With your help An Taisce is able to fulfil its function as part of its prescribed status, ensuring that building projects and programmes are reviewed for sustainability amongst other criteria. You will see from the Advocacy and Planning Report just how important its contribution is to policy-making at a high level, making submissions on large infrastructure projects and taking court cases where necessary to ensure planning and environmental laws are upheld. We are lucky to have highly-qualified and passionate staff, some paid and some volunteers, who not only work on behalf of the organisation, but also assist local An Taisce associations and members of the public with queries on a wide range of planning, environmental and heritage issues.

We are also able to maintain our properties around the country, most of which have been bequeathed to us in trust for protection and conservation.

We have active committees and local associations where you, our members can actively participate in seeing, and being part of, the change you want to see in the world.

The challenges are great, our resources are few, so your ongoing support is what sustains this great organisation. If you would like to learn more about the ways you can support An Taisce why not talk to us today on 01-7077076 or email us at info@antaisce.org or membership@antaisce.org.



Presentation of Honorary Life Membership to Ann Gibbons

NOTES

NOTES

An Taisce
The National Trust for Ireland

COUNCIL OF AN TAISCE

Name	Position	Association
Fr Sean McDonagh SSC	President	
Prof John Sweeney	Immediate Past President	
Philip Kearney	Chair	Dublin City
Trish O'Connell	Vice Chair	
Stuart McCaul	Honorary Secretary	
Alan Price	Delegate	Carlow
Anny Wise	Delegate	Clare
Damon Matthew Wise	Deputy Delegate; Co-opted 2019	Clare
Kevin Hurley	Delegate	Cork
Anne McGowan	Delegate	Donegal
Gerald Tomkin	Delegate	Dublin South
Mairead Mehigan	Delegate	Dun Laoghaire
Rebecca Jeffares	Deputy Delegate	Dun Laoghaire
Derrick Hambleton	Delegate	Galway
Declan Murphy	Delegate	Kilkenny
Mary Brennan	Deputy Delegate	Kilkenny
Margaret Monaghan	Delegate	Meath
Jean Carr	Deputy Delegate	Meath
John Logan	Acting Delegate	Limerick
Kathleen Vandenberghe	Delegate	Tipperary North
Jack O'Sullivan	Deputy Delegate	Westmeath
Charles Stanley Smith	Delegate	Tipperary North
Dr. Mark Clinton	Co-opted 2016, Elected 2018	Fingal
Geoff Power	Elected 2018	
Kevin O'Farrell	Elected 2019	
Patricia Oliver	Re-elected 2019	Meath
Eric Conroy	Elected 2019	
John Gibbons	Elected 2019	
Ruaidhri O'Boyle	Elected 2019	
Nick Armstrong	Elected 2019	
Eamonn Moore	Co-opted 2019	

Directors/Trustees as of July 2020

Philip Kearney, Chair, Joined Board in 2016
Trish O'Connell, Vice-Chair, Joined Board in 2019
Stuart McCaul, Honorary Secretary, Joined Board in 2019
Prof. John Sweeney, Joined Board in 2015
Hugh O'Reilly, Joined Board in 2019
Aoife O'Gorman, Honorary Treasurer, joined Board in 2020

Representatives of An Taisce

Monuments and Antiquities Contact: Dr Mark Clinton
European Environmental Bureau: Attracta Ui Bhroin
INTO: Ian Lumley, Sinead Owens
Europa Nostra: Dr Paul O'Brien
Wexford Monument Trust AnTaisce Nominee: Ian Lumley
Alfred Beit Foundation: Ian Lumley
IWAI Boyne Navigation Branch Committee: James Leahy
Coalition2030: Charles Stanley Smith
Irish Environmental Network: Kevin O'Farrell
ELIG Bureau: Alison Hough
Stop Climate Chaos: Theresa O'Donohoe,
Fingal Heritage Forum: Richard Williams

Key Employees and Volunteers

An Taisce Head Office
Interim CEO - Gary Freemantle
Operations Manager : Sinead Owens
Fundraising Officer: Annette McCaul
Marketing and Membership Development Officer - Dearbhla Ryan

An Taisce Advocacy
Head of Advocacy: Ian Lumley
Planning Officer: Phoebe Duvall
Natural Environment Officer: Elaine McGoff
National Cycling Coordinator: Damien Ó Túama

An Taisce Properties
Caretaker: Louis McGee

An Taisce Environmental Education Unit
Education Unit Director: Michael John O'Mahony
Development Manager: Anthony Purcell
National Green-Schools Manager: Cathy Baxter
National Manager Green Schools Travel: Jane Hackett
Clean Coasts Manager: Sinead McCoy
Education Unit Finance Manager: Colin Sloan
Business Administration Manager: Dawn Parkinson
National Spring Clean Manager: Emlyn Cullen
Green Campus Manager: Dara Dever
Blue Flag Manager: Ian Diamond
Green Flag Award for Parks Coordinator: Robert Moss
Learning About Forests (LEAF) Coordinator: Rachel Geary
Neat Streets Officer: Stephen O'Reilly
Green Home Officer: Robert Moss
Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) Coordinator: Adele O'Connor
Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) Officer: Eoin Heaney
GLOBE Officer: Sabrina Moore



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