

# River View

*The latest news from the Inishowen Rivers Trust*

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## Meet the Board

The first board of the Inishowen Rivers Trust was established in October 2015 and was tasked with setting up the Trust as a company limited by guarantee and a charity. Since then we have had a diverse range of trustees come and go but one thing that each of them has in common is their passion to help protect our rivers and their dedication in offering their free time to help run the trust. Currently at the helm is Claire Thompson, a plant expert and life long supporter of the environment. Mervyn Norris is a sheep farmer and our longest serving trustee. Mark Davenport is a bird surveyor and angler and our youngest trustee. Thomas Lawrence is a well known river enthusiast based in Bunrana. Rosemarie Moulden is the manager at the Inishowen Maritime Museum and an archaeologist. Ronan O'Doherty is an administrator with Inishowen Farm Innovations and the main driver behind O'Doherty's Keep in Swan Park.

In May the Trust will be holding it's 9th AGM when we hope to elect a further three members to the board. But we are always keen to welcome more people to the board. This diversity allows us to bring new ideas and perspectives to what we do and increase our impact. If you are interested in getting involved, find out more about us by reading on or come along to any of our volunteer events. Working side by side at the river is often when we get our best inspiration!

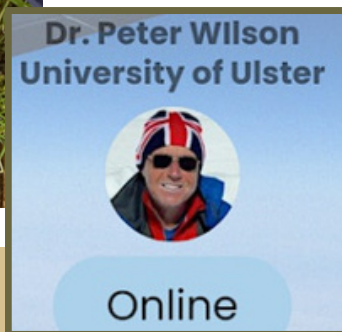


# Heritage Capacity Fund

In March we were thrilled to learn that the Trust has been awarded funding by the Heritage Council under their Heritage Capacity Fund 2023. This funding will be used to develop specialist river monitoring and habitat restoration skills within community groups in Ireland through a national River Guardians training programme. In the past our Inishowen River Guardians Programme has been pivotal in the development of the Trust and our collaboration with local communities. It has also meant that we have greatly increased our knowledge of catchments and rivers and have developed the capacity to deliver bigger projects with a greater impact. It has been wonderful to meet all of our volunteers and exchange knowledge with them. This learning together is core to what a rivers trust can do and this is why this new tranche of funding is so important to us.

The proposed River Guardians programme will develop specialist river monitoring and habitat restoration skills within several communities. Over the summer period we will work with groups in Sligo, Fanad and West Donegal as well as here in Inishowen. Activities planned for this month include, on the 18th May at 7pm, the second part of a webinar with **Dr. Peter Wilson** from Ulster University on learning to read the landscape. On the 20th May, we will explore the wonderful **Drumboe Woods** in Stranolar/Ballybofey in celebration of Biodiversity Week. On Saturday 1st July we will have a Downstream Change Workshop with Mark O'Connor from Field Studies Ireland. On Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th August we are offering a Wilderness First Aid and Safe Working Near Water training weekend.

To join these events or be the first to hear about upcoming events, follow us on Facebook or on Eventbrite. We are looking forward to a busy summer and hope to see you soon!



**Follow us on Eventbrite**  
<https://RiverGuardians.eventbrite.ie>

## New staff at the IRT

We had a bright and busy start to the year with the addition of a new staff member, **Carlene Lyttle**. Many of you may have already met Carlene through her work with Spraoi, the Inishowen Development Partnership and other local organisations. Carlene has qualifications in politics & environmental studies and experience in funding applications and project management. She has a keen interest in community development and technology and anyone who has attended the Smart Villages training will be familiar with her excellent facilitation skills. Carlene was also a key driver in the Wellbeing from Nature project delivered by the IDP which involved a range of partners from around Europe.

Before joining the Trust Carlene attended courses on our Inishowen River Guardians programme and in her new role with the Trust she will be co-ordinating the scaling up of the IRG programme to other Trusts in Donegal and Sligo. Welcome to the team Carlene!



*Our newest staff member, Carlene, pictured here with John, at Safe Working in Water training in Buncrana in April.*

# Ballylosky Wetlands

Barrack Hill Town Park was the first town park in Donegal to achieve Green Flag status and this has been a fabulous boost to Carndonagh town and surrounding area. The Barrack Hill Town Park Committee worked closely with collaborators such as Donegal County Council to achieve this success and more recently they were awarded funding through LAWPRO to develop a wetland and recreational nature trail at the Ballylosky side of the park. Following a tender process the Trust were successful in winning the contract for the development of plans for the pond and trail.

The Trust's project officer, John Duffy, has been busy discussing the plans with the committee, the council and the general public. In February, a community consultation took place in the Boxing Club where views of the local community were heard. John has also met with Council staff to discuss how the trail fits in with future planning for the area. Another key theme is how the wetland area could help to alleviate flooding on the Ballywilly Brook which feeds into the Donagh River and how the pond area could be used as an educational resource for local children.

Back in 2021 the ECO Carn partnership, of which the Barrack Hill TP committee is a member, developed a Biodiversity Action Plan for Carndonagh. This report detailed how Carndonagh could develop areas to protect biodiversity and promote education. The development of a wetland would be a wonderful addition to this plan and would bring a wealth of biodiversity and health benefits to the area.



If you would like to learn more about the Ballyloskey Wetlands, please contact our Project Officer John Duffy or contact Barrack Hill Town Park Committee directly.



*Wetlands attract a wide range of wildlife and provide excellent opportunities for teaching children about water.*

## Volunteer events

The spring is always a busy time for the Trust as it is peak tree planting season. This year has been no exception and the volunteers did an exceptional job planting so many trees on the Culdaff River. This was part of our CRiBZ project to create riparian buffers along the banks to capture run off and help improve water quality and increase biodiversity.

In April and early May we had two great days at the Bredagh River Trail where our regular volunteers were joined by new Ukrainian volunteers to repair the damage to the path after the flash floods of August 2022. These turned out to be very enjoyable events getting to know the new volunteers and getting so much work done. See the photos!

We are very grateful to Moville Tidy Towns for supporting this work and to Celebrate Water who originally revived the old trail back in 2013. We hope to get back to the Bredagh again soon so keep a watch on Facebook for volunteer notices.

With lots of new training opportunities this coming summer we hope to help more people to get out on our rivers to help repair paths and banks, clear invasive species and generally have a very enjoyable time!



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED

## CONTACT US



# What Happened at What's Happening!

In February the Inishowen Rivers Trust were delighted to build on an event we had run back in 2017 when we were still a fledging organisation. This was our Who's Who event which gathered all the agencies with a remit on water management and the community together to discuss how we could work to solve the challenges that our rivers face. That event was held in the lovely An Grianan Hotel in Burt and this year we repeated the event, revising the directory that lists the organisations involved but with an extra twist! This year we also looked at *what is happening* on Inishowen Rivers, how have things changed since our last meeting 6 years ago and how can we press forward.

The Trust were glad at the opportunity to engage with some of the many groups now getting involved with water awareness and protection. A selection of these organisations were offered a chance to get a poster created by designers BizzPrint and give a short summary of their work and the future direction of their organisations. This resulted in the production of 2 booklets - the revised directory and a copy of the posters produced for each organisation, both of which are available freely to the public.

But the event was more than just a review, as we had the chance to network and discuss where to next. We were thrilled that our inspiration Dr. Liam Campbell was available as the keynote speaker for the event. Liam is a native of Burt and is an anthropologist and observer of how people, place and nature interact. Liam's words have inspired us over the years and we are honoured that he was available to attend the event and provide a copy of one of his books 'Room for the River' as a raffle prize.

There was ample opportunity throughout the evening to chat to the various stall holders and to hear the lovely musical welcome provided by Kathleen O'Hara Farren (The Edge School).

The following day a group of 28 availed of the bus to take participants on a tour of some of the great projects that are unfolding across Inishowen. This included our own projects at Clonmany leaky dams and revetments in Carndonagh but also to see the wetland site at Sharagore which is developing under the guidance of Wild Inishowen. Also visited was a KPM Soils treatment site for the invasive Japanese knotweed. A great day out in the field and a welcome stop at the Clonmany Market House Cafe for lunch.

Many thanks to our supporters and funders for this event, LAWPRO and the EPA. We would especially like to thank Jimmy McVeigh who helped our Project Officer John Duffy to skillfully facilitate the evening and Paddy Morris for his support.



*Discussing wetlands creation at Sharagore*

## Thanks to our funders

The IRT is a charity and relies on funding and donations from the public. Staff funding is provided through the Resilience Pilot Project funded through the Local Authority Waters Programme by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage and managed by The Rivers Trust. If you are interested in supporting the Trust, you can donate via iDonate or through our website.

