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Photo c. Karen Taylor

A chara,

Happy New Year! I hope you had a wonderful relaxing Christmas and are geared up for an exciting year ahead for 2026!

We at the IEN ended 2025 with a Winter Conference, and I was once again blown away by the number of people with such closely shared goals and wishes for the future of our land and communities. It has been a privilege to work alongside you all and meet new people every year who are so passionate about topics that are so close to my heart.

For 2026, I want to continue to share your good work and offer opportunities to meet and share our knowledge with each other, making it as easy as possible for us all to achieve the changes we really want to see in the world. I am fully aware that I am not the only one doing this, each network and group that I come across in my role at the IEN are also creating their own local networks, sharing information and best practice, and carrying out the work on the ground. My wish for 2026 is that I can make your work a little bit easier, whether it's by hosting information sessions on topics you want to learn more about, setting up networking opportunities, helping in hosting events on the ground with local groups and PPNs, or sharing news and opportunities through this newsletter.

With all that said, I am delighted to share the first newsletter of the year with you! As well as some wonderful upcoming events, I am particularly delighted by the announcement from Cavan PPN of their upcoming environmental actions, and the Covenant of Care that they agreed upon at their recent plenary to guide the actions of their PPN. It's wonderful to see PPNs flourishing as the community gets more and more involved with them.

I also wanted to draw your attention to a change of date for our upcoming PPN Environmental Reps Meet & Share event online. This will now take place on Wednesday Feb 4th instead of Tuesday. Apologies for any inconvenience this change causes. The link has also been updated to allow for registration, so please do register to receive the link to join us for the event on Feb 4th.

There are also some new job opportunities listed below, including one from Birdwatch Ireland, and new public consultations listed too that I was made aware of over the Christmas break.

Looking forward to a great year ahead, and wishing you the best of success in 2026!
Le meas,
Catherine

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Quick Guide to Events

January

- 8th - 18th: Self Build Wind Turbine Course - Roscommon
- 21st @ 7pm: Environmental Film Festival - Carlow

February

- 4th @ 7pm: PPN Environmental Reps Meet & Share - Online
- 19th @ 7pm: Environmental Film Festival - Carlow

Save the Date

- May 15th - 24th: National Biodiversity Week
- June 23rd: Farming for Nature Festival

Local News

Cavan Public Participation Network agrees an exciting range of Environmental Actions for 2026. All Welcome to Get Involved!

What: Cavan PPN 2026 Environmental Action: Host 2-3 nature based events for creating a greater sense of connectivity not only to local nature but between those engaging in the events. This will engender a greater sense of appreciation of the beauty of Cavan's nature and encourage a promotion of our green agenda and care. This should also incorporate a signposting flier for people to be better informed on how to be an ally of nature e.g. signposting them to where to go to report littering, illegal cutting etc.

Get in touch with Cavan PPN at info@cavanppn.ie or join Cavan PPN for free on their website: www.cavanppn.ie

Cavan PPN Plenary passed a Covenant of Care for the PPN as a guiding document:

Cavan Covenant of Care

We, the people of Cavan, standing in the presence of our land, waters, and community, make this covenant for the flourishing of all life.

1. Reverence for Land and Water

We honour the rivers, lakes, forests, and fields. We pledge to protect the health of soil, water, air, and all creatures who dwell here.

2. Reciprocity and Kinship

We remember that we are not owners, but kin. What we take, we give back. What we receive, we pass on enriched to the next generation.

3. Story and Memory

We gather the stories of our people and our place—ancient and new—and keep them alive, that we may know who we are and where we belong.

4. Community and Care

We look after one another, in joy and in hardship. Each voice matters; each person belongs. Elders, youth, and the vulnerable are held with dignity.

5. Future Generations

We act with the seventh generation in mind. No decision is just unless it leaves the children of tomorrow a world more whole than today.

6. Shared Governance

We decide together, in open assemblies, guided by story, wisdom, and the counsel of all voices—including those that come to us from the land and from the Other.

7. Renewal

Each season, we review our covenant. We celebrate what we have kept, we atone where we have fallen short, and we begin again with courage and humility.

So may this covenant guide our actions, root our culture, and bind us in care—for Cavan, for Earth, and for the unfolding generations.

Community Groups Showcase

Join those who are making a difference for nature and climate in your county! Find people in your area who share your interests and goals for 2026. Below are just three groups out of hundreds in Ireland.

Find more on your PPN's website. Go to their 'members' section and sort by 'Environmental Pillar' to see some of the groups in your area.

Already in a group of your own? Find your PPN online (search 'your county' and 'ppn') to join for free and receive free training, information on local events and funding, and the opportunities to affect local policy creation in your County Council.



Conservation Volunteers (Galway)

Galway

Galway branch of Conservation Volunteers Ireland, Working in public parks, woodlands and seashores.



Naas Biodiversity Group

Kildare

We are a group of volunteers raising awareness of nature



Our Native Glens

Leitrim

Positive environmental action in north Leitrim led by the local community

We are working in locations in north Leitrim. To date, we

They work on a variety of projects, including the Common Tern project which has seen huge success for creating and safeguarding nesting sites for common terns. Get involved in their ongoing efforts in this and lots more projects around Galway.

Follow their work here or contact cvgalway@gmail.com to get involved.

in Naas and creating new nature-friendly areas.

We have so far planted 2x annual pocket forests (880 trees in 2021 and 1000 in 2022) as well as a native hedgerow (150m in 2023). We also organise events such as yoga in the park, public talks, and nature walks.

Read more and get in touch: www.facebook.com/NaasBiodiversityGroup/

have moved unwanted young trees from near Lough Allen to Rossinver and Manorhamilton, and carried out information sessions on woodlands, invasive species, bats, wildflowers, and freshwater invertebrates. We are currently involved in Himalayan Balsam removal and education particularly in the Bonet river catchment. We have had volunteers coming from all areas of Leitrim and further afield to help out on our Meitheal days.

Read more and get in touch: www.ournativeglens.org

Events

JANUARY EVENTS

Self Build Wind Turbine Course

*Jan 8th - 18th
Roscommon*

Roscommon Climate Action Officer shares this upcoming training which teaches you how to build a domestic wind turbine from scratch using the Hugh Piggott Turbine Design. The course is ideal for those interested in building their own wind power systems.

[More information and apply here](#)



Environmental Film Festival

County Carlow Environmental Network (CCEN) have two film nights coming up the new year:

*Jan 21st, 7pm
Carlow*

Wed 21st January – Showing short films on the topic of Energy. We will collaborate with Sustainable Energy Communities and South East Energy Agency.

*Feb 19th, 7pm
Carlow*

Thur 19th February - Showing a number of short films on the topic of Wetlands and to collaborate with the Drummin Bog Project. The Drummin Bog Project is a voluntary not-for-profit community education project to restore the only raised bog in Co. Carlow - www.drumminbog.com.

We will have a discussion after each film with a couple of speakers and a question and answer session.



FEBRUARY EVENTS

PPN Environmental Reps Meet & Share

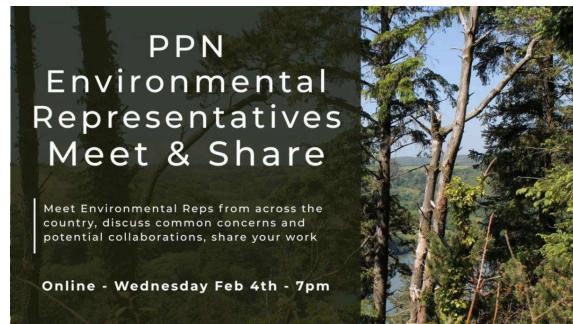
CHANGE OF DATE

Feb 4th, 7pm
Online

Meet other Environmental Representatives from across Ireland. Discuss common challenges. Share resources or make plans for achieving mutual goals.

This meet up is now taking place on Wednesday Feb 4th. Apologies for any inconvenience.

Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83829996202?pwd=PsqrwpcB9mnVRS0CoI0XtG9eLPd09.1>



LATER EVENTS - Dates for the diary

National Biodiversity Week 2026

Save The Date
May 15th - 24th
Nationwide

Explore the rich variety of life in Ireland this May with a host of wonderful events and activities for the whole family.

2026 brings the 14th annual Biodiversity Photographer of the Year competition, Scavenger Hunts for school and at home, and free events every day on all things wildlife in Ireland! Events will be both in person and virtual, so everyone can take part.

Keep an eye out for our new website launching soon!

★ The Farming for Nature Festival

Save The Date
June 23rd 2026
Laois

We're delighted to share an early save-the-date with our network.

On **Tuesday 23 June 2026**, we will gather at Ballykilcavan Brewery, Stradbally, Co. Laois for **The Farming for Nature Festival** — a full day of farmer-led, practical learning and meaningful exchange.

☛ The festival will focus on nature-based farming, with:

- Technical training sessions
- In-field demonstrations
- Evidence-based, farmer-to-farmer discussions

The event will be preceded by a solstice-inspired dinner, on Tuesday 22nd June 2026 celebrating farmers and farming, setting the tone for a day of learning, reflection, and connection.

We would be delighted if you could be part of the learning, the networking, and the conversations exploring the systems shaping the future of farming and nature in Ireland. For now, please Save the Date.

☛ **Tickets will go on sale in February 2026**, with further details to follow in due course.

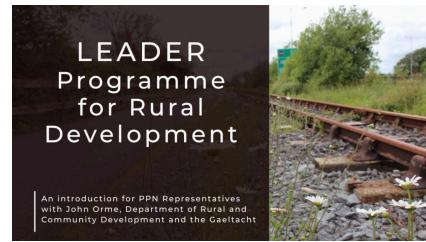
We look forward to sharing more soon and hope you and your teams can join us.

Kind regards,
The Farming for Nature Team

Resources

Watch: Introduction to LEADER and PPN Reps experience of the Evaluation Committee

Tonight we heard an introduction to the LEADER programme with John Orme, Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht. John will introduce the LEADER programme, giving an overview of LEADER from a national perspective. What is the structure of the LEADER programme, who makes decisions for funding allocations, and how do the different committees work and interact?



Afterwards we heard from Liam Breslin about his experience on the LEADER Evaluation Committee in Leitrim. Liam is a PPN Representative on this committee. Outside of this work he is Director of Good Energies Alliance Ireland.

[Watch the webinar recording here](#)

Announcements

Science in Regenerative Agriculture-Market Gardening (Certificate, L6, 15 ECTS)

Apply now
Fully funded level 6 qualification



The aim of this Level 6 programme is to equip learners with the knowledge, practical skills, and entrepreneurial mindset required to engage in sustainable market gardening within the European agricultural context. Recognizing the critical role of farming in supporting livelihoods and local development, this programme responds to the growing challenges posed by climate change, resource limitations, and environmental degradation.

[More info](#)

Public Consultations

The Big Beach Biodiversity Survey

Winter is a great time to get involved in Explore Your Shore! as seasonal storms and high tides often cast up a rich variety of plants, shells, seaweeds, and sometimes even unexpected drifters from warmer waters. These strandings can reveal what lives beneath the waves offering valuable evidence of local marine biodiversity that might otherwise remain invisible.

[Take part here](#)

Public Consultation on the development of Ireland's third Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) National Implementation Plan

Submissions closed: 16 January 2026

The aim of this consultation is to gather stakeholder feedback on the preparation of Ireland's Third Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) National Implementation Plan (NIP).

[More info here](#)

Consultation Opportunity – Coillte's Draft Five Year Forest Plans

We are now inviting you to review our draft plans and submit your views and recommendations during Phase 3 of the consultation process.

Our draft plans are now available to view on our website here [Coillte Draft Five Year Forest Plans 2026-2030](#) (bottom of this page) and you are invited to submit your views and recommendations.

This public consultation period runs from **Monday 22nd December 2025 until Friday 30th January 2026 (6 weeks)**.

Submissions may be sent by email to consultation@coillte.ie or by post to :-

Forest Plans Consultation, Coillte, First Floor, Block B, Marlinstown Office Park, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

37th Irish Garden Bird Survey is ready to take flight

BirdWatch Ireland's **Irish Garden Bird Survey**, kindly sponsored by **Ballymaloe**, is back for its 37th consecutive winter. The survey is very simple and asks people to spend a short amount of time each week watching their garden birds and recording what they see. It plays an important role in tracking the fortunes of some of Ireland's best-loved creatures and informing our work as a conservation charity.

The impact of the data collected by our participants over the past 37 years has been huge. Thanks to them, we know that **Robins**, **Blackbirds** and **Blue Tits** are the most common garden bird species in Ireland. We know that species such as **Great Spotted Woodpecker** are on the rise. We know that **Greenfinch** numbers have plummeted in recent years, a loss that can be almost entirely linked to **trichomoniasis** – a disease which mostly affects finches.

[See the results of last winter's Irish Garden Bird Survey and learn how you can take part](#)



Native Woodland Strategy 2026-2030 Public Consultation

Woodlands of Ireland is a partnership-based environmental charity founded in 1998, dedicated to native woodland conservation and expansion. Previously, Woodlands of Ireland, in conjunction with a range of public and private sector stakeholders, had developed a 5-year native woodland strategy for the period 2016 to 2020, which is now overdue for updating. You can view this document here: [A Strategy for Native Woodlands in Ireland 2016-2020](#).



Since that time, grant-aided native woodland establishment has grown to form c.40% of afforestation activity, while the **native woodland conservation scheme** has struggled to gain significant ground. Here are several factors which need to be considered in an updated strategy for 2026-2030:

- Native Woodland Conservation, Climate Resilient Reforestation, Native Forest Establishment, Emergent Woodland, Woodland Improvement Thinning, Continuous Cover Forestry and Neighbourwood grants are some existing funding mechanisms in the **Rol Forestry Programme 2023-2027**, which support the better management and expansion of woodlands largely composed of native species.
- The challenging **EU Nature Restoration Law** (NRL) legally bound woodland targets in the 2026-2030 period (10,000ha of recreated Oak woodland and c.4000 ha of alluvial (wet) woodland by 2030) require planning, implementation and workforce training and development for long-term maintenance in both the public and private sectors.
- Opportunities for timber production from native woodland and close to nature silviculture systems applied to them require consideration in a range of sites.
- A comprehensive tree cover education and training strategy is needed to achieve the DAFM Forestry Programme, **EU Water Framework Directive** and EU NRL targets.
- Irish Environmental Network (IEN)/ Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) and Public Participation Network (PPN) member groups' input is welcome and essential.
- Many new organisations have emerged to populate the fertile ground of native tree cover expansion in recent years and need to be included in this consultation.

To seek input from a diverse range of stakeholders in the creation of this new strategy for native woodlands, Woodlands of Ireland are conducting an online public consultation from now until **Friday, 16th January 2026**, followed by webinars in February and a March gathering.

To contribute, you can choose one or all of the following options:

- (1) Make your views known to Woodlands of Ireland through info@woodlandofireland.com
- (2) Complete the questionnaire at this link by 16th January:
<https://www.woodlandofireland.com/nws-consultation-form/>

(3) Contribute to webinars in February 2026, dates to be confirmed.
(4) Attend an in-person discussion group in March 2026 focused on the bullet points above and additional points raised from the consultation, location and date to be confirmed.

Links to the Consultation:

<https://www.woodlandofireland.com/native-woodland-strategy-2026-2030-public-consultation/>

<https://www.woodlandofireland.com/nws-consultation-form/>

Job Opportunities

Birdwatch Ireland

Marine Advocacy and Campaigns Officer

BirdWatch Ireland, Ireland's largest wildlife conservation NGO, is seeking a Marine Advocacy and Campaigns Officer to undertake advocacy and campaigning as part of our involvement and sub-grant agreement with the Irish Environmental Network and the Fair Seas campaign. This person will be an active member of the Policy and Advocacy team of BirdWatch Ireland and will also be centrally involved with the Fair Seas core team at the Irish Environmental Network. The Marine Advocacy and Campaigns Officer's line manager will be the Head of Policy and Advocacy at BirdWatch Ireland.

Closing Date January 7th

[Click here for more info and to apply](#)



Coalition 2030 Coordinator

Coalition 2030 is Ireland's civil society alliance dedicated to ensuring the State meets its obligations under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The Coordinator's role is to facilitate, organise and drive collective civil society actions undertaken by the coalition.

[Click here for full details about the role.](#)

The National Biodiversity Data Centre is Recruiting for Positions on the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan

Funding received for the next AIPP, will enable delivery of a 10-module island-wide programme over five years on: Protecting Farmland Pollinators; Creating Buzzing Communities; Local Authority and Public Body engagement; Transport Authority and Public Utilities engagement; Business and Industry engagement; Rare and Threatened Pollinator species; Monitoring; Research; Mapping; and Communications.

The National Biodiversity Data Centre is currently recruiting for six Project Officers, who will support the next phase.

The closing date for applications is 5pm on Friday the 2nd January 2026.

Click on the links below for more details, including the Candidate Information Booklets:

[Farmland Pollinator Officer \(2 positions available\)](#)

[Communities Pollinator Officer](#)

[Local Authorities and Public Bodies Pollinator Officer](#)

[Business and Industry Pollinator Officer](#)

[Rare Species Pollinator Officer](#)



Our Members

Find out who our members are & learn about their crucial work



Find out more about the work of IEN members

The Irish Environmental Network has 34 nationally active members, who work on a wide variety of environmental, biodiversity and sustainability issues.

You can read more about their work, get involved, or sign up to their newsletters to hear directly from them on their websites.

[See all members here](#)

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