



Irish  
Environmental  
Network

Good evening,

Below is our April newsletter. As always this newsletter is free to share with your PPN groups in full or in part. If you want to share the full newsletter here is the link: <https://conta.cc/3PLKIH9>

This month I'd like to highlight a webinar that Cork City PPN is running as part of their Lifelong Learning Festival: *What is the Public Participation Network (PPN)?* Aimed at the general public, this introductory webinar will teach about the PPN structure in general and the workings of Cork City PPN specifically.

Lastly, I am always available to share your news or announcements through this monthly newsletter. If you'd like to receive a reminder for a call for content (sent each month a few days before the newsletter goes out) please let me know and I will add you to a mailing list to receive the call for content. Otherwise, you can email me at any time with items to include in next months newsletter sent on the 1st of each month.

Is mise, le meas,  
Catherine.

(Irish Environmental Network/Environmental Pillar)



A chara Meath PPN,

I hope you're enjoying the returning warmth. With the lengthening days an interesting fact comes to mind that I heard from a regenerative farmer and soil health enthusiast: Plants follow the seasons not through how much light is available but by measuring the length of the night. It is the night that is the controlling factor! With the nights now shorter than the days we will see the explosion of plant life all around us.

Now on to this months news! Have a look below for new resources, announcements, training opportunities and a whole host of events for the Easter break and beyond. There's lots to do outside or at home, with opportunities to get involved in local groups, national campaigns or resources to use at home.

Grab a cuppa and enjoy browsing what's on offer this month!  
Le meas,

## Contents

### Community Groups Showcase

- Swords Woodland Association (Fingal)
- Ballinamore Biodiversity Gardening Group (Leitrim)
- Climate Action Louisburgh Locality (Mayo)
- Birdwatch Ireland

### Events

- See 'Quick Guide to Events'

### Resources

- Community Reusable Party Pack Now Available
- ECO-UNESCO Offering QQI-Accredited Level 5 Course in Sustainable Development
- A beginner's guide to the leafcutter bees and related species (Megachilidae) of Ireland
- Helping Nature at School

### Announcements

- 40 Stories for 40 Years: You could get a free sustainable coffee on ECO-UNESCO when you share your impact story!
- Cork Cycling Campaign Submissions Tracker
- A Digital Home for Ireland's Nature Communities Launches Nationwide

### Public Consultations, Surveys, Campaigns

- Hands Off Nature – The Campaign Continues!
- Hop To It National Frog Survey

### Funding Opportunities

- Creative Climate Action Fund III Now Open for Applications

### Footer

- Find out more about IEN member groups

## Quick Guide to Events

### April

- **1st - 14th:** Easter Hare Trail - Leitrim
- **11th - 12th:** Introduction to Permaculture with Philip Allen - Leitrim
- **25th @ 11am:** Community Gardens Ireland Spring Gathering and AGM 2026 - Online
- **28th @ 1pm:** Lifelong Learning Festival Webinar: What is the Public Participation Network (PPN)? - Online
- **Continues throughout April** (see link for dates and venues): This Spring, IWDG Is Hitting the Road!

### May

- **2nd @ 10am:** Knitting for Beginners - Leitrim
- **15th - 24th:** National Biodiversity Week
- **29th - 31st:** IWDG Residential Weekend Whale Watching Course - Wet Cork

### June

- **3rd @** World Ocean Week Conference - 3rd June 2026 - Cork City Hall

## 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.



## Swords Woodland Association

*Fingal*

We encourage the development of parkland woodland and urban forests and the protection of our natural habitat and waterways. We promote the creation of cycle ways, walkways and forest trails for the enjoyment of the population. We also support any other initiatives that will help to protect and develop our natural environment and thus ensure that the health and wellbeing of our citizens is to the forefront in future rezoning and housing development.

[Read more here](#)



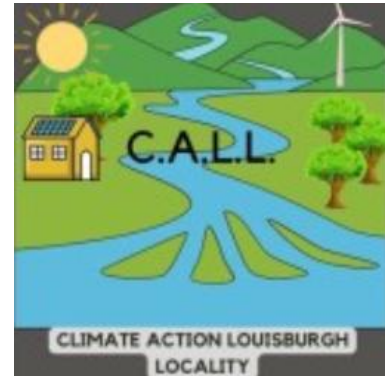
## Ballinamore Biodiversity Gardening Group

*Leitrim*

We at the BBGG seek to inspire, engage and educate ourselves and our community in living sustainably in harmony with nature and preserving the diversity of all life.

We aim to protect, restore, enhance and conserve nature in our community for the benefit of wildlife and the enjoyment of all.

[Follow them here](#)



## Climate Action Louisburgh Locality

*Mayo*

We are a not-for-profit voluntary group of like-minded individuals working towards a more sustainable future. We carry out actions to promote the reduction of carbon emissions and waste while facilitating biodiversity enhancement in our locality.

Our region extends from Killary Harbour to Clew Bay and from Lecanvey to Clare Island, including farmland, mountains, bog, islands, rivers, forest, ocean and urban areas with about 1,000 households.

We take climate action through diverse sub-groups that work independently and report back to the main group. We are always looking for volunteers to help carry out actions and expand CALL's reach.

[Read more here](#)

*IEN Member spotlight*



## Birdwatch Ireland

BirdWatch Ireland are the largest independent conservation organisation in Ireland. The primary objective of BirdWatch Ireland is the protection of wild birds and their habitats in Ireland.

[More info and get in touch](#)

[See all IEN members here](#)

## Events

### APRIL EVENTS



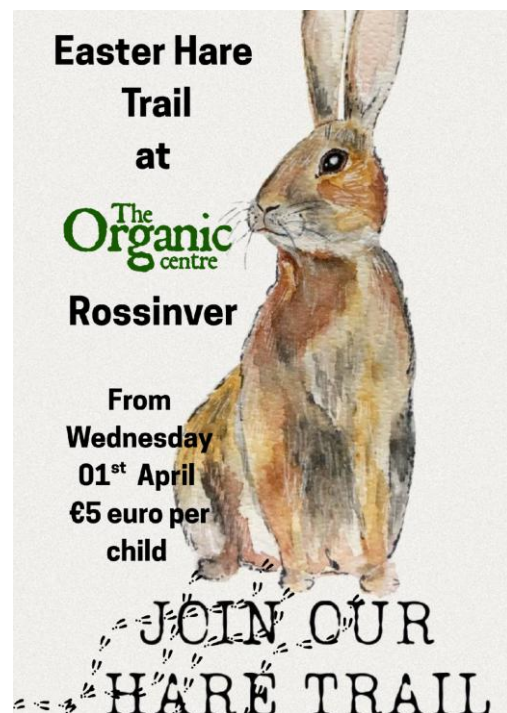
## Easter Hare Trail

*April 1st - 14th, 10am - 4pm  
Leitrim*

Easter Hare Trail-10am-4pm From Wednesday 1st April til Sunday 12th .

Wondering what to do with the family over the Easter break?

The Organic Centre has something extra special for all the family to enjoy. With a twist on the traditional Easter Egg hunt the centre will have its own Easter Hare Trail. The task is for the younger members of the family and you to find the rascal hares hiding all around the centre! Ask for your map at the shop. Find the wooden "hares" and claim your reward when you've completed the adventure. The Easter hare trail will run all day from Spy Wednesday April 1st til the end of the Easter holidays from 10am to 4pm and is five euro per child.



The Grass roof cafe will be open for nibbles for the period of the Easter break for the adventure, with hot chocolates for the children, and barista type coffees, plus more treats on each day.

[More info](#)



## Introduction to Permaculture with Philip Allen

Saturday 11th April 2026- Sunday 12th April-  
10am-4pm.  
Leitrim

A very timely course. The Organic Centre is delighted to welcome Philip Allen from 'Lagan Valley Permaculture Networking' who has been teaching permaculture since 1992. You will leave this weekend course with a good understanding how to build a productive garden, building systems that work together mimicking nature, whilst also going away with a new understanding of working together toward community self reliance and resilience.



[Click here for more information and to book.](#)



## Community Gardens Ireland Spring Gathering and AGM 2026

April 25th, 11am - 1.30pm  
Online

It is 100 years since Community Gardens and Allotments were signed into law and we are still calling for a garden in every community.

Join Community Gardens Ireland online to learn from each other, hear best practice, gain ideas, and support the community growing movement on the island of Ireland.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

This is also the chance to **join our 2026-2027 Committee**. CGI is Ireland's national representative body for Community Growing, entirely voluntary - the committee welcomes anyone with community growing experience alongside governance, communications, or any other relevant experience. If you would like to join a driven team, send us a short paragraph and join April 25th for the AGM. Email: [info@cgireland.org](mailto:info@cgireland.org)

## Lifelong Learning Festival Webinar: What is the Public Participation Network (PPN)?

April 28th, 1pm  
Online

As part of the **2026 Cork Lifelong Learning Festival** (22nd – 29th April), the Cork City Public Participation Network (PPN) is hosting an event introducing the PPN that is open to all.

Join Cork City PPN at this **Cork Lifelong Learning Festival 2026** webinar to learn about the PPN structure in general and the workings of Cork City PPN specifically. We will answer your questions and give you ideas on how and why to get involved in the PPN.

Join us for a lunchtime webinar on Tuesday, 28th of April at 1 pm.

Whether you are a seasoned volunteer or simply curious about how our city is run, this session offers a look at how community groups can influence local policy.

We will demystify what the PPN is, explain how it bridges the gap between residents and **Cork City Council**, and show you exactly how to get involved—whether as an individual or a local group.

[Read more and register here](#)



## This Spring, IWDG Is Hitting the Road!

*Continuing this April  
Clare, Galway, Kerry, Cork, Waterford, Wexford,  
Louth, Northern Ireland*

This spring, the IWDG Local Groups Roadshow is travelling all around our coastline. We'll be visiting IWDG local groups county by county to build community, strengthen capacity, hear from experienced local members, and learn more about Marine Protected Areas in collaboration with Fair Seas.

At the heart of this roadshow is meeting our members, listening to what matters locally, and strengthening our all-island community. The events are open to all including long-standing members, new members, and anyone interested in supporting whale and dolphin conservation from their local area.

If you're already an IWDG member, or thinking about becoming one :), we'd love to meet you, come check us out!

Times, dates, and venues will be available on the IWDG website at [iwdg.ie](http://iwdg.ie), and shared across IWDG and Fair Seas social media channels.

[Find more details here](#)



WINTER - SPRING 2026

### IWDG & FAIR SEAS LOCAL GROUPS ROADSHOW

Building knowledge, capacity and community around Ireland

We are visiting the IWDG community around Ireland's coastlines.  
Experienced data recorders | Local voices | Short film screening  
& Conversations about Marine Protected Areas.

Follow us to see our route and dates

[@irishwhaleanddolphingroup](#)  
[@fairseasireland](#)

FAIR SEAS

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## MAY & JUNE EVENTS

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The  
**Organic**  
centre

### Knitting for Beginners

with Eimear O'Neill

*May 2nd, 10am  
Leitrim*

Discover the joy of knitting and start your creative journey! In this hands-on workshop, you'll learn all the essential skills to make beautiful handmade pieces—from cozy hats to stylish jumpers. Reconnect with the heritage of handcrafting and join generations of knitters who have kept this timeless tradition alive.



What you'll learn: Casting on and binding off, Knit and purl stitches, Increasing and decreasing  
Reading and understanding knitting patterns

No experience needed. All wool and needles are provided (or bring your own if you prefer)  
Please note-Eimear also does a course 'Introduction to hand spinning' later in the year.

[Book now](#)

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## National Biodiversity Week 2026

*Save The Date*  
*May 15th - 24th*  
*Nationwide*



New events added every week! Check our calendar of events at [www.biodiversityweek.ie](http://www.biodiversityweek.ie).

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!

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The poster has a teal background. In the top left corner, there is a dark blue diagonal banner with the white text "SAVE THE DATE". In the center, there is a large white outline of a whale's tail. To the right of the tail is a white outline of the island of Ireland with a small red location pin on the west coast. Below the map, the text "CECAS CENTRE, MYROSS WOOD HOUSE" is written in small white capital letters. In the center, the main title "IWDG RESIDENTIAL WEEKEND WHALE WATCHING COURSES, SUMMER 2026" is written in bold white capital letters. Below the title, the location "CECAS, MYROSS WOOD HOUSE, LEAP, CO. CORK, P81 Y192" and the dates "MAY 29TH - 31ST" are written in white capital letters. A paragraph of smaller white text follows: "Join the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Ireland's leading marine conservation NGO, on a weekend whale-watching course, which includes indoor talks, guided land and boat based watches, in a pleasant surrounding and among like minded folk, who share our passion for whales and dolphins". At the bottom, there is a dark blue wavy line representing water. Below the water line, there are three white wavy lines representing waves. In the bottom right corner, the website "IWDG.IE" is written in white capital letters.

## IWDG Residential Weekend Whale Watching Course

*May 29th - 31st*  
*West Cork*

Looking for a weekend with a difference? Why not join the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (IWDG)

<https://scanner.topsec.com/?d=1406&r=show&u=www.iwdg.ie&t=3f8cfc8b329571b0ed1601600>

[4626d37cc503fff](#), Ireland's leading marine conservation NGO, on an immersive, residential weekend whale-watching course in West Cork over the June bank holiday weekend on May 29-31st. Combining indoor presentations, land-based watches and an offshore pelagic trip, this course will cater for all levels of interest, from the complete novice to the wildlife enthusiast who'd like to learn more about Ireland's marine megafauna, how to observe and identify them, IWDG's recording schemes and research, and how you, as Citizen Scientists, can contribute to their conservation. In taking part, you will also be supporting whale and dolphin conservation in Ireland. Suitable from ages of 18 years upwards.

[Get tickets here](#)



## World Ocean Week Conference - 3rd June 2026 - Cork City Hall

*June 3rd, 9:30am  
Cork*

Join us in Cork for the second Fair Seas Conference in 2026. We will be kicking off World Ocean Week 2026 with a splash in Cork Harbour. We will again bring ocean advocates, the fishing community, government, industry and key stakeholders together to map out Ireland's next steps for designating and managing a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

Learn from best practices from across the world, be part of the conversation and develop an understanding of how Ireland can become a world leader in ocean conservation.

Join us in Cork City Hall on Wednesday, 3rd of June, from 9. 30 am to 4.30 pm.

[Book your ticket today](#)

## Resources

## Community Reusable Party Pack Now Available



The County Carlow Environmental Network is hosting a **community reusable party pack** which can be borrowed for free by members of the community. It is part of an initiative aimed to help communities across the Southern Waste Region celebrate more sustainably.

Each reusable party pack caters for 30, with cups, plates, cutlery, jugs, and bowls, as photographed above, along with bunting that has been created by the Community Reuse Network Ireland (CRNI), using upcycled textiles. The kit all fits snugging into a plastic box for transportation and storage, also supplied.

All items are washable, reusable and designed to be shared within the community. They can be used for any type of community gathering, celebration or event.

### How will it work?

When a celebration or event is planned, residents can borrow the pack from us by emailing Molly at [info@ccen.ie](mailto:info@ccen.ie)

After the event, the items are cleaned and returned, ready for the next occasion. This cycle of borrowing, using, and returning keeps the pack in circulation, reduces reliance on single use items and supports a circular community by keeping resources in use for longer. By cutting down on single use catering products, the initiative also helps reduce local waste management costs.



## ECO-UNESCO Offering QAI-Accredited Level 5 Course in Sustainable Development

**ECO-UNESCO's QAI Level 5 Sustainable Development course is now open for enrolment!**

This course is a part of ECO-UNESCO's QAI-accredited Training and Education programme, which offers multiple courses aimed at equipping young people with the skills and knowledge to become active leaders in environmental causes. The Level 5 Sustainable Development course

provides the opportunity for 25 participants to learn how sustainability works in practice, spanning over 12 weeks and starting in April 2026. Participants examine topics such as climate change, biodiversity, sustainable communities, economics, the agriculture industry, consumerism and its resulting impact on the planet.

The course explores key themes in Sustainable Development through discussion, examination, investigation, analysis, and planning. Upon completion, participants are awarded with 15 QQI credits that can contribute toward a Level 5 Major award, supporting progression into further education, training or sustainability-focused roles.

To learn about eligibility and course pricing, please contact [training@ecounesco.ie](mailto:training@ecounesco.ie), or head to to submit a request form: [Level 5: Sustainable Development - ECO-UNESCO - Environmental Youth Organisation](#).

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## A beginner's guide to the leafcutter bees and related species (Megachilidae) of Ireland

Free course from the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

In this course, you will learn to identify Ireland's leafcutter bees, mason bees, sharp-tailed bees and wool-carder bees.

[Learn more here](#)



### About this course

Free

2 lessons

0 hours of video content

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## Helping Nature at School

Free course from the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

This is a FREE course designed for teachers, educators, principals, caretakers, SNAs, secretaries, Parents' Associations and indeed everyone involved in our education community across Irish primary, secondary and preschools.

In a simple and relaxed manner, you will explore the importance of biodiversity and learn practical steps to help it at your school.

[Learn more here](#)



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**Announcements**



## 40 Stories for 40 Years: You could get a free sustainable coffee on ECO-UNESCO when you share your impact story!

In 2026, ECO-UNESCO is celebrating 40 years of empowering young people and conserving the environment. To commemorate this milestone, ECO-UNESCO is putting a call-out for inspiring stories, big or small, from anyone who has had an impactful experience with them over the years. Tell a little bit about yourself, answer one of the four prompts provided, and submit! 40 of the most inspiring stories get a free sustainable coffee from Cloud Picker Café on Pearse Street Dublin.

Please fill out this quick questionnaire (5 mins): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XH5T7LT>

### Cork Cycling Campaign Submissions Tracker



**Cork  
Cycling  
Campaign**

We track where Cork's cycling investment is really going. Our Funding Tracker reveals progress, gaps, and stalled projects across the city—helping you hold decision-makers accountable and push for a safer, fully connected cycle network.

As part of our ongoing work, the Cork Cycling Campaign regularly engages with public consultations from Cork City and Cork County Council. While we always encourage our members to make their own submissions to [Part 8 and other consultation processes](#), we also prepare and submit collective responses on behalf of the campaign. These reflect our shared expertise, lived experience, and strong local knowledge of cycling conditions across Cork.

We believe that sharing these submissions openly helps foster transparency and gives the wider community a clearer picture of our priorities and the reasoning behind our recommendations.

[Have a look at the tracker here](#)

## **A Digital Home for Ireland's Nature Communities Launches Nationwide**

**Nature Network Ireland is launching a Digital Hub. This will be a national home for groups working together to reduce the impacts of climate change.**



**Nature  
Network  
Ireland**

Funded by Community Foundation Ireland and the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, the Digital Hub is a free-to-use directory, sharing space, and interactive map. We are inviting you to join this collective movement today.

Why should your group join the Hub?

1. Increase Your Visibility: Pin your location on our national map so the public, stakeholders, and partners can uncover the work happening in their own backyards.
1. Share and Access Resources: From event spaces and restoration sites to technical biodiversity training and collaborative campaigns, the Hub is a space to give and get support.
1. Work Together, Not Alone: Move from isolated local effort to a national network. By sharing knowledge and supporting each other, we can work collectively to reduce the effects of climate change across Ireland."

Registration is free. Join the Digital Hub today and help us strengthen the national movement for nature:

👉 [Join the Digital Hub Here](#)

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**Public Consultations, Surveys & Campaigns**

## Hands Off Nature – The Campaign Continues!

The European Commission is preparing another “omnibus” package that will weaken multiple environmental laws at once: from water and chemicals to nature restoration and industrial pollution. This deregulation is presented as “simplification,” but its real-world impact is far from simple. Fewer rules, less responsibilities for polluters, and greater risks to people’s health and safety.

Weakening environmental laws sends a dangerous signal: are we putting industry interests before people's health? When authorities fail to act and allow environmental harm to persist, real humans are the ones left paying the price.

These reckless attacks threaten our clean drinking water, safe food, fresh air, and healthy nature.

We demand that our European leaders defend the laws that protect people and nature, not bow to polluters and vested interests.

Because when nature’s protections are weakened, everyone pays the price, including our kids and future generations.

This is a choice: the health of 450 million Europeans vs. short-term gains for a few.

[Sign now](#). Don't let polluters speak for you. Give nature a voice!

Use our webtool to remind EU leaders to keep their Hands Off Nature.

[More information](#)

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## Hop To It National Frog Survey

Every year IPCC needs the help of people all over Ireland to take part in the National Frog Survey Ireland. Please record where frogs, spawn and tadpoles occur in the Hop to It Irish Frog Survey.

[Take part here](#)



**Funding Opportunities**

## Creative Climate Action Fund III Now Open for Applications

Applications close on Wednesday 15th April 2026.

Creative Ireland is delighted to announce the launch of a new €6.5 million Creative Climate Action Fund. It will support imaginative, large-scale, creative, cultural and artistic initiatives that support communities around climate change and empower people to make meaningful behavioural change.

The Creative Climate Action Fund III (2026-2029) is an initiative of the Creative Ireland Programme in partnership with the Shared Island Initiative and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications.

The fund will support ambitious, durational projects that bring together expertise from the creative sectors, climate science, and community engagement. We are seeking proposals that respond creatively to Ireland's key national climate priorities, including those set out in the Climate Action Plan 2025, the National Dialogue on Climate Action, and the work of the Just Transition Commission. Funding between €400,000 and €750,000 is available for large-scale, public engagement projects, running from 2026 to 2029.

[More info here](#)



### 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](#)