



# Irish Peatland Conservation Council Annual Report and Financial Accounts 2023

COMHAIRLE CHAOMHNAITHE PHORTAIGH NA HÉIREANN

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IEN



Irish Environmental Network



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Images: IPCC’s Conservation and Education Officers Sorcha Doyle and Ruairí Mac an Tuile share their water monitoring skills with Transition Year student Beatrice Gannon on Girley Bog, Co. Meath. Bog Asphodel and Heath spotted-orchid in bloom on Coad Bog, Co. Kerry.



# Message from the IPCC Committee of Management



We are delighted to present the Annual Report and Financial Accounts of the Irish Peatland Conservation Council for 2023.

During the year, we welcomed the recommendations made for peatlands within the report from the Citizen Assembly on Biodiversity Loss. These closely align with the IPCC's Peatland Conservation Action Plans 2020 and 2030.

We undertook a number of peatland research projects including:

- \* Estimating the store of carbon on Killyconny Bog SAC, Co. Cavan.
- \* Completing a two year *Sphagnum* moss transfer restoration on Cloncrow (New Forest) Bog NHA, Co. Westmeath as part of our work on the Interreg North-West Europe, Care-Peat.
- \* Developing a community-based Conservation and Management Plan for Griston Bog, Co. Limerick.



We continued to monitor peatland sites nationally, responding to scoping and planning applications and making submissions in regard to rehabilitation works on Bord na Móna Peatland Climate Action Scheme (PCAS) sites.

We met with over 1000 visitors and groups during the year both at the Bog of Allen Nature Centre and nationally through our peatland education outreach programme. A new fence and gates were installed at the centre.

There were no changes to the IPCC Committee of Management in 2023. We welcomed three new patrons: Tina Claffey, Kathrine Geoghegan and Helen Conneely.

The voluntary Committee of Management held eight meetings in 2023. Topics of discussion included the regulation of IPCC's finances and operations, health and safety assessments and compliance with the Charities Regulator governance code.



We are grateful for all who contributed financially to the Save the Bogs Campaign in 2023, including Friends of the Bog, public bodies and philanthropic individuals and groups.

We wish to thank the IPCC volunteers and staff that worked throughout the year taking action for peatlands. The difference they and other supporters made can be seen in the details of our work in the following pages.

2023 Committee of Management:

John Lynch (Chair)	Catherine FitzGerald (Secretary)
Martin Kelly	Kate Macnamara
Miriam Mooney	Tiernan Murray
John Pierce	Eugene Dunbar
Rebecca Kummert	

Images from top: Tina Claffey, Kathrine Geoghegan and Helen Conneely

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council's (IPCC) mission is to conserve a representative portion of Irish peatlands for people to enjoy now and in the future. We run the national Save the Bogs Campaign, we own a network of six peatland nature reserves in Kerry, Kildare, Meath, Clare and Waterford and we manage the Bog of Allen Nature Centre, which is open to visitors and school groups. We provide an extensive information service on our website at [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie). IPCC has four staff members, who are supported by volunteers. Four thousand individuals subscribe to our campaigns.

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council confirms that our organisation complies with the governance code for the community, voluntary and charitable sector in Ireland. 31st October 2021

# Conserving and Protecting Peatlands in Ireland



Throughout 2023, the IPCC owned and managed six peatland reserves nationally.

On **Lodge Bog**, Co. Kildare, Bord na Móna installed four new peat dams to support water retention on the reserve. Quarterly water-level monitoring was carried out by IPCC staff and volunteers during which 810 causal wildlife observations from 58 species were recorded. These included: 39 bird species including the red-listed Meadow Pipit and Snipe, 8 butterfly species including one record of Green Hairstreak and 16 records of the Large Heath butterfly and 5 bumblebee species including the Moss Carder Bee, which had been a new record for the site in 2022. A pair of Curlew returned to Lodge Bog in spring however no curlew breeding was observed in 2023.



IPCC continued to engage with the national butterfly and bumblebee monitoring schemes on **Lullymore West**, Co. Kildare. 1378 butterflies from 19 species were observed along the butterfly transect over 26 weeks. 71 bumblebees from 6 species were observed during the 8 bumblebee surveys carried out between March and October. In spring, a Marsh Fritillary larval nest count recorded 53 larval webs the autumn larval web count saw a drop in the number of larval webs with 12 webs recorded. Marsh Fritillary populations do tend to fluctuate as a part of their biology, and due to high temperatures in the summer the survey may also have missed some larvae that went into hibernation early.



Throughout 2023 **Fenor Bog**, Co. Waterford continued to be managed in liaison with the Móin Fhionnurach Development Association. Fenor Bog was surveyed by the NPWS in September 2023 as part of a National Fen Survey for Ireland.

A fire on **Coad Bog**, Co. Kerry, was reported to IPCC by a member of the public in March 2023. IPCC staff visited the site with a local volunteer to assess the impact of the fire and replace damaged piezometers. Wildlife recorded during the site visit included the Keeled Skimmer dragonfly, the red-listed Meadow Pipit and amber-listed Chough.



A *Sphagnum* moss transfer restoration project using micropropagated *Sphagnum* moss was undertaken on **Girley Bog** in 2023 with funding support from Meath County Council under their Heritage Grant Scheme 2023. The micropropagated *Sphagnum* moss was sourced from the UK company BeadaMoss with support from Bord na Móna. The *Sphagnum* moss was planted in two trial areas consisting of mainly bare peat in October 2023. Quarterly water-level monitoring was completed. 109 wildlife observations from 26 species were recorded. These included the Black Darter dragonfly, Common Frog, Large Heath butterfly, Raven, Meadow Pipit and Common Snipe.

In 2023, the NPWS completed an invasive plant survey for Tullagher Bog Special Area of Conservation (SAC), within which IPCC's reserve, **Ketts Lough**, Co. Clare is located. Sitka Spruce was recorded in two locations within the boundary of IPCC owned land at Ketts Lough while Japanese Knotweed was recorded in one location close to the IPCC boundary.

Images from top: Keeled Skimmer dragonfly recorded on Coad Bog, World Curlew Day on Lodge Bog, micropropagated *Sphagnum* moss transferred on Girley Bog, and one of the new peat dams on Lodge Bog retaining water on the reserve  
© Irish Peatland Conservation Council

At the **Bog of Allen Nature Centre**, IPCC replaced the entrance gates and fencing with funding support from the Drehid Scheme. A total of 2412 wildlife observations from 71 species were made at the Nature Centre during 2023, with garden bird data submitted to BirdWatch Ireland's Garden Bird Survey. Under licence the IPCC also supported the study of House Martins through bird ringing.

IPCC wish to thank all volunteers who helped IPCC monitor and manage the nature reserves in 2023.

# Save the Bogs Campaign Achievements 2023



The Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC) continues to campaign for the protection of peatlands in Ireland. This is communicated in a number of ways such as through IPCC's social media campaigns and posts, press releases, interviews, policy submissions and consultations, through partnerships with environmental groups both locally and internationally, through education programmes, publications and through essential peatland volunteer skill sharing days.

## Lobbying

The IPCC wrote to Minister Ryan requesting the inclusion of a tax on horticultural products. The cost of peat-free compost is nearly double that of peat-based and is un-fair to consumers looking for the sustainable environmentally safe option. The price of peat-based media should be increased to reduce the disparity between the products and the proceeds of peat-based should be used to fund restoration.



The IPCC with representatives from the Environmental Pillar met with Minister Noonan regarding the proposed Nature Restoration Law and the establishment of a working group. The group also handed a letter to the Minister requesting a change of mandate for both Coillte and Bord na Móna as their mandates are no longer seen as fit for purpose.

## Citizen Assembly on Biodiversity Loss

The IPCC attended the launch of the Citizen Assembly on Biodiversity Loss report and welcomed the recommendations relating to peatlands. These included the formal designation of the Raised Bog Natural Heritage Areas, cross-agency (national and international) coordination, adequate funding for restoration and management of protected sites, increasing educational awareness and integrating biodiversity management in to all Government agencies and State bodies have all been addressed by the report.



## Soil Mission Mirror Group

The IPCC were invited to collaborate and engage with the Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme 2021-2027 which aims to put research and innovation at the forefront of the EU's mission to restore the 60-70% of soils within the EU that are in a bad condition. The IPCC attended three meetings in 2023 and highlighted areas of legislation and policy in Ireland that needs to be strengthened including horticultural peat extraction, research, planning and conservation.



## Interreg North-West Europe, Care-Peat

IPCC completed the second year of the *Sphagnum moss* transfer restoration monitoring on Cloncrow (New Forest) Bog SAC, Co. Westmeath as part of this project. IPCC prepared a report on the outcomes of our work over two years we noted this length of time is insufficient to determine whether this method of restoration has a positive impact on peat and carbon accumulation in the bog.

Images from top: IPCC's Policy Officer Tristram Whyte with representatives of the Environmental Pillar meeting with Minister Noonan, The IPCC attend the launch of the Citizen's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss, water monitoring on Girley Bog, Co. Meath and IPCC attend an on-line webinar on Ireland's Soil Mission Mirror Group © IEN and IPCC

## Peatland Finance Ireland

Peatland Finance Ireland is an initiative that aims to create a national and catchment scale financing system for restoring peatlands in Ireland. It aims to create a Peatland Standard that rewards carbon, biodiversity and other impacts, feeding into the development of broader standards for landscape restoration, and establish a system for monitoring and verification of restoration results on different peat landscape types. IPCC joined the Community Advisory Group and attended one meeting in 2023.

# Monitoring Peatlands in Ireland - Casework

## Casework

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council responded to 13 site issues and made submissions on 8 policy documents in 2023 (see page 5 to 8).

Site Name, County	Issue	IPCC Action / Outcome
Aghafin Bog, Co. Roscommon	Peat Extraction Planning Enquiry	Member of the public contacted IPCC regarding peat extraction at this site. Roscommon County Council had previously investigated this site from previous complaints and closed the file as they did not discover any commercial activity. IPCC highlighted that the commercial operation is completely visible from aerial imagery and this is horticultural industrial activity, not domestic turbary.
Ahgameelick Bog, Co. Offaly.	Peat Extraction Planning Enquiry	Ahgameelick Bog featured in the IPCC Bog of Allen Heritage Survey, 2005 as it one of the last remnants of the Clonsast bog, an anonymous member of the public reported to IPCC what sounds to be horticultural sod moss extraction, a commercial development.
Mostrim Bog, Co. Longford/ Westmeath	Peatlands Climate Action Scheme a Bord na Móna Rehabilitation Plan	This site is to receive the enhanced rehabilitation/ restoration. as part of the Peatlands and Climate Action Scheme. IPCC highlighted that this site is a good example of how regulation and policy had failed to protect peatland habitat as even after formal commitment to protect parts of Mostrim Bog it was developed regardless. IPCC also highlighted that areas of remnant raised bog need to be protected from turbary and Bord na Móna should make an effort to purchase turbary plots from landowners so they can be included in the restoration.
Ballaghurt & Gleb Bogs, Co. Offaly	Peatlands Climate Action Scheme a Bord na Móna Rehabilitation Plan	This is site is to receive the enhanced rehabilitation/ restoration as part of the Peatlands and Climate Action Scheme. This site also incorporates Clonlyon Glebe, which IPCC has previously requested to be designated as an NHA due to the presence of unique habitat yet has since been left to degrade. With the restoration Clonlyon Glebe should once again be put forward or designation.
Sliabh Beagh Eco-Tourism Project, Co. Monaghan and Co. Fermanagh	Ecological Impacts Assessments	The project is at the route selection stage and seventeen routes are proposed which could be developed to facilitate tourism. The area is rich in designated sites (including a Ramsar site) which may be impacted by the development for tourism for example increases in traffic/people and fragmentation of habitats will impact on the designated sites and their biodiversity. There will also be heightened risks of invasive species. IPCC did not favour one route but highlighted conservation issues with all of them while favouring existing tracks to minimise disturbance and requested that restoration and stabilisation of the environment also be a feature of the proposed project.

# Monitoring Peatlands in Ireland - Casework

Site Name, County	Issue	IPCC Action / Outcome
Clooncunny Wind Farm, Achonry, Co. Sligo	Scoping, Jennings O' Donovan & Partner Ltd	There is a high number of designated sites (>15) which support many species that need due regard within any planning proposal. The IPCC highlighted that works should account for the bird nesting season to ensure minimal disturbance. Nitrogen impacts needs to be investigated as the increase in deposition can cause loss of habitat and is becoming more of an issue. Co. Sligo has lost 59% of it's peatland and restoration is important if the biodiversity emergency is to be reversed.
Dyrick Hill Wind Farm, Co. Waterford	Planning Observation on Proposed Wind farm	While the developers assume that there is no peatland present, they also acknowledge that there is Article 17 Dry Heath. Peat depth probes show 0-40cm depth at places but the developers have classified the site as not being peat. A new report from the IUCN shows that organic weight is a better indicator of peat habitats, we must conserve the full spectrum of peatland habitats. The developers have not taken into account cumulative impacts of nitrogen with other developments and also state that an increase in 0.12% mortality of golden plover and 0.1% loss of habitat for them is acceptable but they fail to assess how these may agnostically act with all other developments.
Fartrin Bog, Co. Cavan	Planning Objection on Proposed Quarrying Activities	The proposed development has not recognised the importance of raised bog habitat and have failed to adequately address any possible impacts to the neighbouring Annex I Habitat Degraded Raised Bog (EU Habitats and Species Directive) located at Fartrin Bog North and South. While not currently designated these sites feature internationally recognised and globally rare raised bog habitat. Possible affects from the proposed development range from drainage, pollution, aerial deposition of minerals, aerial deposition of nitrogen from increased traffic, increased dumping from increased footfall, invasive species, disturbance to wildlife from noise, construction and lighting.
Ballivor Wind Farm, Co. Meath and Co. Westmeath	Planning Observation to An Bord Pleanála Strategic infrastructure Development Application for a Wind farm by Bord na Móna	This site featured within the Peatlands and Climate Action Scheme (PCAS). Restoration will be surrounded by turbines hindering effective recovery. The PCAS site should be a poster site yet the turbines may affect species such as birds meaning that land which should be available to support species on the brink of extinction will not be used to its full potential. The Ballivor Bog Group should be used fully for the restoration of biodiversity.

# Monitoring Peatlands in Ireland - Casework

Site Name, County	Issue	IPCC Action / Outcome
Ramelton Flood Relief Scheme, Co. Donegal	Scoping for Donegal County Council by ByrneLooby	The IPCC made comments on the Environmental Constraints Study Report for the proposed flood relief scheme, namely, that restoration of peatland habitats should be a feature of the plan as this may help flood relief by allowing wetland habitats to hold, filter and release water slowly while also providing space for biodiversity. The destruction of peatland habitats have contributed to the effects of climate change and this needs to be reversed. The IPCC also highlighted that there are designated sites which need due regard and that there are sites within the Wetland Surveys Ireland map that have been identified but not received an ecological survey
Cloghercor/Gwebarra Wind farm, Co. Donegal	Planning Observation to An Bord Pleanála	IPCC made an observation on the strategic infrastructure development application for a proposed wind farm within an area of a high number of designated sites and the wind farm would be detrimental to the conservation objectives of the designated sites. The drainage to facilitate the development will degrade the habitats and the roads and infrastructure will fragment and decrease the effectiveness of conservation at the landscape scale. Co. Donegal only has 27% of its peatland range left and it needs to be protected.
Derryhinch, Drumman, Derryarkin and Ballybeg Bogs, Co. Meath, Co. Westmeath and Co. Offaly	Remedial Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Substitute Consent for Historical Peat Extraction from Tobin Consulting on behalf of Bord na Móna	IPCC highlighted that while Bord na Móna were successful in their mandated effort to create economy and jobs in the midlands, the environmental cost has been high, with a new report in nature showing that Ireland has lost more wetlands in the last 200 years (90%) than any other country in the world, and yet we learn from this consultation that it was never properly regulated. The IPCC pointed to different sites which had been scientifically identified to contain important conservation worthy features yet still were developed for profit. The IPCC highlighted species which have become extinct because of peat extraction.
Ballykett Wind farm, Co. Clare.	Scoping from Jennings O'Donovan & Partner Ltd	The scoping report fails to acknowledge Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas. Construction works need to be cognisant of Section 40 of the Wildlife Acts to protect breeding bird species. Tullaheer Lough & Bog SAC, contains transition mire, soak systems and lagg zones which can be susceptible to external water influences and the proposed project needs to ascertain the risks in this regard. Greenland White-Fronted Geese and Whooper Swans are known to use the SAC. The proposed development needs to cumulatively assess its impacts with the other 17 wind farms listed as within 20km and an other developments and activities. Tullaheer Lough & Bog SAC has already breached the critical load for nitrogen causing impacts to sensitive species, how will this development contribute?

# Protecting Peatlands in Ireland - Policy Submissions



Images from top: Durlough Bog, Co. Donegal, Mongan Bog, Co. Tipperary, Fербane Bog SAC, Co. Offaly and Cloncrow, (New Forest) Bog NHA, Co. Westmeath examples of peatland sites that IPCC visited during 2023 hosting peatland education outreach, offering community support and meeting with peatland stakeholders © IPCC

Irish Peatland Conservation Council made submissions to the following policies and consultations in 2023:

## **PREPSOIL, Copa-Cogeca-Brussels, EU Soil Horizon**

This study is looking at the utilisation of peat soils in Ireland and what is needed to further the EU Soil Mission of restoring the 60%-70% of poor condition soils in Europe, how the eNGOs can help and the relationship of soils to the work Irish Peatland Conservation Council. The study also wanted to know how an eNGO manages nature reserves alongside the government and how have the nature reserves improved with restoration since work has been taken to restore them. The IPCC highlighted how the nature reserves are also used for education furthering the IPCC's mission of raising awareness.

## **Biodiversity Information System for Europe - User Needs Survey by the European Environment Agency**

The European Environment Agency and European Topic Centre for Biodiversity and Ecosystems aim to understand the diverse needs and preferences of stakeholders required in regards to having a central repository of information on biodiversity for all of Europe. The survey was interested in learning what types of data eNGOs work with most, how we use it and what would enable and support organisations to collect, manage and share data on biodiversity.

## **Blue Marble Research by DEFRA's Lowland Agricultural Peat Team Management Consultation**

The survey was at the expert stakeholder phase and aims to help DEFRA in sustainably managing lowland peatlands in tandem with agricultural practices by finding out the needs and wants of the stakeholders. The IPCC highlighted that overstocking, development, fragmentation, erosion are issues with peatlands and these impacts need to be managed and reduced to responsibly care for the ecosystem services that peatland provides.

## **Ramsar Wetland Link International 5th Strategic Plan Consultation**

IPCC highlighted areas that the Ramsar convention needs to take into account and promote to further the protection of internationally important and rare wetlands of conservation concern. Improving the green economy would reduce peat extraction pressures which has been a traditional pressure on the peatlands of Ireland.

## **National Biodiversity Centre's Strategic Plan 2024-2028 Consultation**

The National Biodiversity Data Centre is preparing its Strategic Plan to ensure that it represents and is able to fulfil its aims in supporting citizen scientists to record data on biodiversity. The IPCC highlighted the importance of providing a platform for data collection which is easy for the public to engage with.

## **Community Wetlands Forum Strategic Plan 2024-2029 Consultation**

The IPCC highlighted the excellent work of the Community Wetlands Forum engaging with wetland groups nationwide and encouraged the group to consider to develop policies on a number of peatland issues including wind farms and amenity infrastructure to guide wetland groups to ensure peatland habitat is managed for biodiversity and climate.



# Protecting Peatlands in Ireland

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Images from top: Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) and Heath Milkwort (*Polygala serpyllifolia*) examples of some of the unique peatland biodiversity, one of the ecosystem services of Irish peatland habitat, photographed on Blanket Bog habitat, Co. Mayo. © IPCC

## County Meath Heritage Strategy 2023-2030

During this consultation the IPCC highlighted the loss of 92% of the County's peatland through drainage and extraction and how this has affected biodiversity, the natural heritage of the County. To improve climate resilience and support the Natura 2000 Network IPCC also highlighted that restoration of non-designated peatland habitats should be increased and a network of the peatland sites be created with ecological corridors linking them. Amenity on peatland sites should also only be developed if it does not affect the quality of conservation.

## National Parks & Wildlife Service Legislation Consultation

The IPCC were asked by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to recommend improvements to national environmental legislation. IPCC highlighted a number of issues regarding biodiversity, protection of designated sites, planning enforcement, accessibility to legislation and the mandates of state-owned companies which should be changed to reflect the ownership of sites being managed for biodiversity.

## Supporting Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Peatland Researchers

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council facilitate interviews to support undergraduate and postgraduate peatland researchers further their studies.

### Maynooth University, Ireland

Study to investigate the competing tensions for advancing Sustainable Development Goal 11 in regional Ireland with specific focus on the peatlands. This study is aiming to provide a framework so that social, environmental, and economic impacts are balanced and that can help to empower local communities to define and advance towards sustainable living for themselves. The IPCC highlighted the importance of peatlands to biodiversity and local communities and that a community can not be sustainable without due regard for peatlands and their ecosystem services.

### Wageningen University, The Netherlands

Masters Thesis asking the IPCC of the extent of natural and social restoration processes in Irish and Dutch raised bogs. What the two countries can learn from each other. It is interested in the input/opinions of a wide range of stakeholders involved with Abbeylax, Clara and/or Girley bog.

### Uppsala University, Sweden

Sustainable Development and the Future of Bogs thesis investigating the peatlands and bogs in Ireland, specifically understanding and developing different future visions for these landscapes based on the views of different stakeholders and organisations involved peatlands, their protection and also their every-day use.

### University College Dublin, Ireland

Masters thesis exploring the role of NGO's, community groups and private protected areas in the creation and management of protected areas for conservation. The IPCC shared the site specific conservation goals, management plans and are monitoring of IPCC reserves conducted by staff, volunteers.

# Protecting Peatlands in Ireland



Images from top: IPCC attend the Irish Peatland Society study tour 2023, Lemanaghan bog trackway, bird ringing at the Bog of Allen Nature Centre and visitors attending IPCC peatland information stand at the inaugural Kildare Biodiversity conference. © IPCC

## **Dublin City University, Ireland**

Studying investigating the acceptance of solar farms in communities. The IPCC made the observation that preservation of the landscape is more important than solar farms in regards to peatland. The biodiversity and climate change emergency has been caused by habitat destruction, we can not reverse this by putting solar farms on these landscapes as that only fixes the energy needs part of the problem, to reverse biodiversity loss we have to reverse habitat decline and loss. Climate change is a sensitive issue that requires immediate action and solar farms should not be on cutaways as biodiversity recovery is more important.

**The IPCC engage with a wide range of peatland stakeholders through our membership of national and community engagement groups:**

### **Peatlands Council**

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council attended one online meeting of the Peatland Council.

### **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Appeals Board**

The IPCC reviewed documents for two sites and attended two meetings of the board in 2023.

### **Ramsar Wetlands Committee**

Only one field study visit to Marble Arch Caves exploring blanket bog restoration was held in 2023. IPCC did not attend due to the advance bookings and there was no online option. The IPCC continue to be a member of the Irish Ramsar Committee.

### **Irish Environmental Network (IEN)**

The IPCC are a member of the IEN. The IPCC attended five meetings and workshops during 2023. Themes included the Citizen's Assembly on Biodiversity Report and the committee that will be established to oversee the implementation of the recommendations, IEN's Fundraising Capacity Building and Support Webinars, an introduction to Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Defenders and the Annual General Meeting.

### **Environmental Pillar**

The Environmental Pillar met early in the year at Customs House to discuss the Nature Restoration Law with Minister Malcom Noonan and to also hand a statement from the Pillar stating that the mandates to Coillte and Bord na Móna should be changed to reflect biodiversity and climate change. IPCC also met with the Environment Pillar to discuss the strategies and advocacy priorities for the forthcoming year, the Pillars position on good agricultural and environmental condition position paper and the Pillar's plenary.

### **Abbeyleix Technical Advisory Group**

There were no meeting of this group in 2023. The IPCC continue to be a member of the Abbeyleix Technical Advisory Group.

### **Sustainable Water Authority Network (SWAN)**

There were no meetings of the Sustainable Water Authority Network in 2023. The IPCC remain a member.

# Protecting Peatlands in Ireland

## Irish Peatland Society (IPS)

The IPCC are members of the Irish Peatland Society. In 2023 the IPCC attended the annual conference hosted over two days in October exploring peatland archaeology. Site visits included the Corlea Trackway, Lemanaghan trackway and Clonydonnin Bog NHA and Mongan Bog SAC.



## Irish Uplands Forum

The IPCC attended eight meetings during the year including the AGM hosted in Roundwood, Co. Wicklow in June. Work included supporting with the development of a new online educational resource exploring upland biodiversity.



## National Peatlands Park

The group met three times in 2023. One meeting was regarding the Ballydermot wind farm amenity plan out for consultation from Bord na Móna. IPCC questioned what impacts to biodiversity the tracks and pathways will have and how will conservation at landscape level be impacted, especially from the hydrological management. Another meeting was held at the Lullymore Heritage and Discovery Park with Bord na Móna, BirdWatch Ireland Kildare, Wild Kildare and the Lullymore Discovery and Heritage Park. Bord na Móna were asked as to why they have not changed the layout of the plan since the amenity plan publication and the consultation responses from environmental NGOs. Bord na Móna expressed that the site is not large enough to accommodate all turbines west of the Rathangan to Edenderry road, yet Mount Lucas has 38 turbines and half the size. The project has still not gone to planning. The Peatlands Park group also met with the Peatlands Management Unit of the National Parks and Wildlife Service who is leading the National Peatlands Park feasibility study as part of the National Peatlands Strategy.



## AI2Peat project

AI2Peat is funded by Science Foundation Ireland and aims to contribute to the restoration, conservation, monitoring and mapping of peatlands across the whole island of Ireland through the leverage of Artificial Intelligence (AI) along with domain expert knowledge from the field to assess and continually monitor Ireland's peatlands in a structured manner. Its consortium is formed by CeADAR - Ireland's Centre for Applied AI, iCRAG - the SFI Research Centre in Applied Geosciences and National Parks and Wildlife Service. The IPCC supports this project as a contributor and attended two meetings in 2023.



## Climate Influence on Past Carbon Accumulation by Irish blanket Bogs

A Maynooth University Science Foundation Ireland Frontiers for the Future grant funded project researching records of past carbon accumulation rates during recent millennia, by analysing peat cores taken from blanket bogs around Ireland. The carbon accumulation records as well as additional records of past water table levels, vegetation changes and peat decomposition would show the influence that changes in climate in the past had on blanket bog environments and carbon accumulation. The IPCC were invited to be a contributor on this project supporting with public engagement. In 2023 the IPCC met with the researchers and included an article in Peatland News autumn 2023. Further contributions will be made as the project develops.

Images from top: IPCC tour Abbeyleix Bog, Co. Laois with members of the Community Wetlands Forum, IPCC guide Older Voices Chat Café participants on a walk at Pollardstown Fen, SAC, students from Ballylanders National School explore Griston Bog with IPCC and a Marsh Fritillary larval nest, spring 2023, recorded on Lullymore West Nature Reserve. © IPCC

# Peatland Awareness, Education and Training



## **Bog of Allen Nature Centre Visitor Attraction**

In 2023, the IPCC welcomed 424 students from 10 primary and post-primary schools and 200 students from seven universities and international groups. Additionally, 545 independent visitors visited the Bog of Allen Nature Centre in 2023.

## **Féile an Dúlra**

Féile an Dúlra is the IPCC's festival of nature, hosting free public engagement days throughout the year. In 2023, events were hosted to celebrate World Curlew Day, World Environment Day, Heritage Week and International Bog Day. On International Bog Day, Sunday July 23rd, the IPCC welcomed over 80 visitors to the Bog of Allen Nature Centre despite the wet weather, with events on the day including a birds of prey display and talk from Newgrange Falconry and a walk and talk to Lodge Bog.

## **Biodiversity Week**

Supported by the IEN to celebrate National Biodiversity Week, IPCC hosted walks on Lullymore West and Lodge Bog nature reserves Co. Kildare and Girley Bog, Co. Meath. IPCC also uploaded a social media post each day of Biodiversity Week featuring a selection of the biodiversity found on bogs. These posts received a total of 377 likes on Facebook and 371 likes on Instagram across the 10 days.



## **Heritage Week**

IPCC organised walks to Lodge Bog, Lullymore West and Girley Bog nature reserves to celebrate Heritage Week 2023. On Lodge Bog, IPCC held an event 'Sharing Skills in Measuring and Monitoring Lodge Bog' where IPCC staff demonstrated how to measure peat depth and monitor water levels. At Girley Bog the IPCC hosted a 'Girley Bog & Sphagnum Moss' exploring the Sphagnum transfer project and some of the work that has been done on the site to help maintain stable water levels. A 'Butterfly Identification Walk and Talk to Lullymore West Bog' sharing the IPCC's experience engaging with the National Butterfly Monitoring Scheme and habitat management carried out on site.



## **Culture Night 2023**

On the evening of the September 22nd, IPCC celebrated Culture Night 2023 by holding free guided tours of the peatland exhibition at the Bog of Allen Nature Centre.



## **Partnerships**

The IPCC have continued to partner with organisations and help communities form strong relations. These include SEAI, Heritage in Schools, local authorities and libraries, through which a variety of peatland related initiatives were completed.

## **Heritage in Schools Scheme of the Heritage Council**

In 2023, IPCC delivered 13 days of workshops entitled 'Bogs in the Classroom' with primary schools. An online bogland workshop was also presented to Heritage Specialists and an in person workshop at Cabragh Wetlands, Co. Tipperary, during the annual Heritage in Schools network meeting on June 30th. Sorcha Doyle, IPCC's new Conservation and Education Officer was also accepted on the national panel of Heritage in School Specialists in 2023.

Images from top: Visitors enjoy a bird of prey display at the Bog of Allen Nature Centre on International Bog Day, IPCC take part in Heritage Week 2023, over 400 students visited the Bog of Allen Nature Centre as part of their peatland studies with some taking time to visit Lodge Bog and IPCC host a bogland workshop with Heritage in School Specialist in June © IPCC

# Peatland Awareness, Education and Training



## Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland

The IPCC delivered 17 days of SEAI school workshops in 2023. The IPCC also attended one meeting.

## Kildare Bio Box and Meath Biodiversity Detectives pilot initiatives

IPCC worked with Kildare and Meath County Councils on pilot initiatives entitled 'Kildare Bio Box' and 'Meath Biodiversity Detectives'. As part of these initiatives, 30 schools in Kildare and 45 schools in Meath received a biodiversity resource box. IPCC also delivered biodiversity-themed workshops in 20 Kildare schools and 15 Meath schools.



## EcoWeek 2023

In partnership South Dublin County Council, the IPCC delivered bogs in the classroom workshops to four schools engaging 176 students.

## National Museum of Ireland

In partnership with the National Museum of Ireland, IPCC delivered bogland workshops exploring the preservation powers of bogs on Saturday 18th November during Science Week at the museum.

## Hop to It Frog Survey

116 Common Frog records were added to the IPCC's database this year submitted by citizen scientists from all over the country. The IPCC now holds 6613 Common Frog records on our database, dating back to 1997. This information is critical when completing submissions on developments in locations where this species is found, as it is protected under the EU Habitats and Species Directives and the Irish Wildlife Acts.



## Community Foundation for Ireland Biodiversity Fund 2023

IPCC worked with Tyrrellspass Tidy Towns and Ballyhoura Heritage and Environment to develop Community Biodiversity Action Plans.

## New Peatland Exhibition Stand

With funding from the IEN capacity fund and donations from Friends of the Bog the IPCC developed a new peatland exhibition stand



## Engaging with Peatland Communities

IPCC engaged with peatland communities nationwide in 2023 including hosting:

- \* Peatland water monitoring training with Friends of Ardee Bog, Co. Louth and supporting Everything Tyrrellspass Has on Show with establishing an educational water monitoring station at Cloncrow (New Forest) NHA, Co. Westmeath. IPCC also invited both groups to attend an *Sphagnum* moss training on Lodge Bog with IPCC staff.
- \* Freshwater invertebrate training with Sallins Biodiversity Group.
- \* Estimating the store of carbon on Killyconny Bog SAC in partnership with Killyconny Bog project
- \* A primary teacher summer course day with Tarbert Education Centre
- \* Peatland information stands were hosted at Lanesborough Library, Newtownforbes Summer Science Festival, Phoenix Park Biodiversity Festival and Honey Show, Monasterevin Bluebell Festival and National Play Day with Kildare County Council
- \* Bogland and biodiversity walks were hosted with Gallen Community College on Ferbane Bog SAC, Clara Heritage Society on Clara Bog SAC, Older Voices Kildare Chat Café on Pollardstown Fen SAC, Lough Ree Summer School and talks with Youthwork Ireland Laois, Kill Active Retirement group and Creative Meitheal Rathangan.

Images from top: Friends of Ardee Bog engaging in a water monitoring training with the IPCC, IPCC host a walk and talk on Clara Bog SAC with Clara Heritage Society, representatives and IPCC staff use peat probes to measure the depth of peat on Killyconny Bog SAC and IPCC's new peatland exhibition stand © IPCC

# Peatland Awareness, Education and Training

## **Raised Bog Plant Guide**

IPCC contributed to the production of a plant identification guide for raised bogs published by Connecting Communities with Peatlands, Irish Rural Link and Community Wetlands Forum.

## **Monasterevin Community Biodiversity Action Plan**

The IPCC engaged with Monasterevin Tidy Towns to support with the development of a biodiversity action plan for St. Marys Gardens a residential area of their community.

## **Inaugural Biodiversity Conference of Co. Kildare**

The IPCC hosted an information stand and presented at the inaugural Co. Kildare Biodiversity conference in October.

## **Griston Bog Conservation and Management Plan**

The IPCC engaged with Ballyhoura Heritage and Environment to develop a Conservation and Management Plan for Griston Bog, Co. Limerick. This initiative also included a school visit with Ballylanders National School and a meeting with the board of Ballyhoura Heritage and Environment.

## **Wild Atlantic Nature LIFE IP Pilot Primary School Programme**

Organised by the Heritage Council and attended by Minister McConalogue the IPCC attended the official launch of this new peatland programme in Co. Donegal which the IPCC supported the development of in 2022.

## **'of ephemeral measure'**

The IPCC hosted artist Martina O'Brien on Lullymore West Bog Nature Reserve for her project of ephemeral measure: a long-term project based in Co. Kildare rooted in image making, phenology, and the activation of communities. At the core of ephemeral measure is a set of digital wild-sensing cameras, installed at seven different outdoor locations across Co. Kildare. The IPCC also attended a field excursion to three sites including Lullymore Nature Reserve in August 2023.

## **Heritage Council Capacity Fund 2023**

The IPCC were awarded funding from the Heritage Capacity Fund 2023 which supported the employment of two Conservation and Education Officers from March-November 2023. This funding supported IPCC increase full time staff numbers from three to four.

## **National Lottery Good Causes Award**

IPCC was a County Winner in the Heritage Category of the National Lottery Good Causes Award 2023 for our work in peatland policy, research, education and the provision of citizen science and upskilling initiatives.



Images from top: Ruairi Mac an Tuile and Sorcha Doyle, IPCC Conservation and Education Officers who roles were supported by the Heritage Capacity Fund 2023, IPCC attend the launch of the Wild Atlantic nature LIFE IP, Co. Donegal, IPCC develop a new Conservation and Management Plan for Griston Bog and IPCC support artist Martina O'Brien with 'of ephemeral measure' © IPCC

# The IPCC's Peatland Communication

## Peatland News and Action for Bogs Magazines

The IPCC's annual publications Peatland News and Action for Bogs are vital in the IPCC's communication and supporter development work. Two printed issues of Peatland News and one virtual issue of Action for Bogs were published in 2023.

## Wild Ireland 2024

With funding support from Flogas IPCC published 3,300 copies of the 2024 Wild Ireland calendar which includes photos and poems from supporters that feature Irish wildlife and memories.

## IPCC Press Releases

The IPCC issued six press releases during 2023:

- \* 2.2.2023 - IPCC are hopping you become a citizen scientist and join the Hop To It Frog Survey 2023
- \* 17.4.2023 - The Irish Peatland Conservation Council welcomes the publication of the Citizen's Assembly Final Report on Biodiversity Loss
- \* 3.5.2023 - You are invited to Féile an Dúlra 2023
- \* 11.7.2023 - The Court of Justice of the European Union issues judgement on Ireland's Failure to Protect Nature
- \* 14.7.2023 - Join the IPCC in Celebrating International Bog Day on July 23rd, 2023
- \* 3.8.2023 - Join the Irish Peatland Conservation Council in Celebrating National Heritage Week 2023

## Interviews, Press, Publicity and Promotion

IPCC provided weekly wildlife articles to the Leinster Leader which has a readership of 5,000. IPCC also submit two articles annually to the Allen Eye which is distributed to 2,500 in the local area of the Bog of Allen Nature Centre. To follow are some highlights of the IPCC media coverage in 2023:

### Television

- \* 13.1.2023 - Filmed on Lodge Bog on 13.1.2023 the IPCC featured on RTÉ television programme Ear to the Ground discussing the challenges that the Curlew face.
- \* 16.2.2023 - The IPCC also filmed with ARD a French and Germany media production company discussing the ban on sale of turf and why the importance to protect peatlands.
- \* 25.8.2023 - RTÉ film at the Bog of Allen Nature Centre for a Science Foundation Ireland children's exploration programme
- \* 17.10.2023 - Interview with Swiss TV regarding peat cutting

### Radio

- \* 2.1.2023 - Interview on KFM discussing World Wetlands Day
- \* 27.3.2023 - IPCC take part in an RTÉ junior peatlands and climate change interview
- \* 26.7.2023 - Peatland interview with South Dublin FM
- \* 20.6.2023 - Insect eating plant interview with Today FM Ray Foley
- \* 20.11.2023 - Taking action for peatlands interview on iRadio

### Print

- \* 2.4.2023 - Peatland interview with Eoin Burke Kennedy in the Irish Times
- \* 1.6.2023 - Encouraging the peatland explorer in your classroom article in InTouch the primary school teachers magazine
- \* 19.5.2023 - Interview with Agriland in relation to boglands and wet grassland on Lullymore West Nature Reserve.



Images: Covers of the IPCC 2023 Friend of the Bog publications Peatland News spring and autumn and IPCC online digital Action for Bogs available on [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie) © IPCC

# Peatland Communication, Volunteers, Fundraising

## Website and Social Media

The IPCC have been active on social media, and track the progress of the posts during the year. Overall, 142 posts were written and shared on Facebook and 140 on Instagram. From January 1st to December 31st, 2023, IPCC's Facebook posts had a total reach of 46,176 profiles and received 5.4k interactions, and the Instagram posts reached 3259 people and received 1.3k interactions. The IPCC website, [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie), webpages were also regularly updated.



**Irish Peatland Conservation Council**  
 Day 10 of National Biodiversity Week 2023 and IPCC are sharing with you the 10 most important wetland plants, including one of the most delicate sites in the world. Growing on the other side, they are a low-growing, prostrate shrub, with its small, pale flowers. There are three common heather species in bogland. **Light Heather** (Calluna vulgaris), Bogland Heather has small, pale flowers and its bright flowers are in bloom too. [See more](#)



Images: Students from University of Tennessee, America and Trinity College, Dublin were two of the groups that volunteered with the IPCC on our nature reserves Lullymore West and Lodge Bog, Co. Kildare, the IPCC's post on Heather during Biodiversity Week 2023 was the most popular of IPCC's social media posts in 2023 and a screenshot of IPCC's homepage on [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie) © IPCC

IPCC Online Presence	2020	2021	2022	2023
Website Visitors	62,636	31,806	60,900	35,040
Facebook followers	3,734	3976	5,442	5,768
Twitter followers	2,254	2,804	3,267	3,328
Instagram followers	698	1,144	1,433	1,765
YouTube views	39,630	47,286	56,998	71,549
Trip Advisor Reviews	37	37	38	40

IPCC's Top Five Facebook Posts in 2023	Reach	Likes
Heathers - Biodiversity Week	4,928	43
Bogland Flora - Biodiversity Week	3,927	67
Valentine's Day - Sundew	3,648	78
Butterfly walk - Heritage Week	3,444	19
Bogbean in flower	3,294	53

## Volunteers

Throughout the year, the IPCC worked alongside our dedicated volunteers at the Bog of Allen Nature Centre, our nature reserves and remotely. The work involved maintenance of the wildlife gardens, species and water-level monitoring, scrub clearance, research and writing of informative pieces to include in Peatland News, Marsh Fritillary larval web counts and habitat assessment, Large Heath butterfly survey and habitat assessment, and weekly butterfly surveys on Lullymore West.

The IPCC also hosted one university student during their work placement and two Transition Year students completing work experience in 2023, during which time they helped with biodiversity surveys, general tasks at the Bog of Allen Nature Centre and water-level and species monitoring on the reserves.

The IPCC also acknowledge the volunteers who sort stamps in their homes in preparation for sale.

## Fundraising

The IPCC made nine funding applications in 2023. The spring and autumn appeals were generously supported by our Friends of the Bog and advocates who also donated gift prizes towards the raffle and purchased good natured gifts from the IPCC mail order catalogue. All funds raised support peatland habitat and biodiversity conservation.



# Thank You

Image: Cup lichen on bog oak © IPCC



**Companies, Agencies & Organisations**  
An Féar Gorta - Tea and Garden Rooms  
Allen Eye  
Ballyhoura Heritage and Environment  
BirdWatch Ireland Kildare Branch  
Bord na Móna  
Butterfly Conservation Ireland  
Celtic Roots Studio  
Community Wetlands Forum  
Community Foundation for Ireland  
Creative Meitheal Rathangan  
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage  
Dublin Zoo  
Drehid  
ETHOS  
FH Wetland Systems  
Flogas Ireland Ltd  
Fota Wildlife Park  
Friends of Ardee Bog  
Girley Bog Meitheal  
HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust  
Heritage Council  
IEN Irish Environmental Network  
International Peatland Society  
Interreg North-West Europe Care-Peat

Irish Peatland Society  
Irish Ramsar Wetlands Committee  
Irish Uplands Forum  
Jackie & Ed Keilthy Jewellery  
Kilcullen Climate For Action  
Kildare Auditing and Accountancy Service  
Killyconny Bog Project  
Kildare County Council  
KRA Visionary Project Partners  
Laois Offaly Education Training Board  
Leinster Leader Longford County Council  
Meath County Council  
Met Éireann Marsh Charitable Trust  
Milltownpass Tidy Towns  
Móin Fhionnurach Development Association  
Monasterevin Tidy Towns  
Munster Technological University  
National Biodiversity Data Centre  
National Lottery Good Causes

National Parks and Wildlife Service  
National Museum of Ireland  
Olivemount Trust  
Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme  
Peatlands Council  
Pullough Residents Association  
Rathangan Tidy Towns  
Revenue Commissioners  
Sallins Biodiversity Group  
South Dublin County Council  
Sustainable Energy Association of Ireland  
Tarbett Education Centre  
Teaching Plans Ireland Limited  
The Irish National Stud Company Ltd  
The Drehid Grant Scheme  
Wetland Surveys Ireland

## Individuals

Adriaan Palm  
Anne Talbot  
Anthony Collins & Family  
Catherine O'Connell  
Catherine O'Dea  
Colin Nicholls  
Dáithí Kimber  
Daire Courtney

Dilys Bateman  
Eileen Taylor  
Ferdi Haverland  
Fionnuala Ward  
Fr. Joe Coyne  
Jade Dillion  
John FitzGerald  
John F Walsh and Margaret Francis  
Kathrine Geoghegan  
Marie Heaney  
Mary Guckian  
Martina O' Brien  
M.E. Mitchell  
Michael Tubridy  
Michael Smurfit  
Niall MacCoitir  
Roger Goodwillie  
Rosamund Philips  
Seamus Hart  
Seán ó Fearghail and Gwynn Grace  
Susan Minet  
Thomas Hulton  
Wendy Whelan

## Legacies and In Memoriam Gifts

Angela Horn  
Eugene Kennedy  
Frank Callanan  
Jeremy Orme  
Margaret Poulter  
Michael Murphy  
Oliver Usher  
Sheila MacGrath  
William Waldron

## Volunteer

Áine Rickard  
Beibhinn Hickey  
Beatrice Gannon  
Brendan Wyse  
Catherine FitzGerald

Chris Logan  
Declan FitzGerald  
Eliska Lestik  
Emmeline Cosnett  
Eugene Dunbar  
Gwynn Grace  
Ita Sherlock  
Jerome Kelly  
Jesmond Harding  
Joe Kelly  
John Lynch  
John Fearn  
John Pierce  
Kate Macnamara  
Leo Nolan  
Hannah Bolger  
Lorraine Benson  
Máirín Murphy  
Martin Kelly  
Melissa Stobiee  
Mick Barry  
Miriam Mooney  
Myfanwy Humfreys  
Pat McGuinness  
Pierce O'Flynn  
Ralph Gowran  
Rebecca Kummert  
Ruth Ford-Egan  
Seán Ó Fearghail  
Tiernan Murray  
Tony McLouglin  
Veronica Anderson  
Wilbert Gelens

## IPCC Staff

Nuala Madigan  
Paula Farrell  
Tristram Whyte  
Ruairi Mac an Tuile  
Sorcha Doyle  
Lyndsey Casserly

Company registration number: 116156

**The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG**  
**Financial statements**  
**for the financial year ended 31 December 2023**

## The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG

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**The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG**  
**Company limited by guarantee**

**Directors and other information**

<b>Directors</b>	Catherine Fitzgerald Martin Kelly Rebecca Kummert Kate Macnamara Miriam Mooney Tiernan Murray John Pierce John Lynch Eugene Dunbar
<b>Secretary</b>	Dr. Catherine Fitzgerald
<b>Company number</b>	116156
<b>Registered office</b>	Lullymore Rathangan Co. Kildare R51 V293
<b>Business address</b>	Lullymore Rathangan Co. Kildare R51 V293
<b>Auditor</b>	Kildare Audit & Accountancy Services Lower Eyre Street Newbridge Co. Kildare W12 EP63
<b>Bankers</b>	Bank of Ireland Lower Baggot Street Dublin 2

**The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG**  
**Company limited by guarantee**

**Directors and other information (continued)**

**Solicitors** O'Shaughnessy Bairead Solicitors  
1 Father Mc Wey Street  
Edenderry  
Co. Offaly

**Charity Number** CHY6829  
RCN 20013547

## The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG

### Directors report

The directors present their annual report and the audited financial statements of the company for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.

#### Directors

The names of the persons who at any time during the financial year were directors of the company are as follows:

Catherine Fitzgerald  
Martin Kelly  
Kate Macnamara  
Miriam Mooney  
Tiernan Murray  
John Pierce  
John Lynch  
Eugene Dunbar

#### Principal activities

The company's principal activity continues to be the conservation of a representative sample of Irish peatlands, education and publicity, promoting environmental awareness, provision of information and encouraging the protection and conservation of our natural heritage for the common good.

#### Development and performance

Both the level of activity and the year end financial position were satisfactory during the year.

#### Assets and liabilities and financial position

Net Assets increased during the year due to the surplus of income over expenditure.

#### Principal risks and uncertainties

The company is well financed and supported currently through its cash reserve position. The primary risks to the company relate to the future income streams being impacted by a reduction in grant and donation income.

#### Dividends

During the financial year the directors have not paid any dividends or recommended payment of a final dividend.

#### Accounting records

The measures taken by the directors to secure compliance with the requirements of sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014 with regard to the keeping of accounting records are the implementation of necessary policies and procedures for recording transactions, the employment of competent accounting personnel with appropriate expertise and the provision of adequate resources to the financial function. The accounting records of the company are located at Lullymore, Rathangan, Co. Kildare.

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG

Directors report (continued)

**Relevant audit information**

In the case of each of the persons who are directors at the time this report is approved in accordance with section 332 of Companies Act 2014:

- so far as each director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's statutory auditors are unaware, and
- each director has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken as a director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

This report was approved by the board of directors on 8 May 2024 and signed on behalf of the board by:

  
Catherine Fitzgerald  
Director

  
Tiernan Murray  
Director



## The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG

### Directors responsibilities statement

The directors are responsible for preparing the directors report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable Irish law and regulations.

Irish company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the law, the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council. Under company law, the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at the financial year end date and of the profit or loss of the company for the financial year and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for ensuring that the company keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the company, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the company to be determined with reasonable accuracy, enable them to ensure that the financial statements and directors report comply with the Companies Act 2014 and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.



**Independent auditor's report to the members of  
The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG**

**Report on the audit of the financial statements**

***Opinion***

We have audited the financial statements of The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG (the 'company') for the financial year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the profit and loss account, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 3. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at 31 December 2023 and of its profit for the financial year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

***Basis for opinion***

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

***Conclusions relating to going concern***

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

***Other Information***

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Independent auditor's report to the members of  
The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG (continued)**

***Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014***

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- in our opinion, the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements; and
- in our opinion, the directors' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, and financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

***Matters on which we are required to report by exception***

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report.

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions required by sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Respective responsibilities**

***Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements***

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the management either intends to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

***Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements***

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

**Independent auditor's report to the members of  
The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG (continued)**

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

***The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities***

Our report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Claire Kelly (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of  
Kildare Audit & Accountancy Services  
Certified Public Accountants and Statutory Auditor  
Lower Eyre Street  
Newbridge  
Co. Kildare  
W12 EP63

8 May 2024

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG

Income and expenditure account  
Financial year ended 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 €	2022 €
Turnover		318,505	230,304
Cost of sales		(3,150)	(4,596)
<b>Gross surplus</b>		<u>315,355</u>	<u>225,708</u>
Administrative expenses		(210,348)	(179,453)
<b>Operating surplus</b>		<u>105,007</u>	<u>46,255</u>
Other interest receivable and similar income		738	1,460
<b>Surplus before taxation</b>		<u>105,745</u>	<u>47,715</u>
Tax on surplus		-	-
<b>Surplus for the financial year</b>		<u><u>105,745</u></u>	<u><u>47,715</u></u>

The company has no other recognised items of income and expenses other than the results for the financial year as set out above.

The notes on pages 12 to 16 form part of these financial statements.

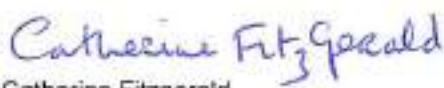
The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG

Balance sheet  
As at 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 €	€	2022 €	€
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	7	423,708		423,673	
			423,708		423,673
<b>Current assets</b>					
Stocks	8	5,246		5,890	
Debtors	9	4,975		3,927	
Cash at bank and in hand		866,202		759,396	
		876,423		769,213	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	10	(10,677)		(9,177)	
<b>Net current assets</b>			865,746		760,036
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			1,289,454		1,183,709
<b>Net assets</b>			1,289,454		1,183,709
<b>Capital and reserves</b>					
Capital Reserve			8,337		8,337
Restricted Operational Contingency Reserve			246,590		246,590
Restricted Land Reserve			70,326		59,800
Income and expenditure account			964,201		868,982
<b>Members funds</b>			1,289,454		1,183,709

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with Section 1A of FRS 102 Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

These financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 8 May 2024 and signed on behalf of the board by:

  
Catherine Fitzgerald  
Director

  
Tiernan Murray  
Director

The notes on pages 12 to 16 form part of these financial statements.

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG

Statement of changes in equity  
Financial year ended 31 December 2023

	Capital Reserve	Restricted Operational Contingency Reserve	Restricted Land Reserve	Profit and loss account	Total
	€	€	€	€	€
<b>At 1 January 2022</b>	8,337	246,590	55,631	825,436	1,135,994
Transfer between reserve accounts	-	-	4,169	(4,169)	-
<b>At 1 January 2022</b>	8,337	246,590	59,800	821,267	1,135,994
Surplus for the financial year	-	-	-	47,715	47,715
<b>Total comprehensive income for the financial year</b>	-	-	-	47,715	47,715
<b>At 31 December 2022</b>	8,337	246,590	59,799	868,983	1,183,709
Transfer between reserve accounts	-	-	10,527	(10,527)	-
<b>At 31 December 2022</b>	8,337	246,590	70,326	858,456	1,183,709
Surplus for the financial year	-	-	-	105,745	105,745
<b>Total comprehensive income for the financial year</b>	-	-	-	105,745	105,745
<b>At 31 December 2023</b>	8,337	246,590	70,326	964,201	1,289,454

**The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG**

**Notes to the financial statements  
Financial year ended 31 December 2023**

**1. General information**

The company is a private company limited by guarantee, registered in Ireland. The address of the registered office is Lullymore, Rathangan, Co. Kildare, R51 V293.

**2. Statement of compliance**

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102 Section 1A, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

**3. Accounting policies and measurement bases**

**Basis of preparation**

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and liabilities and investment properties measured at fair value through profit or loss.

The financial statements are prepared in Euro, which is the functional currency of the entity.

**Turnover**

Voluntary income including income for the purposes of capital spend is included in the financial statements when the charity is legally entitled to it, its financial value can be quantified with reasonable certainty and there is reasonable certainty of its ultimate receipt.

Voluntary income is defined as income received by way of funding, donations and gifts and is included in full in the financial statements when receivable.

**Tangible assets**

Tangible assets are initially recorded at cost, and is subsequently stated at cost less any accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses.

Any tangible assets carried at revalued amounts is recorded at the fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of a revaluation, is recognised in other comprehensive income and accumulated in equity, except to the extent it reverses a revaluation decrease of the same asset previously recognised in profit or loss. A decrease in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation, is recognised in other comprehensive income to the extent of any previously recognised revaluation increase accumulated in equity in respect of that asset. Where a revaluation decrease exceeds the accumulated revaluation gains accumulated in equity in respect of that asset, the excess shall be recognised in profit or loss.

Increases in assets owned from non monetary donations received are not recognised as an income or donation, nor is a value attributed to same in the Financial statements.

**The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG**

**Notes to the financial statements (continued)  
Financial year ended 31 December 2023**

**Depreciation**

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost or valuation of an asset, less its residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Freehold property	- 2%	straight line
Fittings fixtures and equipment	- 10%	straight line
Office equipment	- 20%/33%	straight line

If there is an indication that there has been a significant change in depreciation rate, useful life or residual value of tangible assets, the depreciation is revised prospectively to reflect the new estimates.

**Impairment**

A review for indicators of impairment is carried out at each reporting date, with the recoverable amount being estimated where such indicators exist. Where the carrying value exceeds the recoverable amount, the asset is impaired accordingly. Prior impairments are also reviewed for possible reversal at each reporting date.

When it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, an estimate is made of the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs. The cash-generating unit is the smallest identifiable group of assets that includes the asset and generates cash inflows that are largely independent of the cash inflows from other assets or groups of assets.

**Stocks**

Stocks are measured at the lower of cost and estimated selling price less costs to complete and sell. Cost includes all costs of purchase, costs of conversion and other costs incurred in bringing the stocks to their present location and condition.



## The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG

### Notes to the financial statements (continued) Financial year ended 31 December 2023

#### Financial instruments

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the company becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the transaction price, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Debt instruments are subsequently measured at amortised cost.

Where investments in non-convertible preference shares and non-puttable ordinary shares or preference shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably, the investment is subsequently measured at fair value with changes in fair value recognised in profit or loss. All other such investments are subsequently measured at cost less impairment.

Other financial instruments, including derivatives, are initially recognised at fair value, unless payment for an asset is deferred beyond normal business terms or financed at a rate of interest that is not a market rate, in which case the asset is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Other financial instruments are subsequently measured at fair value, with any changes recognised in profit or loss, with the exception of hedging instruments in a designated hedging relationship.

Financial assets that are measured at cost or amortised cost are reviewed for objective evidence of impairment at the end of each reporting date. If there is objective evidence of impairment, an impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss immediately.

For all equity instruments regardless of significance, and other financial assets that are individually significant, these are assessed individually for impairment. Other financial assets are either assessed individually or grouped on the basis of similar credit risk characteristics.

Any reversals of impairment are recognised in profit or loss immediately, to the extent that the reversal does not result in a carrying amount of the financial asset that exceeds what the carrying amount would have been had the impairment not previously been recognised.

#### 4. Limited by guarantee

The company is one limited by guarantee and in the event of the company being wound up the liability in respect of each of its members is €1.27.

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG

Notes to the financial statements (continued)  
Financial year ended 31 December 2023

5. Staff costs

The average number of persons employed by the company during the financial year, including the directors was 4 (2022: 4).

The aggregate payroll costs incurred during the financial year were:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Wages and salaries	119,226	114,113
Social insurance costs	13,175	12,609
	<u>132,401</u>	<u>126,722</u>

6. Appropriations of profit and loss account

	2023	2022
	€	€
At the start of the financial year	868,983	825,436
Surplus for the financial year	105,745	47,715
Transfer to Restricted Land Reserve	(10,527)	(4,169)
At the end of the financial year	<u>964,201</u>	<u>868,982</u>

7. Tangible assets

	Freehold property	Fixtures, fittings and equipment	Office Equipment	Total
	€	€	€	€
<b>Cost</b>				
At 1 January 2023	543,777	148,155	73,991	765,923
Additions	-	8,427	10,808	19,235
<b>At 31 December 2023</b>	<u>543,777</u>	<u>156,582</u>	<u>84,799</u>	<u>785,158</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 January 2023	166,810	103,186	72,254	342,250
Charge for the financial year	9,433	6,334	3,433	19,200
<b>At 31 December 2023</b>	<u>176,243</u>	<u>109,520</u>	<u>75,687</u>	<u>361,450</u>
<b>Carrying amount</b>				
At 31 December 2023	<u>367,534</u>	<u>47,062</u>	<u>9,112</u>	<u>423,708</u>
At 31 December 2022	<u>376,967</u>	<u>44,969</u>	<u>1,737</u>	<u>423,673</u>

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG

Notes to the financial statements (continued)  
Financial year ended 31 December 2023

<b>8. Stocks</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	€	€
Finished goods and goods for resale	<u>5,246</u>	<u>5,890</u>
<b>9. Debtors</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	€	€
Trade debtors	338	264
Prepayments	2,477	2,223
Accrued income	2,160	1,440
	<u>4,975</u>	<u>3,927</u>
<b>10. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	€	€
Other creditors including tax and social insurance	7,869	6,496
Accruals	2,788	2,681
	<u>10,677</u>	<u>9,177</u>

**11. Approval of financial statements**

The board of directors approved these financial statements for issue on 8 May 2024.

**The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG**

**The following pages do not form part of the statutory accounts.**

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG

Detailed income and expenditure account  
Financial year ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	€	€
<b>Turnover</b>		
Donations	34,913	33,311
Bogland purchase donations	10,527	4,169
Shop sales	8,507	9,422
Government grants	160,887	99,702
Project income	35,262	26,391
Appeal/Raffle	13,786	25,164
Nature centre	11,838	21,011
Consultancy & copyright	19,572	-
Legacies	23,213	10,387
Other income	-	747
	<u>318,505</u>	<u>230,304</u>
<b>Cost of sales</b>		
Opening stock	(5,890)	(6,106)
Purchases	(2,506)	(4,380)
	<u>(8,396)</u>	<u>(10,486)</u>
Closing stock	5,246	5,890
	<u>(3,150)</u>	<u>(4,596)</u>
<b>Gross surplus</b>	<u>315,355</u>	<u>225,708</u>
<b>Gross surplus percentage</b>	99.0%	98.0%
<b>Overheads</b>		
<b>Administrative expenses</b>		
Wages and salaries	(119,226)	(114,113)
Employer's PRSI contributions	(13,175)	(12,609)
Staff training	(1,346)	(1,460)
Water rates	(115)	(126)
Insurance	(9,084)	(8,111)
Light and heat	(7,364)	(6,173)
Cleaning	(738)	(831)
Repairs and maintenance	(3,375)	(1,298)
Printing, postage and stationery	(11,389)	(5,295)
Telephone	(1,752)	(1,654)
Computer costs	(775)	(1,201)
Conservation projects	(12,367)	(4,023)
Travel & related costs	(3,233)	(1,518)
Legal and professional	(2,578)	(18)
Auditors remuneration	(2,869)	(2,676)
Bank charges	(931)	(744)
Profit on exchange	-	7
Loss on exchange	(200)	(208)
Canteen	(171)	(82)

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council CLG

Detailed income and expenditure account (continued)  
Financial year ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	€	€
Staff welfare	(210)	(396)
General expenses	-	(3)
Charitable donations	-	(50)
Subscriptions	(250)	(230)
Depreciation of tangible assets	(19,200)	(16,641)
	<u>(210,348)</u>	<u>(179,453)</u>
<b>Operating surplus</b>	105,007	46,255
<b>Operating surplus percentage</b>	33.0%	20.1%
Other interest receivable and similar income	738	1,460
<b>Surplus before taxation</b>	<u>105,745</u>	<u>47,715</u>

## Irish Peatland Conservation Council

The following pages do not form part of the audited financial statements

### Project Grants Received from Public Bodies

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council wish to acknowledge and thank the following groups for expenses and grants received towards the conservation and education projects undertaken in 2023.

	2023 (€)	2022(€)
Bord na Móna	1,000	-
Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment (Irish Environmental Network)	57,934	48,636
Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage including the Peatlands Community Engagement Fund	10,678	-
Heritage Council (including Heritage in Schools, consultancy and grant awards)	43,308	36,763
Kildare County Council	22,305	13,508
Laois County Council	-	653
Laois Offaly ETB	630	1,130
Limerick City & County Council	-	600
Longford County Council	700	-
Meath County Council	15,740	1,500
National Museum of Ireland	370	-
National Biodiversity Data Centre	300	150
Office of Public Works	400	-
Roscommon County Council	-	300
South Dublin County Council	2,362	1,100
Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland	5,215	6,812
<b>Total (€)</b>	<b>160,792</b>	<b>111,152</b>

### Project Grants Received from Private & Philanthropic Bodies

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council wish to also acknowledge and thank the following groups for funding received towards the conservation and education projects in 2022

	2023(€)	2022 (€)
Dublin Zoo	7,000	-
Olivemount Trust	25,000	-
Bank of America	-	2,527
Community Foundation for Ireland	-	4,746
AXA Community Award	-	2,400
TJX Europe	-	1,000