



# Wicklow Mountain Views

The Newsletter of Wicklow Uplands Council

Summer 2017

## A Letter from the Chair



Dear Members and Supporters, in a way this has been a year of transition for Wicklow Uplands Council with a number of important changes happening within the organisation. The most obvious and visible change is that of our new Co-ordinator, Brian Dunne, who continues to keep our business in order and manage the day to day activities of the organisation.

However, there have also been a number of other less visible changes but are none the less important in the running and functioning of Wicklow Uplands

Council as an effective organisation. At the 2017 AGM, our members will be asked to decide on the allocation of an additional nominee to the Board representing the Tourism and Economic panel. To date there have been three nominees to the panel each year, the least nominees to any panel. As Tourism plays such an important role our projects be it; trail development, village panels, even in vegetation management it is important that this panel has equal representation on the Board.

Our members will also be asked to adopt a new constitution at the AGM. This is to ensure that Wicklow Uplands Council is compliant with the most recent companies' legislation and also the governance code. Compliance with the code is ongoing and once the new constitution is adopted we will have just a few small steps left to be fully compliant with all the requirements. This has been a time consuming process but an important one as it proves that all the operations and activities of the Uplands Council are transparent and done in best practice.

While these changes have been ongoing behind the scenes we continue to work on our projects. In December 2016 the long awaited call for applications for a Locally Led Scheme for uplands areas was announced under the European Innovations Partnership (EIP) initiative. Much of January was spent meeting stakeholders and preparing a strong application for a Sustainable Uplands Agri-Environment Scheme (SUAS) on behalf of Wicklow. The good news arrived in May that we were successful in the initial round of applications and we will now move to the second stage of the application process before a final decision is made. Given the volume and quality of work and research carried out on vegetation management in Wicklow to date we are in a good position to roll out an effective scheme however we cannot get complacent in our duties. It is now more important than ever that we continue to work to develop the strongest application possible. A fully detailed project proposal will be developed over the summer months and submitted for consideration in September. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the stakeholders over the years that have contributed to the vegetation management project in any way and put us in this strong position.

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**newstalk.**  
106-108 fm  
Different Nation - Different Station



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



As January came to a close we held a panel meeting in the Hollywood Centre in Hollywood village. The meeting was very well attended with very interesting and positive feedback from our members. The panel meetings serve as an important opportunity to reach out to communities and engage with live issues on the ground. It is vital that we are fulfilling our brief to represent all of Wicklow and therefore we will continue to host and move the meetings around the county. I would like to extend a very sincere thanks to the Hollywood Centre and the community in Hollywood who gave an excellent presentation on the Hollywood Fair and provided refreshments. It was inspiring to hear of the success of the fair and positive impact that it has had on the local community. Well done to all involved.

The projects mentioned above are just a flavour of what has been happening in Wicklow Uplands Council recently and there is much more information to be found within the newsletter which I hope you find enjoyable. I think it is also worth mentioning that Brian Dunne had the opportunity to introduce Wicklow Uplands Council to HRH Prince Charles in Kilkenny Castle in May. Brian attended at the invitation of the Heritage Council. HRH had requested to meet the people on the ground directly involved in Heritage Council funded projects and it was great recognition of the valuable work that the Heritage Council carries out across the country.

Finally I would like to thank our members, Board and staff. Of course I would also like to thank our funders, without whom we could not continue our work.

*Sean Byrne*

Chairman, Wicklow Uplands Council

## Wicklow Uplands Council endorses Leave no Trace

Practising a Leave no Trace ethic is very simple: Make it hard for others to see or hear you and LEAVE NO TRACE of your visit to the outdoors

Leave no Trace principles of outdoor ethics:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Be considerate of others
3. Respect farm animals and wildlife
4. Travel and camp on durable ground
5. Leave what you find
6. Dispose of waste properly
7. Minimise the effects of fire

# EUROPARC Federation, Sustainable Agriculture in Protected Areas Commission

The EUROPARC Federation serves as a network for Europe's natural and cultural heritage and aims to improve the management of protected areas across Europe through international co-operation, the exchange of ideas and experience and by influencing policy. Wicklow Uplands Council has been a member of the Federation for a number of years and represents something of a hybrid within the organisation, as the vast majority of its near 400 members own or manages protected areas across Europe. 'Protected areas' include National Parks, of varying categories, and other designated areas across Europe including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protected Areas, Areas of Natural Constraint etc.

The EUROPARC Federation recently established new commissions in which members are invited to participate directly. The aim of the commissions is to operate at two levels – as a core group who will form the commission and drive the agreed agenda and an advisory e-forum who will input ideas and information. The new commissions will deal with a range of topics including;

- *Agriculture and Protected Areas, Communications and Marketing, Fedenatur/Periurban, Health and Protected Areas, Natura 2000 and EUROPARC Membership*

Wicklow Uplands Council was invited to have a representative on the new 'Sustainable Agriculture in Protected Areas Commission', following the successful hosting of the 'We are Sustainable Farmers' workshop at the 2016 EUROPARC conference. Tom Byrne, Vice-Chairman and farmer, was nominated to sit on the commission.

The overall mission of the new 'Agriculture and Protected Areas Commission' is to undertake a feasibility study exploring the option of a 'Charter for Sustainable Agriculture' and to make recommendations to the EUROPARC Council on future developments. The EUROPARC Federation recognises that parks and protected areas represent, now more than ever, ideal territories to promote sustainable agricultural practices and activities. There is great potential in these areas to encourage regional rural development through the promotion of local high quality products and resources with a historical and cultural context. The commission will take into consideration the needs of nature protection and the interests of local stakeholders (farmers, breeders, artisans and related sectors).

It is still very early days in the commission but it will serve to promote the contribution that agriculture can offer to protected area management, in terms of nature conservation, and vice-versa. Similar to the work of Wicklow Uplands Council, they hope to create dialogue and co-operation and the involvement of local people in the management and promotion of their areas. The commission will play a role in influencing policy makers in Europe and in June they will meet with the Directorate-General for Environment, the European Commission department responsible for EU policy on the environment. This demonstrates the importance of direct involvement with these organisations and the opportunity to bring issues on the ground to European policy makers.

*Tom Byrne, Vice-Chairman, Wicklow Uplands Council*

## The Dublin Mountains Project

South Dublin County Council, Coillte and the Dublin Mountains Partnership have recently proposed an integrated plan for the Dublin Mountains. The proposed Dublin Mountains Project aims to develop a recreation site providing visitors with a facility to enjoy the landscape and its key cultural, archaeological, geological and natural features. The concept includes the development of a mixed forest, improved networks of trails, conservation measures and visitor facilities.

The plan includes:

- A Hellfire Club Visitors Centre – which will include café, toilets and an information hub and will enable access to the wider trail network and activities of Dublin mountains
- A tree top canopy walk to Massey's Woodland – that will serve as both "an experience and a safe connection".
- A large extension to existing parking areas that will "address congestion and illegal parking issues" currently at the site.
- Improve the trail network by establishing new trails and loops with signage, picnic benches, natural play area, views etc.
- Removal of laurel and invasive species from along streams and river edges, opening up the vistas along the watercourses.

The planning application for the development will be lodged with An Bord Pleanála in June/July of this year. Following that, there will be further consultations with the local community and businesses in the area. Submissions on the Dublin Mountains Project can be made to [econdev@sdblincoco.ie](mailto:econdev@sdblincoco.ie).

Further information at [www.sdcc.ie](http://www.sdcc.ie)



# Common sense prevails in Wicklow Way judgment

The High Court ruling in February overturning a €40,000 award made last year to a woman injured in a fall on the Wicklow Way brought welcome relief for landowners, State agencies, community groups and recreational users.

The case was taken by a woman, Ms. Wall, from north county Dublin, following a fall on a boardwalk section of the Wicklow Way, close to the JB Malone memorial. The accident occurred in August 2013. The woman caught her foot in an indentation in the boardwalk which caused her to fall forwards, sustaining injuries to her knee. As the location is within Wicklow Mountains National Park she sued the National Parks & Wildlife Service for damages, claiming that the condition of the boardwalk had caused her injury.



## Basis to Circuit Court award

It is pivotal to the case that the woman fell on a boardwalk. Section 4(4) of the Occupiers Liability Act imposes a higher duty of care on the occupier (typically the landowner) for structures 'provided for use primarily by recreational users'. Had the woman's injury resulted from a slip on a wet or rocky hillside, or from the collapse of a farm gate, the same judgment would likely not have resulted, as in both those situations the landowner's duty of care would have been comparatively minimal. Following the Circuit Court award in April 2016 a decision was taken immediately to appeal to the High Court.

The High Court hearing took place over five days in November and December 2016. Witnesses were called on behalf of the National Parks & Wildlife Service, County Wicklow Partnership and Mountaineering Ireland; the National Trails Office also provided assistance.

The mechanism of the woman's fall, the structure of the boardwalk and the maintenance procedures within Wicklow



Mountains National Park were all examined in detail. The evidence provided on behalf of Mountaineering Ireland covered the ethos of personal responsibility which is at the heart of mountain activities, the condition of the boardwalk and its use by walkers. The Visitor Safety in the Countryside approach, which provides guidance on how to balance management intervention with personal responsibility, was also outlined.

## Common sense judgment

On 17th February 2017 Judge Michael White delivered a clear and strong judgment setting aside the Circuit Court award. In dealing with the mechanism of the fall the judge concluded there was a high degree of negligence on Ms Wall's part as she was not looking at the surface of the boardwalk when she fell.

In addressing the National Parks & Wildlife Service's legal liability the judge emphasised that the duty of reasonable care to maintain the boardwalk was not an absolute duty and that the standard of care had to be adapted taking into account the location of the boardwalk and the benefit to society from the provision of the boardwalk. The judge found that the National Parks & Wildlife Service was not negligent in not filling in the indentations in the boardwalk or replacing the sleepers and he overturned the Circuit Court judgment.

It is worth reiterating that this case related specifically to structures provided for recreational users (e.g. stiles, bridges and boardwalks) and that the majority of these structures are on managed trails where there is an insurance policy in place to indemnify landowners. This judgment clarifies case-law in a way that will be valuable if similar cases arise in the future.

It is important too that the responsibility of recreational users for their own actions continues to be emphasised by all those involved in developing and promoting outdoor recreation activities.

*Helen Lawless, Mountaineering Ireland*

## Wicklow County Tourism launches #MyWicklow campaign



Wicklow County Tourism has launched a new extensive promotional campaign in partnership with key tourism providers around the County. Following on the tremendous success of the last year's campaign, the focus for 2017 will be on #MyWicklow. #MyWicklow is about why Wicklow is so special for visitors and residents: great outdoor activities, amazing heritage, world class gardens, fantastic foods and flavours, and so much more. Wicklow is unique, and through #MyWicklow, we want to invite the people of Wicklow to showcase what makes Wicklow so special!"

"We're calling to everyone living or visiting Wicklow to post on social media their favourite Wicklow places, favourite Wicklow activities, favourite Wicklow Foods or favourite Wicklow stories, #MyWicklow is an invitation and an opportunity for everyone to share with the world what makes Wicklow such a fantastic place to visit."

For further info, go to [www.visitwicklow.ie](http://www.visitwicklow.ie) or call 0404 20070  
*Fred Verdier, Manager, Wicklow County Tourism*

# Vegetation Management

## Hill farmers: under-valued custodians of hill ecosystems

There was much interest and discussion as a result of this oral presentation by Brian Dunne at the 2017 ENVIRON conference (10th -12th April) in Athlone. The ENVIRON conference is the largest gathering of environmental researchers in Ireland with over 300 researchers in attendance this year.

Brian began with a short description of what is meant by traditional uplands management in Wicklow. A mosaic of low heather, rarely taller than 60 cm (2 feet), was maintained by grazing and burning and provided safe ground nest sites with cover from predatory birds. Only unpalatable taller, leggier woody heather was burnt as it was not grazed. This low intensity burning left the rootstock and peat layer undisturbed. Between the stands of heather a host of other plants flourished, providing optimal conditions for grazing and biodiversity. Records for the Powerscourt estate show a record 358 grouse were shot in 1890 on Sheeps Bank, indicating the quality of the habitat at that time.

So what happened? The unintended consequences of the events of the last century such as World Wars and EU membership, new designations & changes in legislation, the formation of the Wicklow National Park and the development of forestry in the uplands all played a role in changing the socioeconomics of upland areas and changes to upland farming. There has been an ongoing decline in upland sheep farmers who acted as the custodians of upland habitats for generations. The decline in young farmers is of particular concern. Recent research has found that this decline in upland farming to be primarily due to poor profitability. At one time the annual crop of wool meant sheep were double earners both as providers of wool and meat. The price of wool is now at an all-time low, with changes in trends and the development of a disposable society with a penchant for synthetic fibres.

Upland farmers are also finding it more difficult to effectively manage their lands due to restrictive legislation. Much of the deterioration in the quality of upland habitats has been attributed to the alteration of the vegetation management season. Traditionally it was permitted to burn or remove vegetation up to April 15th each year, but is now illegal after March 1st (amended Section 40 of the Wildlife Act, 2000). This date restriction is in the Republic of Ireland only and differs from the UK who can effectively manage vegetation to April 15th each year. In the UK, the RSPB currently recommend such rotational patch burning of heather to provide attractive nesting sites and also state that moorland managed for red grouse support higher densities of curlews. The current season in Ireland is largely unworkable due to unsuitable weather conditions so early in the year. A result of this has been an increased risk of wildfire from a build-up of overgrown woodier vegetation. Curiously, there are few newspaper reports of devastating wildfires before 2000.

The destructive effects of wildfires and the ecological damage lead to lively debate. Wildfires can lead to the destruction of an entire hillside, with burning of the peat layer to the subsoil. Without the vegetation cover, erosion takes place resulting in increased turbidity of the runoff water. This is an increased cost for Irish Water as the Wicklow uplands are the main catchment areas for Dublin's water supply. In addition the capacity of peat, and sphagnum moss, to store and hold water is gone so less protection against floods. Following a wildfire, recolonisation of the vegetation takes years as the soil microbiome is gone;

heather regeneration is particularly slow while bracken is a very invasive. The spread of bracken pose more issues including being toxic to livestock and harbouring ticks. Tickborne diseases, such as Lyme disease and other co-infections affect sheep, deer and humans and are recognised as a public health issue for all users of the uplands. Carbon sequestration and mitigation were also discussed. The Wicklow Uplands, with good vegetation management and increased peaty soil depth, could provide a good carbon store. This sequestration would help meet the national requirements to reduce carbon emissions. Though a wildfire would instantly negate any mitigation as the store literally goes up in smoke.

Thus, up till now hill farmers have been underappreciated, but the custodians of the hills. Tweeted at the meeting- 'hill farmers endangered species'! Should they also be on the Red List? Young farmers have to be encouraged back to the hills. This will require mentoring them in herding skills and also developing flocks of sheep that know the hills. Hefted sheep and young farmers take time to develop.

*Claire Chambers, WUC Board Member*



## Heritage Bill

The Heritage Bill, which would allow burning of upland vegetation in March when weather conditions are unsuitable in the previous months, was debated in the Seanad a number of times in recent months. After a number of proposals and amendments, relating to the hedge-cutting season, the Bill has now been passed to the Dáil for further debate before a final decision is made. Wicklow Uplands Council is in favour of the Bill and the use of controlled burning in the best management of upland vegetation. The current season which ends on the last day of February is very restrictive for upland landowners and has resulted in large areas of overgrown vegetation. Vast monocultures of heather, gorse and bracken are not good for grazing or biodiversity and create a potential fire hazard due to the build of vegetation in drier summer months. Healthy upland habitats are comprised of a range of vegetation type and structure.

This year there were a number of fires in upland areas across the country as dry weather prevailed throughout April. Wicklow Uplands Council urges that fires are not set outside of the current permissive burning season. Dry vegetation resulted in uncontrolled fires spreading rapidly with devastating effect, as was witnessed in the West of Ireland this year. Wicklow Uplands Council will continue to advocate for the extension of the current permissive burning season and the use of controlled and managed burning. However the spread of uncontrolled fires outside of the current permissive season will make this task much more difficult.

## An update on a Locally Led Scheme

For the past number of years Wicklow Uplands Council has been working with hill farmers, the Irish Uplands Forum, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Teagasc in working towards supporting upland farmers and the best management of upland vegetation. Research carried out in the Wicklow/Dublin uplands identified a decline in upland sheep farming and the need for targeted support for upland farmers. As outlined in the previous article, farmers play a crucial role in keeping upland habitats in good environmental condition. During the last review of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) Wicklow Uplands Council lobbied for the inclusion of locally led schemes, for upland areas, under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) and following the consultation period with the Department of Agriculture provision was made for such schemes.



Recently there has been a lot of discussion and media coverage in relation to vegetation management and locally led schemes. However the question for many people is still, what exactly are Locally Led Agri Environment Schemes (LLAESs) and how do they work? Essentially LLAESs encourage locally driven solutions to address environmental and biodiversity challenges at a local level i.e. local solutions to local problems. While other agri-environment schemes have aimed to address environmental problems a weakness has been that they operated on a 'one size fits all' approach. LLAESs aim to offer a more targeted approach.

The value of a locally led approach was realised following two very successful initiatives in the Burren, Co Clare; The Burren LIFE Project 2005-2010 and the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme 2010-2015. These programmes successfully demonstrated the important role that farmers and farming practices play in the conservation of habitats.

After a lengthy period of anticipation a competitive call for applications for LLAESs for upland areas was announced in December 2016 under the European Innovations Partnerships (EIP) programme. The EIP involves the cooperation of farmers, scientists, advisors, NGOs and others coming together in operational groups to address a specific issue. This call for applications was open to projects focusing on environmental or climate related issues not just in upland areas.

Wicklow Uplands Council submitted a proposal for a LLAES aptly titled 'Sustainable Uplands Agri-environment Scheme' (SUAS). The aim of SUAS is to support farmers and promote improved vegetation management in the Wicklow/Dublin uplands. The proposal is based on the research carried out in the area over the last number of years. There was huge interest

in the EIP programme with a greater than expected number of applications being submitted for consideration. The Uplands Council application was one of 22 projects to be shortlisted to progress to the second round of the application process. This stage of the application process will involve the development of a detailed operational group project proposal, to be submitted in September 2017. It is expected that up to 11 projects will then be shortlisted to actually implement the projects on the ground.



While it is still very early days in the application process it is envisaged that SUAS will be a 5 year programme supporting economically, socially and environmentally sustainable farming. It will support the development and implementation of comprehensive plans aimed at improving/maintaining the quality of upland habitats and biodiversity. Participants in the scheme will undertake a number of clear measures which will help to achieve the goals.

As the proposal is still in the very early stages the exact details need to be fully developed. The allocated budget for each successful applicant has yet to be determined by the Department and this will obviously be a key factor in how the scheme can be implemented and what can be realistically achieved. The most important thing is that SUAS works effectively for all those involved. These projects will be monitored closely by the Department with the next review of the CAP in mind. If the projects are successful LLAESs may be seen as the way forward for sustainable farming and rolled out on a wider scale.

Wicklow Uplands Council will be working very closely with local stakeholders over the summer months to prepare the detailed project proposal. The level of research that has been carried out to date means that we are well positioned to develop and implement one of the first locally led schemes for upland areas in the country.

*Brian Dunne, Co-ordinator, Wicklow Uplands Council*



# Litter in the Wicklow Uplands

It's no good saying "Ah sure littering has become an unfortunate part of modern disposable society" Whilst littering it is on the increase we shouldn't blame it on the evolution of lifestyle. Litter is a product of a careless and thoughtless section of people who often don't think of the consequences of their actions. Many people who throw paper cups out of passing cars have pristine clean cars inside and that is what they are focussed on – not the impact of their actions in keeping their cars litter free.

However, litter is not only made up of paper cups and takeaway cartons. It gets more sinister than that. Surveys have concluded that small bags of household rubbish are being dropped on our country roads. The bin from under the sink is finding its way into the uplands rather than the wheelie bin. Why? Cost probably. Recycling centres take most house hold waste. Plastic bottles, glass etc. The problem lies with that small element of 'stuff' that cannot be recycled. Rather than paying the annual bin charges the bin is being dumped for someone else to deal with. But what if nobody deals with it. The problem escalates. More and more bags of rubbish litter our country roads.

Roadsides, dykes and hedgerows dispersed with all kinds of litter are a disgusting sight. It not only affects our environment but also pride in our rural areas, and yet the practice continues. All littering is an eyesore but this type of littering is especially disgusting. Plastic Bottles, cans, nappies and paper blowing around our roadsides is not the picture we want to paint to our visitors.



vast amount of household waste is recyclable. The opening times and lists of acceptable materials at these sites can be found on Wicklow County Council website at [www.wicklow.ie/recycling-centres](http://www.wicklow.ie/recycling-centres). Charity shops also accept offers of clothes, toys, old furniture etc. Indeed, there are a growing number of 'men's sheds' around the county which are also grateful to accept items.

Anybody caught dropping or leaving litter in a public place can be issued with an on the spot fine of €150 or a maximum of €3000 in court. Additionally, any person convicted of a litter offence may be required to pay the Local Authority's costs and expenses for investigation, prosecution and clean up. Do your bit.



But there is hope. The PURE Project has been a major success in tackling illegal dumping and fly-tipping, removing over 2,815 tonnes of dumping from the uplands since 2006. While PURE can effectively tackle dumping sites with larger volumes of rubbish and bags of rubbish, it is more problematic to remove loose litter strewn along our roadsides.

Local communities have been very effective in removing this kind of littering through initiatives such as the PURE Mile and through Tidy Towns Groups. To coincide with National Spring Clean Week, Wicklow Uplands Council organised a Litter Pick on the Sally Gap at the beginning of April.

We had a great turn out of voluntary 'Pickers' who spent most of their morning picking everything from paper cups to old boots, car jacks and bottles from the roadside. Ten kilometres of roadside was covered and as this was a very successful event, Wicklow Uplands Council hope to organise similar litter picks in other areas of the Uplands – indeed it is hoped that this will be an annual event where we will focus on different but key problem areas of the county.

## What can we do? Spread the word.

It's easy!! . Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Demonstrate to your friends and family how easy it can be. It can become a way of life. Even in small urban apartments we can segregate our waste and dispose of it properly. There are five recycling facilities in Wicklow and there is no charge to recycle and the



## Report illegal dumping.

Reporting Dumping and Littering  
Wicklow County Council operates a Lo-call Litterline 1890 54 88 37  
PURE Lo-call no 1850 36 51 21 so you can conveniently report litter offences or call the Main Environmental Office on 0404 20296 or email [env@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:env@wicklowcoco.ie)

*Charlotte Rosemond, Acting Communications Officer, WUC*

**REUSE**   
**REDUCE**  
**RECYCLE**

# Hollywood Fair

Hollywood Fair is a remarkable success story attributed to the work of a dedicated committee together with landowner cooperation, sponsors, and community spirit. The theme of the fair is pre 1950's rural heritage and proven to have something of interest for all. The fair is dependent on the support of Wicklow Co. Co., Gardaí, local businesses and surrounding villages and communities. The biggest challenge facing the committee each year is engaging help. The fair runs from Wednesday to Sunday with Sunday being the 'Fair Day'



Hollywood Fair started out as a means of raising funds for Balinglass hospital and other local charities. A small group ran the fair each year but its popularity soon took over! Following a number of successful years and its growth in popularity, the committee was advised to put the concept on a more formal footing and a limited company was set up. This ensured that all the necessary legalities were put in place.

Each year the Hollywood Fair presents 11 local charities with cheques in the region of €2,500 and to date; over €200,000 has been raised. This is a phenomenal story of how community spirit and foresight can produce an event that attracts visitors from all over Ireland and beyond.

Those attending the fair are encouraged to dress in pre 1950s attire. This, in itself is a sight to behold. Last year the Guinness World Record for the 'Most Flat Caps Worn at a Single Event'

was broken. There are displays of working vintage machinery and cars. There is a sheep show along with a display of vintage shearing. Farriers and blacksmiths can be seen shoeing horses. While other crafts such as basket weaving, butter making and bread making are on display. Old skills such as sheep dog trials and roof thatching, stone cutting and wood turning are displayed in a typical pre 1950's setting.

The weekend is steeped in culture and nostalgia with events such as; a Latin mass, set dancing, ceol agus cáinte, artistic & photographic exhibitions and sessions in the local pubs. Old forgotten games and pastimes such as horseshoe throwing, fortune telling, matchmaking, pitch & toss and the duck race are resurrected for the weekend – something for everyone. All who attend embrace the spirit of the event and the pre 1950's theme. Make a date this August 16th – 20th. Tell your friends and family. Further details can be found at [www.thehollywoodfair.com](http://www.thehollywoodfair.com).



## Rural Post Offices – Are they to be a thing of the past?



There has been much media attention surrounding the closure of Post Offices in rural Ireland. Small villages are losing their post offices as An Post moves forward with its 5 year plan to 'curb losses in the network'. The closure of several hundred Post Offices across the country is planned and the inconvenience caused to older people, many of whom rely on their local post office to collect their pension is huge.

It goes further than inconvenience though. The local Post Office is a place where folk meet and have a chat – the social hub of the village. The place where interaction with friends and neighbours is guaranteed. The warm feeling of belonging to a community is so important to our mental health. Loneliness is on the increase and a chance meeting with a neighbour is so important. Nobody wants to admit to being lonely but it is a huge problem in rural areas. It is becoming harder and harder to belong to a community nowadays. Perception being that people want to live in 'splendid isolation'.

Laragh/Glendalough was one of the post offices which have been deemed as not "economically viable" by An Post and a huge campaign by local people is ongoing to reopen the post office somewhere in the village. Kilmacanogue post office closed unexpectedly on 14th February. An Post said it was due to circumstances beyond their control.

The residents of Laragh, Glendalough and Trooperstown must now travel 10k to Rathdrum or Roundwood Post Offices and folk in Kilmacaongue have to go to Bray. Bit by bit services in rural areas are being decimated and with that the already marginalised communities in these areas are being devastated.

**What can we do? Use the post office.**

**Ensure that it is a viable business.**

The post office is not just somewhere to buy the odd stamp and post a letter. It offers a wide range of products and services. Log on to [An Post.ie](http://AnPost.ie) and see all that they offer to both personal and business customers.

Here are just a few of the essential services your local post office offers.

*Charlotte Rosemond, Acting Communications Officer, WUC*

Send Mail / Buy Stamps	Pay bills (Electricity/Gas)	TV Licence
Next day Mail Delivery	Passport Express	Dog Licence,
Registered Post	International Money services	Property Tax
Express Post	Banking services (AIB)	Mobile Phones and top ups
Courier Post	State Savings products	An Post Insurance
Post Redirection	Bulk Mail Deliveries	iTunes
Mail minder / Delivery Box	Direct Mailing Service	One 4 All Gift Cards

# Farm Safety

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) revealed that farmers are eight times more likely to get seriously injured in a workplace-related accident than the general working population. A reported 21 people lost their lives in farm accidents in 2016. These statistics are a reminder of the dangers on farms.

## Machinery and Tractors

The HSA has published 'Guidance on the Safe Use of Tractors and Machinery on Farms'. It states that; all machinery should be checked regularly to ensure mechanically soundness. Keep a safe distance from machinery while it is operating. Loaders and diggers are especially vulnerable to overhead power lines. If you are planning to excavate, check site maps and call the power and gas supplier to make sure that there are no underground pipes and cables.

## Safety Clothing

It is always a good idea to wear high-visibility jackets so that everyone in the farmyard has a better chance of seeing each other. Suitable clothing and boots are a must and protective clothing (helmets, goggles, gloves and steel capped boots) should be used as required.

## Children and Farm Safety

A farm is a wonderful place for any child to be reared but the farmyard is full of potential hazards and children should always be supervised by an adult. Accidents happen but the risks can be minimised. Set clear ground rules with your children and don't deviate from them.

- Keep children at a safe distance from livestock and supervise when they are feeding animals.
- Keep all pesticides, cleaning fluids, veterinary medicines and equipment in their original containers and in a securely locked store.
- Keep children from climbing ladders and on stacked bales.

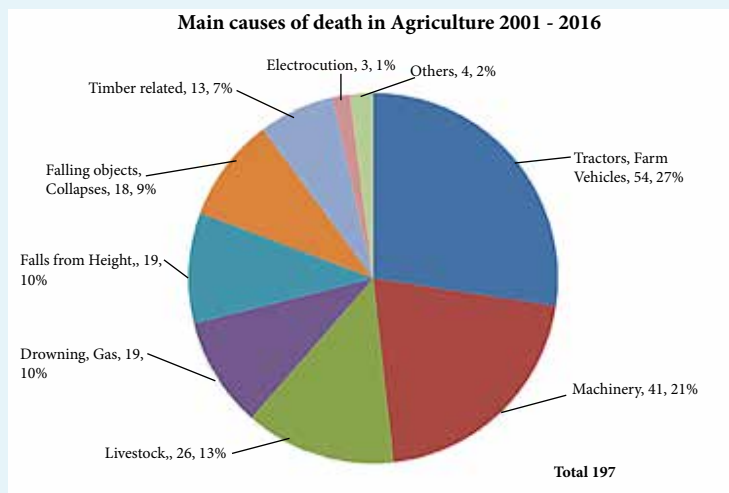
Heavy swinging gates can also cause serious injury.

- Teach children about the dangers on the farm.
- Slurry facilities, wells and tanks should always be securely covered.
- Children should be taught to respect the potential dangers of livestock.

## Bales

Silage bales should be stacked on a level and well-drained area, no more than three bales high. Bales should be securely loaded and kept as low as possible when transporting. Never overload or allow bales to overhang the trailer. It is the responsibility of the farmer or contractor, who is driving a tractor with a trailer transporting bales, to ensure that they are compliant with the national weight and dimension limits.

Charlotte Rosemond, Acting Communications Officer, WUC.



The 'Ireland's Ancient East' brand is a concept rooted in the rich history and diverse range of cultural heritage experiences that are particularly prevalent in the East of the country.

Ireland's Ancient East covers a huge part of the country outside of Dublin and east of the River Shannon including 17 counties; Carlow, Cavan, Cork City & County\* (East of N20) Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick County\* (East of N20), Longford, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford, Wicklow

Using stories told by the best storytellers in the world, Ireland's Ancient East offers the visitor somewhere that is easy to explore and trace 5,000 years of history. The objectives of Ireland's Ancient East are to disperse visitor traffic across the country by encouraging exploration of lesser known sites and unveiling ancient, almost forgotten stories. We aim to motivate and encourage visitors to spend more time in the lesser known towns and villages of the region.

We believe stories and experiences are the key to making Ireland's Ancient East stand out in the crowded travel marketplace. Market research shows that history and landscapes are not enough on their own to motivate people to visit this part

of the world but, put history and landscape together with our stories and the promise comes alive. Our treasure trove of legends and folklore and the Irish people's reputation for stories and storytelling – for wit, warmth and a way with words is the secret to building a truly distinctive brand.

With help from our tourism partners, we have created a series of stories. These stories are shaping everything we do for Ireland's Ancient East from decisions about investment, to words for signs, to creatives for pop-ups, to itineraries for travel trade and media, to a new story-filled website with specially created and curated visuals that bring the stories to life.

## The 9 Stories

1. Castles & Conquests
2. Big Houses & Hard Times
3. Viking
4. Sacred Ireland
5. Ancient Ireland
6. High Kings & Heroes
7. Ireland's Mystical Waterway
8. The Sport of Kings
9. Maritime Gateway



Log on to our website [www.irelandsancienteast/stories.com](http://www.irelandsancienteast/stories.com)  
*Orla Woods, Fáilte Ireland*

*Images reproduced in this newsletter have been kindly provided by: Charlotte Rosemond, Helen Lawless, Fáilte Ireland and Wicklow County Tourism.*

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