



**GeoparkLIFE**  
**ACTION B3 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT**  
 Date April 2015

**The scope of Action B3:**

*The Aim of B3 is to develop the skills base of all stakeholders in the understanding, management and conservation of natural and cultural heritage and to reinforce the Actions B1 and B2. It will strengthen community support of active conservation and also analyse the current policy that impact of these actions as well as making recommendations for the future.*

<b>Project Partnership</b>	<p>Working groups of partners have been activated to plan and deliver on the core actions of B1, B2 and B3. These working groups are examples of partnership in action.</p> <p>The topic of Partnership was explored in some detail during a facilitated session on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, attended by the agencies and stakeholders.</p>
<b>Supporting Action B1: Code of Practice</b>	
Adopt a Hedgerow	<p>This action originated as a proposal from the Conservation and Advocacy subcommittee of the Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN). The initiative would see BEN businesses maintaining a stretch of roadside, collecting litter, reporting dumping and invasive species.</p> <p>30 businesses are participating in a pilot clean up between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> April. This action will be reviewed and assessed afterwards. If deemed appropriate, a proposal for signage may be prepared for submission to Clare Co. Co.</p> <p>Some details need to be refined when it comes to training volunteers in relation to invasive species and further work is needed on this in collaboration with NPWS and Burrenbeo Trust.</p> <p>A strategy for monitoring the success of the scheme has been agreed with the Conservation and Advocacy Group of BEN.</p>
Leave No Trace	<p>The Burren &amp; Cliffs of Moher Geopark had become a partner of Leave No Trace Ireland. Under this partnership the following is being undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up a small group of trained up Burren based Leave No Trace operators</li> <li>• This group will carry out a review of how the programme is working for them and others from a Burren Specific viewpoint and its overall effectiveness – targeting specific Burren problems such as the mini-dolmens, votive offerings, littering etc</li> <li>• Identify areas that could be tackled/improved – how best the message can be got across</li> <li>• Develop a new area specific code with the Leave No Trace group which incorporates the elements of the Burren Code based on their findings</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and perhaps produce a new booklet (as planned by the Leave No Trace group). This will be proposed at the Leave No Trace AGM (May 12<sup>th</sup>) and could start this summer</li> </ul>
Meitheal	<p>A Meitheal event took place in November 2014 where BEN members undertook repair to walls on the Casey and Burke family lands at Fanore/Blackhead under the supervision of the Burren Conservation Volunteers. This was a very successful event with 30 participants organised in a general clean-up of the area and wall repairs including Stile construction. There was good co-operation with farmers and overall the event was very successful where local tourism enterprises got a chance to show their support to local landowners.</p> <p>A short video has recorded the event and is available to view on the Geopark Website.</p> <p>A methodology report on the Meitheal activity is to be prepared by Burrenbeo Trust.</p> <p>An annual Meitheal event as well as more informal local ones throughout the year is currently under consideration by BEN.</p>
Training in Interpretation and Visitor Management	<p>A training manual and programme will be developed under the B1 Code of Practice on the appropriate interpretation, use and visitor management of the B2 Demonstration Sites. This will be piloted this Autumn.</p>
<b>Supporting Action B2</b>	
Training of Supervisors – Observations, monitoring, recording and reporting.	<p>Following on from the Failte Ireland funded work by CASS and Milward Brown of the environmental surveys and visitor surveys at B2 demonstration sites (see B2 and ZH report), a methodology will be devised for the ongoing monitoring of these sites.</p>
Adopt a Monument	<p>This is currently being researched by Zena Hoctor and Christine Grant, with assistance from the Heritage Council. The Scottish model is being looked at in detail.</p>
<b>Community Engagement</b>	
Tidy Towns	<p>This activity was aimed at developing a template and recommendations on engaging tidy towns groups with appropriate activities to nourish and highlight biodiversity in more urbanised environments.</p> <p>A Wildlife Survey was commissioned by the Ballyvaughan Community Development Group (BVCD) funded by the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark as part of their LIFE project, to take place during 2014. The survey was carried out to identify habitats and physical features on a 1:2500 map, annotated with habitat descriptions and species lists, indicating notable species and those which are indicative of the health of the habitat.</p> <p>The Wildlife Survey Habitat Map is based on Phase 1 Habitat Surveying as outlined in the Tidy Towns handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey. A literature review was carried out concerning the SACs and surrounding areas of interest to identify species which may also be present in the town. The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) drew attention to a rare plant, found only in Ballyvaughan, which then was carefully searched for. Public consultation provides species lists for mobile elements of the fauna.</p> <p>The final report from this study has been received and includes</p>

	<p>photographs of those habitats and a Management Plan.</p> <p>The next phase of this action is to develop a work programme and transferable tool kit for the management of biodiversity for Tidy Towns.</p>
<p>Kilnaboy and An Cabhail Mor</p>	<p>A training initiative by Dick Cronin of CCC which would satisfy the wishes of the Kilnaboy Historical and Heritage Group (KHHG) towards the conservation of An Cabhail Mor, a 17<sup>th</sup> Century building in a bad state of disrepair in Kilnaboy.</p> <p>The priority for the site is a focus on training which will aid the consolidation of the walls would include Conservation Volunteers, members of local FAS schemes (or equivalent) and those that have shown an interest and commitment to the site, with the potential for those trained as part of the project to become future leaders of similar projects.</p> <p>The program will include aspects of training in research on historical backgrounds and building technologies with a focus on mortared buildings (not including dry stone walling). The proposed work on the monument itself is simply the re-pointing of the building where possible with lime mortar in an attempt to halt further degradation. Conservation work at the site is a matter of urgency and the proposed training scheme is seen as a means of sustaining the conservation works. Training would be carried out by suitable qualified people and under appropriate supervision, all the while meeting health and safety and other legislative requirements.</p> <p>A lot has happened on the ground with this project as it is seen as a good case study for Action B3 community engagement and conservation with a very pro-active and enthusiastic community group. It has also provided good fruitful debates related to policy issues (see final action point) and the methodology for such projects.</p> <p>The following actions are in progress in preparation for the conservation work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Inspection and Risk Assessment has been carried out (by David Humphrey's of Architectural Conservation Professionals)</li> <li>• Land owner agreement being drawn up</li> <li>• Schedule of works prepared to outline the phased basis for the work</li> <li>• Section 57 declaration submitted to CCC and a notification to NMS</li> <li>• A grant application for Conservation to was submitted to the Heritage Council</li> <li>• A tender document has been circulated for the wildlife survey of the monument with a closing date of Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April</li> </ul> <p>Survey of building will be completed in tandem with the conservation work by suitably qualified personnel.</p>
<p>Lisdoonvarna Failte</p>	<p>Another case study that ties in with local tourism and community involvement is taking place at Lisdoonvarna Spa Wells, in conjunction with the community owners of the property Lisdoonvarna Failtel.</p> <p>Several meetings have taken place between a range of agencies, including the Geopark, Failte Ireland, Clare County Council, and Lisdoonvarna Failte on the development of the Spa Wells as a tourism and community resource. The agreement in place at present is that</p>

	<p>GeoparkLIFE will part fund a feasibility study on the development of the site to properly interpret heritage and conservation values for locals and visitors.</p>
<p>Lisdoonvarna Secondary School</p>	<p>A Transition Year project around the Hydrology of the Burren is developing a programme of research and information provision on the importance of water together with their teacher John Simms and will become an entry in the forthcoming BT Young Scientist Competition.</p> <p>This Lisdoonvarna secondary school groundwater awareness project will be commencing on Tue 21st April. Dr. Tiernan Henry will lead the project with a presentation on the Hydrology of the Burren followed by a round table workshop. Seven Transition Year students will participate under the guidance of Mr. John Sims. It is hoped to enter the project in the UNESCO eco-environmentalists competition next year.</p> <p><u>Project Outline:</u></p> <p>The students will receive expert tuition on various aspects of the geology, hydrology and caves of the Burren from Dr. Tiernan Henry (NUIG) Colin Bunce (Burren Outdoor Education Centre) and Dr. Eamon Doyle (Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark) as well as a presentation on littering and pollution from Sonja O'Brien from the Boghill Centre, Lisdoonvarna. They will then do further research and create a lesson plan to present to students at a local National school, gaining teaching and research experience as well as valuable presentation skills. The National School students in return will receive information about their environment from a local source, closer to their own age than the usual teachers or guest presenters, which they will be more readily able to identify with.</p> <p>GSI, CCC and a local caving club are collaborating on dye tracing.</p> <p>GSI are also collaborating with TCD on a 3D hydrology project for schools while NUIG are conducting post doctorate research in hydrology in the Burren.</p> <p>Lisdoonvarna TY has also worked with GeoparkLIFE to develop a survey relating to residents attitudes to tourism, which will be carried out in April.</p>
<p><b>Policy Review</b></p>	<p>A key issue in achieving the aims of the GeoparkLIFE project overall is to address the policy implications of the project and the challenge of reconciling policy conflicts between sustainable tourism and other policies, especially regulatory environmental policies. It is clear that the problem is not a lack of policy but the need to recognize the applicability of a range of policy instruments which may not be in direct alignment and to aim for integration of better management of interfaces between policies on conservation and tourism. The challenge therefore is to balance and resolve inter-policy conflicts.</p> <p>Three phases of work have been proposed under this heading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mapping the policy framework</li> <li>2. Detailing the key policy conflicts/frictions</li> <li>3. Moving to a reconciliation/Making recommendations</li> </ol> <p>Phase 1 of this work is coming near completion. A desktop study providing the detail of the policies that operate in landscapes such as the Burren and their impact on sustainable tourism has been drawn up from available documentary and digital sources. A draft version of this mapping report was included in the progress report to the Commission</p>

	<p>last October. This report is in the process of being finalised while at the same time engaging with all the partners on the project would be asked to provide a perspective on the key policy drivers on their work. The overall outcome of phase 1 will be an overview of the policies relevant to and influencing the Burren and a detailed mapping of these policies as they impact on the B2 demonstration sites. Interviews with partners are scheduled for May 2015 and the phase 1 report is due for completion soon. There has been positive feedback on the draft policy document and it will be a priority for the coming months to complete this phase of work in preparation for the Mid-term report.</p>
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