

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 policies that impact on these actions as well as making recommendations for the future.

Supporting Action B1:	
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 act as an advocate in maintaining a stretch of roadside in their locality, engaging with the local community to collect litter, monitor, reporting dumping and deal with invasive species. The section of road chosen would be in direct contact with or enroute to the business which has adopted it.</p> <p>25 businesses actively participated in the pilot clean up over the course of a week in April 2015.</p> <p>The annual clean-up for 2016 has been arranged to take place on week beginning 11th April which will tie in with the National Spring Clean campaign.</p> <p>PR assistance will be provided by GeoparkLIFE while CCC provide resources relating to litter-picking and waste disposal.</p> <p>BEN members will attend a one-day training workshop on Invasive Species in March 2016, prior to the April Clean-Up. This training will be conducted by Burren Beo. The training will be the same as the training given to the Burren Conservation Volunteers but this one-day workshop will be dedicated to BEN members.</p> <p>A strategy for monitoring the success of the scheme has been agreed with the Conservation and Advocacy Group of BEN.</p>
Meitheal	<p>Meitheal is anticipated to be one of the five core events of the Conservation and Advocacy Forum. Following on from the successful event last November, another Meitheal event is planned for Saturday 7th November 2015 at Fahee, Nr. Carron.</p> <p>The area of the Burren known as Fahee is of great importance for tourism as well as wildlife. This event plans to support the farmer allowing access on his land with clearing pathways as well as maintaining an important area for rare breeding butterflies that many visitors come to the area to see.</p> <p>The event will be led by Richard Morrison of Burren Beo (BCV) and Paul McHale (Regional Butterfly Coordinator for the National Biodiversity Data Centre) with permission from the landowner.</p>

	<p>Conservation work at this site has been on-going under the guidance of Butterfly Conservation Ireland and with the assistance of the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers, with a noticeable positive impact on butterfly numbers. One of the objectives of this event is to carry out vital work maintaining the habitats on the site in the most favourable condition for breeding butterflies</p>
Community Engagement	
Tidy Towns	<p>Adjacent to Ballyvaughan there are Special Areas of Conservation and a Special Area of Protection for birds. The habitats surrounding the village include some of national and international importance, notably limestone pavement, orchid-rich calcareous grassland, turloughs and saltmarshes. It is suggested that these habitats be managed in order to enhance their value to biodiversity, increasing and protecting the species which live in them.</p> <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 by Phoebe O'Brien 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 final report from this study has been received and includes photographs of those habitats and a Management Plan. Management suggestions are made which comply with the requirements of the Tidy Towns Handbook. Suggestions were also made on how to improve Ballyvaughan's score for Wildlife and Natural Amenities. The 2015 Tidy Towns results showed Ballyvaughan scoring one extra point under 'Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities' compared to 2014, and overall scoring 6 more points in 2015 than 2014.</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>
Kilinaboy/An Cabhail Mor	<p>A training initiative proposed by Dick Cronin of CCC to repair and repoint the 17th Century building in a bad state of disrepair in Kilinaboy.</p> <p>This programme will involve H&S training, lime preparation and training in use of lime. The 17thC structure at Kilinaboy was selected as a suitable candidate for such a scheme, with an enthusiastic local group, good accessibility and facilities nearby.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A conservation inspection and risk assessment was carried out on the 21st February 2015 by Architectural Conservation Professionals (report 23rd Feb 2015). 2. A section 57 Declaration was submitted to CCC. 3. Notification was submitted to NMS with a method statement for works. NMS notification was granted on 3rd July 2015 with the

	<p>following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A summary condition report to be prepared by approved conservation engineer ○ A training plan to outline content of phase 1 training course ○ Standards to be governed by best practice '<i>The Conservation and Repair of Masonry Ruins</i>' ○ Appropriate supervision provided by trainer ○ Regular progress reports to DAHG ○ Outcomes to be discussed prior to any subsequent phases <p>4. An ecology report/wildlife survey was completed in May 2015 to comply with Best Practice. Bat conservation should also be considered as part of any conservation works in general.</p> <p>5. Mortar samples were taken by OPW for analysis.</p> <p>6. The Kilinaboy History and Heritage Group have completed a 'Vision' Document which contains their conservation plan for the monument.</p> <p>7. As per Dept. Guidelines a summary condition report by an approved conservation engineer must be prepared for the whole building with particular emphasis on the area of wall to be repaired in phase 1. This will take into account and make reference to the recent health and safety / risk assessment prepared by ACP Ltd. A request for tender has been circulated (7th October) for the conservation engineers report. Submission date is October 26th 2015 with the report to be completed by end January 2016.</p> <p>8. Some ivy removal has taken place.</p> <p>The DAHG will work on developing guidelines for community groups undertaking conservation projects.</p>
Lisdoonvarna Failte	<p>The Lisdoonvarna Failte case study is a local tourism and community project taking place at Lisdoonvarna Spa Wells with the community owners of the property there.</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 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>A tender document was circulated at the end July 2015 seeking a directional feasibility study for the development of the Lisdoonvarna Spa Wells Complex as a Health and Wellness Visitor Experience, with an appeal to domestic and international visitor markets.</p> <p>The Lisdoonvarna Fáilte vision is to restore Lisdoonvarna to its former glory as a premier holiday destination in Ireland by creating a unique,</p>

	<p>immersive and multi-dimensional visitor experience. The realisation of this vision would</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Restore the character of the town. II. Generate revenue for Lisdoonvarna Fáilte and for businesses in the town. III. iii. Be a catalyst for further entrepreneurship (complementary visitor experiences and general services) and therefore economic regeneration in the town and surrounding areas. <p>The central output of the feasibility study will be the production of an actionable report which is comprehensive and publishable.</p>
<p>Lisdoonvarna Secondary School</p>	<p>An Hydrology of the Burren and groundwater awareness project was developed with a number of contributors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eamon Doyle (Burren Geopark Geologist) • John Simms (teacher at Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna) • Dr. Tiernan Henry (NUIG) • Sonja O’Brien (BEN member/Boghill Centre) <p>The groundwater awareness project commenced on Tue 21st April in Lisdoonvarna Secondary School with a group of 8 Transition Year Students. The students received expert tuition on various aspects of the geology, hydrology and caves of the Burren from Dr. Tiernan Henry and Dr. Eamon Doyle as well as a presentation and video on littering and pollution from Sonja O’Brien from the Boghill Centre, Lisdoonvarna. These students then created a lesson plan to present the same information to students at two local National school. The gain would be two-way, with the TY students gaining teaching and research experience as well as valuable presentation skills. The National School students in return received information about their environment from a local source, closer to their own age than the usual teachers or guest presenters, which it is thought they may be more readily able to identify with.</p> <p>Lisdoonvarna TY has also worked with GeoparkLIFE to develop a survey relating to residents attitudes to tourism.</p> <p>A dye tracing project that was planned with a GSI, CCC and a local caving club collaboration did not proceed due to poor weather conditions.</p> <p>While the groundwater project is aimed at school children, it is anticipated that the project would be communicated to the general public through the ECO UNESCO Young Environmentalist competition.</p> <p>The essence of the EU Water Framework Directive of community education, awareness and engagement can be established for children through this project.</p>
<p>Policy Review</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</p>

	<p>balance and resolve inter-policy conflicts.</p> <p>Mapping Policy was phase 1 of this work, resulting in a comprehensive document outline the various pieces of legislation and policy which govern our work in the Burren by impacting on sustainable tourism and conservation management.</p> <p>Interviews continue with project partners and relevant personnel to get a sense of the broader experience of project partners on the ground (both regulators and regulated) to gain different perspectives on the policies impacting their role, what the conflicts are and how this impacts on sustainable tourism and conservation management. The intent is that recommendations can be made to improve policy integration.</p>
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