

Green Purchasing Award

Burren Fine Wine and Food

Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice Award Winner



Who they are: Burren Fine Wine & Food is situated on the grounds of the former Parochial House of Glenaragh Church in a restored stone building. The business specialises in lunches and private parties that provide customers with locally produced home cooked food between May and September. The focus on local ingredients highlights their flavour forward approach to their dishes and instils a sustainable ethos through practice. They also provide innovative packages combining meals with bike hire, guided Eco walks and cycling tours

What they did: Burren Fine Wine & Food prides itself on raising sustainability standards by purchasing green and locally sourced ingredients. We source our North Clare beef from Sean Haugh, Smoked Fish from Burren Smokehouse, Cheeses from Burren Gold and St. Tola, Coffee from Anam Coffee, Mil na Boirne Honey, Ballyvaughan, Vegetables from Michael Monks, Annie Nolan and Celtic Leaves. Burren Fine Wine & Food sources items from producers along the Wild Atlantic Way if ingredients cannot be purchased locally. This business approach strengthens relationships between local and regional producers and forges a pathway for future collaboration. Incorporating a 'green' approach for service use is achieved by using local providers. Bike hire and guided Eco tours operated by Burren Fine Wine & Food use local guides and the resources of the local bicycle shop. The internal design of the premises has exclusively supported the work of local craftspeople. The services required for the day to day upkeep of the premises is always sourced locally. To support the sustainability of other entrepreneurs within the community we provide a shop and gallery space for local artists, craftspeople, musicians and producers to showcase their products and services.

Outcome: The impact of sourcing services and produce locally has taken the word 'sustainability' quoted in countless documents and put it into action. Economic benefits are achieved by supporting the local economy and engaging with local business. Working to create a platform for local collaboration has stimulated a social consciousness to support local. The impact of our work to network with local business has created linkages between entrepreneurs as many customers have been directed to Burren Fine Wine & Food by other local business within the community. Green and local purchasing has a positive impacted on the environment as the use of packaging and wrapping has reduced substantially. Purchasing produce locally reduces 'food miles' and has a progressive input towards a zero carbon business.



Top Tip

Think before you buy, you can make a difference to the economy of your locality, also think about packaging and the environmental impact on your place, local suppliers can and will support your requests.

Energy Management Award

Hotel Doolin, Doolin

Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice Award Winner



Who they are: Located in the heart of Doolin, this contemporary Hotel Doolin is set amidst the backdrop of the Cliffs of Moher and on the fringes of the Burren National park which is known worldwide for its' rugged ever changing landscape and unique flora and fauna. The hotel is home of Doolin Folk Festival, Doolin Writers' Weekend, Doolin Craft Beer & Roots Festival.

What they did: Hotel Doolin reduced their carbon footprint per guest Jan-Aug 2017 by 25% comparing to the same period of 2016. initiatives included

- Changing the heating system in the hotel from oil to an air to water heat **pump**. The system maintains an ambient temperature of 21.5 degrees in the bedrooms and corridors of the hotel. The system ensures no heat loss through distribution pipes in the boiler room. The efficiency of the system is 400% on oil and our estimated savings per year will be €16,000 in the first year.
- Timers were installed on the very small number of electric radiators that are in their function Suite which is used for weddings in November – February annually.
- We actively change behaviour on a weekly basis by engaging and encouraging our team to reduce their carbon footprint. We find that this training and educating, hugely increased their positive effects on the activities and fundamental targets that we set in place.
- We have converted the remaining lights to LED this year.
- Equipment is serviced annually to ensure that it is working efficiently.
- We continually investing in insulation; Munster Joinery checked and re-sealed all windows in the hotel in 2017.
- We installed sensor lights in the bedroom corridors this year.
- We have an "Energy On/Off times plan" for all equipment which is followed meticulously for lights and equipment in all departments from reception to the kitchen and bar.
- We turn off the keg room in Winter time as it is cold enough outside.

Outcome: The above efforts have resulted in a 40% decrease in KWH per guest usage and an overall reduction of the hotels carbon footprint by 25% from Jan to June 2017 v's same period in 2016.



Top Tip

Record your energy usage, set targets and deadlines for your business to achieve and train the team to treat the business like it is their own home. We are very happy with the installation of the new air to water heat pump system which not only provides a better service but also reduces our carbon footprint significantly at no capital investment cost.

Strengthen Livelihoods Awards

Aillwee Cave and Birds of Prey Centre

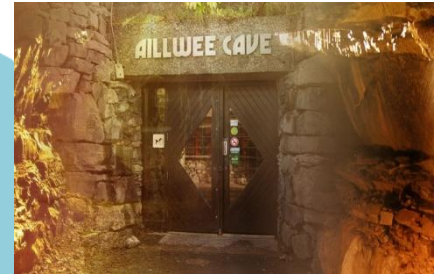
Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice Award Winner



Who they are: Aillwee Cave & Birds of Prey Centre is a visitor attraction in The Burren Co Clare. Our family business has been guiding visitors through the region's geology; particularly its underground landscape, for 41 years. Visitors are also given the chance to enjoy close proximity to, and learn about several Birds of Prey species, native and global. Our Burren Gold Cheese Factory is also open for visitors in our Farmshop. Here we showcase our Artisan, Traditional, Farmhouse cheese making methods. On site also are invigorating hazel woodland and limestone hillside walks.

What they did: Aillwee Cave and Birds of Prey Centre has been a continual employer in North Clare and within the Geopark Region for 41 years. As visitor numbers to the Cave grew employment increased. As developments around the site were added, e.g., Cave Access Building housing ancillary Retail and Catering services, Cheese Factory, Farm Shop, Santa's Workshop and Birds of Prey Centre, employment increased. As national and global travel habits changed due to, e.g. low cost air travel, employment increased. Alongside these positive developments at Aillwee, the most significant change to happen to the family run business model was the ability to provide full time employment within the backdrop of a heretofore traditional, accepted eight month a year 'tourist season'. Aillwee Cave and Birds of Prey Centre has been open to visitors year round for 20 years. This allows for a much more enjoyable experience for all our visitors whether the visit us in January, April, July or November. This is something we are extremely proud of at Aillwee

Outcome: Aillwee Cave and Birds of Prey Centre now sustains 89 Full Time Equivalent jobs in The Burren Region. Our staff age profile is diverse from 17 years to 60+ years of age. The provision of full time employment allows careers to be developed at Aillwee and families to either establish themselves or continue to live in the region. This has positive knock on effects for the local schools, shops and other businesses. Having long term positions filled allows for effective investment in long term training and other human resources which in turn enriches the experience we offer at Aillwee for both our visitors AND our staff. Our ethos of extending a family friendly welcome to all our visitors who choose to spend time at Aillwee is embodied in all our team members and this is commented on by visitor feedback and reviews.



Top Tip

The more businesses work together, we can aspire to the reality of full time employment within the Tourism Industry of the Geopark
#togetherIsBetter

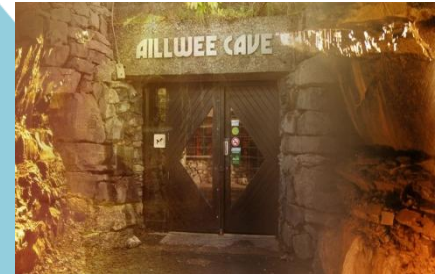
Vibrant Communities Award

Aillwee Cave and Birds of Prey Centre

Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice Award Winner



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What they did: Aillwee Cave and Birds of Prey Centre has been the main sponsor for **The Burren Gaels Ladies Football club** since its inception over 10 years ago. The club has players at all underage and overage levels and has achieved significant success since its original set up. The club draws on players from all the parishes in North Clare encompassing the Geopark Region and include Kilfenora, Kilshanny, Lisdoonvarna, Doolin, Ballyvaughan, Fanore, Carron and New Quay. We have provided all the jerseys for the club and regularly support fundraising efforts to help address the club's financial outgoings. Aillwee Cave and Birds of Prey Centre is also involved with **The Kilfenora Timeline**, since its set up 6 years ago. This charity based community project showcases the long, historical timeline of the people of Kilfenora and is curated by a group of over 90 volunteers from the parish daily for five months annually. Aillwee Cave provided financial support for the setup of the project and also provides ongoing industry expertise, volunteering time and administrative back up.



We continually support fund raising efforts for a whole range of local Geopark wide clubs and societies and are delighted to do so, e.g., Ballyvaughan Playground, Kilfenora Drama Society, Ballyvaughan Walking Club, Ballyvaughan Senior Citizens to name a few.

Outcome Burren Gales Ladies Football Club continues to grow in 2017 the girls had a win at intermediate level which means they will compete at the highest senior county level in 2018. This is huge for the club. As a North Clare club it impacts most households in the area. Our association with the club is long term and sustained and means that we get some brilliant applicants for our seasonal positions and beyond within the company.

Our work sustaining and supporting the Kilfenora Timeline directly and simultaneously impacts both tourists and locals. Volunteers curate at the exhibition where tourists visit, creating an opportunity for a local to welcome a visitor and tell them about their area which is very special. Our visitors are delighted to support our local's efforts and all funds raised go back to the people of the parish through the clubs, societies and educational bursaries.

Top Tip

A financial contribution is sometimes easier than volunteering time, but volunteering is massively more rewarding.

Waste Management Award

Hotel Doolin, Doolin

Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice Award Winner



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What they did:

- In 2017 they begun to use compostable cups, lids & napkins and have completely banned the sale or purchase of plastic bottles of water & soft drinks etc in their gift shop and food & beverage outlets.
- The Hotel grows a lot of their own fresh produce in a polytunnel on-site. By being self- sufficient for these products as much as possible, packaging waste is avoided & less mileage is required. They also constantly put pressure on suppliers to take their packaging away with them on delivery.
- They offer guests a free tea/coffee if they buy a Hotel Doolin Keep Cup and anyone that brings their own cup gets 30c off the next cup after their first purchase.
- They also compost sin-house; and uses the compost in their polytunnel to grow their own herbs, plants and flowers.
- Every employee that starts working in Hotel Doolin receives a full induction day where the green policies are clearly explained
- The Hotel continues to aim to reduce the amount of paper used at reception where possible they use E-invoicing, email confirmations; saving on paper and cartridge usage.
- Eco Wedding Package includes organic wines, planting 50 trees and herbs from the polytunnel, Fairtrade Organic wedding cake, eco-décor including edible menus and local cheese plate.
- Where possible, the hotel try to upcycle materials rather than disposing of them. They use empty treacle jars as sugar bowls in the café. They buy vintage second hand china saucers & cups for our wedding receptions.
- Bins are provided in the bedrooms with a note for the guests on how to segregate waste
- Tissue used in the guest bedrooms are 100% ecological paper.
- They put items that they no longer require on a local Facebook page called "Clare Free to a Good Home"; e.g candle ends that we are finished with – a local lady re-uses the wax. In 2017 they changed the beds of the hotel and put the old ones on the Facebook page,

Outcome:

Landfill per guest has reduced by 21% in 2017 YTD v's same period in 2016 (Jan-Aug).

Food Waste per cover has reduced by 4% comparing to same period in 2016



Top Tip

If you are going to sell take-away coffee, use compostable cups and lids. Look out for local Free to a Good Home is Facebook pages for giving away things that you are finished with.

Water Conservation Award

Hotel Doolin, Doolin

Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice Award Winner



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What they did:

- The hotel records the water meter readings at the same time every day- this is done by their Maintenance Personnel and input into a water log book. Targets are set for the hotel to achieve, with a reduction of a of 10% per guest for 2017.
- They monitor the shower aerators as well as water flow of taps in the kitchen.
- Urinals in bathrooms flush every 2 hours and these are checked regularly
- The hotel operates a towel & linen re-use programme in the bedrooms.
- Guests are incentivised not to have their room serviced by giving them a 5 euro bar voucher. There has been a very positive uptake on this offering.
- Washing machines have eco-friendly programmes pre-programmed to ensure the hotel is saving as much energy and water as possible.
- A knee control unit has been set up on the wash hand basin in the kitchen to avoid letting the tap run.
- The Hotel harvests rainwater and has a 6500 litre tank in the garden. They have 4 shoots running from gutters into pipes bringing rainwater to the tank. This is used water daily for watering plants and polytunnel and cleaning. As well as cleaning the hotel & its footpaths.
- New grease traps have been installed which reduce problems with the septic tank. Also upgraded the waste treatment plant (tertiary treatment system) has been installed which is much more environmental.
- the hotel has installed hippo bags in the toilets to avoid less water being used per flush.
- The hotel also has an onsite water filtration unit to provide filtered water complimentary in bottles in the bedrooms for the guests.
- They also submeter to be able to detect in more detail where water is being used. They then record usage, set targets and monitor water usage continuously



Outcome:

In 2017 the hotel reduced its water consumption by the targeted 10% per guest and estimates that the rainwater harvesting saves 2 cubic metres a day.

Top Tip

Harvest Rainwater – even if it is from the a shoot on your garden shed-it doesn't matter how big it is! It all makes a difference. This is water that can be used for cleaning your back yard or back of house areas.

Working Together (Group) Award

The Burren Food Trail

Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice Award Winner



Who they are: The Burren food trail is a group of 27 food producers or providers who work together to showcase the Burren and its rich food story. Our members are as diverse as its food, from oyster catchers to Michelin star restaurant, its food from lamb to lobster, so no wonder we are known as the fertile rock. Members tell the food story of the Burren through their food offering and at showcase events nationwide. Promoting the Burren as a food destination helps visitors to understand the heritage of the Burren through its food.

What they did: The B.F.T. has worked hard at promoting the Geopark region as a food destination. Over the last five years the group, supported by the Geopark team has promoted the destination tirelessly not only through their food production but also in the joint promotion of their authentic food story. Brining together all the food business in the Burren Ecotourism Network the group has not only focused on their own standards but on promoting them and their regional story with a coherent message, The Burren is a Fertile Rock.

The Burren Food Trail group meets on a regular basis to discuss and plan promotional activity for the trail. Originally coordinated by one of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark LIFE coordinators they have since established their own structures and way of working with a chair, secretary and working group to plan activity with the input of the wider group.

The group have attend and hosted multiple events both locally and nationally. They took stands at exhibitions and events nationwide from cork to Meath to showcase the groups produce and to change the perception of the Burren region as being bare and barren. The group organised and hosted a series of food events every Monday from April to November each year to spread the word and to give visitors a unique food experience. The group worked together to produce a 5 year plan to promote the food offering and story going forward. They have also produced leaflets, posters and event guides to promote food story and the destination. They have twinned with another food trail in Ireland in order to expand their story and promote the links with the Boyne valley food trail.

Outcome: The Burren landscape has been put firmly on the map as a foodie destination due to the cooperation of the group with each other and with the Geopark team. The Burren Food Trail through its partnership with the Geopark applied for and won, the Irish EDEN (European destination of excellence for local gastronomy) award in 2015, the RAI Foodie Towns award and was runner up in the Irish Tourism Awards.



Top Tip

Know your story and tell it well, know that your story is only part of a bigger story so be prepared to share.

Working Together (Business) Award

Burren Smokehouse, Lisdoonvarna

Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice Award Winner



Who they are: Burren Smokehouse a founding member of the Burren Ecotourism Network , they produce a 100% Irish Food product in a traditional craft way. The Smokehouse also has an onsite visitor centre to give an opportunity to individual and groups to taste food from the region and to educate on how their product is produced in a sustainable way with minimal impact on the environment. The Burren Smokehouse employs 18 people all year round and contributes significantly to the local economy.



What they did: The Burren Smokehouse has worked collaboratively since 1989 and particularly so as a member of the Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN). They collaborate with other BEN members on showcasing Burren Food to the international community via their Website, monthly Newsletters, Events, they also contribute heavily to the Geopark destination marketing programme on behalf of BEN.



Since 2005 The Burren Smokehouse has created a platform together with other local producers and BEN members through organising a 3 day event, the Burren Slow Food Festival, the collaborate with food and drink producers, chefs, restaurants, accommodation providers, activity providers and the Geopark project ,inviting journalists as well as national and international speakers to the showcase event.

The Burren Smokehouse has actively promoted Burren Geopark as a tourism destination at events they attend themselves like Food on the Edge, Sheridan's Festival, Litfest, Expo Milan, at Meitheal, ITOA, in Stockholm 2017 in conjunction with Bord Bia/Failte Ireland / SAS Airline. The Burren Smokehouse also actively includes other local producers in their seasonal hampers, they use Burren Gold Cheese from the Ailwee Cave, Anam Coffee, St Tola Goats Cheese and Hazel Mountain Chocolate. To promote the regions food story.

Outcome: The Burren Smokehouse attract 45,000 visitors per year including chefs and journalists , these also visit nearby attractions, producers, restaurants and accommodation providers. Through its constant promotion of the region the Burren Smokehouse secured a visit of Food on the Edge International Michelin star chefs to the regions and collaborated with Burren Ecotourism Network members and The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark to provide host an important showcase for the destination.

Top Tip

Generously Share information about other local businesses in brochures, maps, through website information . Be an active member and take part in events and groups. What benefits the destination will benefit all

A Cared-For Landscape Award

Burren Ecotourism Network

Conservation advocacy Committee

Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice Award Winner



Who they are: The Conservation and Advocacy group are a sub committee of the Burren Ecotourism Network. They coordinate and manage the networks destination activity in the field of conservation. The committee meets 9 to 10 times a year and has a core membership of 7 people. They plan a number of group conservation initiatives that everyone in the network can participate in.

What they did: The Conservation and Advocacy committee have an ongoing structured programme events and activities each year. The committee organises the annual Burren **Food Fayre**, which takes place in October every year. The festival is a local event that is free to attend and celebrates local produces and farming.

The committee also organises an **Adopt a Hedgerow Scheme**. The scheme was conceived and piloted by the committee as a way for every business in the Network to contribute to the health of their local hedgerows. The scheme takes place over a week twice a year, at the beginning and the end of the tourism season. It sees each business clearing up to 3km of the hedgerows around their property of litter, which is sorted for waste and recycling. The litter is then collected in bulk and take to a local waste management facility.

The committee also organises a **Spring Clean** up event in conjunction with a local school which see the core members going into a local school in the Geopark region and chatting with the pupils about litter, the environment and recycling before doing a clean up together of the schools village. The children of today are the future guardians of the Geopark landscape and early education is vital.

The forth annual activity coordinated and organised by the committee is a **Meitheal**. A Meitheal is an Irish tradition of helping local farmers during times of harvest. In this case the Meitheal see the tourism businesses in the Burren Ecotourism Network, who benefit from the recreational walking routes on farmlands, giving back to the farmers by repairing the damage inflicted to the farmlands on these routes. The committee organises the gathering of businesses to take on the repairs to knocked stone walls and other damage.

Outcome: In 2017 The Burren Food Fayre saw its attendance at 400 people and raised €270 for the RNLI. The Adopt a Hedgerow, which is supported by 30+ members cleared the Geopark hedgerows of kg's of litter.

The Kilfenora National School Spring clean saw enthusiastic and highly motivated children helping to clean their village and learn about recycling.



Top Tip
Encourage involvement – it's rewarding! Working together on destination conservation has a larger impact for the local community