



GREEN FOUNDATION IRELAND

Annual Report 2014

Green Foundation Ireland aims, through education, to inspire the public to work towards a sustainable society for Ireland.

2014 was a very busy but rewarding year for Green Foundation Ireland, with three Seminars and a weekend Summer School in Belfast taking place.

During the year, Green Foundation Ireland was sorry to lose **Nuala Ahern**, **Pat McCuskar** and **Tommy Simpson** from the Board, but was very pleased to welcome **John Barry**, **Donna Mullen**, **Martin Nolan** and **Dorothy-Ellen White** as members of our Board of Directors. Both Nuala and Tommy will remain involved with GFI on our Management Team (along with Stiofán Nutty and Ann O'Conarain). We were also delighted that **Duncan Stewart** accepted our invitation to become Chair as well as Director of GFI from 1 January 2015.

MARCH 2014: Morning Seminar

The Irish Constitution – Should it be amended to include Protection for the Environment?

This Seminar, which took place in the Oak Room of the Mansion House, Dublin, asked what would Constitutional Protection for the Environment say about our values as a society; what message would it send from us, the people, to our law-makers; to those that govern us?

The speakers included: **Senator Ivana Bacik** (*Reid Professor at Trinity College Dublin*); **Dr. Matthew Jebb** (*Director of the National Botanic Gardens*); **Conor Linehan** (*Head of Environment and Planning Group at William Fry, Solicitors*); **Donna Mullen** (*Director of the Irish Environmental Network*); **Dr. Roderic O'Gorman** (*Department of Law and Government at Dublin City University*) and **Sharon Turner** (*Head of Energy and Climate Programme at ClientEarth, and Visiting Professor at University College London and at the University of Sussex*).

They addressed the following issues:

- Why amend the Irish Constitution to include protection for the environment?
- What do the Constitutions in other Nation States say about the environment?
- What are the objectives, principles and policies on the environment set out in EU law and EU Treaties?
- Can we protect the environment and also have a successful economy?

We would like to thank everyone who was involved in this Seminar, including our speakers, but in particular **Joan Campbell**. Joan originally had the idea for this Seminar and brought everything as well as the speakers together. Video recordings were produced and edited by **Emer Cooney of Science Media** and can be seen under the "Audio & Video" section on our website www.greenfoundationireland.ie.

APRIL 2014: Morning Seminar

Ecological Restoration – The best conservation strategy for the climate change century?

The keynote speaker at this Seminar, which was also held in the Oak Room of the Mansion House, Dublin was author, journalist, editor, lecturer, tour guide, environmental monitor, **Paddy Woodworth**. Paddy dealt with the ideas and issues raised in his recent book "*Our Once and Future Planet*", which is a product of 10 years' research and writing about ecological restoration projects and stories worldwide.

Responding to Paddy was a panel of experts, consisting of **Gerry Clabby**, Heritage Officer at Fingal County Council, and **Catherine Farrell**, Chief Ecologist at Bord na Móna.

An important part of this Seminar, as with all of our events, was a Question and Answer session and some very interesting and thought-provoking ideas were exchanged between the audience and speakers.

Once again, video recordings were produced and edited by **Emer Cooney of Science Media** and these can be seen under the "Audio & Video" section on our website at www.greenfoundationireland.ie.

JUNE 2014: Belfast Summer School

Greening the EU in the context of the Eurosceptic debate

Following the success of last year's Point Festival 2013, the Green European Foundation Summer University moved to a new venue at Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland. The theme for this year's event was "*Greening the EU in the context of the Eurosceptic Debate*".

It was fitting that the Summer University opened by commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Normandy D-Day landings, which also took place on 6 June, and the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War 1. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University **Tony Gallagher** conducted the official opening. **Nuala Ahern** (*Chair of Green Foundation Ireland*) chaired the first session "*A European history for the 21st century*". Guest speakers were **Philip Orr** (*historian and playwright*) and **Erica Meijers** (*Editor-in-Chief of De Helling, the quarterly journal of Bureau de Helling, the Dutch Green Foundation*). Philip explored the role of Irish soldiers in the first and second world wars and the impact this had on the island of Ireland. Erica focused on the impact of the period on mainland Europe and how the world wars should now be commemorated across Europe. The subsequent Question and Answer session was very lively and animated. After this session, delegates were entertained by comedian **Abie Philbin Bowman** and his many new ideas on how to successfully spread the "green" message.

The theme for Saturday morning was "*Rethinking the UK relationship with the EU*". As an introduction to this session and in relation to other issues being covered over the weekend, **Peter Emerson** (*The de Borda Institute*) outlined the potential and benefits of using multi-option polls in complex political situations. The session then commenced and was chaired by **David Phinnemore** (*Queen's University*), with **Cllr Maggie Chapman** (*Scottish Green Party*), **Jean Lambert MEP** (*UK*), **Maria Wetterstrand** (*Cogito, Sweden*) and **Cllr John Barry** (*Northern Ireland Green Party*) making up the panel. The prospect of a UK referendum and implications of a UK withdrawal from the EU were explored. The current Scottish referendum campaign, the potential impacts of constitutional change on Britain, Ireland and beyond was discussed.

This proved to be a lively session and participants engaged strongly during the Question and Answer session.

The theme for Saturday afternoon was "*How do we make a greener and more socially responsible EU?*". The session was chaired by Lee McGowan (Queen's University), with **Cllr Maggie Chapman** (Scottish Green Party), **Alex Warleigh-Lack** (Surrey University, UK), and **Steven Agnew MLA** (Northern Ireland Green Party) making up the panel. Many good ideas were floated during this session and participants joined in to further explore these ideas during the Question and Answer session.

Stiofán Nutty (GFI) then facilitated a World Café style workshop on the theme of "*Energy Future for Europe – Fracking to Fusion?*". **Stefan Andreasson** (Queen's University) and **Cllr Ross Brown** (Northern Ireland Green Party) made

opening presentations. The participants then dissected and discussed six identified issues. The session concluded with the sharing of these six issues with the two speakers.

John Gormley (who produced the film) then introduced the Northern Ireland première of "*Creating a People's Europe*", which is a project of GEF for the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament. It was realised with the support of the Heinrich Böll Foundation and the financial support of the European Parliament. A very lively Question and Answer session followed the screening of the film. To view the film, which is 20 minutes in length, please see our website www.greenfoundationireland.ie.

After dinner, participants were piped into the entertainment venue by the **Major Sinclair Memorial Pipe Band**. We were then entertained by **Voca Loca**, a Belfast women's a capella singing group. An amazing night of entertainment was completed by **Tommy Sands** who entranced his audience with his stories and music.

A lovely sunny morning saw Sunday's main session "*What Do We Learn From Belfast?*" open with presentations from **Cllr John Barry** (Northern Ireland Green Party) and **Benoît Lechat** (Editor-in-Chief of Green European Journal of Green European Foundation). The final Question and Answer session was animated and participants shared many ideas on some of the lessons from conflict situations experienced in Belfast. The Summer University then concluded with an historic tour of Milltown Cemetery, led by former Belfast Lord Mayor **Tom Hartley**.

Podcasts were produced of the sessions at the Summer School and they can be listened to under the "Audio & Video" section on our website www.greenfoundationireland.ie. GFI is very grateful to **Maurice Macartney** of the Community of Others who made audio recordings of the majority of the talks, as well as the question and answer sessions, and who also produced and introduced the tracks.

NOVEMBER 2014: All-Day Seminar

SERIND: Rebuilding Communities Through Sustainable Jobs

On 15 November 2014 Green European Foundation (GEF) with the support of Green Foundation Ireland (GFI) hosted a seminar in the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), Bolton Street, Dublin, Ireland. The seminar was part of the pan-European "Socio-Ecological

Reindustrialisation" (SERIND) project which is being co-ordinated by GEF and involves seven Green Foundations from seven EU countries with at least one seminar taking place in each participating country. The theme for the Dublin event was "*Rebuilding Communities Through Sustainable Jobs*".

The Dublin Seminar explored the trends in the manufacturing and supply of goods and services, and looked at how new technologies are shortening the supply chain making a more 'circular' economy and re-localisation of employment possible.

Gerry Farrell (*Dean and Director, College of Engineering and Built Environment, DIT*) and **Tommy Simpson** (*Director, GFI*) welcomed participants to the seminar. The **Lord Mayor of Dublin, Christy Burke**, performed the official opening of the seminar and praised the organisers of the event. He stressed the important contribution that the SERIND seminar could make to providing badly needed sustainable employment in Dublin.

Cairín O'Connor (*Development Director, Docklands Innovation*) made a short presentation outlining the work of Docklands Innovation, their facilities and their programmes to support the development of new SME businesses.

New Technology and Localisation of Work

The first session was chaired by **Cairín O'Connor** (*Docklands Innovation*), with **David Foden** (*Head of Working Conditions and Industrial Relations Unit, Eurofound*), **Tony Murphy** (*Senior Change Specialist, IDEAS Institute, SIPTU*), **Tommy Simpson** (*GFI*) and **Hilary Wainwright** (*British sociologist, political activist and socialist feminist, best known for being editor of Red Pepper magazine – she is also co-author of "The Lucas Plan: A New Trades Unionism in the Making?"*) making up the panel.

David reported on findings from the 5th European Working Conditions Survey. One of the outcomes of the survey was the increasing use and effect of ICT in the workplace. In particular, David highlighted the increasing number of "E-nomads", people who do not work from their employer's premises and who use ICT most of the time. 24% of workers in the EU now work in this way and this figure is as high as 45% in Nordic countries. This way of working provides greater flexibility to employers and workers but can have its downsides too.

Tony highlighted the importance of creating a "participative" culture in the workplace where management and staff can work collectively together to ensure success and longer term sustainability to the benefit of all. Tony explained a model that the IDEAS Institute have developed and are now rolling out in co-operation with many large companies to promote this approach. He expects this model will generate creative energy and innovation in those companies and could be applied to good effect in all workplaces.

Tommy focused on advances in new technology and thinking, and how they were likely to revolutionise the way we work. He reported on how it was becoming easier to hire goods and services without owning them and how 3D printing was making it possible to re-introduce traditional manufacturing activity to places where jobs had been lost to lower cost labour countries.

Hilary explored factors that have influenced working conditions and practices in the past and speculated on how these experiences could improve the work place of the future. In particular, Hilary focused on the pro-active innovative ideas that were generated by workers for securing alternative employment, when faced with potential redundancy.

Solutions Offered by Technology

Nessa Childers (*Independent MEP*) chaired the second session, with **Ciarán Cuffe** (*Lecturer in Planning, DIT*), **Sue Duke** (*Director of European Public Policy, LinkedIn*) and **Roland Stelzer** (*Co-Founder and CEO of HappyLab, Austria*) comprising the panel.

Ciarán focused on how urban regeneration programmes could deliver sustainable green jobs. He highlighted how new mapping tools can identify urban areas that require "regeneration" and why new technologies in re-use and retro-fitting are cost effective. Ciarán stated that re-use of existing buildings can create economic and social synergies for development.

Sue outlined how companies like LinkedIn use "big data" for economic and labour market planning. She reported on how data storage costs and hardware costs have declined, how greater bandwidth capacity has combined with lower cost usage to create huge growth in on-line traffic and data generation. Sue showed how the resultant data could be organised to connect the skill requirements of individual cities to people who have those attributes.

Roland expanded on the operations of the "HappyLab" in Vienna and how it is supporting the development of local manufacturing enterprises there, through the use of new technologies including 3D printing. The "HappyLab" is part of the international "Maker Movement", which started in the USA, which currently claims to be contributing to 28 million small businesses in the US and that this sector is creating 2 out of every 3 new jobs there. Personal computing operations and personal fabrication manufacturing are leading to the "Democratisation of Information" and the "Democratisation of Production", according to Roland, and he sees both these factors empowering the development of small sustainable and localised business into the future.

Lunchtime Activities

Lunch was served to participants in the Chocolate Factory next door where they also got to experience the operation of a Repair Café that was organised as part of the event. The Repair Café was also open to the public and was busy repairing electrical, computer, clothing, bicycles, etc. A tour of the Rapid Prototyping Lab in DIT Bolton Street, which includes four different 3D printing systems, was also provided for participants during lunch.

Practical Examples of Repair, Recycle and Remake in Dublin

The final session was chaired by **Duncan Stewart** (*Environmentalist and Broadcaster*), with **Claire Downey** (*Sandymount Repair Café*), **Sandy Dunlop** (*Terenure Initiative*) and **Sarah Miller** (*CEO, Ballymun Rediscovery Centre*) presenting to this session.

Claire outlined the history of and how community Repair Cafés operate. She explained how they use networks, social media and "geek" hangouts to recruit competent "fixers" and to advertise the service to the public. Claire explained that the café setting provided a forum to share experiences, save money and learn new skills. The object of the Repair Café was to re-awaken an ethos of fixing things rather than letting them become obsolete.

Sandy illustrated a model of organised community action which had been developed in Terenure, Dublin to deliver significant business and environmental improvements by engaging the local community. He reported that the project had delivered 10,000 hours of voluntary work to effect desired improvements. Sandy stated that the project, driven by the Terenure community, was delivering real change that was beyond politicians to deliver. He added that the successes already achieved were attracting new funding from the local authority.

Sarah outlined the mission of Ballymun Rediscovery Centre which is to "lead change from waste to resource through re-use, redesign and education". She outlined the history of the initiative and explained how they were able to get community "buy-in" to the project by involving the community in developing the model, which delivers employment and services required by the people of Ballymun. They are now using the skills of the community to provide training for others in using materials that would otherwise have gone to landfill and turning them into restored furniture, recycled paint, recycled fashion, rejuvenated bicycles, etc.

Q & A and Round Table Discussion

Much interesting comment and good ideas were floated during the Question and Answer sessions that took place after each group of speakers had presented. The final session, chaired by **Duncan Stewart**, evolved into a round table discussion covering the material presented at the seminar. The discussion was wide-ranging and included suggestions that communities need to take charge and co-operate to best build their futures and that of their children. The potential of community co-operatives was explored, as was the issue of whether communities needed to act in a cross political way to maximise the potential to deliver sustainable jobs and a healthy environment in which to live. A number of participants agreed to exchange contact details and committed to try and work together on specific local projects. Many contributors praised the holding of today's seminar and suggested that follow-up seminars should be held to build on the progress made.

Video recordings were produced and edited by **Emer Cooney of Science Media** and can be seen under the "Audio & Video" section on our website www.greenfoundationireland.ie.

With our new Board and Chair in place, Green Foundation Ireland is looking forward with renewed vigour to advancing the vision for an ecologically sustainable economy and society in Ireland.