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GREEN FOUNDATION IRELAND COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE
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ANNUAL REPORT ON ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 DECEMBER 2018



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for the year ended 31 December 2018

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

for the year ended 31 December 2018

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

We held three very successful events during 2018 – a seminar (*Jobs in a Changing Climate*) held in Liberty Hall Dublin, the Cork Summer School (*Restoring Food to the Heart of the Community*) and a weekend Sustainability Festival (*Moynalty Goes Wild*).

There was great discussion and interaction between the attendees and the panel of speakers at all of these events and these will no doubt lead to important impacts for the wider community.

Details of all these events (including reports, videos and photographs where appropriate), as well as our events held in previous years, are available on the events section of our website at www.greenfoundationireland.ie.

The Education Sub-Committee of GFI was very active during 2018 in progressing the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) project. This collaborative project with ECO-UNESCO and Good Energies Alliance Ireland has continued to develop inter-actions with the Department of Education and Science, National Parents Council Primary and Post-Primary, Educate Together, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. An Taisce has expressed an interest in working with GFI on the ESD project. Grant funding from the Environmental Pillar has been obtained for this project which is continuing in 2019.

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of our Board and Management Team, as well as to all our supporters, who have all contributed so much to our successful year on a voluntary basis. We are looking forward to the challenges that the coming year will bring.



JOBS SEMINAR



23 JUNE 2018

Jobs Seminar:

Jobs in a Changing Climate

Held in Liberty Hall, Dublin

GFI Co-Ordinator: Tommy Simpson

This Seminar was presented by Green European Foundation with the support of Green Foundation Ireland and in partnership with SIPTU and the Dublin Council of Trade Unions. It was part of a transnational project of Green European Foundation with Green House Think Tank of the UK as the leading partner and included Green Foundation Ireland, Ecopolis (Hungary) and Strefa Zieleni (Poland) as the other partners.

The overall aim of the project was to address the problem of how to create more sustainable employment for workers who will eventually be displaced from fossil fuel based industries as climate change targets are applied throughout the EU.

It also proposed creative solutions that complement the International Labour Organization's framework on a Just Transition and the UK's One Million Climate Jobs initiative. The Dublin Seminar chose the proposed closure of the peat burning power stations in the Irish Midlands, with the displacement of thousands of jobs, as a practical example of where viable alternative livelihoods could be created. The unique metrics devised to forecast the numbers of jobs in different sectors of the local economy are transferable to other economies in Europe and elsewhere.

The Seminar was chaired by **Esther Twomey**, who is a former chair of PEDNEL in the UK. Esther described her early involvement in the trade union movement and Lucas Aerospace. As a teacher, she set up workshops within the polytechnics in Islington, London, facilitating ideas to offer people free help to establish themselves in the market.

Duncan Stewart, Chair of Green Foundation Ireland, spoke about the job opportunities in building energy retrofits to most of our buildings that can reduce energy demand by 80%, and switching from fossil fuel to renewable sources for heating in dwellings, commercial (retail stores, shops, offices) and public buildings (including schools, hospitals, state and local authority offices).

Adrian Kane, Public Administration and Community Division Organiser with SIPTU, was born a few miles from the Bog of Allen and became secretary of the Bord na Móna Group of Unions. His contribution was introduced as follows:

Where Now For the Bogmen?

Ensuring a 'Just Transition' for Midland Communities Reliant on Peat Excavation.

Communities in the Midlands who have been reliant for decades on Bord na Móna and the ESB for employment will suffer if a transition to a low carbon economy is not properly planned. The trade union movement is attempting to affect a 'Just Transition' to a low-carbon economy; the need to decarbonise our economy with workers' right to a livelihood. Rural electrification transformed provincial Ireland. Bord na Móna is now in decline in its core business as the bogs are being mined-out and no new ones are being harvested.

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JOBS SEMINAR *(Continued)*

What comes post industrialisation is typically poorly paid, precarious service industry jobs, such as cleaning, child-minding and elderly care, which have essentially been compartmentalised and outsourced. He stated that, just as the semi-state sector was key to the initial industrialisation of Ireland, its role in bringing about a Just Transition to a low-carbon economy can be equally as dynamic. Unless we plan our way to a low-carbon future it will not happen. The recent announcement by both Bord na Móna and the ESB in respect of the large-scale solar parks is a good example of this type of planning. The announcement to close-down Littleton briquette factory in Tipperary allowed insufficient time to plan for alternative jobs, with no time to allow for re-training, re-education and re-skilling.

The European Trade Union Congress (ETUC) has been working on the establishment of a 'Just Transition Fund' to give financial support to those workers who will be negatively impacted. The fund could be used for business creation and to help re-generation in parts of the Midlands which were heavily dependent on peat excavation. The type of jobs that have been created to date in the Irish economy in renewable energies have tended to be contract, non-unionised jobs, and not of a similar calibre to the jobs they are notionally replacing. We could see the end of decent well paid jobs in the energy sector. *"Now of course there are many new jobs that can be created in the green economy but the people we in SIPTU represent will be left behind in similar ways to which working-class people were left behind in the rust-belt communities of Britain and America,"* Adrian concluded.

Jonathan Essex from the UK Green House Think Tank discussed the projects he and Peter Sims carried out in both Sheffield and the Isle of Wight and the methods they used to propose green job creation opportunities.

Jonathan also discussed how important local economies are in the move towards a low-carbon transition. He identified the areas for job creation and green enterprise within farming and forestry, renewables, transport and construction. He pointed out the problems with centralisation of contracts and a lack of spending reaching rural areas. He highlighted the need for linking climate change with planning, by retrofitting rather than creating waste from new build, to move towards a circular economy. Local enterprise funding must shift away from roads building to more sustainable development.

Peter Sims explained the research modelling used by him and Jonathan Essex based on Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) areas which distinguishes one area from another for finding out green job potential metrics on energy sector, wind potential offshore, for example, retrofitting housing, transport, reuse and recycling, land use and the transition estimated at 7,000 new jobs.

Peter pointed out how complex this system is at calculating where future job creation opportunities may exist. He detailed how his estimate was measured, but some information is not available or simply does not exist. In these cases he has methods for making assumptions using land-use maps and house retrofitting by age of buildings. Transitions in shared transport, car shares, more public transport, reuse and recycling, assuming these areas will advance, multipliers are put in to predict the new jobs which will be created if we move towards a transition.

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JOBS SEMINAR (*Continued*)

Sinéad Mercier has been an advisor on FÓRSA's and SIPTU's Just Transition research projects. She gave an overview of climate change agreements, our obligation to these agreements and the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). She outlined the Just Transition principle and the 'No Jobs in a Dead Planet' campaign as a common ground between environmentalists and the trade union movement.

Sinéad also explained the origins of Just Transition as told through various activists who sought the protection of both the environment and workers. This was followed by a fascinating documentary of human history before the industrial era and local knowledge attached to the land such as the skill of using natural medicine associated with 'witches' led to diminished power of women as well as our relationship with the landscape. Now governments are privatising climate action by using public funds for private investment. Sinéad offered solutions for the Irish Government to aid a fair and Just Transition, which also opens access for Trade Unions to new industries. The cost of subsidising peat-powered stations is €120 million per annum.

Joseph Curtin, of the Institute of International and European Affairs, talked about a 'Just Transition' to a low-carbon economy in Ireland and a re-evaluation of our relationship with our natural environment. Ireland's climate policy performance for buildings, transport and agriculture emissions is lagging far below legally binding EU targets. Joseph presented a proposal for jobs growth if we are to stay on track for EU targets and showed the jobs that are in decline, such as peat harvesting and generation, coal importing and distribution, with gas and oil to follow, marginal beef farming and processing, oil and gas exploration. The parallel growth in jobs will be in building retrofitting, renewables industries, climate-smart agriculture and smart grids.

Tommy Simpson, Projects Co-Ordinator with Green Foundation Ireland and a former President of the Dublin Council of Trade Unions, recalled the experience of the workers of Lucas Aerospace, who proposed an innovative approach to large-scale redundancies in the aerospace sector in the late 1970s. Known as the Lucas Plan (<http://lucasplan.org.uk>), where workers facing job losses developed their own plan, utilising their skills and abilities to manufacture socially useful products. The New Lucas Plan now also encompasses the problems thrown up by climate change and the ensuing job losses in fossil fuel based industries and power generation.

Impacts

Since our Seminar, the Irish government has announced grants for regeneration of towns and villages in rural Ireland. This will facilitate our research further.

Green Foundation Ireland is currently in discussions with Dublin City University and SIPTU to advance further research and studies to create enterprise and regeneration of towns and villages.



CORK SUMMER SCHOOL



29, 30 JUNE and 1 JULY 2018

Cork Summer School:

Restoring Food to the Heart of the Community

Held in:

*University College Cork, and
other locations in Cork city*

GFI Co-Ordinator: Nuala Ahern

Our weekend Cork Summer School was presented by Green European Foundation, with the support of Green Foundation Ireland, in partnership with Dr Colin Sage of the School of the Human Environment in UCC and Chair of the Cork Food Policy Council, and in collaboration with artisan producers, community food security NGOs and local growers.

Opening Reception, University College Cork: Dr Colin Sage welcomed all and thanked Waterford based **Green Party Senator Grace O'Sullivan** for attending, hoping she would take their discussions to Seanad Éireann (the Irish Senate). **GFI Chair Duncan Stewart** spoke passionately of the need to address climate change in the context of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); he pointed to the unusually hot and dry summer weather Ireland had been experiencing this year, with no rain for the past month and dairy herds needing gallons of water every day to feed animals, and that we are now at risk in the near drought conditions.

Saturday Morning: Brookfield Centre, University College Cork

Dr Colin Sage opened with a presentation on the importance of food and health. Food visibly connects human and planetary health, yet access to food (a biological necessity) mediated through market; consequently, exchange value swamps other attributes of food. Food and nutrition has the potential to integrate diverse policy strands; it can disrupt thinking in 'silos'; this potential is not so far realised. Governments have vacated responsibility; health systems are not focusing on maintaining the health of the population but on emergency provision. Food production does not exist to optimise human nutrition but to reinforce corporate control.

He stated that the public policy choices were either:

cheap food from distant markets at huge environmental cost;

or

a regionalised supply chain, with diversified farms providing decent livelihoods with sound environmental stewardship.

Food Citizenship in Italy

Professor Cristina Grasseni talked of her experience in Italy with "solidarity purchase groups", *Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale (GAS)*, grassroots groups of consumers which have developed since 1994 and are a form of "sustainable food citizenship" (*M. Micheletti and D. Stolle*).

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CORK SUMMER SCHOOL (*Continued*)

She presented an online survey in collaboration with Tavolo RES (GAS national co-ordination group) – participants: 204 GAS group co-ordinators (out of 429) + 1,658 gasista families (out of 7,083); also an ethnography (participant observation) with ReteGasBergamo, a network of 36 GAS groups. Although she found that only 13% of the family food budget was spent through such purchase groups, the impact on attitudes to food and food citizenship could be profound, creating and encouraging social engagement with food production.

The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

Dr Oliver Moore (ARC 2020) gave a commentary on the review of the CAP in 2018 which is a lead in to CAP 2020-2027. While there were some positives in the European Commission's proposals, the response of the Institute for European Environment Policy (IEEP) states that "the gap between expressed intentions and mechanisms proposed is so large as to be alarming", and that "while CAP has in recent decades somewhat balanced agricultural support and societal expectations, this new proposal suggests that the Commission is ready to more or less abandon the public goods strand of this strategy" (*David Baldock and Allan Buckwell, IEEP*).

He then went on to outline strategic areas to focus on such as:

- Positives: Climate and environment – the European Parliament Environment Committee has been given a greater say in the reform of CAP. This includes the right to bring proposals direct to the Plenary of the European Parliament.
- "Targeting" gives room to 'encourage' best practice, for example, High Nature Value (HNV) and organic farming, to be adopted.
- Strengthening of conditionality needs mechanisms to ensure it happens.
- "Permanent grassland and permanent pasture ... may include other species such as shrubs and/or trees which can be grazed and, where Member States so decide, other species such as shrubs and/or trees which produce animal feed, provided that the grasses and other herbaceous forage remain predominant".

Eat Locally and Seasonally

Regina Sexton spoke about the importance of locally produced fresh food and how this had changed dramatically in the twentieth century. However for centuries Cork had been at the centre of a global food market, producing salted beef and butter for the transatlantic trade. She stressed the renewal of local producers in the 1960s led by the doyenne of Irish food, Myrtle Allen, while at the same time the intensification of agriculture in the opposite direction was taking place.

Mrs Allen had recognised the quality of the food available in the Cork countryside and coast, and led a revival of interest in local produce simply and beautifully cooked which was at the core of traditional food. She was also the first to seek out artisan cheese producers and led the way in opposing the intensification and industrialisation of food.

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CORK SUMMER SCHOOL (*Continued*)

Discussion and Debate

A major theme was the disconnect between agricultural production, food and nutrition, health and environment, and how to change this.

The Summer School reconvened after lunch at **Cork's English Market** which is a haven for local and craft food producers. They visited **St. Stephen's Sustainable Food Lab** in the south inner city where they listened to a presentation about the project from project leaders. They also visited the **Knocknaheeny Hollyhill Community Garden**. Both community gardens were enthusiastically supported by the local community and endorsed by the city authorities.

<http://greensideup.ie/knocknaheeneyhollyhill-community-garden/>
<http://cgireland.org/>

Discussion and Debate reconvened in the Lecture Room of the Nano Nagle Centre

Participants emphasised how disconnected agricultural policy was from food and health. The community garden showed the importance of restoring food to community and of Local Government support for such projects. The link between health and food was emphasised and useful policy measures at local level considered, such as: urban agriculture: community gardens, growing and greening schemes; procurement for the public plate: reconnecting regional producers to public institutions; innovative and convivial food provision; street markets > supermarkets: bringing food back to the public square; planning restrictions on fast food ('no-fry zones'); civic initiatives/associational forms capable of engaging people as citizens.

The day ended with dinner in the **Good Day Deli** in the Nano Nagle Centre, a sustainable foods café serving a mix of local, seasonal, organic foods with a commitment to sustainability throughout the food chain – <https://www.gooddaydeli.ie/>

Impacts

Over the weekend, there was an underlying theme of the importance of growing high quality, locally produced food.

The report [***Restoring Food to the Community: Public Policy and Food Governance***](#) produced by Green Foundation Ireland for Green European Foundation on the disconnect between agricultural production and nutrition, health and environment poses a significant challenge to be overcome.



SUSTAINABILITY FESTIVAL



19, 20 and 21 OCTOBER 2018

Sustainability Festival:

Moynalty Goes Wild

Held in:

*Moynalty Steam Threshing Museum, and
Golashane Nature Reserve, Co. Meath*

GFI Co-Ordinator: Donna Mullen

Green Foundation Ireland's weekend Sustainability Festival was held thanks to the support of the Local Agenda 21 Partnership Fund at Meath County Council.

Friday 19 October 2018:

Friday night began with upcycling with **Valerie Shekelton**. Families came along, and Valerie first showed us how to paint and cover flower pots, before trying out our new skills on old furniture from the Vincent de Paul shop in Kells.

Meanwhile the SWAP SHOP was in action, with clothes, bags, books, toys and even apples being swapped. Meath County Council kindly donated reusable cups, rice and pasta measures, pencils and rulers.

We also had information stands with leaflets on gardening and farming for pollinators, and recycling tips.

Saturday 20 October 2018:

Saturday began with a fascinating talk from **Terry Cassidy** from the Meath Branch of BirdWatch Ireland on creating habitats for birds. He spoke about the actions being taken in Trim, Co. Meath to protect swifts by installing swift boxes and lures to buildings. This could easily be rolled out around the country. He also spoke about the importance of water to birds as more and more fields and marshy areas are drained.

Susan Andrews spoke about grants to improve energy efficiency in the home. There was great interest in the scheme for photovoltaic solar panels, and insulation upgrades. Everyone was surprised at the level of grants available, and insulation upgrades can even be free to some homeowners. Susan went on to speak about grants to dairy farmers, and community grants.

Enda Mullen spoke about her research on badgers, where collars were placed on badgers and their movements were tracked. Badgers were shown to actively avoid fields with cattle and they also avoided farmyards. It is difficult to see how aerial TB transmission can take place when the badgers are keeping away from cattle. Occasionally badgers visited equine and disused farmyards. Enda spoke about the importance of disinfecting water drinkers – where TB can lie for up to two years.

Tea and cakes were then sold in aid of Maio National School by the parents' association.

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SUSTAINABILITY FESTIVAL (*Continued*)

Kevin Collins from the Department of Agriculture spoke to us about the NeighbourWood Scheme, where local communities plant a community woodland close to their village or town. He spoke about the health benefits of 'forest bathing' and how a walk in the forest is prescribed by doctors in Scandinavian countries. Kevin's enthusiasm was contagious, with lots of interest shown in creating something similar in Moynalty.

Gordon Mackey showed us some bees and read some poems on the importance of insects. He had many interesting gadgets to show us, including a bee keepers' suit, honeycombs, and a smoker.

Alexis O'Reilly spoke to us about his work on rural isolation. He is working with Teagasc and Maynooth University on a PhD programme, looking at the TILDA health statistics on social isolation in farmers. There was huge interest from the audience in this subject, with a lively question and answer session.

Saturday's event was chaired by **John O'Brien**, who did a fabulous job of keeping us all in line. Thanks are also due to **Betty Smith** who organised the Steam Threshing Museum for us on both Friday and Saturday.

Meanwhile **Goska Wilkowska** from PATCH Network ran a children's wildlife workshop. The children examined skulls and really enjoyed pulling apart owl pellets to see what the owl had eaten!

Skyview4U ran a very successful planetarium, with amazing shows on trees and dinosaurs. The planetarium was magical, and the children really enjoyed it.

The SWAP SHOP continued with an entire room of the museum dedicated to swapping! At least 80 people turned up at this event.

Sunday 21 October 2018:

On Sunday we changed venue and moved to Golashane Nature Reserve where approximately 50 people came to hear **Brian Keeley** speak about the wildlife in this area, and the difficulties they face.

Everyone got together with **Colm Fitzgerald** to build bat boxes for Natterer's Bats, a crevice dwelling bat. This involved collecting stones and wood, and cementing them roughly into the boxes to create gaps. As Colm said: "Neatness is not allowed – you have to make the worst looking thing you have ever created!" These boxes will go up on the farm to be monitored and it is hoped that the gaps in the stone will be used for hibernation.

The evening ended with tea, baked potatoes and chatting about the talks.

Many thanks to all who attended, and to Suzanne's Coffee Shop in Moynalty, who made amazing jam which we presented to our speakers.

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SUSTAINABILITY FESTIVAL *(Continued)*

Impacts

Arising directly out of this weekend, BirdWatch Ireland hosted a walk in early February 2019 at Golashane Nature Reserve, where participants looked at this diverse farmland which contains young forest, biomass willow, wetland, a big pond, 7 acres of Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS) oat and linseed bird cover and sunflowers, as well as grassland.

Nominated by the National Rural Network, Golashane Nature Reserve was shortlisted for a Rural Inspiration Award in the environment and climate action category. An initiative of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD), the Rural Inspiration Awards aims to celebrate how rural development projects and policy contribute to a more competitive, sustainable and inclusive rural Europe. The ENRD received 176 entries overall and 25 projects (including Golashane) were shortlisted in five categories.

Green Foundation Ireland is extremely pleased to be associated with these very successful projects.