



REPORT

**Green Foundation Ireland and
The Heritage Council**
invite you to an evening online TALK on

***Farm Buildings, Bats
and the Heritage Council***



Common Pipistrelle Bat

Speakers

Jonathan Macnaughton (*Farmer*)

Anna Meenan (*The Heritage Council*)

Donna Mullen (*Environmentalist and Chair of Green Foundation Ireland*)

Venue: by Zoom (*details given after registration*)

Thursday 25 March 2021 – 19:00 to 20:30

Admission to this event is **FREE** but you **MUST** register beforehand.
You can do so through our website at www.greenfoundationireland.ie

Farm Buildings, Bats and the Heritage Council

THEME

This talk explored the Traditional Farm Building Scheme – how it works and its implications for wildlife conservation.

ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS

Jonathan Mcnaughton: Jonathan is a farmer in County Meath who, along with his family, has restored a stable yard and overhead grain store/loft to their former glory. The courtyard at the farm, which is a mixed beef and tillage enterprise, dates back to the late 18th century and is shown on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map. The stable yard is adjoining the basement section of a Norman Castle, and the buildings were used as a coach man's residence, the storage of the coach and stables for horses.

Anna Meenan: Anna is Project Manager of the Traditional Farm Buildings Grant Scheme at the Heritage Council since 2008. Prior to this she was the Assistant Conservation Officer for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. She also was engaged as Built Heritage Officer for Mourne Heritage Trust and as Conservation Officer for Waterford County Council.

Donna Mullen: Chair of Green Foundation Ireland, Donna is an environmentalist and works as an ecologist, drawing up nature trails and sustainability plans. Her work involves spending many happy hours surveying buildings for bats, and she helped draw up the guidelines on bat surveys for the Heritage Council (Traditional Farm Building Scheme). She is a founder member of both Bat Conservation Ireland and the Irish Environmental Network, and has also served on the board of the Irish Wildlife Trust.

ABOUT OUR MODERATOR

Claire Downey: Claire, who is a Director of Green Foundation Ireland, is Executive with Community Reuse Network Ireland (CRNI), an all-Ireland umbrella body funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that represents community based organisations involved in reuse and recycling. In this role she is responsible for the promotion of reuse, support for members to overcome barriers to reuse, communication and policy input, networking and research.

Claire Downey introduced our first speaker, **Anna Meenan** from the Heritage Council, who opened her talk with information about the Heritage Council grant system for conserving, improving and maintaining vernacular buildings, for instance, older farm buildings and outbuilding dating back to the 19th century, as well as indicating the Council's support for traditional building skill to conserve them, such as lime mortar and slating. This was illustrated by beautiful examples of the use of both these techniques in the process of the renovation of conservation of particular farm buildings.

The Heritage Council encourage farmers to hold open days on farms with heritage building and wildlife, and urge the training colleges to hold open training days, giving the example of Carlow Institute of Technology.

Anna also went into detail about how such preservation and conservation is invaluable in maintaining biodiversity in bats and birds. The Heritage Council has bought a farm building in County Clare because it was the roost of bats which were endangered across Europe. The Clare roost is extremely valuable in preserving the biodiversity of there.

Donna Mullen, Environmentalist, Bat expert and Chair of Green Foundation Ireland, was next to speak.

Donna started off by speaking eloquently about bat habitats in traditional farm buildings, and how to know if you have bats, for example, the droppings are different to mouse droppings as they crumble into dust. Bird habitats are also important in the preservation of old vernacular buildings – an example being swallows nesting in these.

She went on to tell us about different bat species and their preference – some species like to stay close to home, so it is very important not to disrupt them when renovating buildings or observing and counting bats. Some bats are endangered, for example, those who need roosts near feeding area so traditional building near their usual feeding ground are extremely important for endangered bats.

Donna was also informative about different bat species and showed beautiful illustrations of pipistrelle and horseshoe bats, etc. When breeding, females need to be hot, they like to be approximately 30° Celsius so they need places to reproduce where they can roost together when pregnant and get hot enough.

Donna stressed how important it was not to close all small apertures in the building when renovating so bats could access them. She also said how important it was not to allow toxic timber treatment.

Jonathan Macnaughton told the story of his project to renovate farm buildings on his farm in County Meath with support from the Heritage Council. They discovered that they had four species of bats occupying the farm buildings that were in need of conservation and renovation so no work was possible between May and August.

However the project got under way in the autumn and the Heritage Council gave him much support in doing the conservation in an appropriate way.

Jonathan and his family learned much about bats in the process, and they also acquired invaluable traditional building skills from the Heritage Council.

As usual at all of our events, there were lively Q&A session which was moderated by Green Foundation Ireland Director Claire Downey at the end of our event.

The talks on farm buildings, bats and the Heritage Council were really interesting as well as being informative and, with more than 70 participants attending from all over Ireland, the topic is a really popular one.

***Nuala Ahern, Publications Editor
Green Foundation Ireland***

29 March 2021