

FROM THE WATERSIDE

Cabragh Wetlands Newsletter



Spring 2021

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About Cabragh Wetlands

Cabragh Wetlands Trust was set up in 1993 when a number of Thurles and Holycross people saw the opportunity presented by the closure of the Thurles Sugar Factory to establish an area of protected wetlands where wildfowl, otters, and endangered plants and other animals could find a safe home. They purchased some land from sugar factory owners and established the first protected wetlands area. The area has now grown to about seventy acres and now boasts a 3,000 square foot visitor and education centre where classes, social events, meetings, small conferences and musical evenings are regularly held.

Cabragh and COVID 19

The COVID pandemic and the restrictions to which it gave rise had a number of different effects on our work. Of course many of our activities were severely curtailed. Our school classes for both primary and secondary school students had to cease, as did the use of our facilities for meeting and events. We were particularly disappointed to have to abandon our Irish nights which have been appreciated and enjoyed by a loyal band of followers over the years.

Despite this loss of activity, however, we noticed that many more people have been using the wetlands as a recreation resource during the lockdown period. We are delighted with this and very happy to welcome people to our walks. We hope that as people walk through the wetlands or on our Cosmic Walk that they get to think about nature, its importance and its fragility and how we all need to make an effort to make sure that it is protected.

As well as that the facilities of the wetlands have been upgraded when it was possible during lockdown and, in particular, a major refurbishment of our birdhide is being carried out with the assistance of our very talented CES workers, Tipperary County Council and the Heritage Council.



Our birdhide at Cabragh Wetlands under re-furbishment

The Music of Cabragh

One of the big losses of the pandemic for Cabragh was the suspension of our monthly music nights. These were a great joy for all who participated and we were delighted to be able to welcome such a fine body of musicians to our centre on a regular basis.



However, nothing daunted, Kathleen Flanagan organised the musicians and friends of the Wetlands and an extremely successful and COVID-safe recording session was held at GAF studios, Cahir. With a beautiful cover featuring photo-graphs by our renowned resident photog-rap-her Eamon Brennan, a limited edition of the CD was produced and copies were snapped up like hot cakes.

It just goes to show the creativity, resourcefulness and commitment of the Cabragh Wetlands volunteers and friends. Contact Michael at 087-7962177 if you would be interested in a copy priced at €20.



Future Plans

While everyone can see the lovely nature walks and the fine indoor facilities at Cabragh Wetlands, a lot of work goes on behind the scenes to make sure that the future of the wetlands and the organisation that runs it is secure.

During the lockdown the Committee of Cabragh Wetlands Trust have become Zoom bunnies!! They have been putting in a lot of remote effort to meet the requirements of new regulations and to put in place a future structure that will help it achieve a sustainable future.

Cabragh Wetlands Trust is a charity under the Charities Acts and, as of this year, must be able to demonstrate compliance with the Charities Governance Code. This has required the committee to consider how it operates and develop new written policies and procedures to reflect the excellent manner in which it carries out its work. These days you can't just do it, you must write it down as well. This work has now been complete and the Trust can say with confidence that it is compliant.

Very little will change for our friends and customers. It is the old Cabragh Wetlands Trust that will continue with the same purposes and values. It just will be sailing under a slightly different flag.

In addition, the Committee has felt for some time that it would better for the Trust to be established as a company limited by guarantee rather than as an unincorporated body. It has, therefore, set up two new companies. So watch this space.

We have also set up a number of new sub-committees which include very skilled and knowledgeable people from outside the Trust as well as committee members. We now have Social Media, Education, Habitat Management Sub-Committees as well as a Technical Advisory Group. We hope this will stand us in good stead in the future and offer our sincere thanks to all involved.

Read About us in the Tipperary Star

Every week in the Tipperary Star, one of our longest-serving and most dedicated volunteers Jimmy Duggan writes about Cabragh Wetlands and issues of nature and the environment generally. These are extremely well-informed and interesting articles and by reading them you will be able to keep up with the seasonal events of nature as well as the activities in Cabragh itself.

Our Supporters

Like every voluntary organisation, Cabragh Wetlands relies hugely on the community, individual organisations and public bodies. Cabragh Wetlands has been very fortunate in the support it has got over the years from all these sources in Tipperary.

Many organisations and individuals have assisted it with donations and fundraising over the years and in guiding it to access funding from public sources. At present it is being particularly well supported by Tipperary County Council, the Local Authority Community Water Fund, North Tipperary Development Company and the Heritage Council.

It has also received great support from Centenary Co-op with which it now has a three-year partnership agreement and St. Patrick's Missionary Society, Kiltegan.

How you can help

Cabragh Wetlands is extremely fortunate to have had and continue to have the help of many people. However, more help is always needed and we are delighted to welcome people on board.

If you are interested in the work of the Trust or in the issue of climate change, habitat loss or sustainable living, please do get in touch. You don't need any specialised knowledge.

You will find an application form on our website www.cabraghwetlands.ie or call us on 0504 43879 or 087 7962177.

You can, of course, be another of the many who help us by giving a donation, through our website or personally, or by supporting our fundraising events.

The people of Tipperary and abroad have also been very generous in supporting our fundraising activities and in making unsolicited donations to the Trust. Thank you one and all.

While our fundraising efforts have been curtailed over the last 12 months our own volunteers have stepped in. We mentioned the CD project earlier but, in addition Kitty Scally organized a raffle before Christmas, and Máiréad Ryan organized an Easter Raffle and a clothes collection.



Cabragh Wetlands Development Trust is a registered charity with the CRA, CRN 20037239