Cork Nature Network



Annual Report and Financial Statements
1st January to 31 December 2023

Cork Nature Network (Company Limited by Guarantee)

Cork Nature Network

Company No. 560881 / Revenue Charity No. CHY 21602
Registered Charity No. 20106200

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1. Aim and Mission

Cork Nature Network is a not-for-profit registered charity which was established in 2015. The organisation was developed to provide a local source of information on wildlife and to promote conservation. The aims of Cork Nature Network are:

"To benefit the community of Ireland by promoting and encouraging the conservation of wildlife and habitats by educating and increasing the awareness of the need for conservation in Ireland.

1. To promote nature conservation.
2. To educate and increase awareness of the need for conservation.

Protecting and promoting Ireland's wildlife through education, conservation, and research to restore a healthy ecosystem for all species and peoples of Ireland.
Delivering on our mission will require a renaissance in how people view and engage with nature, so that appreciation of wildlife is not seen as a recreational activity, but an essential interrelationship vital to the well-being and sustainable future of people and wildlife

The Board of Directors in 2023 was:

Gill Weyman (Chair)
Tanja Marinch (Treasurer Stepped down November 2023
Yudeshtra Naidoo (Treasurer November 2023)
Rosianne Bencik (Secretary)
Jess Bird (Marketing)
Brian McElligott (Health and Safety)
Eileen O'Riordan (Human Resources and Training)
Maggie McColgan (Development/Grants)

The company registered address is An sibin, Ballinvoher, Castletownroche, County Cork. 0872282040.

Accountant is: Daniel O' Riordan & Co., Chartered Tax Adviser,Certified Public Accountants & Statutory Auditor, 2 Station Road, Ballincollig, Co. Cork.

We are working towards compliance to the Code of Governance. We also have an agreed Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest Policy.

2.WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION



It is with great pleasure that I introduce the 2023 Annual Report for Cork Nature Network. The organisation has achieved notable advancements in fulfilling the goals set forth in our Strategic Plan. Our board of directors has consistently monitored the implementation of the Strategic Plan and our objectives, offering exceptional support and dedication to the organisation

The teams have demonstrated consistent progress. This year has presented difficulties in retaining essential marketing staff; nevertheless, we have re-evaluated and modified our strategies to better align with our available resources and capabilities. We have optimised our projects, analysed the market, and examined the initiatives undertaken by other NGOs, focusing our efforts on four specific priority areas. Funding from AXA has enabled us to appoint a manager for Beaumont Quarry and Tramore Valley Park, who will be responsible for overseeing the execution of the work plan and the Biodiversity Action Plan. Furthermore, we obtained funding to initiate our first otter citizen science pilot project in Tralee and Galway, and we have launched a new initiative addressing Peatlands and Climate Change.

The primary challenges we face in 2024 will involve securing ongoing funding to sustain our project initiatives and ensuring the continuity of our existing work programs with our current volunteers and subcontractors. The prevailing economic conditions are diminishing the volume of donations and project financing. However, I am optimistic that, through future evaluations, our highly capable team will enable us to navigate these obstacles and progress towards establishing a professional and nationally recognized organisation.

I would like to thank our amazing volunteers and members. All of which are highly valued and appreciated. I look forward to another progressive year where Cork Nature Network is spreading the message at local and national level on the importance of protecting our wildlife habitats and species.

Thank you.



Gill Weyman
Chair

3.Internal operations

In 2022, Cork Nature Network developed a five-year strategic plan to set direction and measure the internal operations of the organisation. In 2023, we have continued to work to achieve these measures.

1. Maintaining a healthy volunteer base
2. A good reputation
3. Mission-driven core values
4. Responsible fiscal management
5. Dealing and adapting to change
6. Reaching the right audience
7. Collaborating with stakeholders and communities
8. Measuring progress and outcomes

Included in the strategic plan are measurements that tie into the code of governance. Cork Nature Network is registered with lobbying.ie and regularly reports on its submissions as required. Cork Nature Network also has a code of conduct and a data policy.

OUR CORE VALUES

1. We recognise that our members, volunteers, supporters, and visitors are vital to our success, and we seek to provide excellent standards of service and response to their needs
2. We will aim for the highest possible standards of professionalism and efficiency in all aspects of our work
3. Where possible, we will work in partnership with other organisations in pursuit of common objectives and efficient use of resources and, in particular, to help deliver progress towards our Vision for a Living Landscape
4. We will apply an environmental and socially responsible stance to financial decisions involving sponsorship and procurement of goods and services
5. We work to connect and increase public understanding of how nature is interconnected and that acting now is key to reducing the impacts of habitat and species loss
6. Our conservation and land management decision-making are based on sound scientific evidence, research, and consultation with appropriate experts
7. We believe that anyone can make a difference.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTORS

Jess Bird (Marketing Director)

The 2023 focus of the Marketing Team was to continue to build on past strategies and continue to develop the team. We have volunteers each now working across specific platforms to grow these platforms and increased the skills of each volunteer. At the end of 2023, we set out a brief to engage a web developer to update and improve our website.

In total we had 23.2k Facebook visits from 1st Jan – 31st Dec 2023, with an increase of 232.7%, and 3.2k Instagram visits with an increase of 183%. Throughout 2023, we gained 654 follows on Facebook, and 88 on Instagram. Our Facebook reach report for the year 2023, shows that 200.5k people saw content from or about our Facebook page, and 12.1k people interacted and engaged with our content.

Brian McElligott. Health and Safety/Legal Matters)



In 2023, CNN recorded no accidents, injuries or safety incidents during the season's activities. While this is a welcome record, I remain of the view that near-misses are occurring that are not reported and will be turning my focus to rolling out a near-miss awareness campaign. On the Health and Safety management front, the H&S policy and risk assessment documents were reviewed and updated during the year 2023.

Maggie McColgan (Development/Grants)



In 2023, Cork Nature Network's grants team was instrumental in securing crucial funding that allowed us to expand our work. Their efforts enabled us to implement successful habitat restoration projects and launch new educational outreach. However, the year was not without its challenges, and the team faced significant hurdles, including increased competition for funding and turnover within the grants team itself, which required swift adaptation to maintain our momentum. Despite these challenges, the grants team's resilience and commitment were key to sustaining and enhancing our impact throughout the year. In 2023, we secured a total 11 grants, including 3 Biodiversity Action Plan funds.

EILEEN O'RIORDAN (HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRAINING)



To achieve our objective of maintaining a healthy volunteer base and improving retention, we introduced an induction evening for new starters as part of our onboarding process. This material is continuously reviewed and updated, and all new starters are invited to attend. The induction covers an introduction to the induction process, information about Cork Nature Network, our work, operational procedures, communications, training, and stakeholder knowledge.
Our 2023 Annual Review survey revealed high satisfaction among volunteers, who appreciated the supportive and healthy environment at CNN. Feedback indicated that clearer communication about achievements would further benefit volunteers by keeping them informed.
Throughout 2023, Cork Nature Network focused on matching the right volunteers to suitable roles by advertising through IVOL and social media channels. This included conducting interviews for positions such as Public Relations Officer, Social Media Officer, Marketing Manager, and Grant Writers. In 2023, 23 volunteers registered for DCM courses (our digital training partner), with 14 volunteers fully completing them. The courses included:

- Data Protection (GDPR)
- Lean Six Sigma White Belt
- Project Management Essentials
- Social Media Training
- Time Management
- Train the Trainer

Tanja Marincich- Treasurer Jan to September
Yudeshtra Naidoo. Treasurer October to December


Tanya Marincich


Yudeshtra Naidoo

In November, 2023, Tanja Marinchich stepped down due to other commitments and Yudeshtra Naidoo took up the reins.2023 was a year of both opportunities and challenges for Cork Nature Network. The year-on-year increase in income and strategic use of cash reserves underscore our successful financial management and dedication to our mission. While expenses have increased, they reflect our commitment to expanding program activities and addressing the needs of our conservation efforts.

Rosiane Bencik (Company Secretary- non board member)



In the year 2023, a total of four board meetings were conducted, with comprehensive records maintained for each session, including recordings from Zoom. An evaluation of the password management system for the Cork Nature Network Gmail has been undertaken, and a transition to a more efficient system via Office 365 is currently under consideration to enhance management speed and effectiveness. Additionally, lobbying requests have been submitted to the regulatory website, and all financial information has been uploaded to the Companies Registration Authority website.

4. Cork Nature Networks strategic direction

The long-term vision of Cork Nature Network is to continue to develop as a national body that focuses on a bottom-up approach where increased education and awareness of local communities assist in driving decision-making processes for the betterment of our natural world.

Cork Nature Network aims to develop as a funded organisation that employs a number of staff to run and deliver our aims and missions. We aim to deliver more national programmes to reach communities and to network with smaller groups who are often isolated and with a combined effort we believe that we can make a difference.

Cork Nature Network discussed a name change to reflect its national focus at the end of 2023, with view of agreement in 2024.

4.1. To educate and increase awareness of the need for conservation

Education is key to change. It is important to understand why we need to protect wildlife and our online educational programmes, walks and talks and projects focus on increasing our knowledge so that we are informed to act and protect wildlife.

4.2. To promote nature conservation

We aim to help restore a healthy, functioning ecosystem for both wildlife and human populations in Ireland. Increasing awareness surrounding conservation is central to achieving this goal. We believe that through promoting the importance of Irish Wildlife today through our activities and projects with outcomes will help at local level deliver nature conservation programmes for future generations. It is also important that our projects are based on good scientific knowledge and research. We also comment where necessary on national and local strategies. We are registered with www.lobbying.ie and report on a quarterly basis on any submissions made.

5. Main achievements in 2023

In 2023, Cork Nature Network maintained its focus on two ongoing initiatives: the otters project, Beaumont Quarry project, and Valuing Insects. We began a new project on Climate Change in Peatlands.

Funders of our projects included IMPETUS, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Local Waters and Community Programme, International Otter Fund, Cork City Council, Cork County Council, Community Foundation Ireland, University College Cork, Office of Public Works, Coolagown Community Development Association.

OTTERS



In the year 2023, we secured funding for an Otter Citizen Science initiative supported by IMPETUS. This citizen science project was established with a dedicated web page and two pilot locations: one in Tralee and the other in Galway City. Each location conducted two workshops, drawing in 50 participants for each training session. Additionally, two WhatsApp groups were created to facilitate communication and promote engagement in otter recording activities.

We also completed our research on physical conditions and botanical details around otter sprainting sites as identified in the 2022 Dalton report, commissioned by Cork Nature Network. The investigation into otter sprainting sites and the connectivity for otter movements in the city and county. Results indicate otters primarily move up and down rivers but face a range of barriers such as buildings, fences and lack of riparian areas.

BEAUMONT QUARRY

In 2023, we enlisted a subcontractor to oversee the management plan of Beaumont Quarry and the Biodiversity Action Plan for the Tramore Valley Park on a part-time basis. The management plan was reviewed as was the work plan tailored for the site. Although weather conditions posed challenges, we successfully conducted two cleanup operations of Beaumont Quarry and removed brambles from an area. We also introduced an innovative way of controlling Old Mans Beard in the quarry by contracting the Billy Goat project to bring goats into the trial area to see if they would have an impact on the control of the plant. This attracted considerable press and the interest of local school children.





In November 2023, Cork Nature Network became aware of a proposal to construct an overhanging footpath into Beaumont Quarry. Cork Nature Network opposed this development and made a submission to the BusConnects consultation online portal.

Biodiversity Action Plans



The Cork Nature Network implemented four biodiversity action plans for Tramore Valley Park, Lismore, Ballydehob, and Coolagown. Each plan was developed in collaboration with project managers, and a team of ecologists who conducted surveys covering various subjects, including botany, invertebrates, mammals, and birds. Community engagement was facilitated through surveys, discussions, and visioning sessions, with the feedback received being integrated into the plans. In Tramore Valley Park, a launch event took place, featuring the participation of Cllr Dan Boyle, who represented Mayor Cllr Kieran McCarthy, along with Rosemarie McDonald, the Parks Biodiversity Officer for Cork City Council, and Gill Weyman, Chair of the Cork Nature Network. The event included a guided walk of the site led by ecologists Alex Jones and David Daly.

An online survey and consultation in Coolagown resulted in over 30 local residents attending to learn about the project and give an opinion on managing the biodiversity of their local areas.

Valuing Insects

This initiative was launched in response to the decreasing insect populations and the growing concern regarding habitat management practices that support the sustainability of these species. A dedicated team of four volunteers ran a various educational walks and discussions organised throughout the year, including webinars over the autumn and winter months.

Peatlands and Climate Change project.

A new project was developed to inform awareness of the importance of peatlands on climate change and how these impacts upon biodiversity. A series of videos were recorded in west cork (Two Green Shoots project) and leaflets that are available on the education section of the Cork Nature Network website. Two webinars were held. One in January, where speakers from the Community Wetlands Forum, Irish Peatland and Conservation Council and Cork Nature Network spoke of the threats and

importance of peatlands. A final webinar was held in March to launch the project.

Eco Connects

ECO-CONNECT is a collaboration between University College Cork and Cork Nature Network. In 2023 research undertaken by Tracey Skillington and Johanna Marie Kirsch from the Psychology Department set out to explore the benefits of engaging with green spaces in the city and how it can improve both physical and mental wellbeing. Cork Nature Network assisted by organising a webinar and uploading the results on their website.

Training

We offered a water biodiversity training course with Waterways College Ireland Kilkenny LEADER Partnership The Nore Vision and to deliver this 8 week river ecology course.


KILKENNYPEOPLE.IE
Pictures: Waterways College ecology trainees awarded certificates in Kilkenny
Pictures by Finnbar O'Rourke

Summary of Events

In 2023, we organised 26 events and set up 4 information stalls, marking an increase of 10 events compared to 16 events in 2022. A total of 1,061 individuals registered for our events, alongside 68 who signed up for two events that were unfortunately cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. We recorded attendance of 603 participants, resulting in a take-up rate of 57%. It is important to mention that registration and attendance data were not captured for every event, indicating that the true number of attendees and the actual take-up rate are likely higher than reported.

Both the number of people who registered for events and attendees have risen from 2022, where 693 people registered for events and 423 of these attended.

The most popular events with the highest attendance rate, were our online webinars such as the 'Mystery of Dragonflies' with 70 attendees, 'Irish Trees & the Insects that love them' with 89 attendees, and 'Ladybirds of Ireland' with 62 attendees.

Table 1. List of Information tables and stalls in 20203.

Information tables and stalls 2023	
Date	**Event**
29/07-30/07/2023	Native Species Weekend at Fota Wildlife Park
19/08/2023	Cappamore Agricultural Show/Green Village Information Table
29/08-30/08/2023	Information Table at LUSH
4.10.2023	Kinship Seminar stall
16/11/2023	Information Table at UCC Volunteer Fair

Table 2. List of events, type of event and numbers registered and attend Cork Nature Network events in 2023

Date	Event	Type of Event	Registered	Attended
07/01/2023	Cork City Otter Trail Walk	Physical Event	40	20
02/02/2023	Mystery of Dragonflies	Online	131	70
20/03/2023	Irish Trees & the Insects that Love Them	Online	184	89
25/03/2023	BQ Clean Up	Physical Event	18	15
27/03/2023	Ladybirds of Ireland	Online	130	62
04/02/2023	BQ Picnic and Egg Hunt	Physical Event	33	31
22/04/2023	BQ Clean Up	Physical Event	14	15
21/05/2023	TVP Biodiversity Action Plan Launch	Physical Event	24	25
28/05/2023	A Beginner's Guide to Insect Identification	Physical Event	55	24
06/03/2023	The Importance of MPAs	Physical Event	50	28
06/04/2023	Barleycove Butterfly Walk	Physical Event	15	11
10/06/2023	Cork City Otter Trail, a Guided Walk	Physical Event	50	27
8/14/2023	Coolagown BAP Public Consultation	Physical Event	N/A	33
19/08/2023	Bird Call ID	Physical Event	40	24
20/08/2023	River Bride Ecology Walk	Physical Event	28	17
22/09/2023	Bat Workshop	Physical Event	25	20
04/10/2023	KinShip Symposium	Physical Event		N/A
14/10/2023	Beaumont Quarry Clean Up	Physical Event		20
26/10/2023	Lessons in Resilience from the Iberian Wolf (Member Event)	Online Event		8
16/11/2023	Stoneflies	Online Event	57	24
17/11/2023	Otter Spotters Tralee	Physical Event	34	N/A
25/11/2023	Beaumont Quarry Clean Up	Physical Event	0	10
03/12/2023	Otter Spotters Galway	Physical Event	72	N/A
12/12/2023	Eco-Connect Workshop	Online Event	25	N/A
TOTAL			1061	603

6.0 Financial Report

Statement of Financial Position

Cork Nature Network CLG
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
as at 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 €	2022 €
Fixed Assets			
Tangible assets	7	2,071	2,629
Current Assets			
Debtors	8	26,566	9,741
Cash at bank and in hand		33,034	52,028
		59,600	61,769
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	9	(1,046)	(5,984)
Net Current Assets		58,554	55,785
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		60,625	58,414
Reserves			
Income and expenditure account	11	60,625	58,414
Members' Funds		60,625	58,414

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the micro companies' regime.

Cork Nature Network CLG
INCOME STATEMENT
for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 €	2022 €
Income	4	109,861	106,787
Expenditure		(107,650)	(80,636)
Surplus for the financial year	11	2,211	26,151

The company has no recognised gains or losses other than the surplus for the financial year. The results for the financial year have been calculated on the historical cost basis. The company's income and expenses all relate to continuing operations.

Approved by the board on 6 June 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Cork Nature Network CLG
STATEMENT OF TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES
for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	2023 €	2022 €
Surplus after taxation	**2,211**	26,151
Total recognised gains for the financial year	**2,211**	26,151
Total recognised gains since last annual report	**2,211**	26,151

Note of historical cost surpluses and deficits
The difference between the results as disclosed in the Income Statement and the result on an unmodified historical cost basis is not material.

Notes to Financial Statements

Income

The income for the financial year is analysed as follows:

	2023 €	2022 €
By Category:		
Membership & Donations	**18,778**	4,774
Sales	**655**	349
Third Party Funding	**90,428**	101,664
	109,861	106,787

The whole of the company's income is attributable to its market in the Republic of Ireland and is derived from the principal activity of advancement of environmental sustainability.

Operating surplus	2023 €	2022 €
Operating surplus is stated after charging:		
Depreciation of tangible assets	**558**	558

Employees

The average monthly number of employees, including directors, during the financial year was 0, (2022 - 0).

Tangible assets

	Fixtures, fittings and equipment €	Total €
Cost		
At 1 January 2023	4,456	4,456
At 31 December 2023	4,456	4,456
Depreciation		
At 1 January 2023	1,827	1,827
Charge for the financial year	558	558
At 31 December 2023	2,385	2,385
Net book value		
At 31 December 2023	**2,071**	**2,071**
At 31 December 2022	2,629	2,629

Debtors	2023 €	2022 €
Trade debtors	**26,566**	9,741

Creditors Amounts falling due within one year	2023 €	2022 €
Accruals	**1,046**	984
Deferred income	**-**	5,000
	1,046	5,984

Status

The liability of the members is limited.

Every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of its being wound up while they are members, or within one financial year thereafter, for the payment of the debts and liabilities of the company contracted before they ceased to be members, and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up, and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributors among themselves, such amount as may be required, not exceeding € 2.

Income Statement

	2023 €	2022 €
At 1 January 2023	**58,414**	32,263
Surplus for the financial year	**2,211**	26,151
At 31 December 2023	**60,625**	58,414

Capital commitments

The company had no material capital commitments at the financial year-ended 31 December 2023.

Post-Balance Sheet Events

There have been no significant events affecting the company since the financial year-end.

Approval of financial statements

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the board of directors on 6 June 2024.