

Bere Island Newsletter

Issue 84

Winter 2022



Christmas
2022

*Wishing all Bere Islanders
at home and abroad a
Merry Christmas & Best Wishes for 2023*



Above: Winter sunset at Cloughland Tower. Photo by Helen Riddell



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Waste Collection and Recycling

Waste collections will take place on
Tuesday 6th December
Tuesday 20th December
Tuesday 10th January

Waste stickers are €10 each and can be purchased from Murphy's Shop, the Heritage Centre, and the Projects Group Office. Please note any bags which do not have a sticker will NOT be collected. Bags should be left outside your home from 5pm on the day of collection. The recycling centre will be open over the Christmas period. Please ensure that all recycling is placed in the correct container and that cans, bottles and plastic containers/bottles have been washed. A clothing bank is also located at the recycling centre, this is for clothing only, sheets, duvets and bedclothes cannot be accepted.

Island Marine

BIPG have hired a consultant to carry out a strategic plan on the marine and offshore potential for the island marine businesses. Some of the areas we need to train people in to benefit from the marine industries are:

Certification for seafarers to crew boats.
Vessel surveying.

Superintendent's for drydocking and vessel surveying.

Docking masters which will be needed to dry dock vessels or offshore wind infrastructure for servicing onshore.

Welding in the various codes

Painting, coating and blasting accreditation

The plan will be finalised in December. If you would like to input into the plan, please contact the office or email bipginfo@gmail.com

Bere Island IFA

The AGM of the Bere Island Branch of the I.F.A was held in the Hotel, Bere Island on the 15th of November 2022. There was a good attendance. The guest speakers were Owen O' Driscoll, Planner and Dr Julie McGuire of the Marine Research Station. Owen's presentation was via Zoom and was a very comprehensive report on the C.A.P and the Acres Scheme which are coming on stream. A question-and-answer session followed. Dr Julie McGuire gave her presentation using slides and was very interesting and informative, with members of the meeting hoping to travel to the Marine Station. Julie has agreed to facilitate this. The election of officers was as follows: The chairperson whose four years were up, was replaced by Tony Murphy. Teresa Hall still has a year to go so remains as Secretary. Michael Crowley was elected as Registrar and Angela Sullivan as fourth delegate. The Chairperson thanked the guest speakers. Special thanks to Paul Moore and John Walsh for their expertise in setting up the Zoom and the slide projector. Thanks to Cork County Council and Bere Island Projects Group for funding to purchase the cattle weighing scales and garden tiller. Thanks to Maria in the Hotel once again for providing the refreshments.

(Submitted by the Bere Island IFA)

Stone wall festival

BIPG were allocated funding for a stone wall building/festival, and we plan to get a stone mason to come in and teach people how to build stone walls. A specific area could be picked to build a wall, and this could be done over a weekend. For this to happen we need a few people to come together to plan it, so if you are interested in getting this festival on Bere Island drop your name into the office.

(Submitted by BIPG)

BIM

Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Development Scheme: The purpose of the scheme is to counter the adverse economic and social consequences of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on businesses operating in the blue economy and located in communities within 10km of the coastline. The scheme can give up to €200,000 for suitable projects at 50% rate or 80% for small scale fishers. For full details on the funding have a look here:

<https://bim.ie/fisheries/funding/brexit-blue-economy-enterprise-development-scheme/>

Housing

The Housing report will be launched on the 8th of December at 11am in the Maritime Hotel, Bantry by the Mayor of Cork County Danny Collins. Everyone is welcome to come along. The report and research which was led by UCC has a number of recommendations that will make it easier to access housing on Islands. For a digital copy of the report please contact the office on 75099.



Santa Alert!

Santa will visit Bere Island on Sunday 11th December, at 1:30pm in the Hotel. Everyone is welcome.



School News - COP 27

We watched a video every day during the first week of COP 27 about Climate Change. It was part of the Climate Nature Summit for schools. We learned that COP 27 was in Egypt this year and we also learned that there are actually rainforests in Ireland.

One of them grew back because of a man named Eoghan Daltun who lives near Ardgroom. All he did was put a fence around some land to keep the animals, especially sheep and Sika deer from eating the plants and small trees. He also removed all plants that were non-native, this means that they were brought in from another place or country. The plants and trees began to re-generate by themselves, this is called rewilding. It means allowing the land to go back to the way nature intended. He also wrote a book called 'An Irish Atlantic Rainforest' We also learnt a lot about woodlice, which are actually more closely related to lobsters and crabs than insects and millipedes.

By Jason Harrington

School News - Back to School Mass

A couple of weeks ago there was a 'Back to School Mass'. It was on in St. Michael's church in Bere Island, there were a lot of people there. Some of our class read the prayers of the faithful. We had a party in the school afterwards. We baked a delicious sponge cake and decorated it with borage flowers from the garden. We also squeezed our own orange juice and made fruit skewers. Fr. Spring came to our school. We had a fun time. **By Feya MacCarthy & Erica Murphy**

School News - Fire Brigade

The fire brigade came to our school. They told us about keeping you and your home safe and to test your smoke alarm every week. We also got to look around the fire truck and to ask questions about how they get the water to put out the fires. A garda also came to visit and talked to us about road safety and making sure we can be seen when we're walking and cycling. They also gave us cool school supplies and awesome comics. It was so much fun.

By Amelia Harrington & Meabh Hobbs

Tourism

The West Cork Islands have been working with Cork County Council and Munster technological University on an application on regenerative tourism. The pilot will focus on the West Cork Islands if the application is successful. A meeting of the West Cork/Kenmare destination experience development plan was held in Bantry recently. It was the first meeting of the committee, and a presentation was made on the plan and the priorities and also an update from the partners. This is the first time that there is one group working together for West Cork Tourism.

(Submitted by BIPG)



School News - Drama

We had a visit from Shirley and Maria for a drama workshop. They came in on the 1.30 ferry and we came in from second break, 3rd-6th class got to meet them. We did games and acting exercises. The first game was an introduction game where we would throw a ball to each other and say our name. We also had to practice different expressions and types of movement. We hope they will come back again.

By Lena MacCarthy

School News - Halloween Party

On Friday 28th of October we had a Halloween party. We all dressed up, Aidan was an Octopus, Feya was a Banshee, Kyla was a Were-wold, I was Little Red Riding Hood but not your usual Little Red Riding Hood!

Our teacher Múinteoir Orlagh brought in an enormous pumpkin that she and Roan grew. When we were looking at it, everyone was very impressed and thought it was the biggest pumpkin they would ever see but however the very next day Johnny Hobbs brought in a pumpkin about twice the size! She was quite disappointed, but she said hers was a nicer colour and at least hers didn't look like a giant peach! On the day of the party, we had a 'Guess the Weight of the Pumpkin' competition. Loads of people came, they all lined up to guess the weight and I recorded the guesses, the closest guess would win.

Jocelyn weighed the pumpkins, everybody was holding their breath hoping they'd be the winner! James Walsh, Ali Curry, Fiona Harrington & Dwayne Rogers all made excellent guesses and were the closest to the actual weight. The actual weight of the pumpkin was 19kg & 24kg. Start thinking about growing a pumpkin for next year's party. We also did baking, we made shortbread biscuits in the shapes of ghosts and bats with some lemon zest and chocolate on top. We also made zombie kiwis and Rice Krispie treats.

By Emily Murphy & Abby Harrington

Beara West Family Resource Centre

Singing for the Brain has resumed at the Beara West Family Resource Centre. This friendly and supportive social music group brings people together through songs, stories, and smiles. For more information, call Moira at 086 856 0319.

Regular social group meet-ups designed for children aged 9-12 years with common interests are now underway at the centre. This is a parent-led group everyone is welcome, and neurodiversity is welcome. For more information, please contact 70998.

Community shed

If you are interested in getting involved in developing a community shed on the Island, please contact the office on 027 75099. The project needs a group to get the shed built, so if you would like to get involved in a committee and make this happen let the office know.

Treaty Port Talk

To mark the centenary of Bere Island's role as the location of one of Ireland's three Treaty Ports, Bere Island Projects Group held two talks in October with leading War of Independence historian Tom O'Neill at the Bere Island Heritage Centre. We would like to extend our thanks to all those who attended both events, to Tom for travelling to Bere Island to give the talks, the Bere Island Hotel for looking after Tom, all the staff at the Heritage Centre, Theresa Hobbs for driving the rural transport bus, Tadhg Hobbs for assisting Bere Island Community Radio in recording both talks, and Colum Harrington for providing a late ferry for those attending the evening talk.

The event was funded by Cork County Council's Commemoration Grant Scheme 2022 and was supported by The Heritage Council under the Heritage Capacity Funding 2022.



Above: Tom O'Neill at the Heritage Centre

Smart Village Training

has been running on the West Cork Islands over the last 5 weeks. The facilitator Caroline Egan has covered sustainable development goals, best practice examples from other communities, planning, communications, consultation and needs assessments with Island communities. The next round of funding from the EU will be the smart village fund and this training will help to put a good application together when the opportunity arises.

Lonehort Battery

Bere Island Projects Group have tendered for a restoration plan for Lonehort Battery. A funding application has now been submitted to LEADER to undertake this. Tours of Lonehort are currently by appointment only. To book a tour contact Teresa Hall on 086 1981541 or Barry Hanley on 086 8845709.

RNLI Lotto Draw

Castletownbere RNLI and CoAction Beara have announced the relaunch of their weekly fundraising lotto draw. The first draw will take place on: Wednesday December 7th with a starting jackpot of €2900. If the jackpot is not won, there will be 5 lucky dip winners of 50 euro each. Tickets are €2 each and can be purchased from local businesses. Volunteers and ticket collectors are needed, if anyone is able to help out, they are asked to send a message to the Castletownbere RNLI and CoAction Beara Facebook page.

Bake Sale in Support of Saint Vincent de Paul Beara

A group of volunteers are holding a fundraising bake sale in support of Saint Vincent de Paul Beara on Thursday December 8th in The Square, Castletownbere from 9am.

A selection of delicious home baked goods will be available. All funds raised will go to support the work of SVP Beara.

Beara Camera Club

The Beara Camera will hold their next meeting and Christmas celebration on Monday December 5th at 8.00pm in MacCarthy's Bar, Castletownbere. New members are always welcome.

The Hotel Christmas line up 2022

- Karaoke Sat 10th December
 - Santa clause will be visiting the hotel Sunday 11th Dec
 - Music with Pat Higgins Fri 16th Dec
 - Bere Island radio Live from the Hotel on Sun 18th Dec
 - Music with Aoife O'Neill Fri 23rd Dec
 - Christmas Eve. Christmas jumper fundraiser
 - Stephens Day (5pm) music with Aoife O'Neill
- Annual xmas pool and darts competition dates to be confirmed. under 18's pool tournament





Bere Island Sustainable Energy Community

Update from the Bere Island Sustainable Energy Community (SEC)

The BI SEC has been working to progress the focus areas identified in the Energy Master Plan of 2021. To this end, we have been working on the main areas of **transport**, **building upgrades** and **renewable energy**.

Transport has centred on the electrification of road vehicles and marine vessels as follows:

- An electric minibus and charging system at BIPG is underway with tenders for their supply being prepared for distribution;
- Electric vehicle charge points are also planned at the west and east ends of the island;
- An electric bike scheme is working to resolve insurance issues so that this can be realised;
- In the longer term, the electrification of boats and ferries is planned. The technical aspects are understood and plans are being developed with assistance from the European Union.

In the area of **building upgrades**:

- The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) launched new grants in 2021 to help homeowners to improve their homes' energy efficiency. These grants focus on insulation and building improvements such as windows and doors, as well as grants of energy efficient heating and hot water provision. You can find out more on <https://www.seai.ie/grants/>
- A first, relatively inexpensive step for homeowners to consider is to implement better insulation and draught-proofing of windows and doors. This will reduce heat loss in the home and thus potentially reduce heating costs.

Renewable energy, in the form of solar PV panels, has been installed in several homes and businesses on the island. This has:

- Substantially reduced electricity costs for those homes and businesses for the sunny 9 out of 12 months in the year;
- Produced electricity that can be used as generated or stored in a battery for use later;
- Provided us with a group of people on the island who would be happy to talk you through the benefits and costs of this decision. Please contact the BIPG on 027 75099 or bereislandenergy@gmail.com if you would like to understand your potential benefits;

Lastly, the payback time for investment in solar PV has, due to the soaring energy prices, reduced hugely, making it an even more beneficial option to consider. *(Submitted by the BI Energy Group)*



*Left: The school sewing hair scrunchies
Right: The school taking part in STEM/ Science week*





Heritage Week

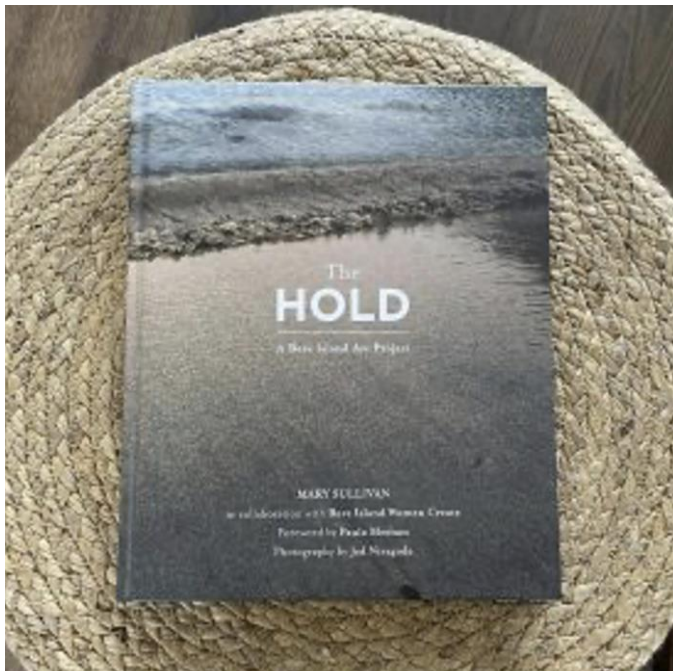
Bere Island Projects Group have won the runner up award in the National Heritage Week Awards for their guided tour of Lonehort Battery for children. The event at Lonehort was held during National Heritage Week in August, and was held to mark to Wild Child Day, a day in Heritage Week which encourage children to be involved in their local heritage. The tour at Lonehort Battery was led by Barry Hanley and saw over 50 children and parents attend to learn about the history of the battery, and the site's biodiversity and the variety of wildflowers to be found there. The awards ceremony was held online, and we extend our congratulations to Myshall Nature in Co Carlow who won the award.

The Hold

The Hold by Mary Sullivan and Bere Island Women Create is currently on sale from a number of venues on Bere Island and throughout West Cork. The book was launched at Bere Island Women Create's exhibition The Hold in June 2022 and details the project which led 24 island women to document through art the hold their island has on them.

The book, is priced €25 and would make a great Christmas present and can be purchased from:

- Murphy's Shop, Rerrin
- Lawrence Cove Marina
- Bere Island Heritage Centre
- Sarah Walker Gallery, Castletownbere
- Forest and Flock, Bantry
- West Cork Arts Centre



Bere Island Christmas Newsletter 2022

Now on sale!



Cost is €5.

Available from Murphy's Shop, Bere Island and Super Valu, Castletownbere



November in Greenane

The Bere Island Projects Group CLG office will close on Wednesday 21st December 2022 and will reopen on Thursday 5th January 2023. We would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2023.

Macedonian Trip

A very interesting trip to North Macedonia occurred on the 24th of October 2022. This was a collaboration between Leader, Comhar na nOileán, SECAD and Tourism. Flying out from Dublin to Tessalonika in Greece. We were met by our host Alexander who took us to our hotel in Shtip. The hotel was quite new and very comfortable but had no kitchen facilities. Breakfasts were excellent and there was an abundant supply of fruit juice and delicious coffee.

Our first day was spent in lectures at the hotel until afternoon when we explored our surroundings. The temperature was 23° - 24° but cooler at night. The second day we visited a business in Angelica where they grow cherries, peppers and various other fruits and vegetables. They were frozen, dried, or bottled. They also made chocolate liqueurs with the cherries, which we sampled, and they were quite delicious. We had lunch by the lake called Ophrid which was man made and full of carp and trout, some of which we sampled with loads of salads and freshly baked bread. On the third day we visited Radovis where there was a metal fabricating business which had been passed down from father to daughter. They made metal containers of all shapes and sizes including lockers and small boxes. After lunch we went to a factory where they make quality shirts. They were aimed at the executive market and retailed at €120 and upwards. They had a little shop where we were able to buy them at half price.

Everywhere we went there were fields of tobacco plants which were their main export. They will now have to find another product to replace this as with the smoking laws and the no smoking adverts it is really affecting their business. The other prominent items we came across were Massey Ferguson tractors, most of which were very old and many without cabs or rollbars. That evening we visited a Greek Orthodox Church in the company of an architect who was very knowledgeable on the many ornate icons within the church. The next day we visited Conche and were entertained in the Mayor's office from there we visited the town of Conche where we were each given a tree to plant, which was a lovely gesture. Our final trip was to a market where loads of fruit and vegetables, herbs and spices were on offer. The most impressive feature of the visit was the businesses we visited most of whom were family businesses. It was a great experience to have met those people. We are looking forward to the visit of the Macedonians in April. I am hoping that our visit will bear fruit and that we have learned from each other. *(Submitted by Brenda Elphick)*



Bere Island Win Tidy Islands Award

Bere Island has won the Tidy Island Award in the 2022 Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition, it's the fourteenth consecutive year the island has won the competition. The Bere Island Tourism and Environment Group are responsible for the island's entry into the competition, the year saw the island's overall score up by 13 points on last year to 347. points. Bere Island first entered the competition in 2001 and achieved its first win in 2007.

The adjudicator gave particular mention to St Michael's National School for the overall presentation of the building and school grounds, they concluded the report by commenting "the visit to Bere Island was an enlightening and enjoyable experience for the adjudicator, who was struck by the vibrancy and community spirit present on your beautiful island. We wish you well for the future and with your transition to the use of more renewable sources of energy and the greater energy efficiency of homesteads - keep up the good work."



Keeping well this winter

Keep well and warm:

- Keep warm, eat well, and avoid unnecessary travel. You should eat regular hot meals and drink plenty of fluids, this will keep you warm and give you energy to keep active.
- Ensure you have sufficient supplies of food and any prescription medicine you may need.
 - Keep active indoors.
 - Have sufficient fuel supplies to maintain adequate heating in your home.
- Ask your relatives and neighbours for help if you need it. Keep their phone numbers near your phone.

Personal Safety:

- In icy weather, wear well-fitted shoes with non-slip soles if you have to go out but try to limit walking outside during the cold weather
- Consider wearing a personal alarm so that family or neighbours are alerted if you fall
- If you have a fall, even a minor one, make sure you visit your doctor for a check up

Fall prevention in your home:

- Leave a low energy light on at night time, preferably one with a high light output
 - Use a non-slip shower or bath mat
- Make sure wires or cords from lamps, telephones etc. do not trail where you walk
- Arrange furniture so that you can easily move around your rooms
- Remove rugs or use non-slip tape or backing so rugs will not slip
- Consider installing hand rails on both sides of the stairs

If you have older relatives or neighbours make sure to phone them or call round to ensure they have enough, food, fuel and supplies. Keep safe this winter – for more information visit www.hse.ie



The Money Advice & Budgeting Service (MABS)

Winter can be a hard time financially for people especially with the increase in the cost of living and Christmas just around the corner. MABS can help those who are struggling financially to avoid getting into debt or help reach a solution if in debt. The service is free, independent, confidential, and non-judgemental with each client assigned an advisor who will work with them to resolve their financial situation.

Who does MABS help?

- Anyone who is struggling to pay bills including rent, mortgage & utilities
- Anyone struggling with arrears in respect of mortgages, rent, credit union loans, credit cards, legal moneylenders etc.
- Anyone who needs help in completing household budgets

How do MABS help?

- Contact creditors on behalf of clients
- Negotiate sustainable repayment plans
 - Create realistic Budget Plans
- Complete Standard Financial Statements

Services offered include:

- Debt write off up to €35,000
- Mortgage arrears service including advice, access to legal advice, access to insolvency, access to solicitor for court dates and support from an Advisor on relevant court dates. For more information contact MABS on 0818072450. (Submitted by BIPG)