

Bere Island Newsletter

Issue 93

Spring 2025



Above: View of Sheep's Head from Greenane. Photo by Leila Sidley



Above: Lonehort Gorse. Photo by Helen Riddell

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Bere Island National School

Our First Confession was on the 27th February. We had mass in school. Our mass theme was forgiveness. Isla, James and Aidan made their First Confession. We sang 'This is the day', 'Happy in the presence' and 'My Shepherd is the Lord'. - *By Isla and Mason*

On the sixth of March, we dressed up for world book day at school. Everybody was dressed up from their favourite books and Múinteoir Aoife and Kyla were both dressed as Winnie The Pooh but still looked different! Some of the characters people dressed up as are Anthony as Gangsta Granny, Leo was Sherlock Holmes, Connie was Batman, Cillian was the Cat in The Hat. As soon as we got into school we had a zoom meeting with other schools and the author Anthony Garvey. We did a whole school drama where we were put into groups of 4. It was so much fun watching all the groups. We also created our own book covers with what we were dressed up as. - *By Kyla as Winnie the Pooh and Leo as Sherlock Holmes*

We went out on the 10 o'clock ferry on Tuesday morning to go swimming. When we got to town, we went on the Hartnett bus for about an hour. When we got there, we split up into groups. We were there for 45 minutes. We had so much fun and can't wait for the next lesson. We got the ferry at half 2 and went straight home. - *By Cillian*

On the 14th of February we went to the cinema to see Dog Man. It was a really good movie and we all got popcorn, juice and gummies to eat while we watched it. We went on Hartnett's bus, across to Bantry. It was a really good day and I hope we can do it again. - *By Amelia*

We went to the church with the school for Ash Wednesday. Father Spring came over on a boat to say mass. We all got holy ashes on our foreheads before returning to school. It was a great celebration. - *By Anthony*

On the seventh of February we went to the credit union quiz in Bantry. We went on the ferry at 5 pm and Ann drove us on the rural transport bus to Bantry. We got there at half past six, the quiz started at 7 o'clock and lasted two hours. The teams were Erica, Abby, Feya and Meabh, Leo, Anthony and Kyla and Amelia, Jude and Cillian. We didn't win but they took a picture of us and put it in the newspaper because we came from Bere Island. We went back in on the ferry at 10:20 and were back at 10.35. We had a great time. - *By Erica and Abby*



After School Club

The after school group returned in January after the Christmas holidays. The kids have enjoyed plenty of activities such as arts and crafts weekly. After School club is on Mondays at the community centre between 3 pm - 5pm and is open to all primary school kids.

Baby & Toddler Group

The Baby and Toddler group continues to meet Fridays at 10am, all welcome to pop in and have a coffee and chat. The group recently enjoyed 4 weeks of family learning classes with Claire Kelleher.

Invasive Species

Summary

One of the actions of the Bere Island Conservation Plan is to prevent the spread of any invasive species on Bere Island which could have a detrimental impact on our island landscape.

Two main invasive species have been identified on the island, Japanese Knotweed and Gunnera.

Japanese Knotweed

Japanese Knotweed is a tall, vigorous herbaceous perennial which grows in dense patches and can reach up to 3 metres in height. It has distinctive hollow bamboo like stems which are green with red/purple speckles during summer. The leaves are green, shield shaped with pointed tips and a flat base. It produces off-white coloured flowers in small clusters which hang from the joint of the stem and the leaf. They flower from August to October. The roots are tough, thick and wood like in their appearance.

Japanese Knotweed is one of the most problematic invasive species and if left untreated it can seriously damage buildings and infrastructure by growing through concrete, tarmac and other hard surfaces if any cracks exist. It is spread via the deliberate or accidental movement of rhizome fragments of the plant or through cut stems. Even tiny amounts of cut stem, or rhizome are capable of producing a new plant. Landowners are being asked to be on the lookout for Japanese knotweed, and if you find any sign of it, it is imperative not to cut back the plant. Japanese Knotweed should only be treated by an experienced contractor using an approved herbicide. It can also spread through construction, if you are having work done on your property we would advise to check first for Japanese Knotweed.

Treatment of Japanese Knotweed

National Biodiversity Ireland recommends that the only control of Japanese Knotweed involves the use of herbicides, the plant should be treated in the spring and again in the autumn. However, these chemicals can pose a risk to human health, and for that reason it is essential that qualified and experienced contractor undertakes all treatment work. If anyway has, or has spotted, any new outbreak of Japanese Knotweed then please let the office know on 027 75099 and it can be added to the eradication plan.

Gunnera

Gunnera is a fast-growing, clump forming, perennial plant, which can grow over 2m in height and has huge leathery leaves on thick stalks arising from a stout scaly rhizome. It forms dense clumps which can prevent native vegetation from growing. It can also contribute to flooding by blocking drains and streams and can quickly dominate large tracts of land. Each plant is capable of producing up to 250,000 seeds every year which are then distributed by birds, water and human activity. Gunnera was originally introduced as an ornamental garden plant, however it quickly outgrows most domestic gardens and can escape into the wild.

Treatment of Gunnera

Again, National Biodiversity Ireland recommends the use of herbicides to treat Gunnera.

How you can help

If you discover Japanese Knotweed or Gunnera on your property, please notify The Projects Group Office on 027 75099 who will advise of the best course of action and put you in touch with a licensed contractor who will treat the plants. If Japanese Knotweed is growing on your property near a public road, please notify the office so that its location can be marked to prevent hedge cutting in that area.



Left : Japanese Knotweed

Right : Gunnera



Bere Island Arts Festival

*****SAVE THE DATES*****

The committee are busy planning the 3rd Bere Island Arts Festival which will take place from the 18th – 21st September this year. We are lining up a very exciting programme of events that we can't wait to share with you over the coming weeks and months.

The AGM will be held on Saturday 29th March at 7pm at the community centre. We are so grateful to all the volunteers who put so much time into making the Arts Festival the great success that it is but we are always looking for more people to get involved so please come along and pass the word around to anyone else that you think might be interested. If you can't make the AGM but would like to get involved, please contact Pauline Hurley, Mary Sullivan, or Caitriona Hanley, we would be delighted to have you on board.

Thanks to the valuable support and sponsorship that we have received from the local community and businesses as well as grant aid from Creative Places West Cork Islands, The Arts Council, Cork County Council, and Poetry Ireland, we have been able to offer a high quality and diverse programme of poetry, music, art, film, and dance each year and we are delighted to say this year's programme is set to be even more impressive.

To start off our fundraising campaign this year, we have organised a family friendly Table Quiz on Easter Sunday 20th April at The Hotel from 7-9pm. First prize is 4 tickets to 'Mundy' who will be playing at Wild Atlantic Glamping on August 16th . There will be a raffle on the night to win some fantastic prizes including a beautiful hamper of artisan treats. Raffle tickets are on sale now from Murphy's Shop. Start thinking of your team name and we look forward to seeing you all there!



Active Retirement Group

The Active Retirement Group celebrated Christmas in style at the Hotel Bere island at the annual Christmas party, a great night was had and special thanks to Mary, Marie and all the staff.

The group continues to meet every Thursday for their coffee mornings between 11 am - 12 pm at the community centre. New members are always welcome to pop in for a coffee and a chat. The group enjoyed 6 weeks of yoga with Trudy during January and February and look forward to more later in the year.

Members of the group enjoyed a day out at the Beara Big Bash which was held at the Berehaven Golf Club. These events offer a great chance to meet people from all corners of Beara.

Trip to Dingle

A 2 night trip to Dingle was enjoyed by members of our Active Retirement Group in March. The group enjoyed a visit to the fantastic Basket Centre along with experiencing the culinary delights of Dingle along with the craic agus ceol of Dingles vibrant nightlife.

Men's Shed

The Bere islands Men's Shed held a 45 card drive and raffle fundraising night on the 28th of December at the Hotel. Congratulations to Pauline and Adrian who won the 45. A fantastic night was had, with €485 raised. The shed would like to thank everyone for their continued support in our fundraising for our own shed. The Men's Shed continues to meet weekly on Thursday's events at 7.30 pm at the community centre. The group is currently involved in a number of community projects. New members are always welcome so pop in and learn more about the exciting plans for 2025.

Re-turn bottles and cans

The Bere Island Men's shed are running a fundraising campaign to raise money that will go towards building their own shed. There is a yellow bin located at the recycling centre where people can donate bottles and cans with the re-turn logo on them. We would like to thank everyone for their continued support and donations.

Bere Island Women Create

Bere Island Women Create held their AGM in January and elected the following committee:

Chair: Christine McCreary
Vice-chair: Sinead Hanley
Secretary: Pauline Cleary
Treasurer: Angela McCarthy
PRO: Gemma Hunt

The group are planning a number of classes in 2025 including lino cut printing, quilting, painting, dancing and writing workshops. The group is open to all island women, and also hosts a monthly book club.

Bere Island Tourism and Environment Group

Bere Island Tourism and Environment Group held their AGM recently and elected the following committee:

Chair: Triona Murphy
Treasurer: Caitriona Hanley
Secretary: Barry Hanley

The group are now busy working on projects for the 2025 Tidy Towns Competition, and are looking for volunteers to help with this, if you can spare an hour or so a week to help with watering, weeding or planting please contact one of the group members.

The group will also be holding a beach clean in the coming months, details of this will be announced shortly. The new glass crusher has now been installed at the recycling centre, the group are grateful to Cork County Council's Climate Action Fund who awarded BITE funding of €5,500 to purchase the machine. Everyone is asked to recycle as much as possible in order to minimise waste on the island, please ensure all items brought to the recycling centre are clean and are placed in the correct containers.

For all waste that cannot be recycled there is a monthly waste collection, stickers are €10 each and can be purchased from Murphy's Shop, Rerrin or from the Projects Group Office.

BIPG – Home Visits

Since the last newsletter Mary Mullins has joined the Rural Social Scheme here on the island. Mary is available for home visits to have a chat and a cuppa. If you would like Mary to visit for one hour per week please contact the office on 027 75099.

Bere Island Community Radio

Bere Island Community Radio was honoured to be nominated for the Mayor's Community Award in the western division of Cork County Council.

The awards were established to honour community driven initiatives throughout the county which despite all obstacles continue to flourish, and we want to thank Cllr. Finbarr Harrington for nominating us.

Four members of the Radio Team travelled to County Hall for the event on 11th February; Brenda Elphick, Eileen Murphy, Dorothy Brophy and Dominic Hallahan. The evening began with drinks and a delicious dinner (coincidentally, prepared by Bere Islander Shane O'Sullivan and his team). There were speeches from the Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Joe Carroll, Cork County Council C.E.O. Moira Murrell and Pauline O'Dwyer of Muintir na Tíre, County Cork. The awards ceremony followed for each of the three divisions Western, Northern and Southern. In each division one award was presented to a community group and one to an individual who has contributed greatly to their community. Though Bere Island Community Radio didn't win an award, being nominated was a significant acknowledgment of the contribution 'The Radio' has made, over the past 6 years, to life on Bere Island, Beara and Beyond!



Bere Island GAA

The Rebels Bounty is back for 2025. Support Bere Island GAA and sign up by clicking on the link below and choosing Bere Island. Tickets available until March 27th.

100% commission to clubs above minimum targets

€500,000 in prizes

12 monthly draws

360 chances to win

Support your local club

<https://rebelsbounty.ergogroup.ie/prod/rebelsbounty/join-draw>

Oileán na gCaorach

Since the last newsletter a number of things have happened. Firstly, Cork County Council compiled a memo regarding the ownership of the pier and the County Engineer has agreed they will take responsibility for it. A meeting was then held with reps from the subgroup, Cork County Council and the Department and agreement was reached that a tender document would be put together by the Council in order to progress the project. At the time of writing, we are told the tender document is near completion. Once tendering is complete consultants will be hired to progress the feasibility study for the pier area which will involve community consultation with islanders as well as other stakeholders e.g. Fisheries office.

The Bere Island Theatre Troupe

The Bere Island Troupe held an AGM recently and have elected the following committee:

Chair Eugene Glendon, Vice Chair Mary Sullivan, Treasurer Triona Murphy, Secretary Pauline Hanley and PRO Helen Riddell.

The Troupe was formed in 2003 and received help in the form of an artist residency collaboration between Bere Island Projects Group and the Ireland Newfoundland Partnership which provided funding for playwright Agnes Walsh from Cuslett, Newfoundland to work with the group. The Troupe performed a number of plays on Bere Island over the years, including *In the Shadow of the Glen* and *The Tinkers Wedding* by JM Synge, *Translations* by Brian Friel and *Sive* by John B Keane. The group are now hoping to stage a performance on the island again. Anyone who would like to joining the Troupe, to act, or help behind the scenes in set design, costume, sourcing props or stage management can contact any member of the committee or leave their details in the Projects Group office.



Irish Community Archive Network

Bere Island Projects Group were one of the groups whose work was highlighted at a special event hosted by the National Museum of Country Life and the Irish Community Archive Network to mark International Women's Day on March 8th . In late 2024 BIPG were one of a number of community groups who contributed to an exhibition held by iCAN and the National Museum to celebrate the work of Community Midwives and Nurses. BIPG's contribution focused on the story of Nurse Mary Mullins who was the island nurse from 1935-1975.

BIPG are continuing their work to digitise island heritage collections and in 2025 plan to digitise clips from the Ed White film collection and make this available online. We are grateful to Noreen Dennehy for giving permission to use footage from this film collection of her late father's.

We are also working with Margaret Harrington and Sile Harrington to digitise a number of Irish words and phrases which were used on Bere Island over the years, these are available on the website.

If anyone would like to share old photos or documents of the island to digitise and make available on the website, please contact Helen Riddell at : bereconservation@gmail.com

The community archive can be viewed at: www.bereisland.heritagecork.org

BIPG

The Bere Island Projects Group CLG were delighted to welcome Jack Barry to our team last month. Jack works in the office with the BIPG staff every Friday morning from 10am – 12pm carrying out photocopying, shredding and various other office duties. We hope Jack has settled in and is enjoying his time with us as much as we are enjoying it.



Éamon O' Cuív

On 11th December 2024, Comhdhail Oileán na hÉireann and Comhar na nOileán came together with former TD, Éamon O' Cuív to mark his retirement from politics. Every island made a presentation to him in recognition of the massive contribution and commitment he has shown to the islands over the years. We wish Eamon and his wife Áine all the very best for the future.



Leader

LEADER West Cork and Islands commenced on the September 26th 2024, and the first LCDC LAG meeting took place on the October 15th . The Budget for the Cork Islands is as follows.

Economic Development and Job Creation €383,546

Rural Infrastructure €199,940

Environment and Climate Change Mitigation €68.603

Total budget for the islands: €652,089

There is a huge interest in the LEADER funds this time around primarily because the rate of aid can be as high as 75% of total project costs for both community projects and private projects. The rate of aid for analysis and development i.e. feasibility, business plans, development plans is at 90% to a maximum of €30,000 per project.

Development officers are available to meet with potential promoters at any time and some community meetings have taken place. If anyone has missed the community meetings, feel free to call Comhar na nOileán on 099 75096 to arrange an appointment. Everyone will be met and assisted.

Currently there are 5 private individuals who are preparing applications under

- Enterprise Development/Rural Tourism projects.
- There are 2 Community Groups in the process of preparing invitations.
- 39 forms have been sent out to potential promoters.
-

The first project, went before the LCDC Local Action Group (LAG) in February and it is envisaged that a stream of projects will be coming through. We encourage anyone who has a project idea to get in touch asap as the funds are limited and in high demand.

Community Rotavator

The Community Rotavator is available to use for everyone on the Island. A fee of €20 is applicable. The Rotavator will be delivered to you, demonstrated and collected again on the agreed date.

For bookings and more information please contact the office on 027 75099.