



Green Sod Land Trust-An Foidín Glas

8 Bowling Green, Galway, Ireland www.greensodlandtrust.com

Annual Report 2007

**We believe in the sacredness of the Earth.
We believe the Earth too is alive.
We believe that all life is sustained
in relationship to the Earth
and what happens to one affects the other.
We promote care and respect for the
whole of life.**



An Foidín Glas

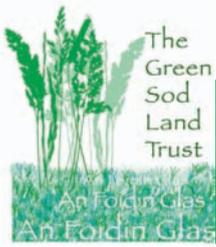
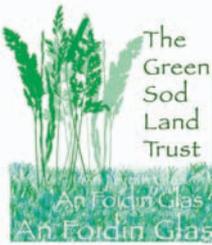


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An Foidín Glas



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Our Vision

Out of this vision the Trust works with local communities encouraging them to live in harmony with nature. It also works to advance education by promoting and encouraging public awareness of the importance of conserving land and protecting the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Trust encourages, promotes and fosters the initiation of proposals for the conservation, protection and improvement of lands and the environment.

The Green Sod Land Trust-An Foidín Glas, works to:

- *conserve land both for its own sake, for the sake of the total earth community who live on the land, and for the sustenance, inspiration and source of spiritual nourishment it is to humanity.*
- *protect existing natural processes, and their indigenous animals, plants, soils etc., out of respect for the diversity of life.*
- *renew land where it has been damaged by encouraging natural processes enabling less restricted interactions amongst species.*

- *liaise with local communities and encourage them to live in harmony with nature.*

- *promote biodiversity.*

- *encourage biodynamic agriculture.*

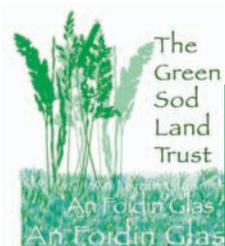
- *promote an awareness and understanding of the natural world, our home, that we may live in right relationship with all of life.*

- *stimulate public support to protect land from improper use, that land may no longer be seen merely as a commodity but as a source of life.*

- *encourage voluntary participation in the conservation and renewal of land.*

Education is of utmost importance when it comes to protecting the natural world. The Green Sod Land Trust therefore has an on-line education initiative that can be easily accessed by schools. This education initiative 'The Universe Story' which is a multi-discipline programme, has been piloted with great success in over 100 primary schools in the west of Ireland. 'The Universe Story' can be downloaded from:

www.greensodlandtrust.com



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A word from the Chair

Dear Friends,

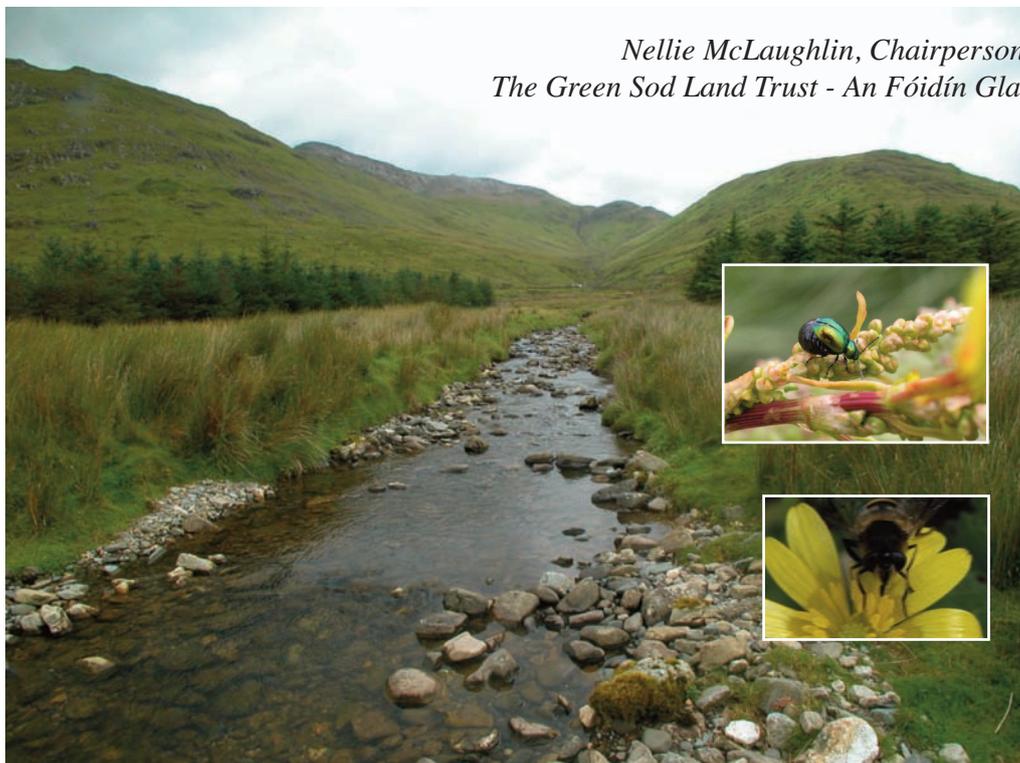
What a fortunate people we are to live on this beautiful island of Ireland, rich in history, culture and landscape, surrounded by water. However, in this climate of prosperity this land, the very essence of Ireland, is undeniably under threat. We, in the Green Sod Land Trust want to preserve it and share it with the whole community of life.



At this time of unprecedented economic growth in Ireland we can be lulled into a false sense of well-being when the reality is that the living systems of our planet are under serious stress. The population of Ireland is more than the human population if we take into account all other species. We can no longer talk in terms of people only. Animals, plants, soils, rocks, micro organisms, watersheds and the like are all part of the community of life in which we too are situated. The Green Sod Land Trust is a critical response to our growing alienation from our natural environment.

Let's wake our collective consciousness for the sake of the soul of our native soil and reconnect with our deepest roots in the land, before it is too late.

*Nellie McLaughlin, Chairperson,
The Green Sod Land Trust - An Foidin Glas*



An Foidin Glas



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Directors

An Foidín Glas

Chairperson: Nellie McLaughlin - Inishowen, Co. Donegal, author of 'Out of Wonder', the Evolving Story of the Universe, lecturers on the MA in Ecology & Religion Dalgan Park, Navan & Lampeter University, Wales. She has worked as a teacher in N. Ireland and Iceland, and presently in cosmology, ecology and sustainable living throughout Ireland.



Treasurer: Rosaleen Hogan - teacher, from Inchicore, Dublin. For many years she has lived and worked in greater Dublin. Seeing at first hand the suffering and plight of land in an ever expanding city she is convinced of the need to protect land and all its inhabitants for the future before it is too late. Rosaleen is a founder member of the East Coast Cosmology group.

Secretary: Melissa Griffith - lives in Galway. Working in Papua New Guinea and the experience of living with its people, mountains and rain-forests opened her eyes to how inter-dependent and inter-connected all life is. Melissa lives by the maxim of John Seymour who said "I am only one, I can only do what one can do, but what one can do I will do,"



Mary Connaughton - Sister of Mercy teacher, worked in Brazil with members of the Sem Terra movement and their struggle against eviction and dispossession greatly affected her. The contrast between the lush soil of her native Meath and the deprivation and suffering of the landless of Brazil has heightened her concern for the protection of land for future generations.

Sheila Gallagher - native of Galway where she works as an art teacher with the Travelling Community. She is a founder member of Galway Environmental Alliance a lobby group formed to help protect the natural environment and is co-owner, with her sister Mary, of The Nora Barnacle House Museum, Galway



Noreen Lyons - native of East Galway, Adult Educator in Earth Literacy at An Gáirdín, Portumna. She is keenly aware of and disturbed by the changing nature of our relationship with the land. Founder member of An Gáirdín Ecology Centre, Portumna. She believes our single most urgent task in this Millennium is to protect the land which is now under unprecedented threat.



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How far have we come: Summary of Meetings

DECEMBER 2005

A meeting took place on Sat. 3rd December 2005 in The Gresham Hotel in Dublin re forming a Land Trust.

Present :

Nellie Mc Loughlin, Ann-Marie Mullally, Noreen Lyons, Mary Connaughton, Rosaleen Hogan, Claire Griffith, Melissa Griffith. Absent: Sheila Gallagher.

Agenda Report of a meeting that took place between Liam Staunton, solicitor, Sheila Gallagher and Melissa Griffith on 24th November 2005 re forming a Land Trust;

In order to become a Charity the following need to be done:

- Set up a company limited by guarantee-cost €500 (euro)
- Draw up constitution
- Agree name for the Trust
- Get an address
- Seven people (min) need to commit to being directors
- Set up a bank account
- Decide on how the Trust will be administered (as audited accounts will have to be submitted annually)

The Green Sod Land Trust: An Foidin Glas was agreed upon as the official name of the newly founded National Land Trust

MAY 2006

On 13th May 2006 Sheila Gallagher, Nellie McLaughlin, Mary Connaughton, Rosaleen Hogan, Noreen Lyons, Christine Brennan, Melissa Griffith and Liam Staunton Solicitor met in Nora Barnacle House, 8 Bowling Green, Galway and the paper work was completed to set up a company limited by guarantee: The Green Sod Land Trust Ltd. The first legal step to establish a Land Trust was taken.

JANUARY 2007-

Green Sod Land Trust: An Foidin Glas Meeting held at 8, Bowling Green, Galway. 12.00-3.00pm

Present: Nellie Mc Laughlin, Sheila Gallagher, Mary Connaughton, Noreen Lyons, Rosaleen Hogan, Melissa Griffith. Absent: apologies from Christine Brennan.

The purpose of the meeting was to address the issues raised in a letter from the Revenue Commissioners, via Liam Staunton, which required urgent attention.

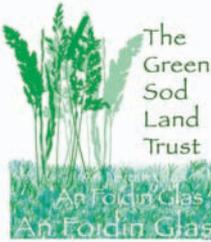
- Amendment of main object:
- Amendment of Subsidiary object and
- Election of Officers.

Discussion took place re the wording of the main object and the subsidiary objects as set out in the Companies Acts document: Memorandum & Articles of Association.

1. After thorough discussion the following amendment to the main object was proposed by Sheila Gallagher, and seconded by Rosaleen Hogan:

"To protect and conserve land in Ireland and its indigenous inhabitants; animals, plants, soils, rocks, micro organisms, watersheds and the like; to work with local communities and to encourage them to live in harmony with nature and to advance education by promoting and encouraging public awareness of the importance of conserving land and protecting the environment for the benefit of present and future generations."

Continued...



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2. After thorough discussion the following amendment to the subsidiary object was proposed by Nellie Mc Laughlin and seconded by Mary Connaughton:

(a) To encourage, promote and foster the initiation of proposals for the conservation, protection and improvement of lands and the environment and to promote and encourage public awareness in the conservation of land, its indigenous animals, plants, soils, rocks, micro organisms, watersheds and the like. To renew land that has been damaged. To promote biodiversity. To encourage biodynamic agriculture.

3. The Election of Chairperson and Treasurer.

Nellie Mc Laughlin was proposed by Sheila Gallagher and seconded by Mary Connaughton for the position of Chairperson. Nellie accepted the role for as long as she and the group feels it is her role.

Rosaleen Hogan was proposed by Nellie Mc Laughlin and seconded by Noreen Lyons to be Treasurer. Rosaleen accepted the role for as long as she and the group feels it is her role. Sheila and Mary agreed to liaise with Rosaleen in the initial setting up of a recording system etc.

Melissa is the group secretary and her first year of office will end in May.

FEBRUARY 2007

In February 2007 after a lengthy process of application The Revenue Commissioners granted Charitable status to Green Sod Land Trust: An Foidin Glas. Registered Charity No. - CHY 16916.

MAY 2007

Meeting held at 8, Bowling Green, Galway. on the 12th May

Present: Nellie McLaughlin, Sheila Gallagher, Rosaleen Hogan, Christine Brennan and Melissa Griffith
Apologies from Mary Connaughton and Noreen Lyons.

Rosaleen delivered lots of info to us re getting our cards printed. It was decided to print sod cards which we will prepare as single cards and also to print notelets too and sell them 4 to a pack (for promotional purposes). It is hoped to get these prepared asap. After Rosaleen left for the train it was decided to get Klee to print off several copies of the Universe Story for us too for distribution and also to copy the CD. We will design the circle for the CD and also decide what is to go on the CD cover. Rosaleen is following up on costs etc....

It was decided that the most urgent need for the Trust at the moment is to get the Database established, and that a person needs to be found who can do that, and that we need to look at getting a computer to do it on. The person required need to be able to connect the website and the database.

Sheila and Melissa will meet soon to do a news page update and to continue working on the 'pack' for people who don't use computers.

APRIL 2007

LAUNCH OF EDUCATION INITIATIVE

JUNE 2007

Directors Meeting among other things the following were discussed.

Application to City & County Councils for grant under Agenda 21-(rang Env. Officer again for application)

Data base progress/ computer/etc.

PRO strategy – articles, talks, organisations, events, etc etc

OCTOBER 2007

PUBLIC MEETING Venue: The Prince of Wales Hotel, Athlone

Full minutes available upon request.



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Launch of on-line Education Initiative



Mayor of Galway City, Niall O'Brolchain with the Directors of the Green Sod Land Trust at Barna Woods (from left): Melissa Griffith, Christine Brennan, Mary Connaughton, Sheila Gallagher, Noreen Lyons, Rosaleen Hogan, Neillie McLaughlin.

Photo: Jos O'Shaughnessy.

A step was taken in Galway on Saturday 21st April 2007, that could well impact on all our futures. At a gathering in Barna Woods, on the outskirts of Galway City, on a very significant day world-wide; International Earth Day, The Green Sod Land Trust-An Foidin Glas, launched its on-line education initiative for Primary Schools in Ireland.

What this means to the people of Ireland is that every Primary School from North to South, East to West can download this entertaining pack which simultaneously challenges the way we live today.

The education initiative was launched by the Mayor of Galway City, Niall O'Brolchain. "Never was it more urgent than it is today to be proactive in saving land for future generations. The wonderful thing about what the Trust is doing is that it is taking a long term view." said Mayor O'Brolchain at the Launch. Chairperson Nellie McLaughlin says "Irish people love the land and

are greatly concerned with how fast it is disappearing. This is a wonderful opportunity for Irish people to come on board to save green spaces in their own county."

The education initiative entitled The Universe Story, tells the story of the origin of the universe to the present day.

This is our story as one species among many others on the planet. We have taken inspiration from what science, philosophy and theology are giving us and from what the great thinkers of our time such as Thomas Berry, Brian Swimme, Miriam Therese Mc Gillis and others say, and we have creatively put this package together in song and verse using the old Irish melodies. "While it is being directed towards primary school children – it is in fact something that we have used very successfully with groups of people of all ages. We are currently working on Earth Literacy Education Booklets for adult learners, coming on-line in 2008," said Melissa Griffith, Secretary of the Trust.

An Foidin Glas



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First Public Meeting

The First Public Meeting of the Green Sod Land Trust was held in Athlone on October 13th 2007 at The Prince of Wales Hotel.

A presentation was given by Directors of the Trust, Melissa Griffith and Sheila Gallagher, to a large crowd informing them of the work of The Trust.

The meeting was opened by Chairperson Nellie McLaughlin, who spoke of the importance for all of us of recognising that the living systems of our planet are under serious stress and that we can no longer talk of human need only. 'Land and all species - are a one time endowment - once extinct they're gone for ever. This makes it very urgent for us to work and protect the land for present and future generations,' she said.

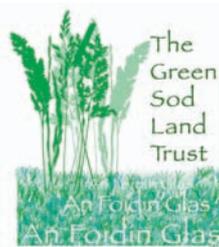
Noreen Lyons of The Trust, spoke of balance of all living things, and of how disconnected we humans have become from the earth and how most of us have lost our capacity to listen to what it has to say. 'We are all familiar with the Native Indian adage "What we do to the Land we do to ourselves." We know this in theory but to translate it into practice is radically challenging. How would it be if our relationship with the land was one of a harmonious relationship, not one of domination?

The Trust is preparing a National Fund Raising Campaign to kick start the acquisition of their first parcel of land.

People attending the Meeting came from as far away as Cork and Donegal, Carlow and Clare. 'I am delighted with the turnout for this first public meeting of The Land Trust and we are very grateful for a substantial donation which we received subsequently.' said Rosaleen Hogan, Treasurer of the Trust. She encouraged people to log on to www.greensodlandtrust.com to learn more and to keep informed about future meetings and happenings.

There are many Land Trusts in England, Scotland and all over Europe. But with the exception of groups like the Irish Peatlands Conservation Council, The Green Sod Land Trust is the first of its kind here. The Trust is confident that it has arrived in time to keep Ireland Green for its indigenous inhabitants and for the sake of the spirit and soul to Irish people.

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Awareness Raising

Roundtable: "Rural Evolution" 7th November 2007, Temple Bar Gallery

Marjetica Potrc, Andreas Lang (Architect/Public Works, UK), Wapka Feenstra (Artist/NL), Dominic Stevens (Architect/IRL), and Sheila Gallagher (The Green Sod Land Trust/IRL), chaired by Nathalie Weadick, (Director, The Irish Architecture Foundation). "Rural Evolution" was organised in partnership with The Irish Architecture Foundation.

Sheila Gallagher gave a power point presentation on the setting up of The Green Sod Land Trust, its vision and its place in rural evolution.

The audience response reinforced the timeliness and urgency of the work of the Trust.

Public Talks

Other public talks have been given by board members in various parts of the country to community groups such as Organic Growers; Parish Groups; Support Groups; Environmental Groups; Active Retirement Groups; etc.

Printed Material

The Trust have also printed blank notelets with four different images available at a cost of €4.00 / pack of four. Sod cards are also printed and ready for distribution. There are four types of sod cards: Congratulations, Best Wishes, Seasons Greetings, In Loving Memory available at a cost of €25.00 each.

The Trust has yet to purchase land and at this stage, all money raised through the sod cards which are numbered individually will go towards buying the first piece of land. The sod cards represent the purchase of symbolic sods to save Irish land. The Trust has had information bookmarks as opposed to leaflets printed for ecological reasons. The Trust has been distributing these information bookmarks to libraries around the country and they are being received with great interest.

Earth Literacy Booklets

The Trust is at present preparing a series of booklets related to environmental education. These booklets are geared towards the adult learner and are especially suitable for integrated literacy. The booklets cover such areas as: Food and Nutrition, Waste and Recycling; Nature Walks; The Story of the Universe; Art; Woodwork; and Climate Change, covering both literacy and numeracy. The booklets will be launched at the RAPAL (Research and Practice in Adult Literacy) Conference to be held in NUI Galway in June 2008. They will be available to download from www.greensodlandtrust.com during the coming year.

All of our printed material, Bookmarks, Notelets, Booklets and Sod Cards are 100% recycled.



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Acknowledgements

The Green Sod Land Trust-An Foidín Glas is yet in its infancy and at present is establishing the infrastructure that will take it into the future. It is difficult, with no precedent set, to expect help for a project with a vision such as this and so we wish to acknowledge the following for their support and for their trust in our vision.

Liam Staunton, Solicitor, 11 Sea Road, Galway, liam@stauntonsolicitors.ie who gives so generously of his time and legal expertise.

Kelly Murray. Chartered Accountants, Registered Auditors, Harris House, IDA Business Park, Tuam Road, Galway, who give so generously of their time and expertise on an ongoing basis. www.kellymurray.ie

Mary Gallagher, Mairín Ní Mhurchú, Jennifer Cunningham who are working tirelessly behind the scenes.

Dr. Sasha Bosbeer, C. Env.MIEEM for her professional guidance in Environmental Matters, and for the beautiful photographs which are being used on this site. www.sylvaneco.com

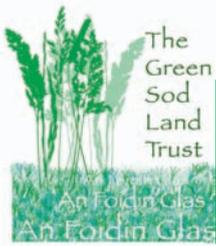
The Nora Barnacle House Museum, Bowling Green, Galway, for making the facility available to us. www.norabarnacle.com

Galway Environmental Alliance. c/o One World Centre, Quay Street, Galway, Ireland.

Noel Kelly of www.artprojectsnetwork.net for all the help with the web site.

An Tairseach, Ecology Centre, Wicklow whose educational programmes planted seeds in fertile ground. www.ecocentrewicklow.com

The Mercy Sisters, Mater Hospital, Dublin, for facilitating initial meetings.



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Web Site

The Green Sod Land Trust web site can be viewed on line at www.greensodlandtrust.com

- It is a comprehensive web site giving information about the work of the Trust.
- The public can download the Education Initiative for Primary Schools and in the coming year will be able to download another Education Initiative for adult learners.
- The web site has a news page that is up-dated regularly and a diary page.



The Green Sod land Trust An Foidin Glas- Conserving Land in Ireland

The aim of The Green Sod Land Trust- An Foidin Glas, Ireland is to protect and conserve land in Ireland and its indigenous inhabitants; animals, plants, soils, rocks, micro organisms, watersheds and the like, for their own sake and for the sake of present and future generations. The Trust works with local communities and encourages them to live in harmony with nature. It also works to advance education by promoting and encouraging public awareness of the importance of conserving land and protecting the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.



An Foidin Glas