



LOUGH NEAGH
PARTNERSHIP

LOUGH NEAGH PARTNERSHIP REPORT

SUMMARY OF PROJECT
DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT IN
THE LOUGH NEAGH AREA OVER THE
LAST 5 YEARS

2016-2021

November 2021

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SPECIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS 2016 – 2021

The Lough Neagh Partnership over the past five years has managed to work closely with local councils and government departments to make significant positive changes and improve the management and protection of the Lough. Below is a summary of the main outputs and outcomes of the collaborative work of the Partnership.

RESULTS

- 21 FTE jobs created
- £10.8m total direct investment brought into the Lough Neagh area
- 58 projects delivered
- Team of 12 people managing projects.
- 1,815 hectares of land under better environmental management
- C.350 hectares of new land to be transferred to Lough Neagh Partnership and managed as nature reserves
- 1791 Volunteers involved in helping to protect Lough Neagh
- Local people provided 2882 volunteer days of work equating to £144, 050 of value
- 25,000 people engaged in heritage & environmental activities
- 2 environmental group farm schemes created with over 140 farmers signed up
- Media reach 47,171,732
- 213 tonnes of litter and 48 km of shoreline cleaned up through major litter lift programmes
- 2 new working rangers on Lough with boats
- 20 barn owl nests installed
- 9 archaeology investigations and surveys carried out
- 3 historic buildings conserved
- Toome & Clonoe WWII historic Airfields recorded and researched
- Revival of Cranfield Holy well traditional ritual
- 5 books published and 15 additional publications published on history and culture of Lough Neagh
- 3 new bespoke sculptural interpretations in place
- 74 walks and talks provided
- Washingbay Masterplan implemented valued at £526,250
- 3.1km new trail created, 8km refurbished
- 1,134 pupils engaged in schools' Lough Neagh heritage programme
- 33 vocational conservation participants helping with conservation of Lough
- 2 community heritage gardens created
- Restoration of Toome Canal Lockhouse
- Return & restoration of WWII torpedo platform boat to Lough Neagh
- Conservation of Church Island medieval church
- Development of 12 heritage and food tours, attracting 773 visitors
- 3 new exhibitions and visitor centres developed
- 1,657 people trained in heritage skills
- 7 replica historic boats built
- New Lough Neagh Interpretive Trail created





STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENTS (2016 – 2021)

- Over £10 million of new investment brought to Lough Neagh by Lough Neagh Partnership Ltd.
- A strong management team setup
- Lough Neagh Partnership is now recognised as the Lough Neagh Management body
- The improved management of the environmental designations of Lough Neagh
- The creation of new Nature Recovery Networks around the shores of the Lough
- New tourism experiences developed with the Private Sector and Councils
- Increased visitor numbers and improved perceptions of Lough Neagh
- New collaborative clusters set up for local artisan food and moil cattle
- New focus on safety and a new navigation subcommittee set up
- New cross-party political support for better management and development of Lough Neagh
- New tourism infrastructure developed around Lough Neagh by Councils working with the Partnership
- More Important historic buildings of Lough Neagh protected and conserved
- New environmentally friendly farming culture developed and additional funding for farmers around the Lough
- New archaeological research completed on important historic sites
- Monitoring Lough Neagh's environment increased, and annual data now recorded
- New opportunities for sustainable financing examined such as purchase of bed and soil of Lough
- Improved working relationship and support from NIEA and DFI
- Improved working relationship and support from the main Councils around Lough Neagh
- Greater involvement and interest of local communities in the management of Lough Neagh
- Continual lobbying of elected representatives to develop the Lough





FOREWORD BY CONOR JORDAN

Chairperson of The Lough Neagh Partnership

"Great work done but plenty more to do."

Lough Neagh is the largest freshwater Lough in Northern Ireland, Ireland, and the UK, and supplies Northern Ireland with 40% of its drinking water and 30% of its sand for the local construction industry. Yet in many ways it seems a forgotten Lough. You can travel around its 100-mile shoreline but only get small glimpses of the water itself. The Lough and the area around it, is so low lying to make it almost hidden.

Politically no Northern Ireland Minister, Department or group of Departments take responsibility for its integrated strategic management. As such, it has no inter departmental coordination, regional promotion, or navigation authority. These are the minimum of government services offered in other similar loughs and waterways in the rest of the UK and Ireland.

This report is therefore a testimony to what a body like the Lough Neagh Partnership, working with local people and stakeholders can achieve and how they can transform and protect a living working landscape by working with bodies like local Councils and positively engaging Departments like the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Department for Infrastructure (DFI). It shows that large change can occur by local people taking responsibility.

But in another sense, the work of the Partnership over the last number of years has not been successful, in so far as, it has been unable to persuade the Northern Ireland Government to take greater responsibility to provide greater investment and coordinated management for the Lough. Numerous meetings with Ministers have been held over the last number of years but the simple truth remains that there is still, in 2021, no navigation authority for Lough Neagh. Not even a simple interdepartmental management group for the Lough exists. Sad to say, twenty-three years after the Good Friday Agreement, Lough Neagh remains out with the remit of Waterways Ireland, the body set up by the agreement to manage inland waterways.

So just what is the future for Lough Neagh and how can it be better protected and better managed? Well, the answer to this question is quite simple: develop strong working relationships with those bodies that recognise the needs and opportunities of this huge natural resource.



Already bodies like the main Local Councils working with the Partnership have identified the increase in local tourism from the impact of COVID. In response, they have invested in and developed strong tourism infrastructure on their shorelines such as at Ballyronan, Antrim Shore Park and Kinnego Marina. This investment has brought huge rewards with large numbers of people now visiting the Lough for the first time during the Covid Pandemic.

The Partnership has recognised the importance of the change in the farming sector and the impact of Brexit. It has worked closely with DAERA and developed strong practical working relationships with local farmers, bringing in new environmental farm scheme investment and encouraging farmers who live along the shore to develop new environmentally farm practices and create new nature connected areas.

There are also great opportunities to develop the Lough and its river infrastructure in the future. In July 2007, the remit of Waterways Ireland was extended by the North South Ministerial Council to include responsibility for the reconstruction of the Ulster Canal from Upper Lough Erne to Clones, and in 2021 funding was allocated to complete the connection to Clones. There is no reason, why some work on the Northern side of the canal, which starts at Lough Neagh, cannot be identified and investment agreed. There is a great opportunity for the local Councils, DFI, and DAERA to come together and work with the Partnership and Waterways Ireland to develop some northern river and canal infrastructure.

In Northern Ireland the Rathlin Model is also a great example of how three or four departments, with a lead department and senior civil servants driving policy, can oversee an integrated government plan for important landscapes like Rathlin and Lough Neagh. There is a need to improve the Loughs safety and navigation and to develop some practical protocols on sustainable dredging and the opening of the mouths of some rivers. To date the Department of Infrastructure is working with the Partnership and local Councils to examine and consider options for the future.

The private sector can also recognise the need to take mitigating actions to help protect the Lough and could come together to provide funding for specific environmental protection and restoration projects. In the long-term, investment and ring-fenced income could even come from the public purchase of the bed and soil asset of Shaftesbury Estates and both governments in the south and north could eventually implement the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement and give Lough Neagh a fully functioning navigation authority.



More recent discussions and interest from the Northern Ireland Assembly MLAs and the three main local Councils is now happening. The three main Councils which cover most of the Lough have passed or are in the process of passing motions expressing the need to develop and protect the Lough and work more closely with the Lough Neagh Partnership and Government bodies. There are also great future funding opportunities stemming from the new Peace Plus, Green Growth, Dormant Account NI, UK Community Renewal and Shared Island Funds. Whilst there is a need to examine the impact of climate change on the Lough there are also strong opportunities to develop sustainable income and investment from providing land management and carbon trading services.

So, I believe now is the right time to grasp the new opportunities and good will that now exist and begin to manage and protect this wonderful natural resource for everyone.

Chair of the Lough Neagh Partnership

PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

List of projects 2016-2021



PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Acquisition of the Dept. of Education 'School Lands' for Peatland Restoration

These lands encompass a mosaic of lowland (mostly cut-over) raised bog and semi-improved grassland interspersed with alder-dominated woodland and scrub with low density rural settlements located southwest of Washing Bay. LNP engaged and agreed a lease with the Dept. of Education for acquisition of 320ha to be restored and managed as a wetland reserve. To achieve this, we invested heavily in a community engagement process that would enable LNLP to build relationships and trust across several platforms. Acquisition is founded on community connect, trust and rapport for the vision we aim to achieve for the site.



Partners: Dept. of Education, Derrytresk Community Assoc., Muintir na Mointeach, RSPB, DTNI, MUDC.

Impact: 320 ha of priority wetland habitat brought into community ownership and protected; Priority species protected.

Project: Conservation and Site Restoration Plan for the SW Peatlands

The Partnership undertook a series of botanical, hydrological, access and recreation, fire management surveys alongside an extensive community engagement programme to provide baseline data to inform the development of a 10-year site conservation, restoration, and management plan for the Southwest Lough Neagh Peatlands. This provides the scientific and socio-cultural framework for bringing the lands back to a high value peatland habitat that has a broad species diversity and ecosystem services function.



Partners: NIEA, Mid Ulster District Council, Dept. of Education, Derrytresk Community Assoc., Muintir na Mointeach, RSPB.

Impact: Data secured to inform the 10-year management of 320 ha of priority wetland habitat towards favourable condition, Community engaged in learning about the cultural and natural significance of the peatland and its role in the historical development of their area.

PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Curlew Monitoring Programme

The project set out to identify the dangers and pressures facing Curlew in the SW Lough Neagh Peatlands. Data was collected on the number, distribution and breeding status of Curlew Territories, behaviour of breeding Curlew and identification of potential threats to adults, nests, eggs/chicks or fledged young. The information was used to establish new conservation actions to protect this remnant population and prevent local extinction. The Curlew data showed that the area is hugely important and holds considerable potential for the conservation of this species which is facing a very uncertain future.

Partners: KRC Ecology, NIEA, Mid Ulster District Council, Derrytresk Community Assoc., Muintir na Mointeach, RSPB.

Impact: New Curlew Conservation plan, Community engaged in learning about the Curlew through workshops and site visits.



Project: Curlew Rescue Programme

After a spate of fires on the SW peatlands, the team collected several Curlew eggs (under license) and successfully reared and released nine juveniles into the wild. This received extensive media coverage broadcast throughout Ireland, UK and Europe and has been recognised by NIEA and many others as a significant intervention for species conservation.

Partners: NIEA, RSPB, KRC Ecology, Mid Ulster District Council, Derrytresk Community Assoc.

Impact: Species protected with nine Curlew chicks saved and released, Wider local, national, and international community engaged in learning about the Curlew facilitated by extensive media reach.



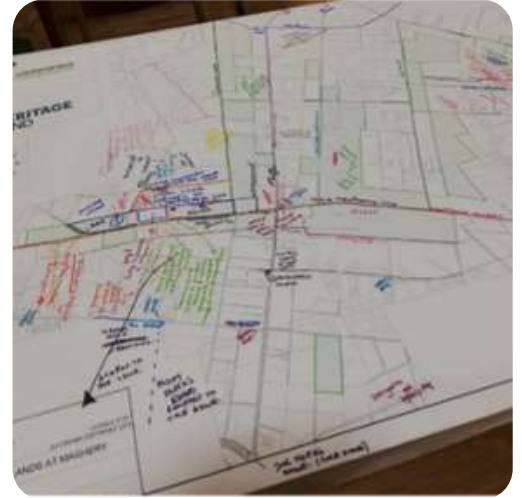
PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Exploring Community Connect with Heritage in the South-West of Lough Neagh

This project initiated a process of examining and understanding the multiple ways in which communities relate to their landscapes, particularly the local peatlands and their wildlife. People and place are connected individually and collectively through affect, memory, sensory experience, imagination and use, and these connections are established through bodies and minds, both tangibly and intangibly. People and place mutually shape one another in complex reciprocal relationships. As part of a wider engagement programme, we worked with local people to gain an insight on what they thought about the SW Peatland and how they used the areas of moss. Participants shared intimate memories and, using photographs, drawings of moss wildlife and old maps, they created a series of 'deep maps'. These represent the range of memories, associations with, feelings about and hope for the moss among people in Derryloughan and Derrytresk.

Partners: Derrytresk Community Assoc., Muintir na Mointeach, Quarto

Impact: Community engaged in learning about the cultural and natural significance of the peatland and its role in the historical development of their area; Memories, experiences and local knowledge recorded in deep maps; Data used to help develop a new peatland conservation and management plan.



PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Landscape Visioning - The Art of the Moss

The project utilised artistic impression to explore and represent the connection the local community had with the surrounding SW Peatlands. It captured and visually represented the ideas the community had on how to engage with the site and used these 'artistic' impressions to help shape future work. Working with school children and adults the project focused on 'learning how to paint the landscape..... using bits of the landscape'. The collaborative artwork provided a newfound appreciation of the moss facilitated by observation, thought and interaction with nature.

Partners: Primary School, Derrytresk Community Assoc.

Impact: Five workshops to represent community ideas and vision visually/artistically; new arts features developed; Landscape vision created.



Project: 'Curlew' Murals at Kingsisland PS and Holy Family PS

Rosalind Lowry worked with Kingsisland and Holy Family Primary schools' students and staff to create and paint a wildlife mural on the school buildings showing the iconic Curlew, Cuckoo, Meadow Pipits, Large heath butterfly and insect eating plants all found on the peatlands around Lough Neagh.

Partners: Kingsisland PS, Holy Family PS.

Impact: 57 Schools engaged. Children and adults more aware of peatlands and their importance for biodiversity



PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: My Place in the Landscape

'My Place in the Landscape' programme was designed to connect Key Stage 3 students with the cultural and physical landscape of their area using the written word and through visits to several nature reserves around the Lough. Students explored at first-hand the Nobel laureate's poetry in the very landscape around Lough Neagh and Lough Beg that inspired so much of his work, taking in Toner's Bog, Church Island, turf-cutting and farming. Students produced their own poetry and supporting portfolio, using their 'outdoor classroom' experience to develop an increased awareness of their own sense of place and to connect them with their natural heritage.



Partners: Seamus Heaney HomePlace, Mid Ulster District Council, Five Secondary Schools.

Impact: New generation more aware of local built, cultural, and natural heritage, new teaching resource created. 319 Secondary School Children, 5 Schools, Seamus Heaney HomePlace.

Project: Bird Ringing on Lough Neagh

We supported the BTO and the Causeway Coast Ringing Group with their four-year ringing study at Blacker's Rock on the migratory warblers that breed and pass through the site, with a particular interest in the two breeding *Acrocephalus* (acro) warblers in Northern Ireland – Reed warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) and Sedge warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*).

Partners: British Trust for Ornithology, Causeway Coast Ringing Group

Impact: New data collected that supports future site management plans.



PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Irish Bee Conservation Project

We worked with several beekeepers located around SW Lough Neagh who adhere to the philosophy of conserving our indigenous Irish honeybee (*Apis Mellifera*) and have formed the “Low Country Native Irish Honeybee Association”.

The Partnership supported the group through purchase of new starter hives, pollinator plants and a small shed to accommodate project delivery.

Partners: Low Country Native Irish Honeybee Association

Impact: New Bee conservation group established, Native Bee's protected and biodiversity maintained.



Project: Brookend habitat management for Waders

The Partnership in cooperation with NIEA undertook removal of scrub from the Brookend NNR to protect and enhance the conservation value of the wet grassland and fen habitats. This work was informed through the completion of new aerial photographic, NVC, Irish Ladies Tresses and invertebrate surveys. We now have a new conservation and grazing management plan in place that will maintain the site conservation objectives into the future. The Partnership are also in the process of acquiring the property as part of a wider legacy programme.

Partners: NIEA, RSPB.

Impact: New site management plan completed, 26 Ha of scrub removed, 400m riparian fencing, Site access improved, Improved habitat for breeding waders.



PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Rush Management Programme

Our strategic partners RSPB led on the delivery of a comprehensive rush management programme at Lough Beg, Portmore and Brookend.

In total, 600 Ha of rush pasture was controlled over a four-year period creating enhanced habitat for breeding waders and other wildlife.

Partners: RSPB, NIEA, Landowners

Impact: 600 Ha of rush pasture returned to favourable condition for breeding waders.



Project: Linen Landscape Workshop – Prints inspired by the flora and fauna of Lough Neagh

We delivered a series of workshops to give participants the opportunity to experiment with mono-printing techniques onto Irish Linen using natural materials. Participants created unique prints inspired by the flora of the local Lough Neagh landscape and experimented with colour, pattern and mark making.

Partners: Discovery Centre, Derrytresk Community Association, Muintir na Mointeach.

Impact: People developed new skills in printing, Participants became more aware of their surrounding landscape and its species diversity.



PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay

This project was linked to Lough Neagh Partnership's Strategic Shoreline Plan with the Landscape Partnership Scheme contributing to a series of programmed management interventions.

We assisted with the preparation of a SAC management plan, completed condition surveys, hydrological investigations and supported several litter lifts and invasive species eradication works.

Partners: NIEA, TCV, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

Impact: SAC management plan developed to bring two Wet woodlands back into favourable condition, 40 people engaged in volunteer activities, Habitat monitoring surveys completed.



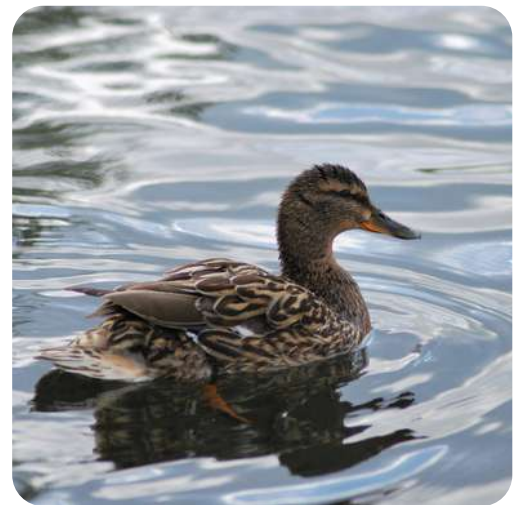
Project: Bird hide and Duck Conservation

The Partnership worked with members of Sandy Bay Conservation Group to address the declining number of Mallard and other resident duck species in the area.

The group are very proactive in improving wetland habitat and breeding conditions for duck and created twenty new nest boxes. To help facilitate the recording of bird numbers we assisted in providing a small hide on their site.

Partners: Sandy Bay Conservation Group

Impact: New bird-hide and conservation shed, 20 new duck breeding boxes.



PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Engaging with Lough Beg – Access for all

Working with Council we supported the development of a new pedestrian access boardwalk to Long Point on Lough Beg as part of a wider Seamus Heaney Trail Experience. This project involved the creation of a 930m pathway consisting of 410m boardwalk across the ASSI / Ramsar Site and 520m pathway through the ancient woodland of Long Point Wood, ending at a viewing platform overlooking Lough Beg and Church Island. The project also included the creation of a car park with disabled facilities to allow visitors to access the walkway safely. This walk now allows visitors to immerse themselves in the landscape, the birdlife of the area and the poetry of Seamus Heaney. The project allowed us to help engage less able bodied directly with nature.

Partners: Mid Ulster District Council

Impact: Heritage visitor attraction, New 930m DDA compliant trail, Car Park, Educational resource.



Project: Accessing wildlife at Sandy Bay and Lady's Bay

Working with two local groups, we supported the development of a 500m pedestrian access path to the Lough Neagh shoreline at Sandy Bay.

The path provides enhanced opportunities for the community and others to engage with the natural heritage found in and around the shore and contributes to addressing the issues surrounding the limited points on the Lough where people can get to the water.

Partners: Rathlane Care Farm, Sandy Bay Conservation Group

Impact: Heritage visitor attraction, New 500m trail, educational resource



PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Sensory Wildlife Garden

The Partnership worked with TIDAL to develop a new Sensory Wildlife Garden that would provide a range of sensory experiences including smell, texture, sound, touch, and visual aesthetics.

This new facility provides valuable resource for the community and is used for education, recreation and providing a stimulating experience for people with physical and mental illness. It will encompass the 'Take 5' ideas of being active, connecting, learning, taking note and giving.

Partners: TIDAL

Impact: New resource for engaging people, especially those with physical and mental illness, with the natural environment



Project: Monitoring Nature at Reedy Flat

We undertook a Breeding Wader Survey to provide up to date information on the status of breeding waders along the southern shoreline of Lough Neagh.

The survey provided up to date scientific data which was used to inform management of the foreshore habitat for breeding waders, the need for predator control in the area and contributed to the creation of a sustainable conservation strategy for the area.

Partners: RSPB, Landowners and Farmers

Impact: Data collected to inform future site management; Volunteers trained.



PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Tern habitat support

The Partnership contributed to improving breeding habitat for Common Terns on Lough Neagh. We replaced the existing protective fence around the Torpedo platform and installed a live streaming camera for monitoring and raising awareness purposes. We also installed a new tern raft at Ballyronan.

Partners: NIEA, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council.

Impact: New and refurbished breeding habitat for target conservation species.



Project: Monitoring the wildlife on the water

We supported purchase of two small boats to assist with bird monitoring and Island habitat conservation works.

This essential equipment allowed us to physically access the water and has made a significant contribution to improving breeding conditions for waders and resident black headed gulls.

Partners: NIEA

Impact: Increased conservation actions on Islands and along the shoreline. Protection of Common Tern Species



PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Osprey opportunities

Ospreys have been recorded at various locations on the Lough over the past 50 years however none have remained to breed.

Looking at potential opportunities for future rewilding, we completed an Osprey Reintroduction Feasibility Study for the Lough looking at habitat conditions, availability of food and diet requirements, nesting requirements and options for translocation.

Partners: NIEA, RSPB, Raptor Study Group, BTO

Impact: Developed opportunities and recommendations for future Osprey reintroduction.



Project: Manufacture and erection of Barn Owl Boxes

We installed twenty Barn Owl at targeted sites along the eastern shoreline of Lough Neagh to help address the decline in this NI Priority Species. The project has been very successful with several the boxes currently being used as breeding sites.

Partners: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Ulster Wildlife Trust, NI Raptor Group, Landowners.

Impact: Increase in barn owl species, established links with local landowners, land managers, agriculture, and business communities, increased public awareness on the Barn owl and its habitat requirement, volunteer base in place to continue monitoring.



PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Shoreline Clean-ups

Lough Neagh has historically suffered from an extensive litter problem along its shoreline. Working with the Rivers Trust, local Councils, and the community sector, we collected 200+ tonnes of litter across 48Km of the Lough shore. Working with our partners in the Rivers Trust and others, the project also developed a new website (www.litterlessloughneagh.com) to provide a platform to promote future litter pick events, celebrate those that have taken place and deliver a litter reduction campaign. The website hosts project information, news and events, downloadable documents, and a contact us page as well as acting as a platform for an interactive web mapping portal. The project also developed two short campaign films about litter and its impact on the water environment and about how to volunteer for litter picks.

Partners: The Rivers Trust, Ballinderry Rivers Trust, Mid Ulster District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Armagh City Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Schools, Community Groups, Sporting Groups.

Impact: Litter reduced, Public more aware and engaged in litter management, 32 events organised with 481 people volunteering, New dedicated website.



PROTECTING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Lough Neagh Shoreline & Islands Plan

The Lough Neagh Shoreline and Islands Team monitor numbers of breeding Amber listed Common Terns and Black Headed Gulls on 15 Island sites during the summer months. Funding from the DAERA EF Challenge Fund allowed the team to install a tern raft in Ballyronan Marina to create additional breeding habitat. This funding also allowed the team to provide a replacement barrier on the Torpedo Platform to increase chick survival rates and installation of a Live Stream Camera to engage public awareness and access to priority species and their behaviour.

The team have engaged with several Wildfowling Clubs to gain access to several island sites to carry out habitat management work. We have also engaged with other stakeholders to produce and implement the Reas Wood and Farris Bay SAC management plan.

Partners: NIEA, DAERA, BTO

Impact: Monitoring of amber listed gull and tern numbers on island sites, habitat management work to improve nesting conditions, management plan for two SAC sites.



PROTECTING THE BUILT HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

List of projects 2016-2021



PROTECTING THE BUILT HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Refurbishment of the Lock-keepers cottage and installation of heritage interpretation.

Working with Toome based development group TIDAL Ltd and Waterways Ireland, we upgraded the existing Quay and developed a new waterways heritage centre and café on the site of the former Lock Keeper's cottage at Toome Canal. The new centre houses a comprehensive interpretative display that covers the history of the canal and its importance as a gateway linking the north coast to the Lough as well as information on the community, natural environmental and wider cultural and industrial heritage of the site.

Partners: TIDAL, Waterways Ireland, Antrim, and Newtownabbey Borough Council

Impact: Built and cultural heritage asset conserved, new heritage interpretative facility created, new jobs created, Heritage tourism



Project: Community Archaeological Investigations

To develop a better understanding of Lough Neagh's historical setting, we worked with Queens University Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork to deliver six community led archaeological digs and geophysical surveys at Aghagallon, Antrim, Brocagh, Ardboe (2) and Ballyeglish. The events attracted large audiences and attendees were provided the opportunity to participate in much of the digging work.

Partners: DfC Historic Environment Division, Queens University Belfast Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Mid Ulster District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Armagh City Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council.

Impact: 1266 people engaged and participating in discovering hidden built heritage and history, Increased understanding of Lough Neagh's unique built and cultural heritage through new research, Compilation of a database of known archaeological artefacts and the dissemination of new research through a series of publications and workshops.



PROTECTING THE BUILT HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Preservation and conservation works to historic structures

Working with DfC Historic Environment Division we completed structural restoration works to the church at Church Island, manufactured brick from local clay for use in repairing Mountjoy Castle and digitally recorded Ardboe Cross and several historic gravestones to assist with developing a series of new conservation management plans. We also engaged young people in the manufacture of brick using local clay for use in the restoration projects.

Partners: DfC Historic Environment Division, Mid Ulster District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.

Impact: Three archaeological monuments repaired and consolidated, Structures digitally recorded to assist with future management, improved public access to sites, school children engaged in the conservation process.



Project: World War Two Aviation sites audit

LNLP commissioned a report to locate, record and report on the quantity, quality, and potential threats to the preservation of the defence heritage archaeology of the World War 2 airfields at RAF Toome and RAF Cluntoe. The findings helped support the delivery of a conference and a series of workshops on Lough Neagh and WW 2 but more importantly provided a framework for the designation of many of the structures under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects Order (1995) resulting in their long-term protection. The findings were presented a number of workshops.

Partners: DfC Historic Environment Division, Mid Ulster District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Ulster Aviation Society, Northern Ireland War Memorial.

Impact: Detailed site report and GIS, Data recorded on Sites and Monuments Defence Heritage Database.



PROTECTING THE BUILT HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Cranfield Site Conservation

Working with Creggan Local Heritage Group and QUB we carried out a detailed GPS survey of the graveyard. This included plotting the position of all the funerary markers, as well as masonry supports and the landscape topography. Each funerary marker was digitally photographed, and the inscription transcribed.

The condition of the monuments where also recorded. All this information was gathered to make the Story-Map. A public lecture discussed the results from geophysical and graveyard surveys, as well as the historical geography and archaeological landscape of the religious site and wider parish. We also completed a series of landscape restoration works around the Holy well and created a new sculpture piece that told the story of the Cranfield area.

Partners: Creggan Local Heritage Group, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council, Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Impact: Restoration and conservation works to St Olcan's Holy Well; Conservation management plan for grave markers; Installation of new sculpture piece; New digital story map online. Site geophysical survey; Two community workshops and community training sessions.



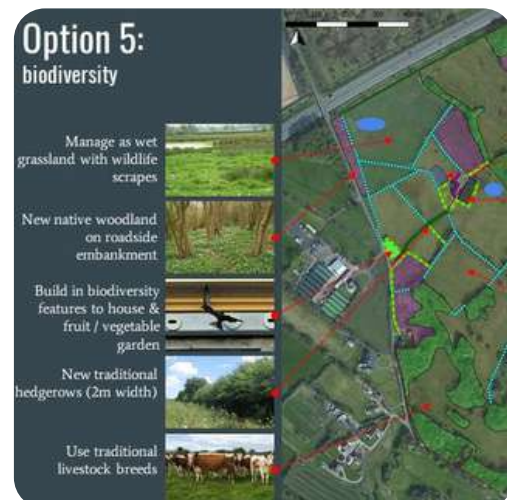
PROTECTING THE BUILT HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Options Appraisal and Listing for Silverwood Farm

The Partnership worked with ABC Council to develop an options appraisal on the potential for developing Silverwood Farm as a sustainable heritage focused legacy project. The farm comprises an earth walled, tin-roofed cottage which was previously thatched, and a two-storey farmhouse constructed from both field stones and handmade brick, thought to be from a local brick kiln. We were also successful in getting these listed in 2017 as Category B2 structures (HB Ref. No. HB14/03/015). Lough Neagh Partnership have been working with Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council who have agreed to take measures to preserve the building and bring it back into use. A full condition survey has been completed by Des Cairns Architecture (Conservation Architects) who has prepared a measured floor plan of the building, inspected the internal and external elements including the roof, walls, floors, windows, doors etc., drafted a written report on each element of the building, made recommendations for the repair and rectification of the building and included a cost estimate for recommended repairs. Council plan to implement these actions over the coming year.

Partners: Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council, DfC Historic Environment Division

Impact: Structures are listed, Site development options report provides a framework for future heritage development, The historic importance of earth walled buildings and the use of earth walls which are a sustainable resource have been recognised.



PROTECTING THE BUILT HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Coalisland & East Tyrone: Historic Manufacturing Base of Mid Ulster

This project highlights the industrial heritage of the Coalisland and East Tyrone area. The principal focus is the story of the manufacturing and extraction industries, such as brickworks, potteries, textile mills, glass factories, sand dredging and coal mining. In addition, the project features the canal, railway and road networks that enabled the development of these industries. The impact of man's activities across the centuries is also investigated by exploring the links between landscape and placenames.

Activities have included:

- Community archaeology with the Centre for Community Archaeology, Queen's University.
- Several original dramas written and performed by the Craic Theatre.
- Cultural events, with music and original drama.
- Website, books, videos, and podcasts exploring these themes:
- The story of manufacturing in East Tyrone.
- Field & place-name Interpretation.
- Placenames, Poetry, Songs and Stories.
- A community sculpture by Diane McCormick, a ceramic artist from Ardboe, Co. Tyrone.
- Re-development of the Coalisland Museum & Heritage Centre, including volunteer recruitment, exhibitions, costumed interpretation programme and guided tours.

Also offered to participants were:

- OCN Level 2 Tour Guiding qualification.
- Fine craft skills workshops in blacksmithing, ceramics and glass cutting.
- A bursary programme for people taking heritage craft training.

The project will conclude with the publication of "The Way Forward 2021-2024" which will identify ways to promote and enjoy our local heritage in the future.

Partners: Funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund with additional support from Mid Ulster District Council. Steering Group members also include Centre for Community Archaeology, Queen's University, Craic Theatre & Arts Centre, Coalisland & District Community Association, Western Building Systems, South Tyrone Empowerment Programme, Island Turf Craft, Diane McCormick Ceramics.

Impact: Increased input and support for the heritage sector in East Tyrone including venue development, volunteer programme, heritage skills training, educational resources, publications along with innovative and high value development of community resources in the arts and culture sector.



CELEBRATING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

List of projects 2016-2021



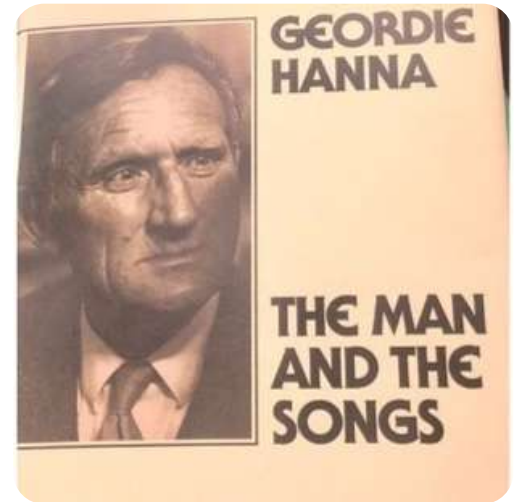
CELEBRATING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Geordie Hanna – The Man and the Songs

This project celebrates the Loughs traditional singing culture with the research and publication of a book featuring a collection of songs from Lough Neagh which tell the story of love, emigration, hunting, fishing, and humour from around its shores.

Partners: Geordie Hanna Traditional Singing Society

Impact: Increased participation and interest in traditional singing from a wide audience around the Lough, A new audience of younger people engaged.



Project: Schools Engagement with Heritage Apples

The Partnership worked with seven Primary Schools to raise awareness of the heritage of unique trees and fruits that grow in the South Lough Neagh Landscape. The project reconnected the children with their shared food heritage and long held traditions through a series of workshops, fieldtrips, creation of nurseries for apple trees within each school ground and cookery demonstrations.

Partners: South Lough Neagh Regeneration Association

Impact: Participants gained an understanding of regionally specific apples, sustainably growing food tree, planting, working within the seasons, an insight into food chains and food webs and traditional preserve and cooking skills.



CELEBRATING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

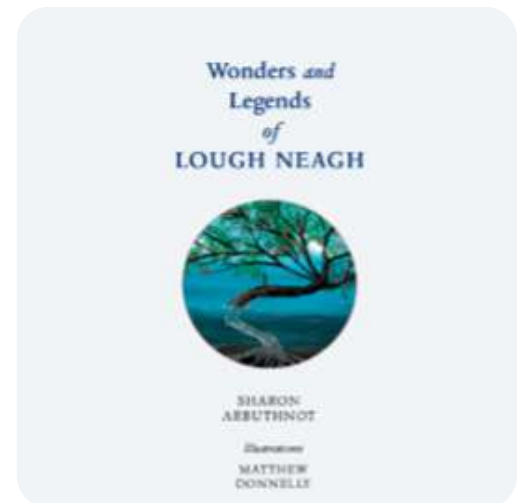
Project: Wonders and Legends of Lough Neagh

The Partnership published a new illustrated book exploring the ancient origin-myths of Lough Neagh and Liban the mermaid, as preserved in the 12th century Irish manuscript 'Lebor na hUidre - the Book of the Dun Cow' and other key Irish texts.

The result of extensive research by Dr Sharon Arbuthnot, and illustrated by Matthew Donnelly, the new book both preserves and promotes the unique and fascinating folklore of Lough Neagh.

Partners: Ulster Historical Foundation

Impact: Publication of a definitive guide to the cultural heritage surrounding the mythical origins of the Lough.



Project: Protector of the Lough Art Sculpture

The Partnership contributed to the creation and installation of unique piece of public art – the 6m high 'Protector of the Lough' – located at Antrim Lough Shore Park that functions as a navigational aid and promotes the folklore of Lough Neagh. The iconic structure acts as both a landmark in the Lough Neagh landscape and a brand for promoting local heritage-based tourism.

Partners: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

Impact: People are engaged with local mythology and wider cultural significance of the Lough through an iconic visual medium.



CELEBRATING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Gateway Centre Heritage Interpretation

We contributed to the development of new interactive heritage exhibition space at the recently completed Gateway Centre at Antrim Lough Shore Park and an Activity provider. The interpretative area within the building is designed to enhance the visitor experience to Lough Neagh, providing interpretation of the built, cultural, and natural heritage of the Lough including the myths and legends, biodiversity, and history.

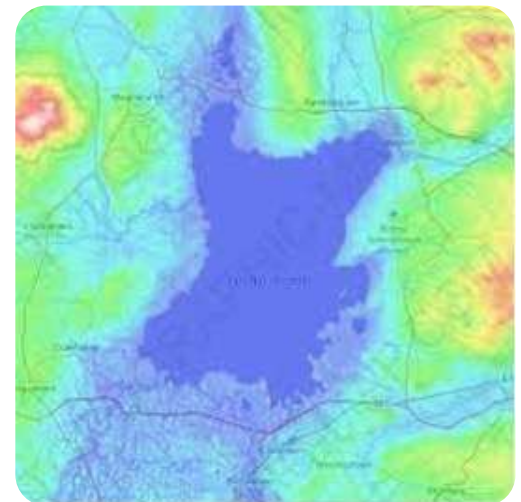
Partners: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

Impact: People relate to the Lough through a better understanding of the built, cultural, and natural heritage assets found around the Antrim shoreline.



Project: Digital Atlas and Book

This project provided a new interactive platform for the public to explore the rich heritage that is found around Lough Neagh as it is shaped by the people living there, the habitats surrounding it and how it is imagined in literature and mythology. The portal includes all the findings and achievements of the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership programme and provides a forum for adding new information, stories and projects post the completion of the NLHF scheme. Organised according to contemporary heritage priorities, the Digital Atlas of L. Neagh – Dynamic shores and communities invites users to explore the heritage of the region from Neolithic times through to the modern day while considering the future of this unique area. The site is accompanied by a printed book.



Partners: Academia, and Local Community

Impact: The provision of an open access resource will allow people to learn about the broad heritage assets that exist around Lough Neagh. The resource is a valuable tool for both recording the outcomes and outputs of the Landscape Partnership Programme and for letting people build on their knowledge of the region.

CELEBRATING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Tour Guide Training

We provided training to a sixteen people enabling them to contribute to the delivery of bespoke built, cultural, and natural heritage 1-day and 2-day tours of Lough Neagh.

The participants developed common standards approach to tour delivery and achieved an OCN Level 2 accredited qualification in tour guiding.

Partners: Mid Ulster District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council.

Impact: Sixteen Guides have been trained to deliver heritage focused tours that are bespoke to Lough Neagh.



Project: Lough Neagh Reminiscence Project

We developed and delivered a Reminiscence Programme as part of a cultural education theme aimed at collecting and recording stories and recollections about fishing, boats, industry, World War 2, and folklore & traditions from Lough Neagh. We completed library and archival research on these themes in relation to the lough and its diverse communities. We carried out extensive interviews and facilitated group reminiscence sessions, as well as offering training in heritage practice. Through this project, we met, talked with, and individually interviewed people on the themes of fishing, industry, and folklore.

Partners: Community Groups

Impact: The reminiscence process was a valuable tool in understanding the cultural and social relationships around the Lough and in doing so provided a resource that now contributes to a greater understanding of local heritage.



CELEBRATING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Visitor and Lough Neagh Fishermen Co-operative Visitor Interpretation Centre

In partnership with the Eel Cooperative in Toome we developed a new Lough Neagh Fisheries Visitor Centre that celebrates the history of fishing on the Lough, telling the stories of the fishermen and explaining the biology and natural history of the fish found there which have been awarded a range of accolades including PGI status for Lough Neagh Eel and PDO status for Lough Neagh Pollan. The highly immersive and interactive nature of the new centre facilitates bit use by both schools and visitors and is actively marketed as an educational resource throughout N. Ireland.

Partners: Lough Neagh Fishermen's Cooperative

Impact: People relate to the Lough through a better understanding of the cultural heritage associated with Eel and fishing industry.



Project: People & Places Schools Project

The programme aimed to explore the built and cultural heritage within the shared history of the Lough Neagh area, with a focus on the importance of the Lough throughout time. The sessions consisted of a two-hour workshop divided into two sections - an Education session and a Living History performance. A time period of the Victorians or Monks and Vikings was available, depending upon the school's choice. The Education workshops were created with the intent of engaging children of all ability levels and learning styles using different mediums; cartography, photographs, a visual timeline to be built; storytelling; teamwork; and the use of local knowledge. The Living History segment was to be an immersive experience allowing pupils to learn of local traditions and history, using drama and personal knowledge to create an idea of a shared heritage, and included a pupil participant group activity.

Partners: St Patrick's PS (Aghagallon), Stewartstown PS, St Joseph's PS (Antrim), St Patrick's PS (Annaghmore), Gilford PS, St Patrick's PS (Mullinahoe), St John's PS (Kingsisland), King's Park PS (Lurgan), St Peter's PS (Moortown), Anahorish PS, Holy Family PS (Aughamullan), Derrychrin PS, St Mary's PS (Stewartstown), St Joseph's PS (Antrim), Creggan PS, Holy Trinity PS (Cookstown), Killyman PS, Ballytrea PS.

Impact: 1134 children from seventeen schools have been introduced to many of the historical and cultural heritage facets associated with Lough Neagh. This early year's engagement has set the foundations for heritage learning and will significantly influence the level of participant interest in the future.



CELEBRATING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Heritage Conference Programme

We completed a series of bespoke conferences that aimed to showcase Lough Neagh's rich and varied built and cultural heritage assets and bring together professional and amateur practitioners from across Ireland and the UK. The conferences included: Song of the Bog Conference – Heritage: Past, Present and Future, Second World War Legacies around Lough Neagh, Rural Vernacular Conference and Lough Neagh Connections – history, heritage & society of the Loughshore.

Partners: Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Historic Environment Division, Queens University Belfast, Heritage Council, Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, Community Groups, History Groups, Local Business.

Impact: Five conferences delivered, 522 attendees, Research disseminated to the public, Three Conference Proceedings published, built heritage knowledge transferred to others



Project: Lough Neagh Stories

The 'Lough Neagh Stories' competition was open to school children from around the Lough and aimed to encourage primary school pupils to share family stories about life on Lough Neagh. We received more than 320 submissions which have been collated into a story board.

Partners: Local Schools and Local Community

Impact: 320 children from nine schools have recorded many of the historical and cultural heritage stories associated with family life on Lough Neagh.

This engagement has set the foundations for heritage learning and will significantly influence the level of participant interest in the future.



CELEBRATING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Ulster Scots Programme

We delivered a five-week workshop called 'Family, home and place' focusing on Ulster-Scots and researching family and local history at the new The Gateway Centre in Antrim. It was completely booked out and culminated with a very successful visit to the Public Records Office in the Titanic Quarter in Belfast.

Partners: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Ulster Scots Agency. Local Community.

Impact: 32 people have become more aware of the rich and varied heritage associated with Ulster Scots.



Project: Robert Cinnamond Project

We contributed to the research and launch of a new publication on the story of Robert Cinnamond, 'Tis Pretty to be in Ballinderry: Robert Cinnamond 1884-1968', a native of Glenavy who captured the heritage of the loughshore through stories and songs. The book on his life also included two CDs of his recordings produced by Roisin White a traditional singer who has devoted several years of her life to gathering his songs.

Partners: Roisin White, Local Community and Musicians

Impact: A definitive guide to the cultural heritage surrounding Robert Cinnamond, Increased participation, and interest in traditional singing from a wide audience around the Lough, A new audience of younger people engaged.



CELEBRATING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Shore of Traad Heritage Day

The Shores of Traad Heritage-day focused on bringing the Lough Shore communities together to experience and participate in a range of cultural heritage events including a traditional boat race as well as engaging though talks and displays from exhibitors on local fishermen, wildlife, and stories.

Partners: TABBDA

Impact: 320 people learning about and directly engaging with the fishing, boating and natural heritage associated with Lough Neagh.



Project: River to Lough Festival

As part of the wider cultural engagement with the public, we delivered the River to Lough Festival in partnership with TIDAL and the Lough Neagh Fishermen's Cooperative. Participants had the opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities. Lough Neagh Fishermen were at hand to show visitors the traditional methods of catching Lough Neagh Pollan and other fish. Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) scientists had an array of specimens, equipment, and samples on show to demonstrate how their technology and research help in the monitoring of freshwater fisheries. As part of the event, and a first for many visitors and locals, was the opportunity to take to the waterways on paddle boats, canoes, or a boat trip. Heritage demonstrations related to activities around the lough were on display all day at the Lock Keepers Cottage including boat building and greenwood carving.

Partners: TIDAL, Lough Neagh Fishermen's Cooperative

Impact: 2200 people learning about and directly engaging with the fishing, boating and natural heritage associated with Lough Neagh.



HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

List of projects 2016-2021



HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Project: Community Archaeology Toolkit

The QUB Centre for Community Archaeology and the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership launched a free online learning resource for people interested in learning more about how to research their local archaeological heritage. This 6-week course will run twice a year and participants will learn how to develop a community archaeology project anywhere in Northern Ireland. It examines the background to running a project and is packed full of tools, techniques, and information to help participants research their local heritage. Participants can learn about using historic maps, landscapes, health & safety, fieldwork techniques and the work of archaeologists.

Partners: Queens University Belfast Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork

Impact: 48 people are more aware of the built and cultural heritage found around Lough Neagh and have the tools to undertake locally focused research.



Project: Community Heritage Training Programme

As part of our wider community heritage engagement work, we developed and delivered a six-week programme that provided participants and community groups with new skills to read, understand and interpret the features, history and heritage that told the story of their home area. Sessions were delivered to 47 participants at locations including Toome, Derrytresk and Ballyronan.

Partners: Local Community

Impact: 62 people are more aware and have a better understanding of the built and cultural heritage found around Lough Neagh and have the skills to undertake locally focused research.



HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Project: Volunteer Training

The Partnership provided a broad scope of vocational, academic, and practical training that provided participants with new skills that can be used for the effective conservation and management of the wetland habitats surrounding Lough Neagh. Courses included first aid, Herbicide Pa1 and Pa6 training, GPS, and GIS, reedbed management, scything and grassland management, habitat and species monitoring along with many others.

Partners: Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, TCV, Ulster Wildlife Trust, Local Community Groups

Impact: 34 training different courses delivered that engaged and trained 296 participants. Participants are now better qualified and skilled to undertake conservation activities.



Project: Vocational Conservation Training – Conservation and Placement Programme

The Partnership established a new vocational based placement programme for both unemployed people and students that provided training across the practical and technical aspects of natural heritage conservation and management which enhanced the employability of those participating. Practical works included habitat management (scrub removal, invasive species control etc) as well as site surveys, monitoring and data collection. Participants were also trained in species ID including peatland plants, wildflower meadow species, beetles, dragonflies, woodland plants, breeding waders as well as the requirements needed to successfully deliver practical projects such as First aid, nature photography, Phase 1 habitat survey, invasive plant species, peatland and other habitat restoration techniques and GIS.

Partners: Armagh City Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, TCV, Ulster Wildlife Trust.

Impact: 33 people trained across a range of practical and technical techniques in natural heritage management and conservation



HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Project: Lough Neagh Youth Ranger Programme in schools

The Partnership, Duke of Edinburgh Awards and Ulster Wildlife teamed up to deliver a Silver Level Award to 30 participants through a series of Volunteer activities, Practice Expeditions, Qualifying Expeditions and Canoe/Cycle Training. The young people experienced and learnt about the wildlife around Lough Neagh and actively engaged in conservation activities that contributed to habitat management.

Partners: Armagh City Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council, Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Impact: 30 participants have developed new skills and contributed to natural heritage management through assisting with scrub removal, biological recording, boat handling, invasive species control and removal and communicating and interacting with visitors and groups.



Project: Lough Neagh Ambassadors Programme

The project targeted 14-17-year-olds bringing together youth work and natural heritage using the common theme of Lough Neagh and using the model of the John Muir Award to discover and explore the Lough, take action to improve it and share their experiences with others. Participants developed key skills through personal development sessions and outdoor activities and gained recognised qualifications to improve future employability.

Partners: Armagh City Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council, John Muir Award.

Impact: Young people's perceptions of natural heritage were challenged leading to changes in attitudes and behaviours, particularly with regards to personal impacts and lifestyle choices through trying new activities and conserving and protecting habitats.



HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Project: Traditional Boat Building

We worked with Lough Neagh Boat Builders and local community organisations to recreate four Lough Neagh Cots which are a style of boat that would have been commonly used for fishing on the Lough from before 1950. The project was delivered over a series of four twelve-week workshops and engaged 91 volunteers who developed new skills and knowledge on the art of traditional boat construction.

Partners: Lough Neagh Traditional Boat Builders, Community organisations.

Impact: 91 people trained in constructing and conserving traditional boat building skills, Maritime heritage on Lough Neagh preserved by enabling the local community and individuals to participate in building traditional boats.



Project: Upskilling for River Volunteers

The Rivers Trust worked with us to deliver an upskilling programme for existing volunteers and members of angling groups involved in the management of four of the main rivers in the Lough Neagh basin. Participants received training in First Aid and River Safety, Fisheries habitat assessment, Electrofishing (to assess fish stocks), Fisheries Management Planning, Biological Water quality assessment and Invasive plant identification and control planning.

Partners: Antrim and Newtownabbey Council, Ballinderry Rivers Trust, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Lough Neagh Fishermen's Cooperative Society, Maine Rivers Trust, Mid and East Antrim Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Rivers Agency, River Blackwater Catchment Trust, Six Mile Water Trust, The Rivers Trust.

Impact: 24 people qualified to undertake river assessments. Improved water quality in rivers and entering Lough Neagh, Improved fisheries management and river biodiversity for river resident fish and migratory fish to Lough Neagh, Increased involvement of local volunteers in managing their own natural heritage sites, Enhanced volunteer skills, Management plans will allow for future management.



HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Project: Discovering Ancient Skills

As part of our experimental archaeology programme, we delivered an annual weeklong 'Discovering Ancient Skills' programme at Oxford Island and Antrim Castle Gardens. With help from the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork (CAF) the participants received training in wickerwork & wattling, flint knapping, pottery making & decorating, rope making and basket weaving. The open days proved to be a tremendous success within excess of 4,200 people participating in a range of activities. Trainees from our Discovering Ancient Skills Training Programme all helped with engaging the public and were able to use their newly developed talents in flint knapping, rope making using nettles, pottery, and weaving. Maghery Boat Builders provided workshops on how to construct a log boat while Time Steps Living History told stories about Vikings to an eager audience.

Partners: DfC Historic Environment Division, Queens University Belfast Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Mid Ulster District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Armagh City Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council.

Impact: 4200 people developed a new understanding of Lough Neagh's built and cultural heritage by engaging in practical activities created to replicate those undertaken by historic peoples. Participants now have an increased understanding to past ways of life and have learnt about past skills through interactive experimental archaeology.



HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Project: Wildlife Recording

The Partnership engaged with multiple stakeholders and the public to deliver a series of wildlife recording events and provide training on species and habitat data monitoring. Participants developed skills in habitat assessments, bat, butterfly & moth, insect, tree, and plant monitoring and are now regularly submitting biological records from around Lough Neagh to CEDaR.

Partners: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Armagh City Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council, CEDaR, BCNI, UWT, RSPB, NIEA.

Impact: Raised awareness of biodiversity in the Lough Neagh wetlands with 88 people introduced to wildlife recording and 10 people trained in data collection. Biological records for the area are now regularly submitted to CEDaR.

Beneficiaries: Wildlife, Individuals, families, Local Communities

Heritage Outcomes: People have developed skills, People have volunteered time, People will have learnt about heritage, More and a wider range of people have engaged with heritage.



Project: Heritage Pottery Training

Working with local artisans, we developed and delivered a series of workshops focused on training participants to coil build pots similar in form to how Neolithic or Early Bronze Age peoples would have constructed their vessels. These workshops attracted a diverse range of participants and proved to be a valuable introduction to ceramics.

Partners: Community Organisations

Impact: 76 people were introduced to working with clay and learnt about historic pottery manufacturing techniques.



HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Project: Recording and Habitat Creation

The project worked with local Council's and Butterfly Conservation NI to record the presence of the Cryptic Wood White butterfly around Lough Neagh and to enhance habitat. We engaged volunteers to undertake habitat management work at Craigavon Lakes and other localities to create better conditions for this rare species.

Partners: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Armagh City Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council, CEDaR, Butterfly Conservation NI.

Impact: Raised awareness of the Cryptic Wood White with 30 people introduced to Butterfly recording and volunteers creating 3 Ha of CWW friendly habitat. Biological records for the CWW are now regularly submitted to CEDaR.



Project: Recording the Lough

We recorded the sounds of Lough Neagh using microphones and hydrophones to create a sound map that helped better present to the public the auditory heritage present around the Lough.

Partners: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Schools, Individuals.

Impact: 16 people have been trained to make recordings from around the Lough. Currently 36 recordings are available through <https://soundcloud.com> and the LNLN webpage.



HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Project: Hedge Planting and Management

The Partnership worked with several stakeholders to undertake hedgerow management works and establish a number of new species rich hedges that would improve land boundaries and promote better ecological connectivity. People were trained on best practice management techniques and engaged in awareness raising on the important topic of hedges and trees in general.

Partners: Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Community Groups, Farmers

Impact: 1.2 Km of new hedgerow have been planted with a further 1.1 km managed providing better ecological connectivity and improved biodiversity. 57 participants are now upskilled to undertake future hedge management.



Project: Conservation Training

Using the landscape features, habitats and species found around Oxford Island, we worked with Council and others to provide individuals with comprehensive conservation skills toolbox that could be used to make better decisions in environmental management. Training was provided to volunteers on habitat and wildlife recording as part of a process of on-the-job training in conservation management. Participants also developed associated skills including working safely, teamwork and learning for employment.

Partners: Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Community Groups

Impact: 36 training programmes delivered which engaged 294 people in learning how to record, monitor and map habitats and species. Participants are now able to collect environmental data and make informed decisions on how to best manage local environments.



HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Project: Protecting Glenavy heritage by enriching future generations

This programme of projects captured the rich heritage of Glenavy and surrounding areas adjacent to Lough Neagh through education of and engagement with young people. The programme involved delivering a series of heritage workshop ranging from collections of heritage-based images, exploring the historical landscape, poetry, heritage murals and traditional recipes publications.

Partners: Glenavy Heritage Partnership, Glenavy Development Partnership, Glenaidan Youth Project

Impact: 15 projects engaging 78 young people who have learnt about their local heritage through inter-generational engagement and heritage expression.



Project: Lough Neagh Arts Skills

This new project developed in response to the high demand from the public to engage with and learn about the wider scope of heritage arts linked with Lough Neagh. Projects including pottery skills, landscape painting, crocheting and heritage photography were delivered to local groups as part of the engagement during Covid approach the Partnership took when lockdown was first introduced.

Partners: Local Community Groups

Impact: 26 bespoke projects allowed 155 people to safely engage with our natural heritage

Beneficiaries: Individuals

Heritage Outcomes: People have developed skills, People will have learnt about heritage, More and a wider range of people have engaged with heritage.



CONNECTING LOUGH NEAGH NATURE AND WELLBEING

List of projects 2016-2021



CONNECTING LOUGH NEAGH NATURE AND WELLBEING

Project: Maghery Heritage Garden

In response to Covid, we worked with the community at Maghery to create a hub that offers people a place to engage with nature, meet others, reduce social isolation, and get active outdoors through gardening and manual works. As well as creating a new community space participants also learnt how to grow vegetables and indigenous fruits and how to preserve these different foods using traditional methods.

Partners: South Lough Neagh Regeneration Association

Impact: The garden offers people a place to enjoy the peace and solitude of nature, encouraging relaxation and increasing their sense of confidence and pride.

Beneficiaries: Individuals, Local community

Heritage Outcomes: People have developed skills, People have volunteered time, People will have learnt about heritage, More and a wider range of people have engaged with heritage.



Project: Engaging with heritage during lockdown

This project was developed in response to the Covid pandemic and allowed the Partnership to significantly engage with the public during lockdown restrictions. The project established a series of outdoor workshops and activities that allowed participants to engage with the natural environment in a safe and secure setting where they felt comfortable and stress free. Activities included nature walks, animal tracking, bee keeping, bird ringing, bat walks, bird and bat box making, wild food foraging and bush craft, pottery making and nature-based health and fitness programmes

Partners: Mid Ulster District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Council and Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Council, Public Health Agency, Community groups, SHSCT, NHSCT, BHSCT.

Impact: 42 bespoke projects allowed 412 people to safely engage with our natural heritage resulting in better mental health and wellbeing.

Beneficiaries: Individuals

Heritage Outcomes: People will have learnt about heritage, More and a wider range of people have engaged with heritage.



DEVELOPING ACCESS AND SIGNAGE ON LOUGH NEAGH

List of projects 2016-2021



DEVELOPING ACCESS AND SIGNAGE ON LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Castlebay Wetland Park

The project involved developing a new trail and wetland park within the wider Castlebay estate that would help enhance access to nature and provide opportunities for outdoor learning.

The 375m trail provides access directly to the Lough and is designed to accommodate users of all abilities.

Partners: Brocagh and District Regeneration Group, Mid Ulster District Council

Impact: New environmental education facility, Improved access to nature, Enhanced access for promoting better health and wellbeing.



Project: Gort Moss Trail Refurbishment

The Partnership undertook refurbishment works to the Gort Moss walk, a combined series of circular and linear walks of circa. 8Km in length along old moss roads and between hedgerows close to the village of Ardboe.

The route has a wide range of cultural and natural heritage assets and is a valuable local resource for telling the stories behind historically isolated communities from around the western shoreline of Lough Neagh. Working with Council and the local community, we put in place new stiles, directional signage and upgraded stream crossings.

Partners: Mid Ulster District Council, Muintirevlin Historical Society

Impact: Improved access to nature, Enhanced access for promoting better health and wellbeing.



DEVELOPING ACCESS AND SIGNAGE ON LOUGH NEAGH

Project: Access provision and viewing platform

Working with Muintir na Mointeach we have completed a new viewing platform and access and biodiversity trail at Washing Bay. This is an add on to the original project proposal and has been developed through additional funding secured from Sport NI, DAERA and Mid Ulster Council. The new trail provides a safe off-road and fully LED lit pathway with directional and distance signage and is used to promote the wetland heritage of the Lough to both locals and visitors. The route has been finished to a standard that facilitates all user groups including those with disabilities, parents, and children. We also undertook a series of litter and scrub management programmes on the site provided training to volunteers on habitat management.



Partners: Mid Ulster District Council, Muintir na Mointeach, Sports Council.

Impact: Wildlife, Improved access to nature, Enhanced access for promoting better health and wellbeing, thirteen people trained to manage the natural heritage assets on the site.

Project: Interpretative and Directional Signage

The project involved installation of new interpretative and directional signage. A total of 26 new lectern signs and 14 refurbished information boards have been erected at various built and natural heritage sites around the Lough.

Partners: Mid Ulster District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Armagh City Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council.

Impact: Visitors to sites around Lough Neagh now have a better understanding and increased awareness of local heritage. Sites are easier to find and access encouraging more people to visit.

Beneficiaries: Individuals, Local communities, Visitors, Tourists

Heritage Outcomes: People will have learnt about heritage, More and a wider range of people have engaged with heritage.



WORKING WITH SHORELINE FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS

List of projects 2016-2021



4 Big Structural Needs

- 1) Need a Lead Department for the Lough (DFI)
- 2) Need for interdepartmental structure, plan and investment
- 3) Need for short or long term Navigation Authority
- 4) Need for significant private sector investment for management of Lough

WORKING WITH SHORELINE FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS

Project: Lough Neagh Group Farm Scheme (Group One)

The delivery of two major Environmental Group Farming Scheme (EFS) has made a substantial contribution to bringing the Lough Neagh wetland habitats back into favourable condition. Funding secured from DAERA encouraged two groups of farmers to come together and liaise with one central coordinator who helped them draw up environmental farm plans, providing group training, and arranging best practice visits. Through the schemes many Lough Neagh farmers are now carrying out environmentally friendly farming practices on their land.

Partners: DAERA, Landowners

Impact: 141 farmers engaged in wetland habitat management, 664 ha Wet grassland and fen managed for conservation, 105 ha Wet woodland under management, 167km of riparian fencing completed.

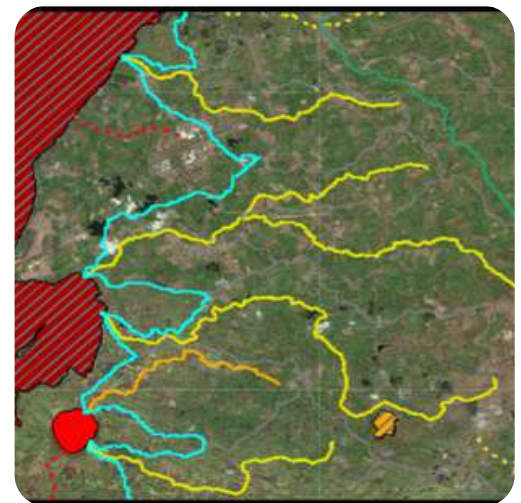


Project: East Rivers Group Farm Scheme (Group Two)

This environmental group farm scheme is the second major scheme coordinated by the Lough Neagh Partnership. The scheme covers 6 small rivers on the eastern shore of Lough Neagh. Rivers included in the scheme are the Dunore River, the Dundesert River, the Crumlin River, the Glenavy River, the Ballinderry River, and the Crew Burn. The aim of this proposal is more focussed on improving the quality of the water entering the rivers and the Lough by working with key landowners and tenants who farm within these small catchments flowing into the eastern side of the Lough.

Partners: DAERA, Landowners, NIEA Water Catchment Unit

Impact: 24 farmers engaged in river catchment habitat management, 3 ha wet woodland under management, 24km of riparian fencing completed and 23 moil cattle involved in scheme.



WORKING WITH SHORELINE FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS

Project: Irish Moil Cattle Scheme

The Irish Moiled is the rarest of the indigenous Irish cattle breeds and the only surviving domestic livestock native to Northern Ireland. The breed was dominant in Ulster over many centuries and highly sought after as a dual-purpose breed and for their ability to thrive on hill land and wetter areas where their larger stomach and moderate size (600-800kg) allows them to make use of more fibrous forage and scrub. The purpose of this project is therefore to try and preserve the breed of cattle but also to develop a supply chain for the quality meat the cattle produces and to encourage farmers to use the more environmentally breed of cattle on their wetter rougher land

Partners: Farmers, Butchers, DAERA, Landowners, Local Community.

Impact: It is still early days in developing the project, but 55 cattle are now in the scheme and a new meat food chain is beginning to be developed and promo.



Project: WaterPro

Lough Neagh Partnership was a partner in the WaterPro project along with eight other organisations across the northern peripheries.

Water Pro is part of the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme which attempts to help peripheral and remote communities on the northern margins of Europe to develop their economic, social, and environmental potential. WaterPro was a transnational cooperation project which found new ways to address shared environmental challenges of pollution and nutrient runoff from agriculture and explore new ways to address these problems.

The goal of WaterPro was to help protect the water quality of the NPA region's coastal and freshwaters, protect human health and ecosystems and stimulate sustainable economic growth and development in the Northern Periphery Area.

Partners: Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Finland, Geological Survey of Finland, Agricultural University of Iceland, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden, Lough Neagh Partnership, Northern Ireland UK, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, Northern Ireland UK, Heriot Watt University, Scotland UK, Donegal County Council, Republic of Ireland, Búnaðarstovan, The Faroe Islands

Impact: Through collaboration, the WaterPro Project was able to research environmental protection and reduce the impact of runoff from agriculture. A toolbox of good management practices was developed.



HELPING DEVELOP TOURISM BUSINESSES

List of projects 2016-2021



HELPING DEVELOP TOURISM BUSINESSES

Project: Lough Neagh Artisans Group

Lough Neagh Artisans Group was formed in 2019 and operates as a collective. The group collaborates and inspires people from around the world with their foods, crafts, and experiences.

The group believes that there is a strong need for collaboration among Lough Neagh businesses which complement each other and the necessity to make excellent artisan products and services, including hospitality and experiential initiatives which are unique to this part of the world. Some of the initiatives the artisans have collaborated on include a recipe book showcasing the local produce, hampers featuring our local produce and attendance at consumer shows under the Lough Neagh Artisan Brand.

Partners: Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Antrim, and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council, and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

Impact: The Lough Neagh Artisans have established a brand and through the cluster can benefit from increased exposure and more cost-effective marketing, resulting in increased profitability.



HELPING DEVELOP TOURISM BUSINESSES

Project: Lough Neagh Tours

The Partnership invested in the development of Lough Neagh Heritage Tours (www.loughneaghtours.com), a new tourism product which offered a range of themed based tours trialled with both the private and group market. The twelve new tour itineraries focused upon traditional foods, built heritage, music, poetry, and wildlife with all developed in consultation with local heritage organisations and private sector tourism businesses. The stakeholders recognise the tours as being an asset in promoting Lough Neagh's heritage to local communities, educational groups, and visitors.

Lough Neagh Tours provide visitors the unique opportunity to engage with the locals and discover what life is really like in rural Ireland. Our tour portfolio includes incredible traditional thatched cottages, meet the makers such as fishermen and farmers and artisan food producers. Our tours give visitors the chance to roll up their sleeves and learn skills such as traditional Irish bread making, dance or crafts or get out on the water with a Lough Neagh Fisherman and sample his catch of the day. We have designed various itineraries and offer bespoke tours which can be tailored to the interests of any group.

Partners: Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Antrim, and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council, and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

Impact: Twelve new heritage tours developed that attracted 773 visitors to Lough Neagh, the tours have helped people better understand the heritage around Lough Neagh in a user-friendly and inclusive way that improves their experience of and engagement with the natural, cultural, built, and industrial heritage.



MAIN FUNDING BODIES



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council



Armagh City
Banbridge
& Craigavon
Borough Council



Northern Periphery and
Arctic Programme
2014-2020



EUROPEAN UNION
Investing in your future
European Regional Development Fund



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working,
active landscape valued by everyone



Northern Ireland
Environment
Agency
www.caera-ni.gov.uk

THANKYOU TO ALL OUR FUNDERS

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Staff who have worked with the Lough
Neagh Partnership over the last 5 years

NEEDS OF LOUGH NEAGH

In March 2020 the Lough Neagh Partnership held a major Conference at Oxford Island Craigavon to identify the needs and potential solutions to the management and protection Lough Neagh. Detailed below is a summary of the agreed needs and potential solutions identified in the Conference. These needs will form the basis of future programme development on the Lough

What are the needs of Lough Neagh?

- No navigation authority
- No Lead Department and government policy or plan for the Lough
- No interdepartmental structure or leadership
- Loss of important built, cultural, and natural heritage assets
- No significant government core or capital investment
- Resources generally extracted from Lough
- No long-term sustainable resources and investment
- Underutilised as an Experiential Tourism Destination

How to address needs:

- Need for a new inter-departmental and council management structure for Lough Neagh with investment
- Lough Neagh Partnership to agree with DFI a basic navigation protocol to oversee safety and dredging on the Lough
- One single government department to take leadership responsibility for a new structure working closely with Councils and other Departments
- Greater private sector investment in protecting the Lough
- Long term sustainable policies identified such as Waterways Ireland as a Navigation Authority and local or public ownership of the Lough's bed and Soil
- Councils continue to provide quality infrastructural Tourism hubs and private sector provide quality tours and experiences

FUTURE STRATEGY

The last 5 years have seen significant achievements on the ground but there is still lots of work to do. In the future, the Partnership intends to build on the work with Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to improve the protection of the Lough and involve more farmers in its management. It also wishes to develop a new management structure with DFI, DAERA and local councils. The Lough Neagh Partnership will try to create a short to medium term navigation and sustainable dredging system, again working alongside DFI and local councils. In the long term, it wishes to examine the options for Waterways Ireland becoming a navigation authority and the purchase of the bed and soil of the Lough, from Shaftesbury Estates, together with developing opportunities for sustainable financing through providing environmental management, climate change and carbon trading services.