



Green Party members at the launch of their Save Lady's Island Lake on Thursday evening. Photo: Jim Campbell

Green Party leads group vowing protests over 'ecological disaster'

PÁDRAIG BYRNE

Seemingly unmoved by Taoiseach Micheál Martin's assurances that he will "personally intervene" to reverse an unfolding "ecological disaster" at Lady's Island, the Green Party led a small but determined group to the side of the lake to protest and ensure it

remains firmly on the agenda of the powers that be.

Pollution, mostly caused by agricultural practices in the area, has meant that the unique ecosystem at the largest lagoon of its type in Ireland is seriously under threat. It's a problem that has been deteriorating for some 40 years, however, experts say

that the unique ecosystem at Lady's Island is now on the verge of complete collapse.

Wexford County Council is set to head up a new multi-agency response to the crisis, which will also involve National Parks and Wildlife and the Environmental Protection Agency, but the process is likely to cost millions and

take years to see the damage fully undone.

Green Party representatives were joined by those from Wexford Environmental Network, Coastwatch, South Wexford Coast Promotions, the ICA and the Rotary Club to discuss the issue.

"The lake is a unique Special Area of Conservation and Special

Protection Area, but it's not being protected," local Green Party rep Peadar McDonald said.

"It's one of the most nutrient polluted lakes in the country, mainly due to about 60 tonnes of nitrogen entering the lake annually, as indicated in a recent EPA report. 1,505 tonnes of nitrogen and 127 tonnes of phosphorus are estimated to be retained at in the bed of the lake and as a result, we've seen severe damage to native plants and fish.

"The problem has been well-known for decades now, yet there has been a lack of effective action by the relevant authorities to tackle the problem."

Taking in the beauty of Lady's Island, the group discussed ways to increase public awareness of its rapid decline and how to ensure that remedial action is urgently initiated by Wexford County Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

They warned that "direct action will be considered, such as contacting public representatives and protests at high profile public events"

A further meeting is planned for Thursday, July 3, at Lady's Island to make plans for the next stage of the campaign and they hope to see more an attendance from the local community.