

‘Serious funding’ to be allocated by government to save Lady’s Island lake

The Wexford lagoon has been described as ‘most polluted’ in Ireland

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Wexford County Council (WCC) is expecting some “serious funding” to be allocated towards the restoration of Our Lady’s Island Lake after local officials confirmed the project had the full support of the Taoiseach. Earlier this year a report by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that the lake was “one of the most polluted lagoons” in Ireland and had undergone a “significant ecological deterioration” in the past 40 years due to “agricultural nitrate pollution”.

The report also revealed that around 60 tonnes of nitrogen enter the lake annually and that high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus have been deposited on the bed of the lake since the 1980s.



Caption with balance lines to help work across two lines Caption with balance to help things work across two line elegantly

Accepting that returning the lake to its former state will take some time, director of services with WCC, Eamonn Hore, said he had been liaising with those in the highest office to secure funding for what will be an extensive project.

“We’ve had our fourth meeting

with the steering group which includes the Minister (for Nature, Heritage and Biodiversity) Chris O’Sullivan, and we believe he will be making an announcement of some serious funding for the lake in the coming weeks,” said Mr Hore. “We’ve asked Uisce Éireann for additional informa-

tion on the treatment plant and have met at least 20 of the farmers down there and in fairness they are on side.

“There is a concerted effort by everyone involved to work together on this, we have the full backing of the most senior people in the department including

the taoiseach and I have no doubt we will see improvements there. It will take a long time to get the lake back to its former state but we should start seeing improvements by the end of the year.”

Mr Hore was speaking at the October meeting of WCC, a meeting which saw the members of the Save Our Lady’s Island Lake group gather outside to petition councillors and officials making their way into County Hall. Green Party member Peadar McDonald is the chairperson of the group and he said their campaign to save the lake had garnered support from the world over.

“We have a small group of people but we’re here to present a petition signed by over 1,100 people from around the country – even some from abroad,” he said as he outlined the group’s goals. “In particular, we want to see more water testing and follow up action. If there’s pollution being caused, we want to see the enforcement action under the Water Pollution Acts.”

“It’s not enough to just make agreements with people or make plans and speeches – we need to see more feet on the ground and a visible presence there.”

As a regular visitor to the lake, Mr McDonald said it was unfortunate that many people are unaware of the pollution.

“Because the lake looks fine from the surface, people don’t realise that there is up to 60 tonnes of fertiliser a year going into the lake. If that was 60 tonnes of oil, you can imagine the rumpus there would be.

“It’s unfortunate, because it looks well, people don’t realise how bad it actually is – most of the plants and grass have gone out of it. It’s a lot worse than it actually looks.”

Campaign spokesperson Ciara Murphy said: “Today marks an important milestone for our campaign. The hand-over of our paper petition, combined with the launch of our online petition, demonstrates the widespread public support for urgent action to save Lady’s Island Lake. We were encouraged by the productive conversations with several councillors today, and we remain committed to working with all levels of government to reverse this ecological catastrophe.”

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