

# CARNSORE POINT BIODIVERSITY & HERITAGE PARK

## MONTHLY COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



Dear Community,

The November Carnsore Community Meeting was a successful key milestone in shaping the Biodiversity & Heritage Park at Carnsore Point. This newsletter shares insights into our last meeting's highlights, key messages from speakers, and next steps, including upcoming co-design sessions and the formation of a Community Leadership Group. A big thank you to all attendees and speakers for their valuable contributions and interesting discussion. Thanks also to our hosts at Lady's Island Community Centre, especially the catering team for keeping us well-fed.

Our project represents a collaborative effort to address these issues at local level through conservation, education, and community-informed design. Together, we're creating a Biodiversity & Heritage Park that celebrates Carnsore Point's natural and cultural legacy. This initiative aims to respond to the challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change while celebrating the region's rich cultural heritage and promoting sustainable energy innovation.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2022) highlights: *"Climate change and biodiversity loss are deeply interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The degradation of ecosystems exacerbates climate change, while climate impacts accelerate the decline of biodiversity, threatening the resilience of both natural and human systems."*

The Biodiversity & Heritage Park aims to:

- Enhance local biodiversity and raise conservation awareness through educational outreach.
- Preserve cultural heritage, including place names, dialects, and historical landmarks.
- Create an inclusive, interactive public trail that highlights biodiversity, cultural heritage, and renewable energy and its role in combating climate change.

The Biodiversity & Heritage Park project combines community co-design, ecological stewardship, and educational outreach to create a living legacy for Carnsore Point. This collaboration incorporates local community insights and ecological knowledge to create a space that reflects our shared values and vision.

We are grateful for your continued involvement in this transformative project and look forward to working together in 2025 to create a lasting legacy for Carnsore Point.

Warm regards,

Siobhán and the Carnsore Point Biodiversity & Heritage Park Team.



## KEY DISCUSSION OUTCOMES

The small group discussions at the November meeting produced valuable insights into the community's vision for the Biodiversity & Heritage Park. Below are the key themes and outcomes from each discussion question:

### What We Have

The community identified several strengths and assets unique to Carnsore Point:

- **Natural Assets:** The area's designation as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Marine Protected Area (MPA) underscore its ecological significance. Participants highlighted local species such as seabirds, intertidal habitats, and the unique granite geological formations that shape the landscape.
- **Cultural Richness:** The region's Yola dialect, historical place names, and spiritual traditions were noted as key elements of its cultural identity.
- **A Sense of Place:** Many participants spoke about the site's tranquillity and its deep connection to local history, describing it as a space that evokes reflection and fosters community ties.

### What We've Lost

Attendees shared concerns about the losses Carnsore has experienced over time:

- **Declining Biodiversity:** Many noted a reduction in native flora and fauna, including seabird populations and pollinators, due to habitat degradation and climate pressures.
- **Traditional Knowledge and Skills:** Practices such as sustainable fishing and intergenerational storytelling about local heritage were identified as cultural losses.
- **Community Access:** Some participants expressed concern over limiting access to the coastline, making it harder for residents to engage with and protect their local environment.
- **Cultural Erosion:** The anglicisation of historical place names and the diminished use of local dialects like Yola were seen as significant threats to Carnsore's cultural heritage.



## Community Leadership

### Call to Action:

We would like to establish a Community Leadership Group with the aim of ensuring the long-term success of this initiative, **we invite you to join the Independent Community Leadership Group.**

### Purpose of the Group:

1. Act as a liaison between the community and project leaders to ensure clear governance and transparent communication.
2. Support funding applications and promote growth opportunities for the community.
3. Support adaptive management to respond to evolving needs and priorities of the community.

This group will serve as a vital step in ensuring the community's voice remains central to the project's development.

Express your interest at the co-design sessions or contact us directly.



## KEY DISCUSSION OUTCOMES

### What We Want

The community’s vision for the Biodiversity & Heritage Park centred around inclusivity, education, and sustainability:

- **Educational Features:** Adaptive signage that tells the story of Carnsore’s biodiversity and cultural heritage was strongly supported. Participants suggested using QR codes to link to additional resources and incorporating visual and audio storytelling to engage visitors of all ages.
- **Wildlife Observation:** Specific features such as bird-watching hides, pollinator-friendly zones, and spaces for observing marine life were suggested.
- **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** The park design should prioritise pathways suitable for all users, including those with mobility challenges, and feature spaces for quiet reflection.
- **Sustainability:** Participants expressed interest in showcasing Carnsore’s renewable energy infrastructure as a model of sustainable development, linking it with biodiversity conservation.

### How to Achieve It

The discussions produced actionable ideas for achieving the community’s vision:

- **Community Co-Design:** Workshops and consultation sessions were seen as important for ensuring local knowledge is integrated into the project. Collaborative efforts between community members, project leaders, and experts were widely supported.
- **Governance and Communication:** Clear governance structures and regular updates were identified as critical for transparency. Establishing a community-led leadership group was viewed as a vital step in maintaining momentum and accountability.
- **Annual Events and Programmes:** Participants suggested hosting workshops, clean-up days, and cultural events to foster ongoing engagement with the park.
- **Innovation and Engagement:** Creative approaches like art installations, interactive displays, and digital tools were recommended to keep the project dynamic and accessible.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

We are excited to begin co-designing the narrative for the **Biodiversity & Heritage Park’s educational signage**, focusing on two key themes:

- **Biodiversity Enrichment:** Highlighting local species, ecosystems, and the importance of environmental conservation.
- **Cultural Heritage:** Sharing stories of place names, Native Irish, language, Yola dialect, and the historical significance of Carnsore Point.

These narratives will be developed through a **hybrid co-design and consultation process**, combining community input with expert guidance.

Your participation will help create compelling, accurate, and engaging signage that reflects local knowledge and values.

### Co-design Session Details:

#### Online Session:

Wednesday, 8 January, 12:00 PM – 2PM

#### In-Person Workshop:

Friday, 24 January, 09:00 AM – 2PM

Both sessions will provide opportunities for meaningful collaboration, ensuring the signs capture the spirit of Carnsore.

Ahead of the sessions, think about what aspects of Carnsore’s biodiversity and cultural heritage you feel are essential to showcase. Your insights will help create signage that truly reflects the community’s values and identity.

Your voice is vital to bringing these narratives to life!

RSVP via email to [smclough9@tcd.ie](mailto:smclough9@tcd.ie)

# Community Hour Speaker Contributions



Jim Hurley  
(South Wexford Coast Promotions)  
'Carnsore Point and MPAs'

Jim highlighted Carnsore Point's ecological importance as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). He emphasised the trail's potential to educate visitors about the coastal area's rich biodiversity and its role in marine conservation.



Mick Berry  
(Coast Watch)  
'Local Coastal Ecology & Community Action'

Mick shared the importance of local knowledge and grassroots action in environmental protection. He stressed that engaging the community in data collection and stewardship activities fosters a sense of pride and responsibility for the landscape.



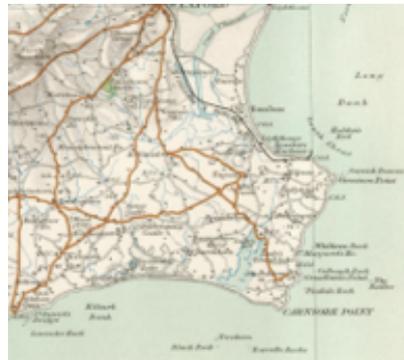
Anne Marie Kirwan  
(Tomhaggard Clean Coasts Group)  
'Local Community in Action'

Anne Marie discussed the group's significant contributions to coastal clean-ups, including removing large amounts of coastal debris this year- 10 tonnes!. She highlighted the need for improved access to support continued conservation efforts.



Dr Robert Sinnott  
'Native Modern Irish of Our Lady's Island Parish'

Robbie underscored the value of preserving local place names and dialects as a way of maintaining cultural identity. He emphasised that this linguistic heritage is a critical part of understanding and celebrating the area's history.



Sascha Santschi-Cooney & James Maloney  
'Yola Dialect & Local Heritage'

Sascha explained the historical and cultural importance of place names. He shared how they provide unique insights into the social and ecological history of Carnsore Point, highlighting the stories of those who shaped and inhabited the land.

Join us next time:

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Learn more about Nature + Energy