

**BIOREGIONAL
WEAVING
LAB WATERFORD**

CATCH-UP OPEN DIALOGUE EVENTS

7th and 12th Feb 2023
Online and GROW HQ



Catch-up and open dialogue events, online and in person

Catch-up events allow all stakeholders to have open discussions outside of the more structured workshops we hold at other times. 14 people participated.

Flexible agenda

- Say hello in 2023
- Reflections on the Dunhill event 16th Dec
- General thoughts around our manifesto and mission
- Funding – including small BWL grants

BWL status as 2023 starts

- We have transitioned from an exploratory phase in 2022 of sensing if a BWL could be of use and interest in the Waterford bioregion, to a more solid phase where **BWL Waterford is a three year initiative that is now underway.**
- Funding is in place for a 60% weaver position and minor projects out 2023. Major and minor fundraising activities for both stakeholder participating projects and BWL weaving is an ongoing process.



RECAP OF WEAVING WATERFORD

An inspiration and weaving event to support everyone who wants to build the future we aspire to

Held on 16th December 2022
At DUNHILL EcoPark

See full report, with links to talk recordings and more [here](#)



“We want future food to come from a place where community is core. Our aims are both idealistic and practical. We want to create new habits, and new ways of working. We want viable ways of living. We want to protect our rivers, restore nature, cherish life. We want a world where everything is connected, from rocks to the human heart”.

From the Waterford Bioregion Food Manifesto, co-written autumn 2022

Reflections on the Dunhill event - general

General comments reflecting back on the event

- Very inspirational
- Good turn out of varied stakeholders
- Concrete holistic projects arising
- Valuable – practical ideas emerging from this
- Good resource in report – recordings, summaries and ideas for concrete future projects

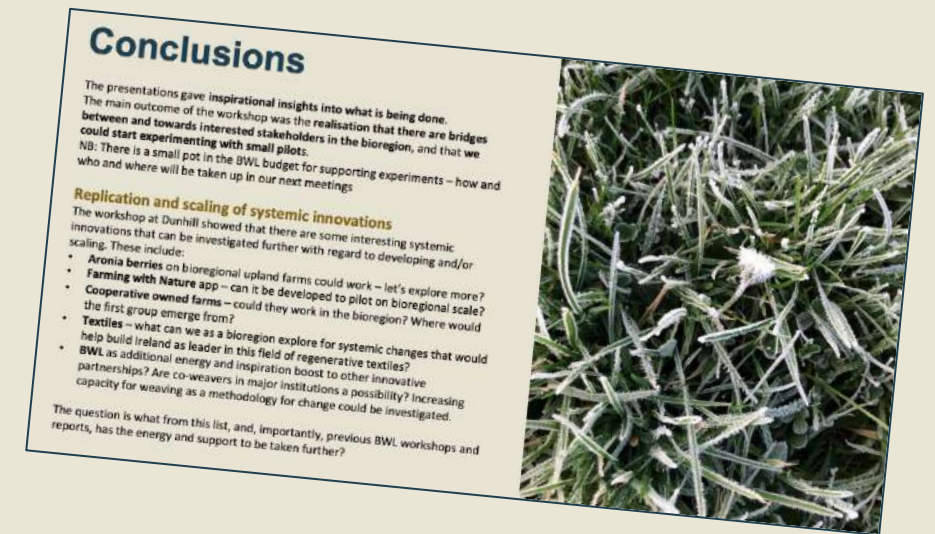
Recap of conclusions from report which can be read [here](#):

Interesting systemic innovations for further investigation:

- **Aronia berries** on bioregional upland farms?
- **Farming with Nature** app – can it be developed to pilot on bioregional scale?
- **Cooperative owned farms** – could they work in the bioregion? Where would the first group emerge from?
- **Textiles** – what can we as a bioregion explore for systemic changes that would help build Ireland as leader in this field of regenerative textiles?
- **Weaving** and BWL approach in general as additional energy and inspiration boost to other innovative partnerships? Are **co-weavers** in major institutions a possibility?

To remember:

We have had several workshops in 2022 that unveiled other emerging pathways, ideas and systemic changes. These should be combined with the concrete ideas that emerged at the Dunhill event.



Reflections on the Dunhill event - speakers

See original report for summaries and recordings [here](#)

- **Grace O’Sullivan** - Have us a real sense of believing transformation is actually possible. Appreciated the endorsement for weaving. We could include these concrete examples of policy change in the proposed Ambassadors Toolkit?
- **Luis Camargo** – we could introduce weaving to PPN (Public Participation Networks) who sit on SPCs (strategic policy committees) in council work - important in bioregion. For example the environment and business SPCs. Get in touch with Muriel Tobin now John Hawkes has retired. There are 600+ groups attached to PPN – excellent way of circulating BWL activities and mobilising changemakers.
- **Steve Collins**: Brilliant example of livelihoods and biodiversity in harmony. Since the event we have connected interested parties and arranged a visit from the bioregion to Aronia Berries farm in West Cork. Apparently a good view across to other mountain sides with sheep. It maybe didn’t come out from the talk how well qualified he is to talk about health benefits in wide context – experience from famine of Ethiopia and the effects of extreme soil erosion on people’s health.
- **Helen Kavanagh** – we must all acknowledge the challenges of running such a centre in a rural setting – very dependent on volunteering. We need a system change to bring about new funding models not relating to financial returns alone. Interesting to see how this would link to holistic 4 Returns model of BWL.
- **Donal Sheehan** – Farming with Nature: very innovative and relevant. Would be great to see tested in the bioregion. And EIP is a good idea.
- **Mike Walsh** – interesting to hear the science and the spectrum of opinions around environmental challenges and in particular if dairy is good/bad for increasing emissions. Would be good to hear this as an exchange of views in a debate (perhaps see biofarm link in report).
- **Kit Keawwantha, Fibreshed** – very interesting, and especially in light of [Wool Feasibility Study](#) from July last year. and things Minister Noonan has been trying to do. Perhaps contact Minister Noonan about BWL again, in this and other contexts.
- **Geert van der Veer** – super interesting, and inspired people in the room to think it was perfectly possible to try this model of co-owned farms. Question if there are cultural differences that might make it harder. Question of commercial dairy land being snapped up vs. sympathetic land owners. The fact the farmer gets a steady salary is important – the unpredictability of farming in Ireland is a big part of the problem To have security of income could help encourage people to grow more vegetables Also nice with closeness of consumers and growers.

SUMMARY OF CATCH-UP OPEN DISCUSSIONS



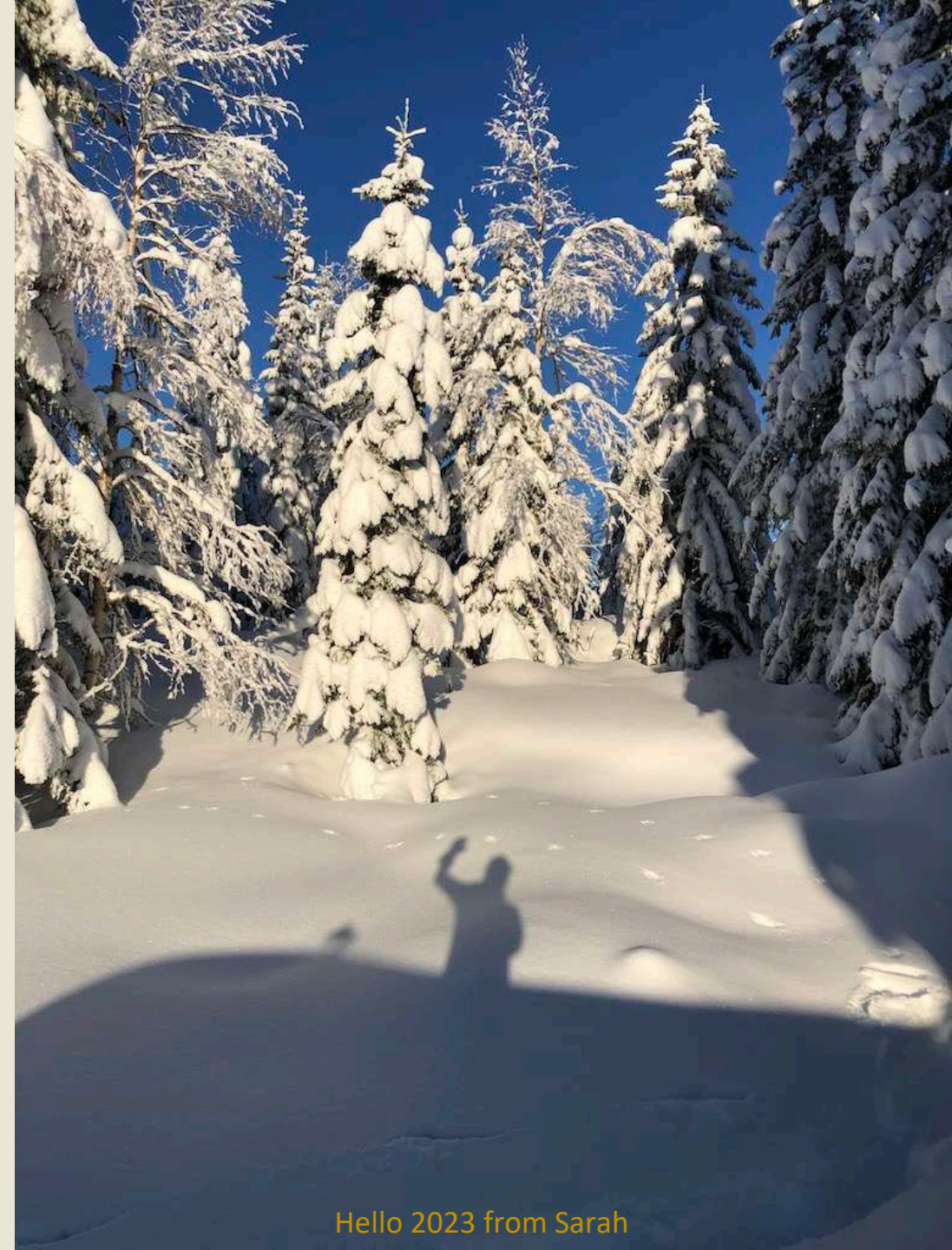
Participants' tips

Media

- **Stories from the Waterside** – recommended website with many stories from the bioregion and beyond – search by river or place, and listen to live story reading at [this link](#).
- **Troubled Waters** - An episode of Eco Eye on RTE, watchable at [this link](#) – suggesting there is enough money and a multitude of institutions in the water quality debate, but we need something else to enforce things as quality continues to decrease. Food is also so toxic – ‘What are we feeding our kids’ was shocking, and many producers of chicken/carrots do not eat their own food.
- **What are we feeding our kids?** Documentary was on RTE. What bad food is doing to our brains.
- **Europe revealed** – was on on RTE. **Feeding Europe** and **Nature Revealed** episodes are recommended, if depressing.
- **A River Runs Through It** - age-friendly creative project.

Resource

- **The Good Lobby** – [see here](#) for more info and resources about this organisation that ‘supports nonprofits, activists, progressive businesses, and philanthropies to shift public policies through a combination of strategic advocacy advice, training and unconventional alliances’.



Thoughts from participants (1/2)

- **Joining people** up is so important – great that BWL does it. **Intergenerational** knowledge is so valuable. So is hope, **collaboration**.
- **Empowerment of the farmer** is so important – a feeling of **stewardship** and they they hold the keys to change. No step is too small, **'a bit organic' is great** but is difficult in the system today. Farmers hold the most powerful position in the world – we hold the key.
- Once organic always organic. Once a farm is organic it should not be possible to sell it onwards and out of organic certification, but at the moment there is no law or incentive not to do so.
- **Changemaking** as a concept is interesting. We could help by being **BWL ambassadors** - a easy to use toolkit would help. Idea: make an **Ambassador's Toolkit** with key descriptions, manifesto and example case studies.
- Looking for a serious **science-based** talk on **marine** and fisheries in the bioregion – e.g. what is happening at Helvik.
- **Beekeeping and conservation** – so much more than honey bees. Need education centres, research and habitat support
- **Vulnerability** – 94% of dairy has to be exported as milk powder, importing 4million tonnes of meat from Brazil. The supply chains in both systems are vulnerable. There should be more mixed farming

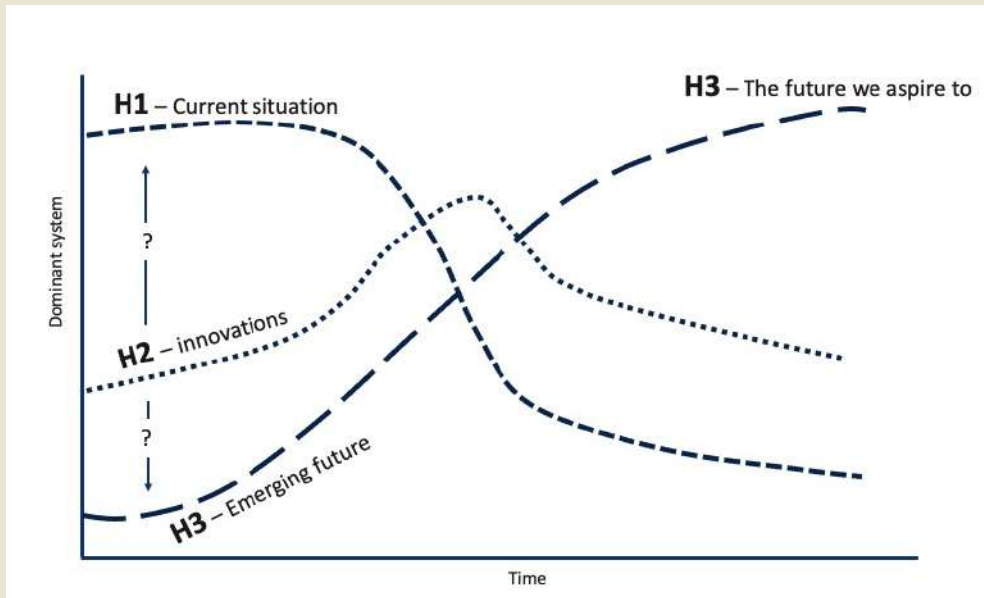
“Farmers hold the most powerful position in the world – we hold the key.”

Thoughts from participants (2/2)

- **Cooperatives** – are too big. We need **small** ones.
- **Water quality** – the rules are there but are not being implemented. See Troubled Waters on RTE. One body should be **accountable**.
- The role of **supermarkets** – labelling that ‘insecticide may have been used in this food’, subsidies. How to bypass the system through local food systems?
- Tax food that is produced badly
- **Early intervention** in nutritious food will save on health costs. But the **system does not allow this**. Obesity levels are highest in Europe, Damien O’Rielly in Farmers Journal – I only buy organic food.
- Look to Farm to Fork again, there are 20 lovely ambitions – just that government regulations don’t allow them to happen, e.g. pigs and chickens together on small scale farms. **Scales we need and want need new laws.**
- **Changing mindsets:** Use media more for BWL. Discussion of the power of commercial in lobbying, and alternatives such as the **Good Lobby**. Get the Ambassador Toolkit ready and then approach them. Also consider if it is willingness, capacity or awareness hold back change (Ashoka resources).
- Look to Denmark? In Åhus you can apply for fund to set up small growing-gardens

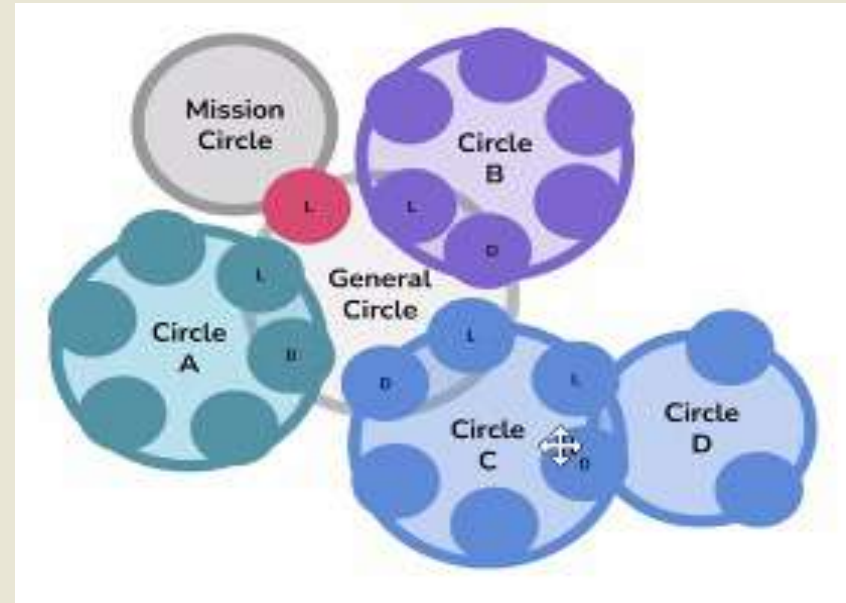
We need a new mindset of ‘I value my health more than my car’.

Examples of theoretical frameworks that came up during discussion



1. Three Horizon thinking

How can we find innovations on H2 that are captured by H3 rather than H1, thus lifting the emerging future we aspire to into the dominant position.



2. Sociocracy

Possible way of organising sub co-working groups on themes such as berries, wool, co-owned farms etc

3. Mindset change – tool to determine which dimension to work with

We need a new mindset of 'I value my health more than my car'.



AWARENESS ON THE PROBLEM

The knowledge or understanding of a decision maker about the scale and seriousness of the problem, and, potentially, also the role of government in keeping the problem in place.

Increased awareness about a problem or a solution is **rarely sufficient** to trigger action and needs to be transformed into a sense of urgency and relevance that is the precursor to decision-makers taking action once the opportunity arises.



WILLINGNESS TO ACT

The state of being willing to take action on the proposed change. There are multiple components of will:

1. Opinion, which is our stakeholder's belief or judgement about an issue, once they know something about it.
2. Intensity, which refers to the strength of a person's opinion.
3. Salience, which is how important and relevant an issue is to our stakeholder personally.
4. Receptiveness to a specific approach or its carrier which implies the attitude towards a concrete approach to address the problem, and attitude to people or organizations who carry it.
5. Willingness to take a particular action despite the risks or trade-offs that are associated with that action, which might imply angering peers or constituents who disagree.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT

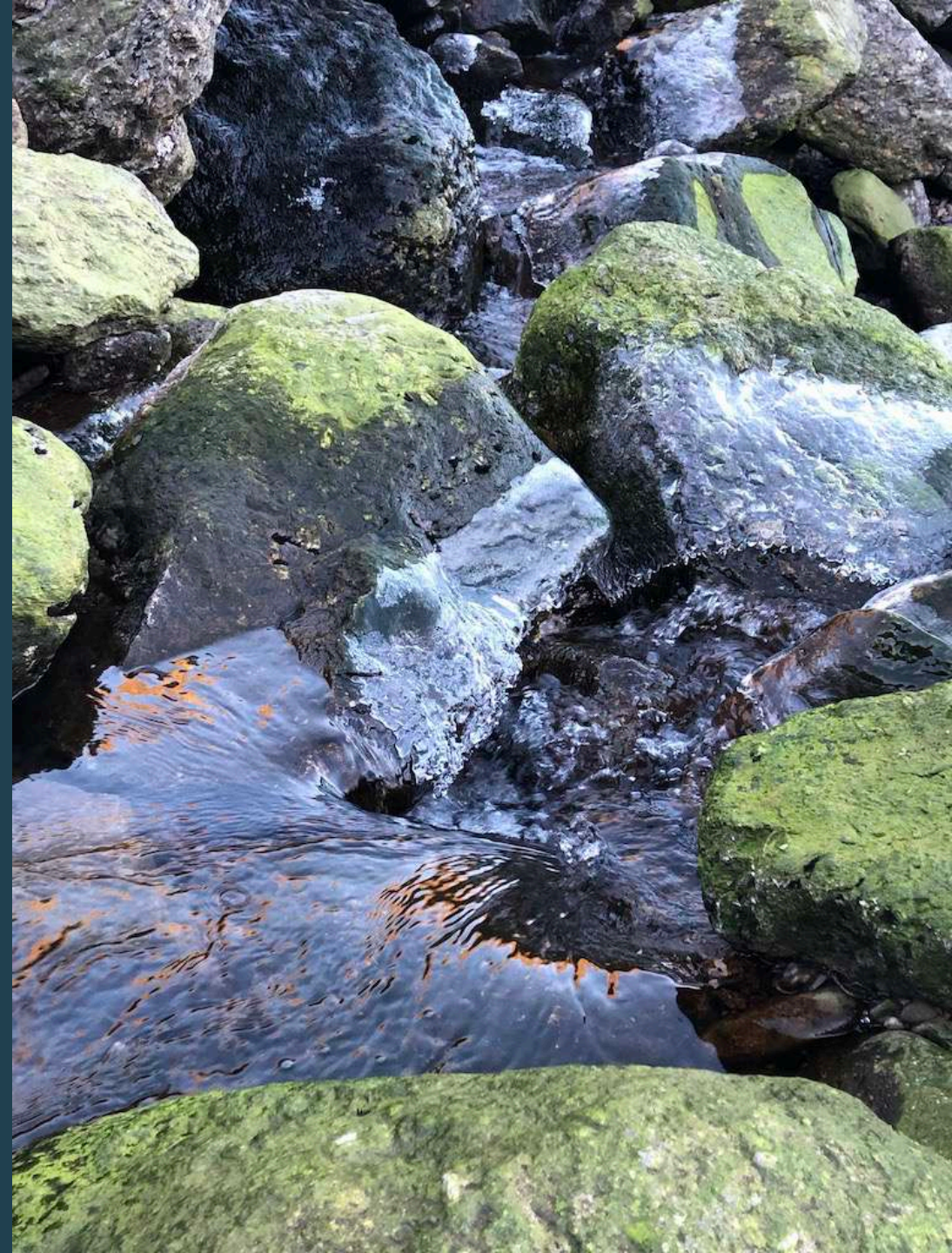
Ability of decision makers to implement proposed change - defined by the human and financial resources to implement the proposed change. When we assess capacity, we don't necessarily mean the capacity of that individual person, but the capacity of their organisation, and potential concerns the person we are working with might have about it.



FUNDING

BWL small grants

Bioregional landscape funding



BWL small grants/seed funds

As part of our core funding from Commonland, made possible by Fund De Roeper, BWL Waterford has some small grants (total 17,500 in the pot currently) to **seed fund** and **catalyse** projects that could lead to **systems change** connected to our **manifesto** and **mission**.

We are open to ideas (get in touch!) regarding how these might best be used. Ideas that emerged through the catch-up events included:

- Use to concretely follow up on the three holistic ideas in the Dunhill event – fund concept development by a relevant person?
- Go through earlier workshops and see if other ideas could be brought to concept or prototype if someone paid to do so.
- Use funds to pay for time that is otherwise voluntary and yet should be valued.
- Capacity-building courses – systems change, ecosystem financing, 4 Returns and more – co-partner for these and use seed funds to develop courses?
- Promote weaving in big institutions – need funds to stimulate co-weaver roles?
- Dingle films about climate challenges and farming? Could we screen them? Invite them over, and talk about biodistricts too.
- Heritage keeper schools? Find out more about these from Burrenbeo
- Pay for some articles and media work on this – films from the manifesto-people reading it.
- Commission future visioning workshops – what will our landscapes look like in 20 years?
- Farmers inspiring farmers – is enough happening on that front?

The participants mandated Sarah to develop some of these further – she'll do so and inform in next email before any funding decisions made.



Wider BWL funding activities and applications

Applications (examples of applications submitted and upcoming)

- LAWPro Community Water Development Funds – application submitted
- EU Interreg NWE – concept note submitted with Netherlands and France
- Lush ReFund – application submitted
- Robert Bosch Foundation – awaiting final confirmation
- Waterford CC supporting communities – deadline 24th Feb
- Creative Ireland – deadline March 13th
- FLAG – investigate open call

Looking out for:

- EIPs
- Smart Southern Region

Involved in:

- Global dialogue event - **Accelerating Finance for Thriving Landscapes: A Dialogue Series for Financial Landscape Leaders.** Held by Landscapes for 1 Billion People [link](#)



NEXT STEPS

APPENDICES

Latest version of manifesto with link to audio file
Overview of Landscape Plan



Next steps and ongoing work

Planned events

- **Can Beans Transform the Food System?** Joint event with GIY and others, 8th March
- **Trip to Aronia Ireland**, 12th March

Regarding future events

- Participants think best after 6pm or weekends.
- **Regional gatherings** requested – West Waterford (Bride Valley?), Dungarvan, Tramore? Later in March – possibly **19th or 20th March**.
- **‘Financing Waterford bioregion as joined-up ecosystem’**: Landscape and systems finance seminar and field trips – **September** (date tbc)

Ongoing work

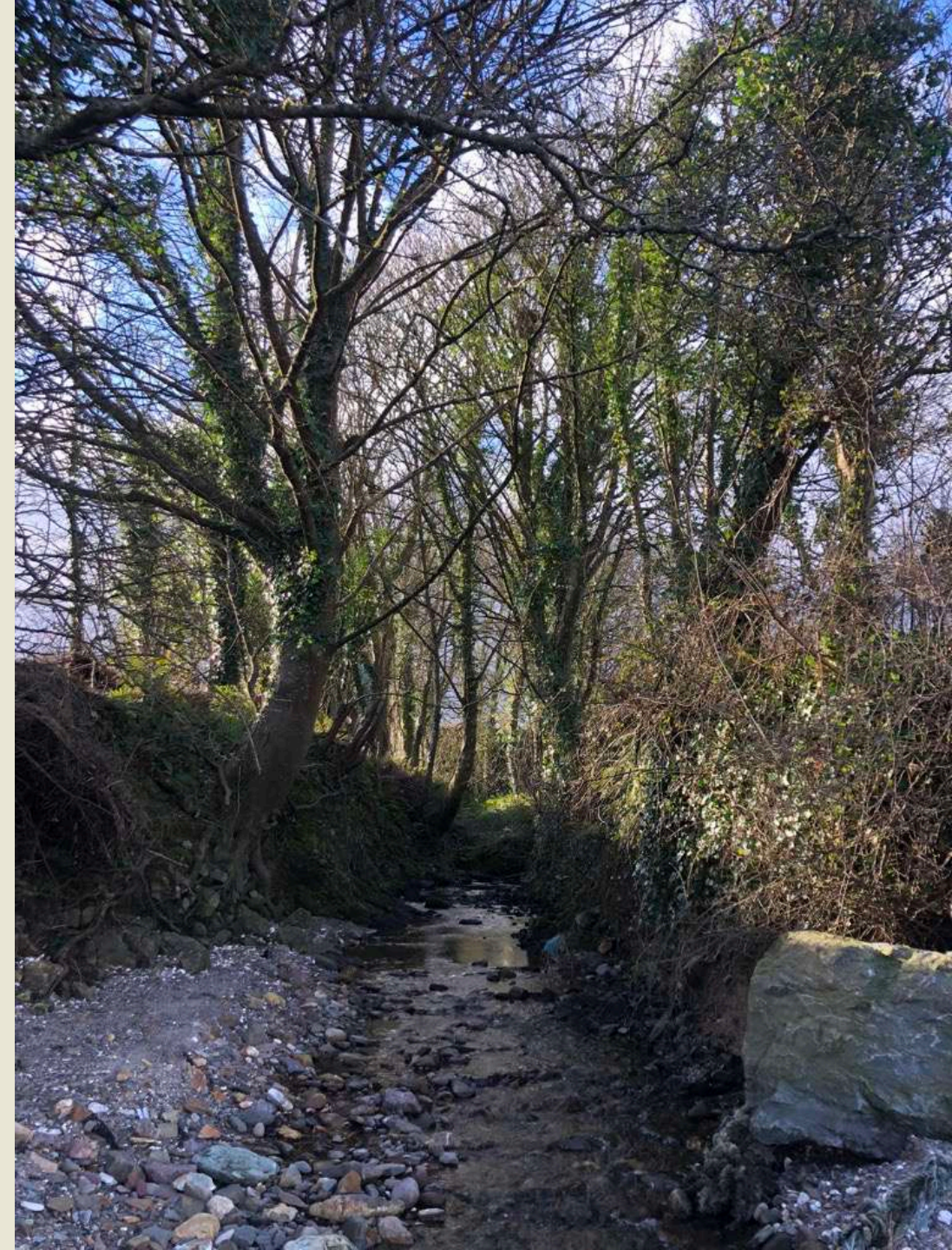
- **Landscape plan** – being written, co-writing appreciated.
- **GSI mapping** – kick off end Feb.
- **Manifesto** – [link](#) now on webpage, but more to be done to be ready to spread widely. Do in conjunction with Ambassador’s Toolkit idea.

Follow up work from December Dunhill event

- The three holistic cases, and a co-weaving case – explore if they can be developed further, both as individual initiatives, and in context of financing landscape ecosystems. Consider if BWL seed funding could support them
- Individual follow up from action points in summary report.

Follow up from February catch-up conversations

- Connect with PPN
- Ambassadors Toolkit and mentoring resources



Waterford Bioregion's Food Manifesto *(to be read out loud, [or listen here](#))*

Food is not a luxury.

Food is a basic social need to which everyone has a right. It is a right not only to enjoy food, but to be able to create it.

Food is a way of building ideas, connections and communities. Through food we become aware of ourselves and of each other.

Food is a common good. It is grounded in our common need, and our common vulnerability.

Food is revolutionary. How we grow food, how we consume it, how we think about it, can lead to radical change.

Food is not only about the present: rethinking our relationship with food is a call for a different future, a better one.

We, the local producers and consumers of food in the Waterford bioregion, assert:

We have the right to a good quality of life, grounded in communities of mutual support.

We have the right to disagree, to disrupt the status quo.

We have the right to respect, even while we dissent.

Our dissent is moral, philosophical, cultural, affective, economic and political. Sometimes all at once.

Our dissent is about building a better world, because we, are the ultimate decision-makers.

We stand for:

The breaking-down of barriers between thinkers and doers. We are, all of us, both thinkers and doers.

A reinvention of the relationships between producers, retailers and consumers.

A renewed focus on quality of life for all.

Food that is sustainable for our health.

The protection of the land.

The richness of the soil.

The flourishing of the imagination.

New ideas. New stories. New inspirations.

New ways of relating to the food we grow and eat.

We want future food to come from a place where community is core. Our aims are both visionary and practical. We want to create new habits, and new ways of working. We want viable ways of living. We want to protect our rivers, restore nature, cherish life. We want a world where everything is connected, from rocks to the human heart.

We want our children and grandchildren to know the taste of wild salmon and the foods those before us enjoyed. We want to be good guardians of the soil, and of our traditions. We want to become good ancestors.

We want future food to be:

Grown and eaten with passion, without which we will fail.

Inspirational

Easy to get and affordable for all.

Connected to people and communities

Familiar

Surprising

Secure, in a system where farmers and consumers share an interest in this security.

Pristine

Fair

Seasonal

Nutritious

Delicious

Final version as of 9th December 2022

<https://giy.ie/bioregional-weaving-lab/>





Ireland:
Waterford Bioregion
4 Returns Landscape Plan



Overview and analysis

Introduction

- Irish land/sea context degradation/regeneration
- Partners and background
- How we work: The four returns and three zones. Bioregion and weaving. NBS and SI. Systems change

Description and overview of bioregion, with stakeholders and partners

- Geology and geomorphology
- Soil
- Vegetation and biodiversity
- Water
- Weather and climate
- People and culture
- Landuse
- Planning and architecture
- Education – schools and adults
- Entrepreneurship
- Farmer, food and nature organisations
- Donors, funders and partners

Landscape analysis

- Maps that resonate and can document change
 - Three zones
 - Regen land and sea
 - Regen social, financial and inspiration
- System barriers and root causes
- Holistic opportunities to transition

Planning and strategy

Returns regeneration strategic framework

- The Four Losses in the bioregion
- The Four Returns in the bioregion
- What works? Past and present
- Future scenarios – high level

Nature Based Solutions (NBS)

- Current
- Potential to upscale
- Needed NBS to be developed or imported
- Needed systems and mindset changes

Social, inspiration and economic innovations

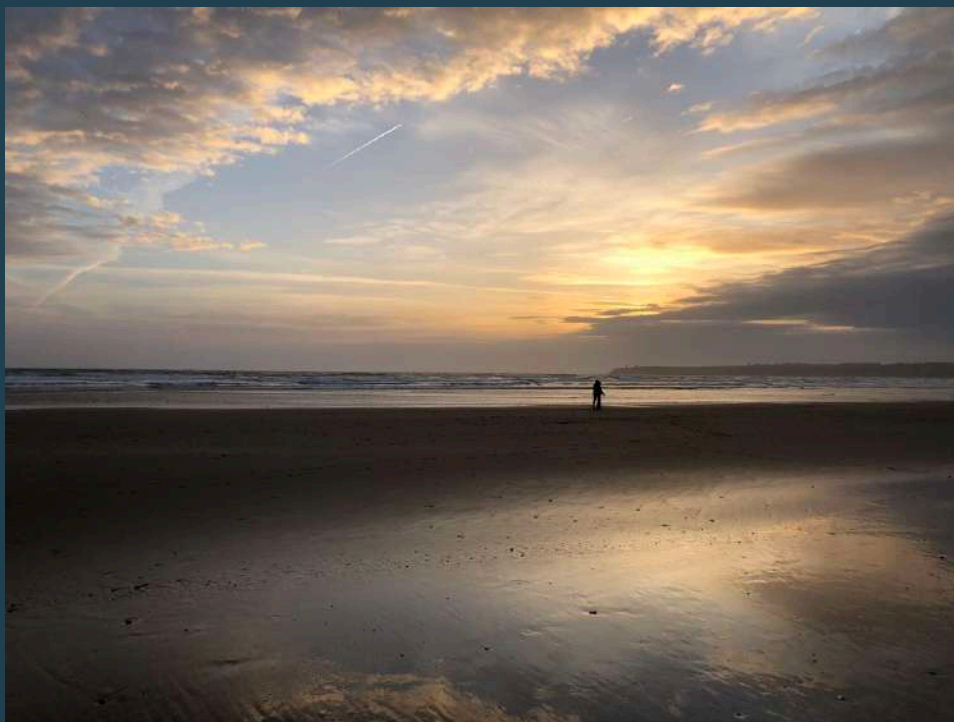
- Current
- Potential to upscale
- Needed innovations to be developed or imported
- Needed systems and mindset changes

Structure, governance and ways of working

- Collective impact network
- Governance
- BWL
- Funding (inc. of systems change and weaving)

Funding and Roadmap

- 5 year plan
- 10 and 20 year plan
- 5 year budget Waterford bioregion
- 10 year budget Waterford and beyond



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