



Manifesto workshop

**Bioregional Weaving Lab
Waterford**

11th September 2022





Contents

- **Background**
- **Aims and tools**
- **Manifestos**
What are they? Personal manifesto-writing
- **A Waterford Manifesto for a Regenerative Bioregion**
Co-writing manifestos for the Four Returns.
- **What could we do with a manifesto?**
- **Proposed Manifesto v1**
- **Proposed Manifesto v2**
- **Next steps**

Background



BWL Workshop

11th September 2022

Time: 9.30 – 12.30pm

Location: GROW HQ

Our common intent?
A resilient food system that supports thriving landscapes, seascapes and communities in the Waterford bioregion.

This workshop was the third event to bring **people, projects and places** together and explore the potential for a future **collective impact** approach to making long term change in the region around Waterford. This event was one of the activities organised by **Bioregional Weaving Lab (BWL)** Waterford, and part of a wider European network of such initiatives.

Course facilitators:

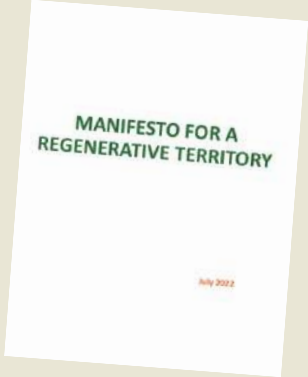
- Sarah Prosser**, Collective Impact Weaver, BWL Waterford (at GIY)
- Will Buckingham**, Wind and Bones
- Hannah Stevens**, Wind and Bones



Why this workshop happened

Sarah Prosser introduced the framing of this manifesto workshop in light of the previous events initiated by the Waterford Bioregional Weaving Lab and by the wider BWL initiative across Europe. This covered the following (all reports available on GIY website):

- An overview of the initiative (see next two pages).
- A summary of the two previous main BWL activities:
 1. *5th July 2022. Multi-stakeholder workshop* at Ardscoil na Mara, Tramore. Focus on our collective knowledge and identifying common trends and insights around the mindset and structural changes needed to build resilient and regenerative food systems in the bioregion.
 1. *5th August 2022. Next steps.* Reflections around findings from 5th July workshop, where the need for a co-created common vision was one of many things identified. All participants agreed that a good next step would be to co-write a manifesto, also inspired by examples presented at the meeting including that from the Spanish BWL – Manifesto for a Regenerative Territory.





Bioregional Weaving Lab (BWL)

What is the BWL Network?

Organisations across Europe are right now actively co-creating a network of Bioregional Weaving Labs with the intent of releasing local potential and solutions to lead to a biodiverse and thriving future for all. The vision is a world where current and yet-to-be discovered nature-based solutions and social impact projects have become the norm, and where everyone has the agency and motivation to engage and contribute on both small and systemic levels, anchored within their local landscapes and cultural contexts.

The BWL concept was co-created with established social innovators in five countries, each with its own distinctive environmental and community setting. Founding support partners – Commonland, Ashoka, The Presencing Institute - include some of the most established organisations in the world when it comes to cultivating change in local landscapes and supporting inclusive social innovations for the good of all.

BWL Waterford

In Ireland, the BWL is located in the Waterford bioregion, an area defined by the distinct ecology and the communities within it, such that it extends beyond county boundaries. Given the region’s agri- and aquacultural qualities, and combining our awareness of the wide benefits that come from growing, cooking and eating your own food, a food system lens will be central to BWL activities in Ireland. Mick Kelly from GIY is the ‘BWL Ambassador’; Sarah Prosser is the programme ‘weaver’.

One page overview

Our vision

A biodiverse future with healthy ecosystems, regenerative economies and thriving communities, where solutions that work with nature and communities in landscapes are the norm and scale widely.

Our mission

To mobilise 1 million changemakers by 2025 to overcome systemic barriers and restore, protect and regenerate 1 million ha of Europe’s land and sea, with significant impact on 4 Returns (social, natural, economic and inspiration) by 2030

Partners in BWL Waterford – please join us!



COMMONLAND



ASHOKA



For those interested in reading more about the Bioregional Weaving Lab initiative in Ireland and the wider European BWL network we recommend the following:

BWL Waterford on GIY programme webpage

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

BWL Europe on Ashoka webpage

<https://www.ashoka.org/en-gb/program/bioregional-weaving-labs-collective>

With downloadable reports:

- **Bioregional Weaving Lab Insights Report**
- **Bioregional Weaving Labs White Paper**

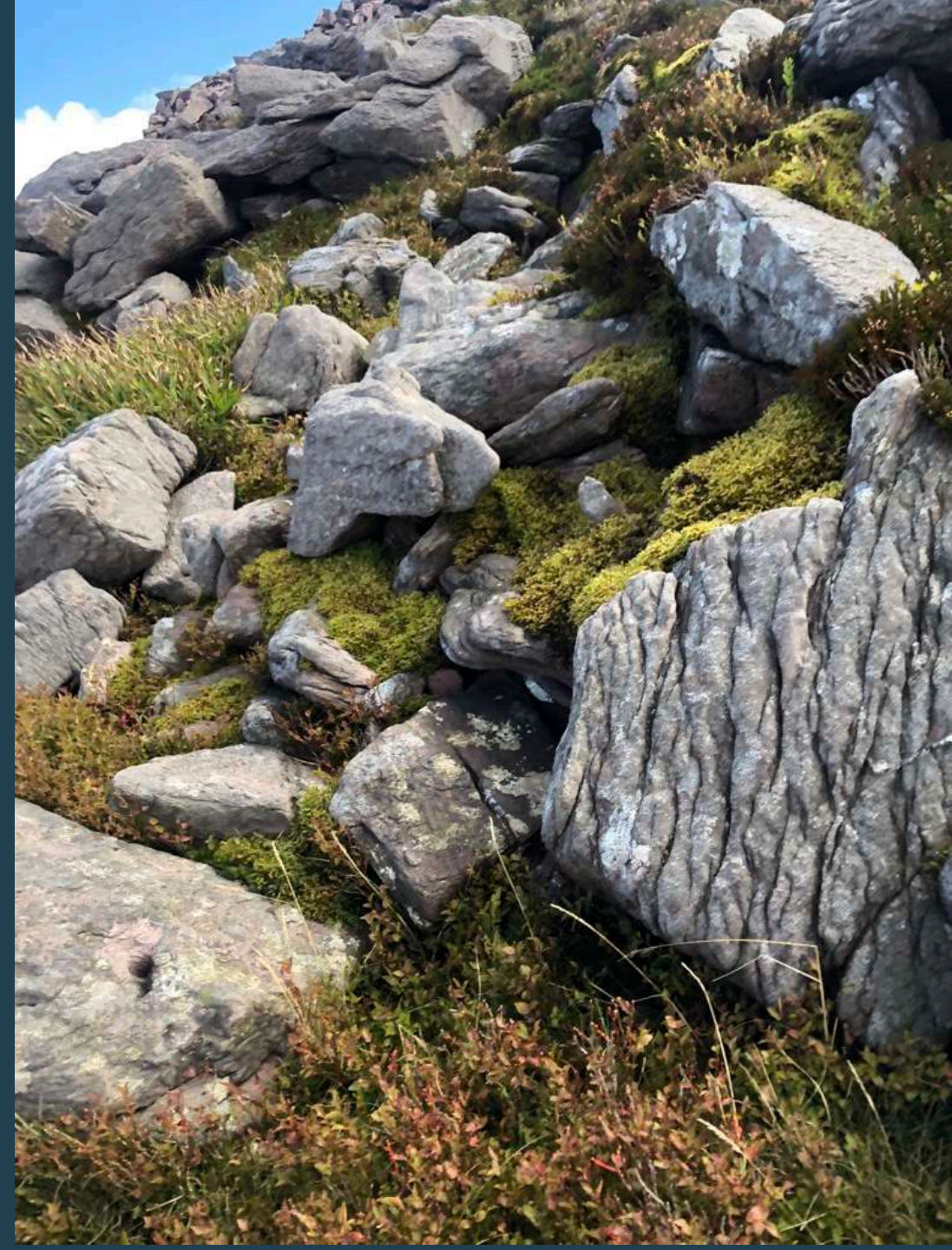
Masters thesis on weaving as a practice to scale nature-based solutions

<https://networknature.eu/sites/default/files/uploads/masterthesisexecsum.pdf>





The workshop
Aims and
methodology



Agenda

0930 Introduction to BWL

1000 Aims of the workshop and tools for systems change

1015 Manifestos – what are they?

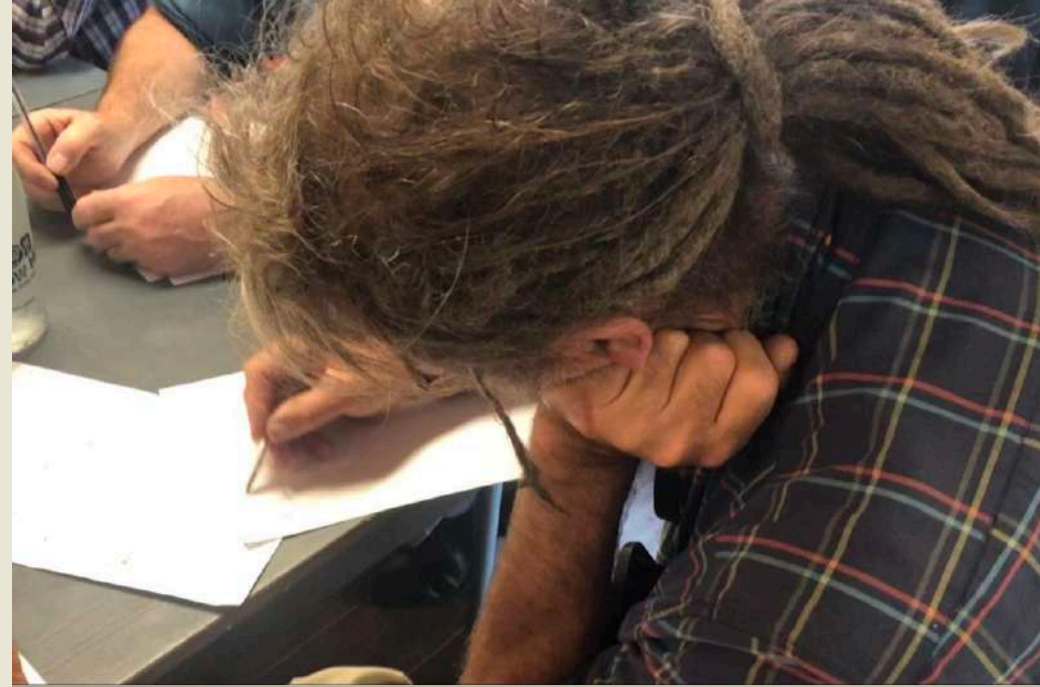
1030 Personal manifesto writing

1100 *Break and talk over scones and flapjack*

1130 Common manifesto writing for Four Returns

1200 How can we use a manifesto?

1230 End



Participants

Name	Affiliation
Richard Mee	GIY, Head gardner
Steve Collins	Berry farmer and doctor
Garry Graham	Hortitude
Rory Harrington	Vesi Environmental. ICWetlands
Donal Sheehan	The Bride Project and Farming with Nature
Kath Foran	Farmer, Kilmeaden
John and Grace Kiersey	Ballyhussa Farm, Freezin' Friesans
Sally Sweeney	Tramore Zero Carbon ++
Paul Henry	Camphill Communities of Ireland
Damian Nicholls	Copper Coast Permaculture and Tramore Eco Group
Tommie Ryan	Waterford Skillnet
Eilish Kelly	Tramore Educate Together
John and Bridget Carney	Portally Farm, social farming
Tom Doyle	Innovate Communities

Name	Affiliation
Anon	
John Geraghty	SETI. Organic and Biological Agriculture
Ray McGrath	
Seánie Comerford	GIY Philanthropy
Carol Montgomery	Diageo
Steve Link	Philanthropy at Cornerstone Advisers
Eleanor Deegan	

Bioregional Weaving Lab	
Sarah Prosser	Weaver, BWL Waterford (at GIY)
Michael Kelly	CEO at GIY and BWL Ambassador
Co-facilitators	
Dr Will Buckingham	Wind and Bones, creative writer
Dr Hannah Stevens	Wind and Bones, creative writer

To those of you that were unable to attend and that sent messages of support: thank you for your interest - see you next time!

Facilitators

Sarah Prosser

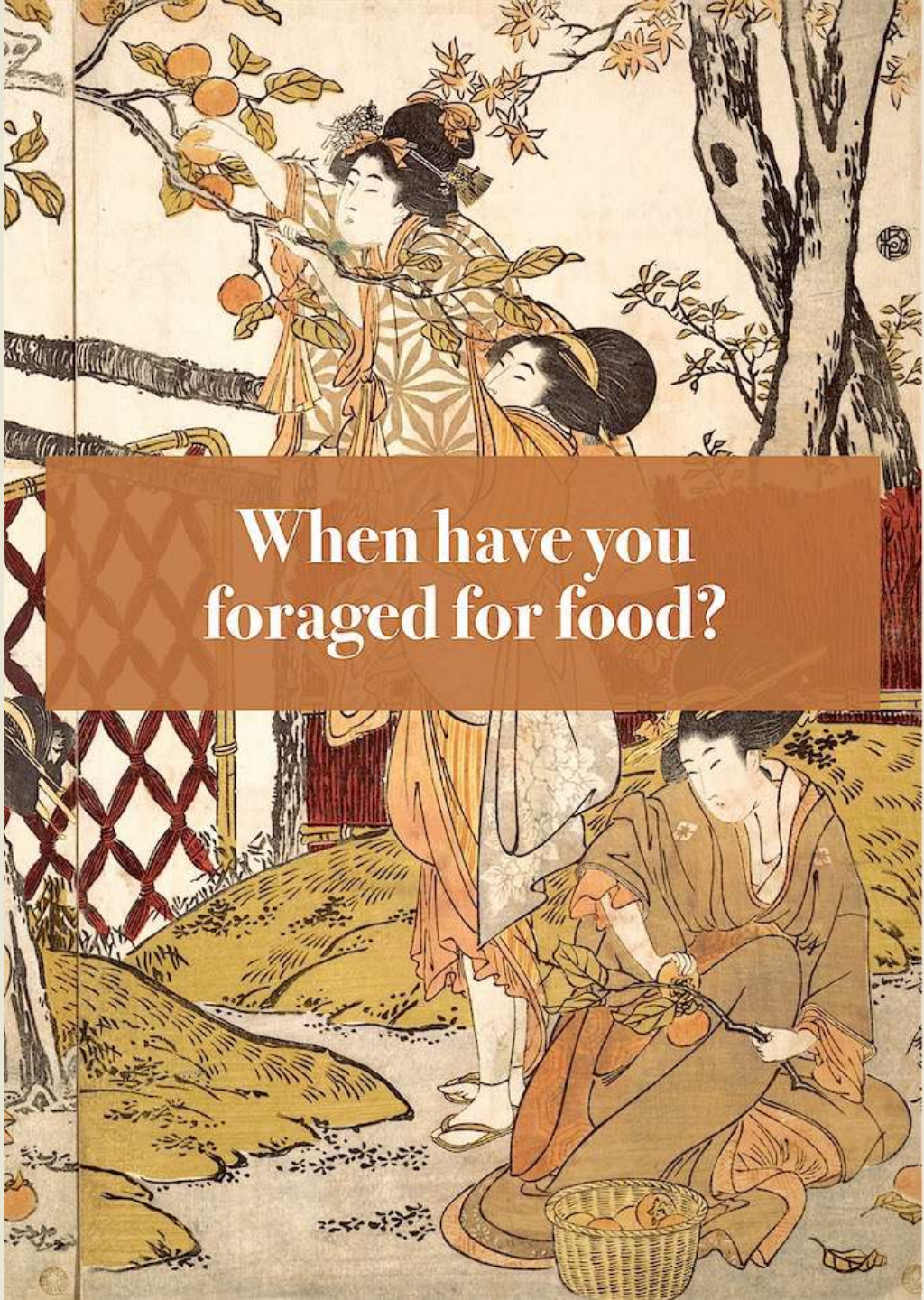
Sarah is employed as a ‘weaver’ of socio-ecological change as part of the European network of Bioregional Weaving Labs (BWL). The Irish lab was established in Waterford after an initial exploratory phase led by **Mick Kelly** at GIY. Mick is a BWL Ambassador and an Ashoka Fellow.

Will Buckingham and Hannah Stevens

Co-directors of Wind&Bones, Dr Will Buckingham and Dr Hannah Stevens explore the intersections of writing, creativity and social change. They have international experience from Myanmar and from Bulgaria where they ran manifesto writing workshops.

See more at <https://www.windandbones.com/>

Will and Hannah were in Waterford for the Harvest Festival where they were also collecting micro-stories from people attending the stalls and events in the centre of town, prompted by questions such as that to the right, and resulting in stories such as **‘Worms’**.



When have you foraged for food?

Worms
When I was younger my dad would take us kids out to nearby fields to pick mushrooms. They were white button mushrooms and we would eat some on the way home. Remember to always check for worms before you bite!

Aims of the workshop

Sarah Prosser summarised the aims of workshop, including the following:

- To gather as a group of people who mind about our **thriving and regenerative futures**, particularly in the Waterford bioregion, people who are acting in different ways to make that happen. To provide a workshop that is **thought-provoking, meaningful and inspirational**. To conduct it in the spirit of '**safe space of belonging**'. To leave with an increased sense of **hope and solidarity** and as part of something **bigger than individual efforts** to make change can achieve alone.
- To explore **personal** and **collective** approaches to capturing in words a) what it is we know about the place we live, b) what we believe to be true based on our experiences and c) what this leads to in terms of expressing heartfelt views on what should be done to build the future we want to see. To do this through the activity of **co-writing a manifesto**.
- To keep within the themes of the wider **vision** and **mission** of the Bioregional Weaving Lab initiative, and in particular the topic of **resilient and regenerative food systems**.
- To remain **rooted in the essence of the people** living in and caring about the Waterford bioregion **today**, and including aspects of **heritage and landscape**.
- To discuss **how such manifestos can be used** in general and in our case in particular, for instance by providing a touchpoint to decide **what should be prioritised** next in terms of actions, and **opening communication channels** beyond our own close circles.


“Manifestos are designed to shake us up, to get us thinking, to change not just our minds but also our hearts”

A regenerative bioregion – where change is seen in four returns


Commonland (one of the BWL backbone organisations) has developed a framework for documenting and monitoring landscape change by monitoring four returns and/or losses. The methodology has been developed and implemented internationally, providing a common language of global landscape restoration.

The four returns:




Inspiration 
Giving people hope and a sense of purpose




Natural Return 
Restoring biodiversity, soil, water quality and capturing carbon



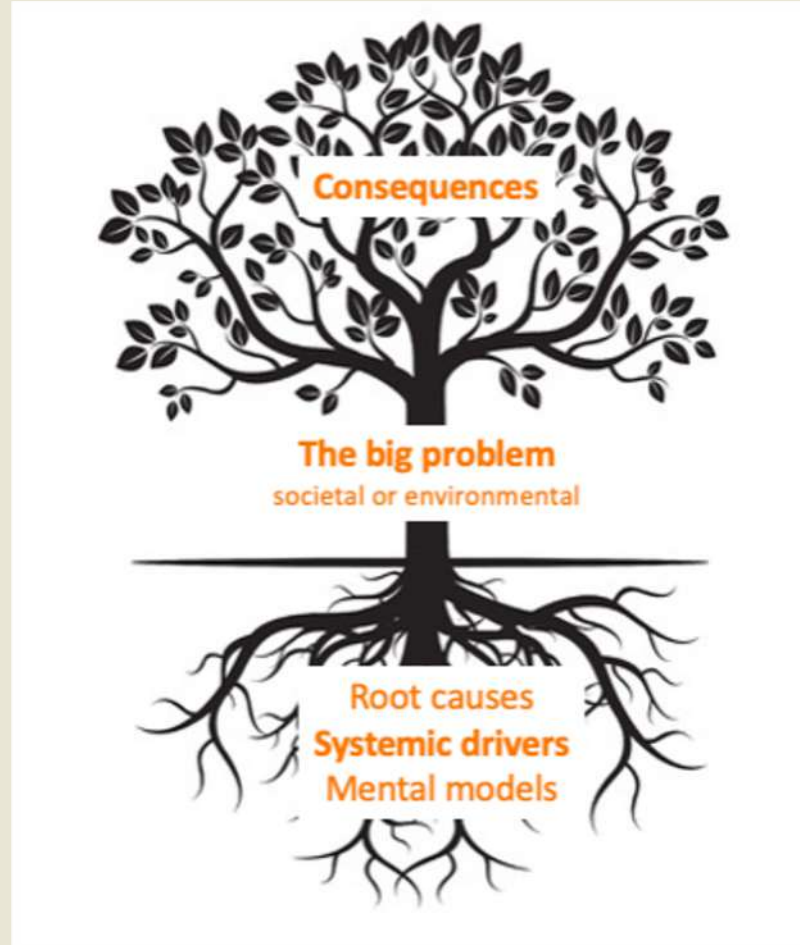
Social Return 
Bringing back jobs, business activity, education and security



Financial Return 
Realising long-term sustainable profit

Systems change and collective impact

Two key diagrams were presented to give a common understanding of other concepts being used in the workshop:

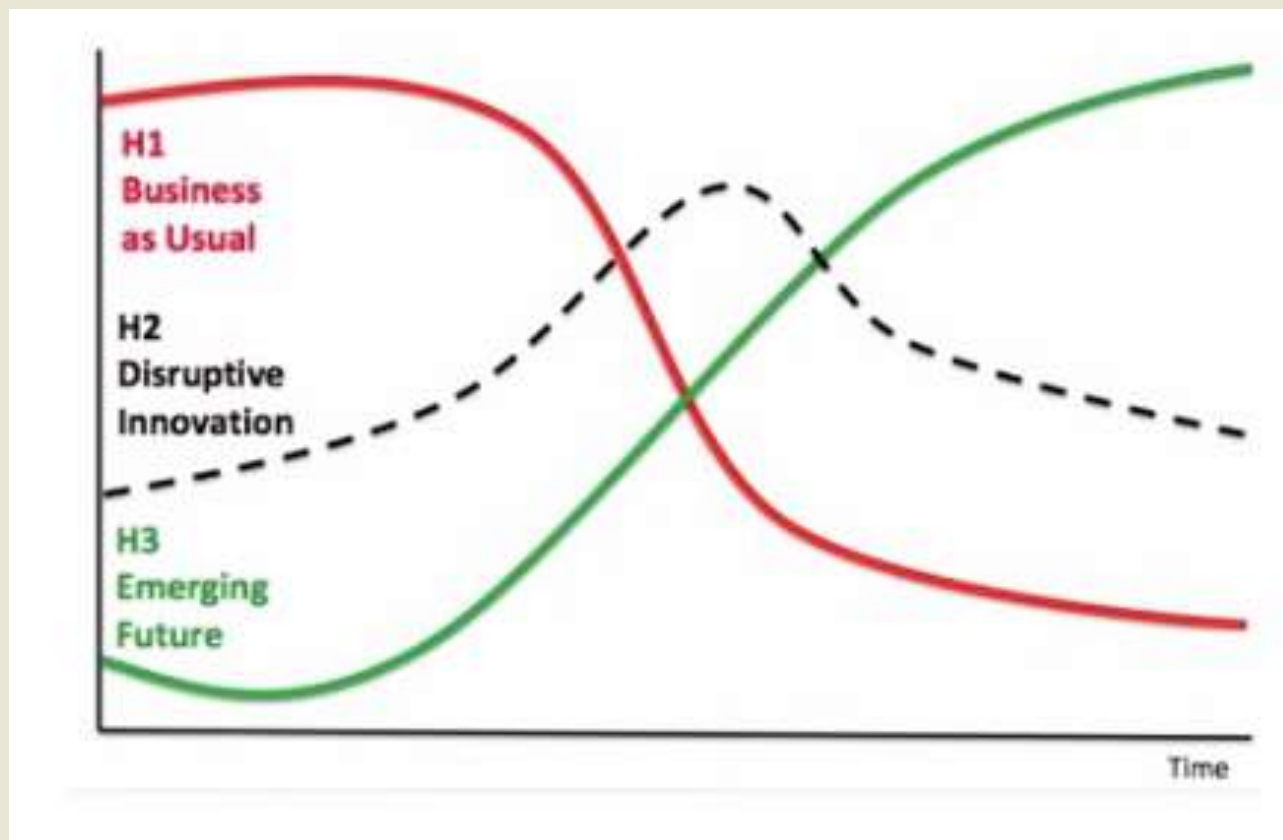


Tool 1

The Problem Tree

A way of focussing on initiatives that address root causes, and the systems holding them in place, and less so on short term projects that are built around fixing the consequences of the 'big problem'.

Our workshops and initiatives aim to enable participants feel one part of a bigger system. By working collectively we aim to transform the current extractive systems and mental models and make regenerative practices the norm.



Tool 2

The Three Horizons

A way of illustrating that we must look for the emerging futures we wish to lift, rather than concentrating on the problematic dominant practices today.

We can design for a sustainable, regenerative future by capturing disruptive innovations (H2) to help the future we wish for (H3) grow and become the norm.

Business as usual (H1) must be helped out of this world and not perpetuated by allowing new innovations to keep them going as the dominant ways of working.

Watch this film for a good explanation of the Three Horizons:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5KfRQJqpPU

Participants in the workshop generally represent people, projects and organisations that are the emerging future we want to make mainstream, along with others not present.

The disruptive innovations may be social innovations, nature-based insights or wider things such as COVID, tech or climate change.

Manifestos

- What are they?
- Talk with one other
- Write personal manifestos



What is a manifesto?

Will Buckingham gave an introduction to the role of manifestos in history – such as Ashokan pillars – and emphasised its role in bringing energy and passion to its readers.

"A manifesto is not a policy document. It is something much more unruly.

Manifestos are designed to shake us up, to get us thinking, to change not just our minds but also our hearts.

They are not the summation of how far we have come. Instead, they are the starting-points for change.

They wake us from complacency. And they help usher in futures we can't yet imagine."

"A manifesto is not a policy document"



Examples of manifestos

Manifesto on Artists' Rights (2012)

Art is not a luxury. Art is a basic social need to which everyone has a right.

Art is a way of building thought, of being aware of oneself and of the others at the same time. It is a methodology in constant transformation for the search of a here and now.

Art is an invitation to questioning; it is the social place of doubt, of wanting to understand and wanting to change reality.

Art is not only a statement of the present, it is also a call for a different future, a better one. Therefore, it is a right not only to enjoy art, but to be able to create it.

Art is a common good that does not have to be entirely understood in the moment one finds it.

Art is a space of vulnerability from which what is social is deconstructed to construct what is human.

Artists not only have the right to dissent, but the duty to do so.

Artists have the right to dissent not only from affective, moral, philosophical, or cultural aspects, but also from economic and political ones.

Artists have the right to disagree with power, with the status quo.

Artists have the right to be respected and protected when they dissent.

by Tania Bruguera

Futurist Manifesto of Men's Clothing (1913)

We are fighting against:

- (a) the timidity and symmetry of colours, colours which are arranged in wishy-washy patterns of idiotic spots and stripes;
- (b) all forms of lifeless attire which make a man feel tired, depressed, miserable and sad, and which restrict movement producing a triste wanness;
- (c) so-called 'good taste' and harmony, which weaken the soul and take the spring out of the step.

We want Futurist clothes to be:

Comfortable and practical.

Dynamic

Aggressive

Shocking

Energetic

Violent Flying (i.e. giving the idea of flying, rising and running)

Peppy

Joyful

Illuminating (in order to have light even in the rain)

Phosphorescent

Lit by electric lamps

by Giacomo Balla

Talk to each other

Participants were invited to talk one to one.

Sitting opposite each other at a comfortable distance. No objects to be held in either person's hands.

Tell the other person:

- What I know
- What I believe
- What I want



Write your personal manifesto

Participants were asked to now write their personal manifesto based on the same three points:

- What I know
- What I believe
- What I want



Personal manifestos

NATURE - SOCIAL - FINANCIAL - INSPIRATIONAL

We live on the most wonderful place in the universe and we share it with all living things. The way in which we live is breaking our world and we need to repair it and nurture it. We will restore nature and cherish all life. We will grow food for local communities and farm regeneratively. We will grow food without chemicals and poisons. We will protect our rivers. We shall be good ancestors. We will measure success through nature restoration through profit/money.

Know + BELIEVE - on one colour card
WANT - on other card

All of our rivers + water bodies to be returned to pristine status

WANT

- PEOPLE WITH IDEAS VIBRANT/ TO BE HEARD
- PEOPLE WANT TO CHANGE - TO BE INSPIRED
- FA ENTHUSIASM OF PEOPLE IN COMMUNITIES TO BE HELPED WITH

Know + Believe

- we have an inherent understanding and appreciation of our environment and the planet.
- we need to learn/feel/do experience rather than read/talk/theorise
- we need to do stuff on our own + together.
- we need to share (teach) others in order to really learn new stuff.

- want

I know that I know what I don't know. I'm alive, I'm lucky. I'm living, at the moment is all that is, I know I prefer the section of talk + vocal expression person to person is the one to get out of bed in the morning. It's what we all need.

I know I am human and I share this space with other sentient beings, I don't own it.

I believe we are all here for a purpose. ~~Fast~~ I believe this weaving is not a project ~~to~~ to be tackled. I believe it is a new way of connecting with our surroundings. Connecting with everything from the rocks to the human heart. ~~isn't~~ ~~being~~ it's an all inclusive planet thing. It is about our surroundings and the people and places, rocks, sea, land, flora, fauna.

Necessity is the mother Nature of all invention

...petition, opportunities to change habits, to reinforce new healthy habits (healthy for people + planet) practice, ...ed accessible nature-based alternative ways of living.

Personal manifestos

- Experiential is key/essential. - as with a 'body' led by the body, integrity, invite farm having established separate togetherness entity to be wind & have to use a phrase, to be alive rather than dead/compr to be 'biodynamic' truly as in more than the organic - a half dead concept - yet essential - biodynamic as in more interactive - universe to care earth | area | person | people | animals | furred feathered. Diverse + @ peace in that + from that biodiversity. Invitation to respect to learn, to really see + engage with, led 'body' to yet not comprising the holder, the earth, the ground, the exchange, enhancing by a growth that can only be good even though there is always the choice, the arbiter

manifestation, working with + thru the cycle of 'winter' Spring summer autumn + respecting the integral. beginnings + end. To bring change + touch to a world that needs it from all participants - nature / others + all humans.
Fascinating

RE - AGRICULTURE

Know

- we are going to hell in a hand cart but can turn it around
- the resources for change are there in the farming + research community

Believe

Main barrier to change in agricultural change is:

- Economic system
- Government/E.U. Support

Want

- Subsidies, Support + research to be directed at sustainable systems
- Economic assessment of agriculture to be based on real long term cost

Manifesto

That mankind is causing problems in no we can feel overwhelmed. We have knowledge about the individual issues it's hard to sum up the solutions in one package.

We have a lovely life of to past generations were in heaven (cf with medieval peasants. ~~but~~ ~~we~~ we consumers + can't just consume less.

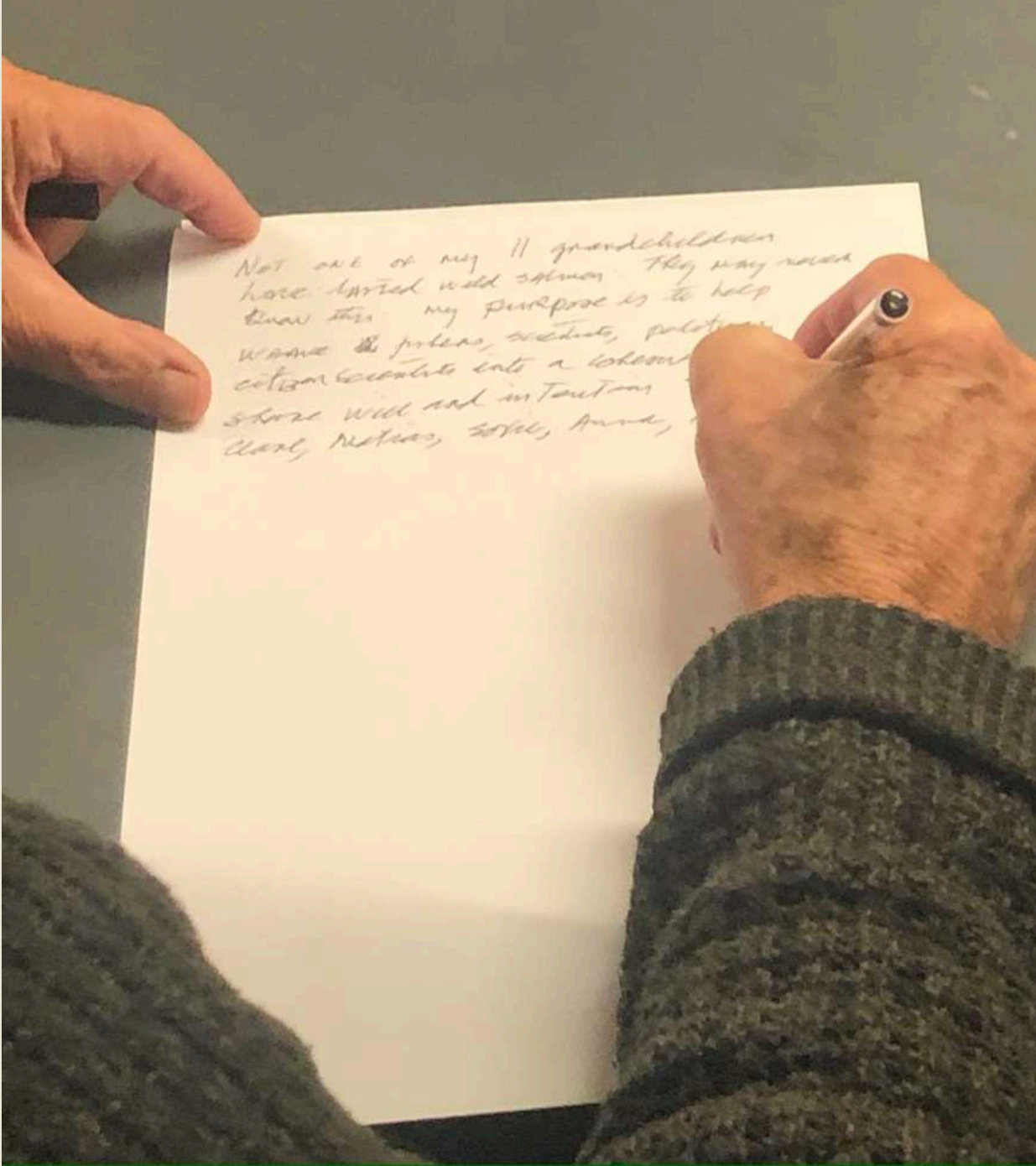
I KNOW WATERFORD IS AT THE COALFACE OF A ^{MULTINATIONAL} ~~BIG~~ 100 SYSTEM THAT IS DAMAGING PEOPLE + PLANET

- I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN PRODUCE + CONSUME FOOD IN A WAY THAT REGENERATES ECO-SYSTEMS #, KEEP PEOPLE HEALTHY + HAPPY + PROVIDE A VIABLE LIVING FOR FARMERS + GROWERS
- I WANT POSITIVE, URGENT, MEANINGFUL ACTION, FINDING COMMON GROUND BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS TO CREATE A REGENERATIVE, RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEM

Personal manifestos – the highlights

Participants were asked to circle or underline one or two key phrases or sentences from their manifestos. They were then invited to say them out loud, with no explanation or apology. The words and the emotion they evoked in the room were something quite special!

"Not one of my grandchildren have tasted wild salmon. They may never know that my purpose is to help weave fishers, politicians, and distributors together so that one day before they die they will know what wild salmon is"



Sharing highlights verbally

Not one of my 11 grandchildren knows the taste of wild salmon, and I want to weave fishers, politicians and distributors together so that one day before they die they will know what wild salmon is.

Our food is contaminated, and it's a huge problem and as a society we are blinkered. We need change and we need it as soon as possible. We need clean food and we need no sick people.

I know it is broken, I believe we can change and I want to help with that.

To understand nature and the world and those we hold dear

I believe we should give nature a chance

We shall be good ancestors?

I want a system that enables xx listening and leading from a local level, and I want communities to have real ownership and accountability for their innovations.

Experience for people is essential to connect heart to nature and to each other

Opportunities to change habits, to reinforce new healthy habits, healthy for people and planet, local, accessible, nature-based alternative ways of living

I think we need to seek out the indigenous people in our communities and I think we need to find out what is the that 20% of the 80:20 principle – what have we not been measuring

Some good things are happening. We can do better to have a broader, positive and greater impact

I believe that we need to give nature time and space to heal, and that we need to listen to nature as our guide as about where we want to go. I think we need to allow reality to emerge and not seek to change things, though we may need to change ourselves.

Pulling together all assets of community

We have a problem, but if we join together with a common goal and shared mission, with measurable goals we can provide hope to future generations

We will grow food without chemicals and poisons

I want to influence policy makers by showing practical examples of what works in both agriculture and public health

To avoid being overwhelmed as individuals we can work on fewer issues and be more creative

We need to shift from the economic model that is so destructive to a system that is based on the circular economy and using a well-being index rather than GDP

Good food sustains us.
Tainted food diminishes us.

I believe that we can produce and consume food in a way that regenerates ecosystems, keeps people healthy and happy and provide a viable living for farmers and growers

The connection between the primary producer and the farmer and the end-user consumer is broken and this can be fixed by the farmer and consumer becoming the systems drivers and not policy processors or retailers

We live in a place of great richness of nature, but our systems are somewhat broken. We can change. There is light out there. We have the knowledge, we need some education and direction

Current national and international policies sustain unsustainable agriculture practice and unsustainable public health practice.

**A Waterford
manifesto for a
regenerative
bioregion?**



Co-writing manifestos for each of the four returns

Participants sat in four groups. Each group was designated one of the topics of the four returns: Inspiration, Nature, Social or Economic.

They were then asked to write what **they collectively** know, believe and want for the bioregion, just for that one topic of return.

‘Know and believe’ were captured on one card colour. ‘Want’ on another.



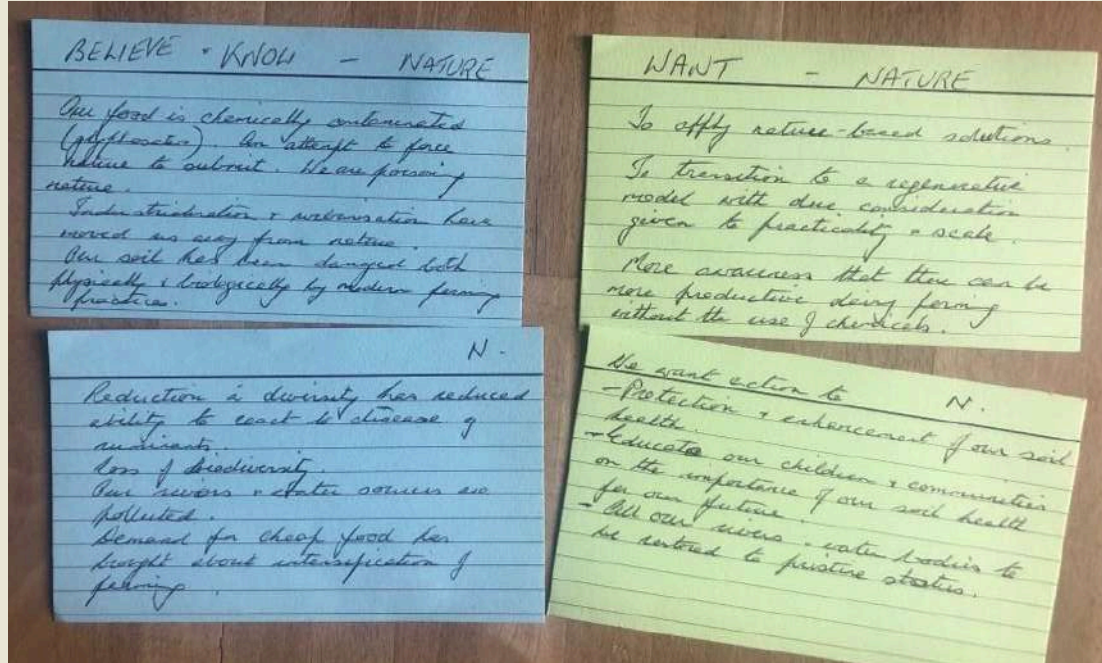
NATURE

What we know and believe

- Reduction of diversity has reduced ability to react to disease, e.g. ruminants
- Loss of biodiversity
- Our rivers and water sources are polluted
- Demand for cheap food has brought about intensification of farming
- Our food is chemically contaminate (glyphosates). An attempt to fence nature to submit. We are poisoning nature
- Industrialisation and urbanisation have moved us away from nature.
- Our soil has been damaged both physically and biologically by modern farming practices.

What we want

- Protection and enhancement of our soil health
- Educate our children and communities on the importance of our soil health for our future
- All our rivers and water bodies to be restored to pristine status
- To apply nature-based solutions
- To transition to a regenerative model with due consideration given to practicality and scale
- More awareness that there can be more productive dairy farming with out the use of chemicals



BELIEVE - KNOW - NATURE

Our food is chemically contaminated (glyphosates). An attempt to fence nature to submit. We are poisoning nature.

Industrialisation & urbanisation have moved us away from nature.

Our soil has been damaged both physically & biologically by modern farming practices.

WANT - NATURE

To apply nature-based solutions.

To transition to a regenerative model with due consideration given to practicality & scale.

More awareness that there can be more productive dairy farming without the use of chemicals.

N.

Reduction in diversity has reduced ability to react to disease of ruminants.

Loss of biodiversity.

Our rivers & water sources are polluted.

Demand for cheap food has brought about intensification of farming.

N.

We want action to

- Protection & enhancement of our soil health.
- Educate our children & communities on the importance of our soil health for our future.
- All our rivers, water bodies to be restored to pristine status.

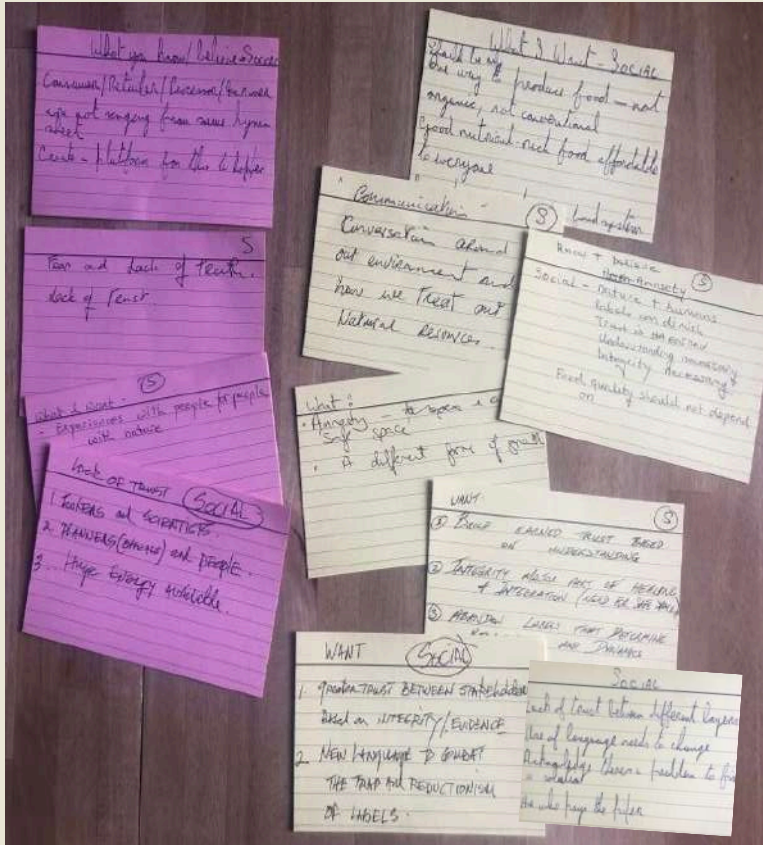
SOCIAL

What we know and believe

- Lack of trust between:
 - XXX and scientists
 - Planners (officials) and people
- Huge energy available
- Consumer/Retailer/Processors/Farmers are not singing from same song-sheet
- Create a platform for this to xxx
- Social = community
- People, mammals, plants, all living things
- Lack of trust between various groups
- Belief of trust between various groups
- DS – 1st point: acknowledge there is a problem
- Fear and lack of truth. Lack of trust.
- Trust is earned
- Understanding is necessary
- Integrity is necessary
- Food quality should not depend on..

What we want

- Experiences with people for people with nature
- Greater trust between stakeholder based on integrity and evidence
- New language to combat the trap and reductionism of labels
- Build earned trust based on understanding
- Integrity major part of healing and integration (need for safe space)
- Abandon labels that determine relationships and dynamics
- Amnesty – and a safe space
- A different form of growth
- Communication - conversation around our environment and how we treat our natural resources
- Use of language needs to change
- Acknowledge there is a problem to find a solution
- He who pays the piper
- Should be only one way to produce food – not organic, not conventional.
- Good nutrient-rich food affordable to everyone
- Farmer/consumer driving the food system



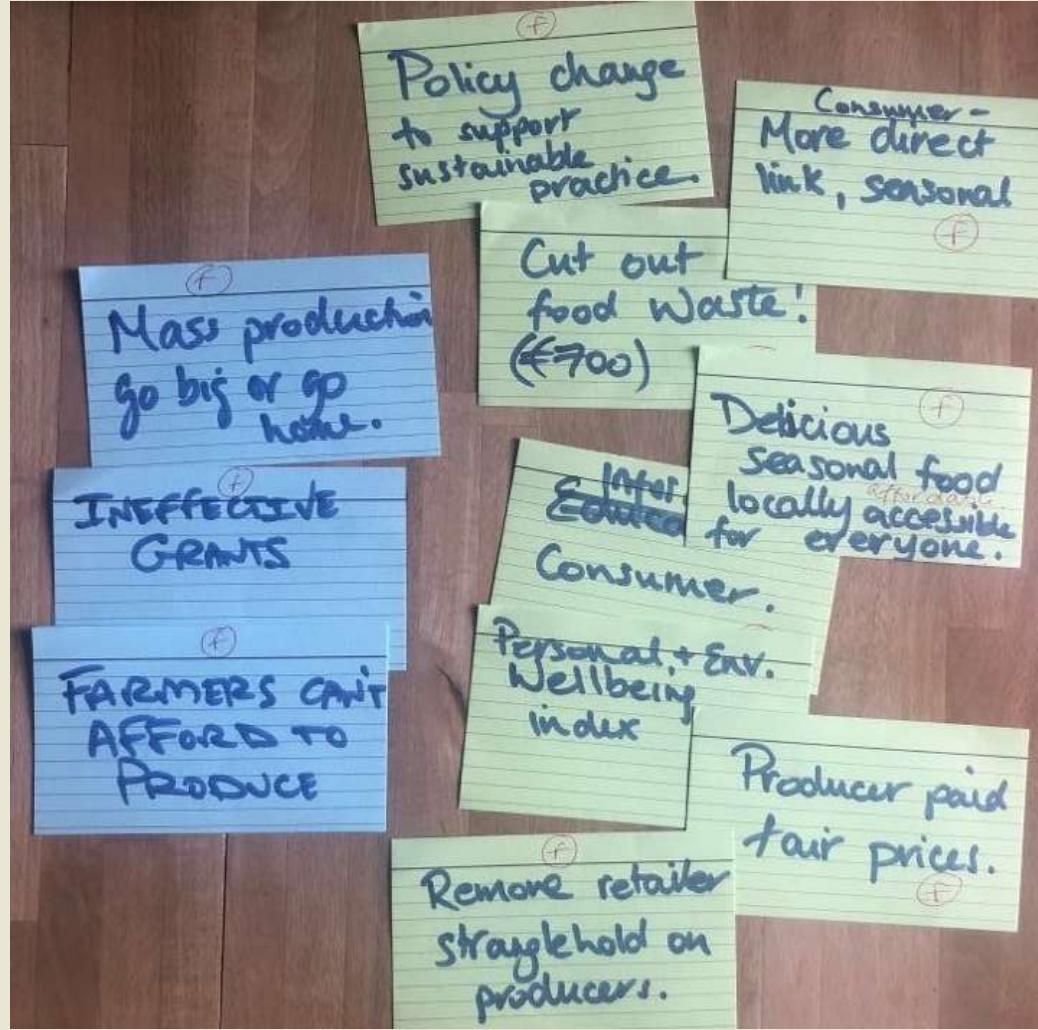
FINANCIAL

What we know and believe

- Farmers can't afford to produce
- Consumers don't know the true cost of food
- Ineffective grants
- Mass production – go big or go home

What we want

- Remove retailer stranglehold on producers
- Producer paid fair prices
- Personal and environmental wellbeing index
- Delicious seasonal food locally accessible and affordable for everyone
- Informed consumers
- Cut out food waste (700 Euros)
- Policy change to support sustainable practice
- Consumer - more direct link and seasonal



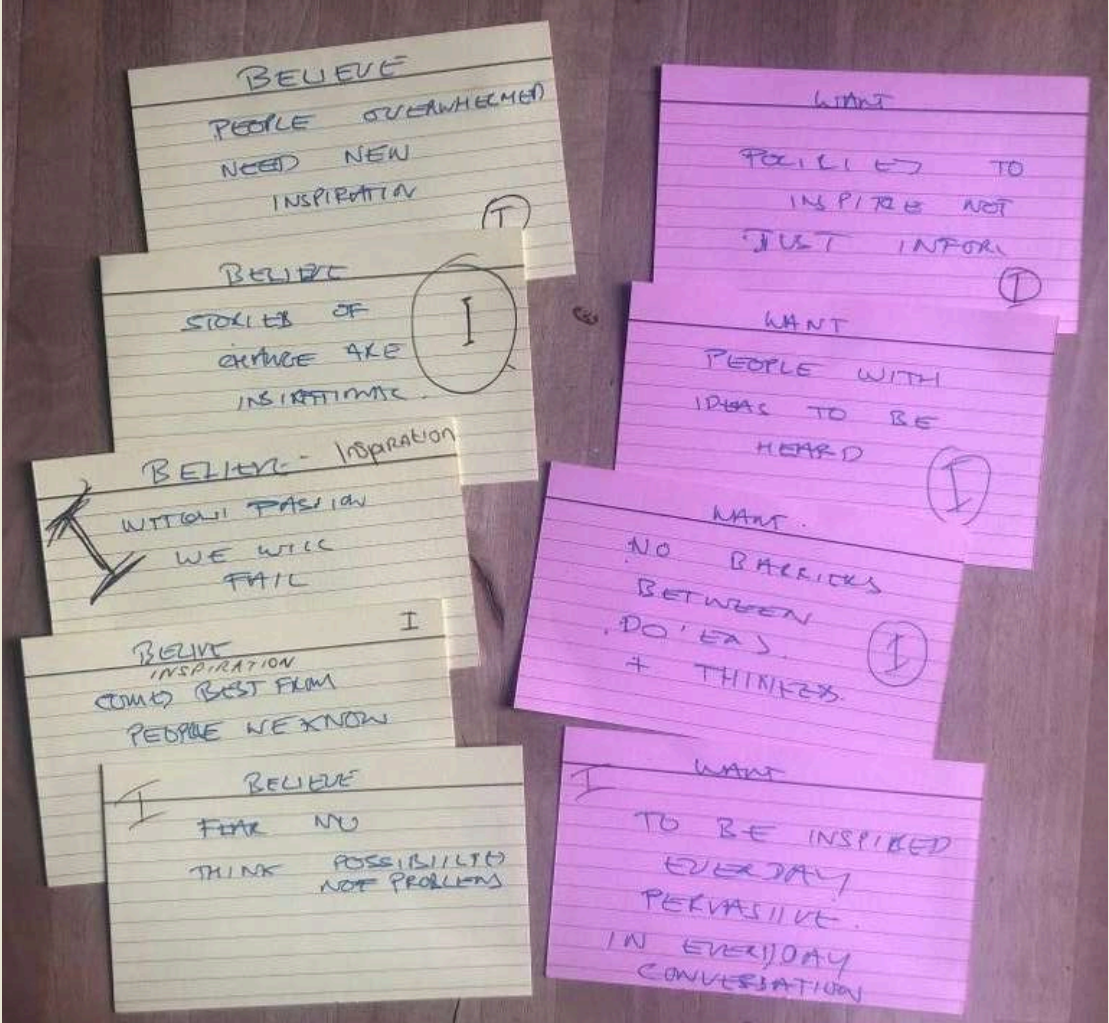
INSPIRATION

What we know and believe

- Fear XX
- Think possibilities not problems
- Inspiration comes best from people we know
- Without passion we will fail
- Stories of change are inspirational
- People are overwhelmed and need new inspiration

What we want

- To be inspired every day, pervasively in everyday conversations
- No barriers between doers and thinkers
- People with ideas to be heard
- Priority to inspire not just inform



Sharing highlights verbally

We believe without passion we will fail

We believe people are overwhelmed and need new inspirations

We believe inspiration comes best from people we know

We believe fear is a negative thinking about problems and not possibilities

We want seasonal foods xxx that are affordable for everyone

Social and society – it extends beyond community and people to
animals, plants and all living things

We know that mass production is supported – go big or go home

We believe that industrialisation and urbanisation has moved us away from nature

Socially trust is earned, understanding is necessary, integrity is necessary

We want a society for the protection of cruelty to soils

There should only be one way to produce food –
not necessarily organic, not conventional, but costs shouldn't come in to it.
We are talking about nutrient-rich food.

We want to bring down the barriers between doers and thinkers

We want greater trust between stakeholders, based on
integrity and evidence, and a need for new language to
correct the trap and reductionism of labels

We want to transition to a regenerative model of agriculture with due
consideration given to practicality and scale

We want policies to inspire and not just inform

We want to remove retailer stranglehold on producers

**What could we do
with a manifesto?**



Summary and analysis of discussion in plenum

What happens next regarding signatories and changes to the current manifesto?

Options:

1. Be open to further input into the manifesto and continue with co-creation. Treat this as a 'seedling of our diversity' with room to grow
2. Accept this version is a snapshot of something based on who was present on this day. Other future manifestos would be different snapshots. We could have a multiplicity of manifestos.
3. Offer this version as it is for anyone that would like to sign saying they support it, even if they are not co-authors. Signing would be to express support and not to commit to doing more than that

How to use the manifesto?

- As a starting point for discussions with decision makers. A pathway to start moving along.
- Use it to feed into a future policy document (while avoiding being a policy document itself).
- Media interest? This could be of huge interest to the media. Do we want this to go nationwide?
- We are building a web of persuasion – this is a part of it.
- It can be a way to get through blocks that arise when working with ideology and incomplete evidence base.
- It can also be a way to stimulate new actions and make a platform for evidence to build around.
- it is a call to action, clear and broad.
- To invite conventional farmers and food producers/retailers feel aspirational rather than attacked, i.e. not too dogmatic nor too preachy

Other key points;

- Demonstrations will be key – we must show what works. Individual landowners and their sites are key. To inspire for change we need to link to what this can look like in reality
- Topic breadth: There are other larger challenges that are not included. This group was convened under the banner of a regenerative bioregion, in particular regarding food systems, so maybe we stick within that remit in this group.
- Might we fail? Are we brave enough to admit that we might fail? If we are consciously upfront and transparent about this, we will be brave enough!
- Irish is a nature based language. How would a manifesto written in Irish read?
- Changemaker mindset and identity: 'We are the decision makers. We are the planners. Their plans will not work if we don't follow them'. We need politicians and planners too.
- Change is possible

Discussion in plenum – raw data

- Demonstrations will be key – we must show what works.
- Will need the help of government agencies that are blinkered and tamed into their current positions.
- Individual landowners and their sites are key.
- Change is possible – e.g. All Ireland pollinator plan is a good example of what can be done.
- To inspire for change we need to link to what this can look like in reality

- Signatories – We need farmers and politicians. There is a spectrum of knowledge and size of operation relevant to this. We must include, no matter how small so that it is a little bit of everyone no matter how small. ‘Yes and...’ so that people do not feel overwhelmed.
- Further input into the manifesto?
- Shall we use this to communicate as it is now, or will it change?

- What does it mean to sign this?

- A discussion on the fact that when a manifesto is written it is a snapshot in time.
- It can be used to feed into a policy document
- The participants today are not representative of the population of Waterford as a whole – lacking in diversity on several dimensions. Does this matter? Either yes if we hope to use this as a representative document, or no if it is a snapshot manifesto representing what was said on this individual day by the individuals present. Is it a seedling of our diversity?

- Media interest? This could be of huge interest to the media. Do we want this to go nationwide?
- How wide is it in its objectives? There are other larger challenges – deforestation – that are not included.
- Are we brave enough to admit that we might fail.

- We are building a web of persuasion
- How many planners and politicians are in the room? Manifestos need to recognise where politicians find themselves. What do relationships look like if they are built from the bottom up? 50,000 people in Ireland are illiterate, and there are many language barriers.

Discussion in plenum – raw data

- Emergence 80% of biodiversity resides in 20% of land and that locks in indigenous. I know the land, it can't heal,
- Manifesto – is one form of deliberative democracy. Why should there only be one form of manifesto? In theory we could go to another place tomorrow and co-write another manifesto based on the people present there. A multiplicity of manifestos. We are engaging in collective deliberation around our beliefs and aspirations at this moment in time.
- Passion and evidence have to converge in the roots of what we do.
- There is a tension between ideology and action. Ideology can block beneficial changes, evidence can help to mitigate that.
- Regenerative agriculture has many blocks and many requirements if it is to do what we hope for. A manifesto hopes to be a way to get through those blocks that reflects our collated positions. It can also be a way to stimulate new actions and make a platform for evidence to build around.

- Irish is a nature based language. How would a manifesto written in Irish read?
- A draft manifesto can be a starting point for discussions with decision makers. A pathway to start moving along.

- We are the decision makers. We are the planners. Their plans will not work if we don't follow them. I choose to do it my way if I know it is better for the environment.
- Overfishing of sprats in Waterford Harbour is an unmanaged massacre of the sprats.
- 'As well as'
- We are a special interest group – unless we have support. Politics is about numbers, politicians are weighing up the pros and cons of doing things. If there are enough people in the room to pressurise, and we do represent folk, then things will happen-
- A manifesto is somewhere in-between inspiration and frustration. We can freeze or fawn, fight or flight in a crisis.

- We should not overthink this – it is a call to action, clear and broad.
- We must make sure it is inclusive enough to let conventional beef producers feel aspirational rather than attacked, i.e. not too dogmatic as a document, nor too preachy from a position of moral authority.
- The question of if this is a draft, or maybe an open ended draft? Should we have a deadline for people to feed into it? Can we be facilitators or change through this document?
- To build trust we must have demonstrations or what works.

- The word in itself – manifesto – could be discussed.
- Two important words are 'what' and 'if' as we look to the future and want to introduce change.



Proposed manifesto
Version 1



**A Waterford Manifesto
for a Regenerative Bioregion**

A Waterford Manifesto for a Regenerative Bioregion

This document is the result of a coming together of approximately 30 farmers, teachers, researchers, growers, social entrepreneurs, communication and marketing experts, engaged citizens, ecologists, fundraisers and others to co-write a Waterford manifesto for regenerative bioregion. The particular focus was resilient food systems and how these relate to healthy ecosystems and community well-being.

In the Waterford bioregion we **believe and know** that :

- Water is not pristine
- Biodiversity has been lost
- Soils are damaged
- The ability to make agri-food choices for well-being of planet and people is difficult
- There is a lack of trust
- Understanding is a must
- Community is core
- The cost of food must be transparent
- Grants are not effective
- Mass production is not the only answer
- Inspiration comes best from people we know
- Possibilities are more inspiring than problems
- Without passion we fail
- Change is possible

In the Waterford bioregion **we want**:

- To work for a transition to a regenerative model
- A society for the protection of soils, including education
- Restoration of rivers and water bodies to pristine conditions
- Nature based solutions
- Dairy farms showing how to be more productive without chemicals
- Contact with, and experience of, nature
- Trust - through understanding and demonstration
- A new language for communicating nature and relationships
- New indicators of growth for universal well-being
- Farmers and consumers to drive our food systems
- A weakening of the retailer-producer bond
- Fair prices to be paid to producers
- Seasonal food to be locally accessible and affordable to all
- Food waste to be drastically reduced
- Policy changes to support sustainable and regenerative practices
- To be inspired everyday, pervasively
- No barriers between thinkers and doers
- People with ideas to be heard
- Policies that inspire, not just inform
- Demonstrations of what works for nature, health and well-being

The manifesto is a co-produced document, created through a deliberative and democratic process amongst those that were present on 11th September 2022. We acknowledge that the opinions represented here are limited to those that were present on this one particular day. We also believe that as 'seedlings of the bioregion's diversity', the findings might resonate with others, and that perhaps one day they could be nourished and grow to include many more voices and another future version of The Waterford Manifesto for a Regenerative Bioregion.

Expanded version of ‘what we know and believe’

Based on group work and feedback on Four Returns

We believe and know that in the Waterford bioregion:

NATURE

- **Water is not pristine:** Our rivers and water sources are polluted. Our grandchildren have not tasted wild salmon.
- **Biodiversity has been lost** and intense farming methods Reduction of biodiversity has occurred and resulted in reduced disease resistance
- **Soils are damaged** – both physically and biologically. Industrialisation and urbanisation has moved us away from nature and our soils have been damaged physically and biologically through modern farming practices.
- **The ability to make agri-food choices for well-being of planet and people is difficult:** We the people *can* choose to make decisions that are good for the environment. Our demand for cheap food has contributed to intensification of farming. Our food is poisoned by chemicals and contaminants.

SOCIAL

- **There is a lack of trust:** between scientists, officials and the people of the bioregion. Consumers, retailers, processors and farmers are not aligned. Trust is earned. Integrity is necessary.
- **Understanding is a must:** language matters and demonstrations of what works must be clear.
- **Community is core:** any social returns will depend on thriving communities. This includes plants and animals as well as people

FINANCIAL

- **The cost of food must be transparent:** Farmers need be able to afford to produce. Consumers need be informed so they know the true cost of food. The food waste factor need to be factored into costs and into transparent communications.
- **Grants are not effective:** funding is not demonstrably effective.
- **Mass production is not the only answer:** current policies are all about scaling or failing. The distance between consumer and producer is long and not related to seasons.

INSPIRATION

- **Inspiration comes best from people we know**
- **Possibilities are more inspiring than problems** – stories of change are inspirational
- **Without passion we fail** – and that people can become overwhelmed without inspiration

Expanded version of 'what we want'

Based on group work and feedback on Four Returns

In the Waterford bioregion we want:

NATURE

- **To work for a transition to a regenerative model**, bearing in mind practicality and scale
- **A society for the protection of soils:** an organisation that works for the protection and enhancement of our soil health, with education for children and communities
- **Restoration of rivers and water bodies** to pristine conditions
- **Nature based solutions** to be applied as the norm
- Awareness of how **dairy farms can be productive without chemicals**

SOCIAL

- **Access to contact with and experience of nature**
- **Trust:** created through understanding and demonstration
- A new degree of communication and language that deepens understanding of nature, deepens good relationships and illustrates there is only one way to produce food (not organic or conventional)
- **New indicators** of growth for universal well-being
- **Farmers and consumers to drive food systems** of the future

FINANCIAL

- **A weakening of the retailer-producer bond**
- **Fair prices to be paid to producers**
- **Seasonal food to be locally accessible and affordable to all**
- **Food waste to be drastically reduced**
- **Policy changes to support sustainable and regenerative practices**

INSPIRATION

- **To be inspired everyday, pervasively**
- **No barriers between thinkers and doers**
- **People with ideas to be heard**
- **Policies that inspire, not just inform**



Proposed manifesto
Version 2



**A Waterford Manifesto
for a Regenerative Bioregion**

The process of absorbing feedback into version 2 of the manifesto

Feedback from the workshop collected from participants. In general there was overwhelming positivity of the process and what we accomplished including the richness of the content produced and the enjoyment of the event. Also a sense of urgency and that the time for action is now.

There were two other clusters of comments that can be summarised as follows:

1. Is there room to be **more concrete in content**? Both when introducing the Waterford bioregion and the need to sustain it, and the potential for generating value in social/natural/financial and inspirational ways. Can we emphasise certain ecosystem elements more? Can we include wider challenges? Can we write a manifesto when we are not constituted more formally in other ways?
2. Is there room to be **more creative and evocative**? The writing style of version 1 of the manifesto was a bit bullet-pointy and dry. If it is not a policy document then we could try to be as creative as the examples illustrating the role of manifestos (Artists' Rights and Mens' Clothing).

In response to these two divergent directions of feedback we have done two things:

1. **More content, more concrete?** As part of the wider Bioregional Weaving Lab network we are encouraged to write a **Landscape Plan**. This is a formal report that covers definitions of the bioregion, the current challenges and context of the area, the opportunities for the future. We suggest that the desire for concrete content, **including text that incorporates the input and passion of the workshop participants**, is taken up in this document. We will invite interested parties to co-write this plan. We will use the structure and ambitions of the plan to guide BWL work over the next three months. We will remain within the frameworks and input derived at the July multi-stakeholder workshop on collective knowledge and ideas for systems change.
2. **More evocative, more creative?** Inspired directly from the Artists' Rights and Mens' Clothing manifestos, we inserted words from the manifesto workshop into these texts. The result was more emotionally stirring than the bullet point list of version 1 of our manifesto (see next page). From this, we went one step further and mashed up three manifestos into a final version 2. We hope can stand as a manifesto from this day and this moment in time that delivers on the introductory framing:

"A manifesto is not a policy document. It is something much more unruly.

Manifestos are designed to shake us up, to get us thinking, to change not just our minds but also our hearts.

They are not the summation of how far we have come. Instead, they are the starting-points for change.

They wake us from complacency. And they help usher in futures we can't yet imagine."

Step 1: what happens if we insert words from the workshop into the examples of manifestos shared early in the workshop?

Manifesto on Food's Rights (2022)

Food is not a luxury. Food is a basic social need to which everyone has a right.

Food is a way of building thought, of being aware of oneself and of the others at the same time. It is a methodology in constant transformation for the search of a here and now.

Food is an invitation to questioning; it has become the social place of doubt, of wanting to understand and wanting to change reality.

Food is not only a statement of the present, it is also a call for a different future, a better one. Therefore, it is a right not only to enjoy Food, but to be able to create it.

Food is a common good that does not have to be entirely understood in the moment one finds it.

Food is a space of vulnerability from which what is social and edible is deconstructed to construct what is human and from nature.

Food producers and consumers not only have the right to dissent, but the duty to do so.

Food producers and consumers have the right to dissent not only from affective, moral, philosophical, or cultural aspects, but also from economic and political ones.

Food producers and consumers have the right to disagree with power, with the status quo.

Food producers and consumers have the right to be respected and protected when they dissent.

Inspired by Tania Bruguera

Future Manifesto of Food (2022)

We are fighting against:

- a) A time and place where we cannot hear ideas, nor feel inspiration
- b) Barriers between thinkers and doers, and bonds between retailers and producers- which leaves us without trust, hope, understanding or belief that we are the ultimate decision makers
- c) The fact we do not have a Society for the Protection of Soils
- d) So-called mass-production for the people, which we know is mass-destruction for the land.

We want Futurist food to come from this region that is the most wonderful place in the universe. We want it to come from a place where community is core.

We want Futurist Food to be:

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

Inspirational, pervasively, every day.

Easy to get and affordable for all.

Familiar and connected to people we know.

Secure in a system driven farmers and consumers.

Overwhelming – so we are less overwhelmed by other things

Pristine

Fair

Seasonal

Delicious

Nutritious

Inspired by Giacomo Balla

Step 2: what happens if we mash-up all versions into a new manifesto for the Waterford bioregion? This is Version 2 of the manifesto.

Waterford Food Manifesto *(to be read out loud)*

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

Food producers and consumers not only have the right to dissent but have the duty to do so.

We have the right to disagree with power, 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.

We are fighting against:

A lack of passion and invention: we want new ideas, new inspirations, new ways of relating to the food we grow and eat.

Barriers between thinkers and doers. We are, all of us, both thinkers and doers.

The current relationships between retailers and producers, that obscure the fact that we are the ultimate decision makers

Food that is unsustainable for our health

The degradation of the soil.

The degradation of the imagination.

The mass production of food, of ideas, of images, and of stories.

The mass-destruction of the land.

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.

We want our children and grandchildren to know the taste of wild salmon. 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

Delicious

Nutritious

Step 3: what happens if we relook at the second paragraph and adjust some other points according to participants' feedback? This is Version 3 of the manifesto.

Waterford Bioregion's Food Manifesto *(to be read out loud)*

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 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.

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 retailers and producers, because we are the ultimate decision makers

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 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.

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

Delicious

Nutritious

A series of white, overlapping, wavy lines on a dark teal background, resembling a stylized graphic or a path.

Next...

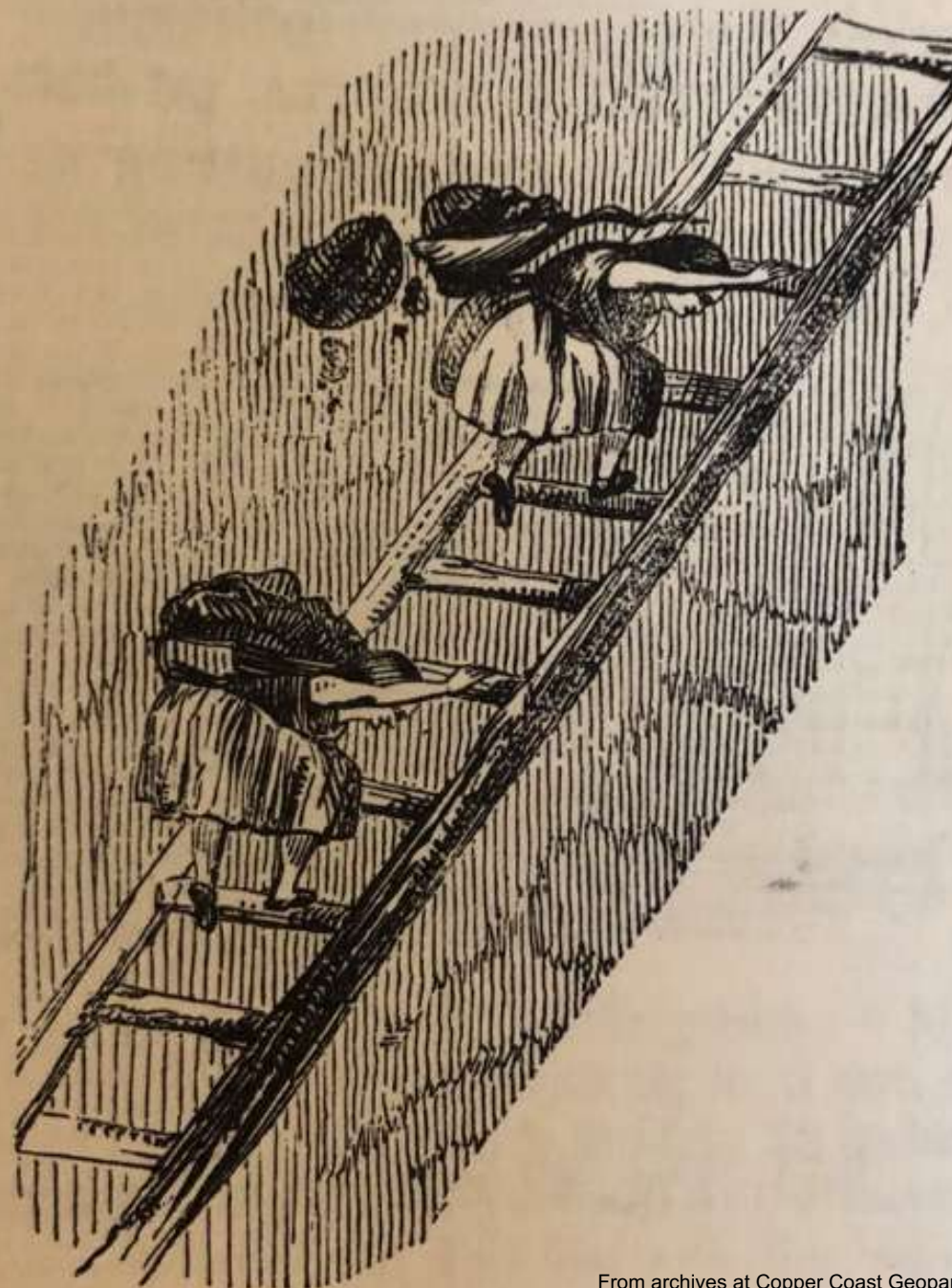


Next steps

In the immediate aftermath of the 11th September workshop:

1. We will use the manifesto to start new conversations and shift the focus of old conversations. We will encourage others to do the same.
2. We will share this report and the manifesto with the wider stakeholder group in the Waterford Bioregional Weaving Lab database.
3. We will share the manifesto on social media and ask for reflections and responses, expressions of support or dissent, from the wider public.
4. We will not have the ambition to change the 11th September manifesto after the version 3 presented here – it will stand at a product created by this specific group of people that came together at this specific moment in time.
5. We will use the words and the sentiments expressed to enrich our further written documents and our conversations.
6. BWL will consider how to write, hopefully in collaboration with interested co-writers, a Landscape Plan and commits to incorporate the wider suggestions and sentiments raised at the manifesto workshop and in subsequent feedback.

Fig. 13.



Next gatherings

Save the dates, invitations and links will follow:

Online event

Friday 21st October, 1pm – 2pm

Aims: To share the process and outcomes of the manifesto workshop with a wider audience. To read the manifesto out loud. To touch on how it can be used. To introduce the Landscape Plan as a container for capturing more content, pathways and plans for the bioregion.

Physical workshop

Monday November 14th, 2pm - 5pm or Sunday November 13th, 10am-1pm (feedback if better on a weekend or weekday?)

Aims: Future scenarios and concrete planning for implementing the manifesto and distilling out what might be concrete projects for the four returns. Landscape Plan co-creation

Physical conference

Friday December 16th, 1.30pm-5pm

Aims: To present the Landscape Plan to wide audience and highlight the opportunities it contains. To bring the elements of the bioregion together into one space. To call for partnership, investment and action in projects and approaches to communicate the value of a weaving lab in the Waterford bioregion. Location: Dunhill Multi-Education Centre, followed by optional Festive Supper Club event at GROW HQ (ticketed).



Contact:

Sarah Prosser sarah@giy.ie

Mick Kelly michael@giy.ie