



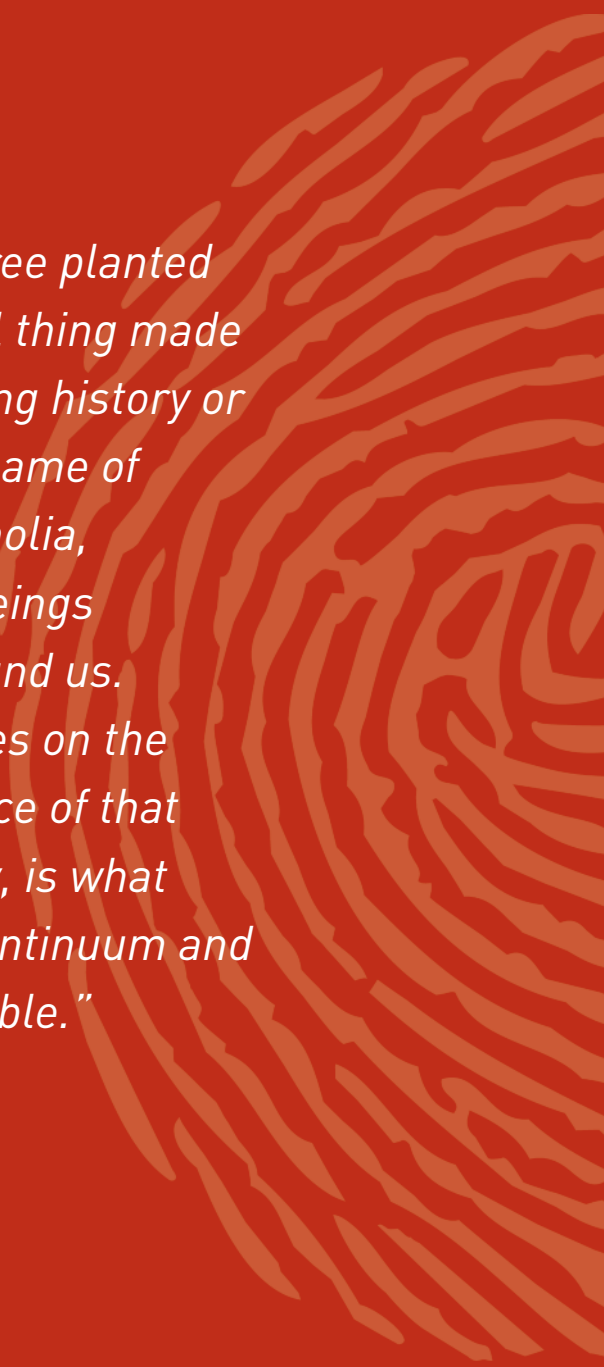
An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



**CELEBRATING**  
**20 YEARS 1995-2015**

Working for heritage | Working with communities

About the Heritage Council



*“Be it an assembly mound, a tree planted commemoratively, or a natural thing made even more remarkable by having history or tradition attached to it, in the name of pathos, angst, hubris, melancholia, aesthetic or folly, we human beings monumentalise the world around us. That’s how we imprint ourselves on the world, and being in the presence of that history, feeling the temporality, is what attaches us to the historical continuum and makes human existence bearable.”*

**Conor Newman**, *Chair*

# Contents

	Page
Early History	1
About the Heritage Council	2
Our Future	4
Working on behalf of communities	6
Promoting research, access and enjoyment of Ireland's Cultural Assets	8
Collecting data on Ireland's cultural heritage has been a core part of the Heritage Council's work since its first strategic plan in 1997	9
Promoting research, access and enjoyment of Ireland's Archaeology	11
Promoting conservation, research and enjoyment of Ireland's built heritage	12
Shaping a New Urban Policy for Ireland's Towns	15
Conserving the rural landscape	16
Recreation and Heritage	19
Promoting education, awareness and enjoyment of the national heritage	20
Wildlife	23
National Heritage Week	24
Publications	26
The Heritage Council's Role in Policy Development	27
Developing Ireland's heritage expertise in Europe	29
Our partners	30



# Our History

The Heritage Council was established as a statutory body under the Heritage Act, 1995 by the first Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht Michael D. Higgins TD. Celebrating 20 years as a statutory agency in 2015, our functions had been previously transferred to that new department from the Department of the Taoiseach in 1993. Minister Higgins appointed Freda Rountree as the first Chairperson of the statutory body. Still a relatively small body 20 years on, with only 15 full-time staff, the Heritage Council continues to meet its original aims.

The origins of the Council go back a further three decades. The need for a Heritage Council was first noted in the 1960s and grew out of a former committee of An Foras Forbartha, the Committee of Nature and Amenity. A 1967 report for the Minister for Local Government outlined 'the immediate and most important need is for an independent grant-aided body, technically competent and broadly based, and able to command widespread support'. Referring to this proposed body for the first time as the 'Heritage Council', its role was seen as giving leadership, providing specialist information, coordinating research, stimulating existing agencies, addressing gaps in voluntary bodies, and promoting legislation. The success of the Arts Council, established in 1951, led the Taoiseach of the day, Charles J. Haughey, to suggest that a similar organisation was needed with a specific heritage remit. In June 1988, following advice from a small committee on appropriate functions and structures, the creation of a National Heritage Council was presented for government approval. Lord Killanin was appointed as chairman of the new body.

It is no coincidence that the original insight of the need for a dedicated body to care for and champion Ireland's heritage coincided with the outward looking era in the 1960s, a time of sustained optimism. Preserving our heritage, was future thinking then, and part of a new found self-confidence in a still young country.

Twenty years on, we are proud that our work, and more importantly the future value of Ireland's heritage is being celebrated by the visit to us in Kilkenny of the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins. For him it is a return visit, and for us it is the warm affirmation of an old friend who was a first, foundational influence.

## About the Heritage Council

Heritage gives each place its identity, its character and its distinctiveness. As we plan for our future we need to plan for the future of our heritage also. This will ensure that the best elements of our heritage, which enhance our communities and enrich our lives, will be passed on to our children and to their children in turn. In doing so, we also ensure that our local areas and communities are good places to live and work.

The Heritage Council takes an integrated approach to heritage, with responsibilities that include both its cultural and natural aspects. The Heritage Act provides a definition of 'heritage' - and its breadth is truly comprehensive. It includes monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects such as art and industrial works, documents and genealogical records, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens, parks and inland waterways.

It has particular statutory responsibilities to ***"propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of Irish heritage"*** and in addition has a specific role ***"to promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in, and facilitate the appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage"***.

The vision that heritage is to be enjoyed, managed and protected for the vital contribution that it makes to our well-being and future, is behind all of what the organisation works to achieve. We are a public body working in the public interest. Our current priorities are to support jobs, education and heritage tourism in local communities. It complements but importantly builds on the work of other state heritage bodies which have primary responsibility for the care of property in state ownership and the designation of protected areas.





# Our Future

## Investing to realise the potential of a community based heritage infrastructure

The Heritage Council has played a lead role in creating a community based heritage infrastructure in Ireland, one that will help unlock the maximum benefits for society as a whole. This infrastructure, which complements existing state heritage services that manage state owned properties and designated sites, has proven its resilience, innovative nature and flexibility and is ready for further development and investment.

Steps we advocate to ensure that the pride we take in our own place is supported by practical proposals include:

- Invest and support the establishment of 10 Irish Uplands Partnerships building on the success of the Wicklow Uplands Council.
- Invest and support the development of a Rural Towns and Villages Network building on the success of the Irish Walled Towns Network, the pilot Historic Towns Initiative and Village Design Statements.
- Provide capacity to expand the partnership between the Heritage Council and the Local Authorities to meet local needs through the Heritage Officer Network.
- Invest in targeted support for owners of historic houses and significant elements of our vernacular architecture to create local employment.
- Support and encourage public access to significant collections through an expanded Museums Standards Programme.
- Support for local communities through targeted grants programmes that deliver on educational, employment, training and accessibility objectives.
- Commit to actions arising from emerging public policy including the National Landscape Strategy and the National Cultural Policy and maintain research in the value of heritage.
- Increase the capacity of the Heritage in Schools Programme at primary level and develop it within secondary schools.

They are sensible, straight-forward steps, that when implemented will make a big difference.

People, quality of life and pride of place are values that make heritage important. Heritage is the everyday. We take it for granted until it's gone. Then it becomes a loss that cannot be repaired. Because heritage is irreplaceable, Ireland has a **Heritage Council**. We advocate for, enhance and protect our heritage. Our job is to be a cheer leader, think tank, and practical help to local communities. We are a small public body that thinks big. Working with individuals, communities, state bodies and local authorities we aim to support the policies and people that will preserve and enhance Ireland's heritage for the future. This is our plan, for that future.

## Working on behalf of communities

From our beginning in 1995, community involvement has been at the heart of the Heritage Council's vision for national heritage. In practical programmes across Ireland, the Heritage Council has put in place infrastructure and networks that enable communities to take responsibility for and participate in the development and conservation of their heritage assets.

That has meant successfully working with a wide range of community groups in every county in Ireland.

*“It was out of an awareness of the evolving Local Agenda 21 process, and a conviction that heritage is always best managed by the people who live there that the Heritage Council developed its community based grant scheme”.*

**Freda Rountree**, Chairperson, Community-based Heritage Grant Awards, 27th April, 1998.

Since then the Heritage Council has funded over 6000 heritage projects across Ireland and allocated over 28 million to heritage conservation, education and awareness.

This has provided support and expert advice over the years to a wide range of state bodies, non-governmental organisations, individuals, community organisations, universities and many others. The very success of our approach and work has brought new challenges to the organisation in recent years.

Heritage is no longer viewed as solely the responsibility of the state but as something that provides local distinction, economic advantage and social cohesion for communities across Ireland.

This public- private partnership is at the heart of the Heritage Council's approach and has meant enormous strides have been made in the care and conservation of heritage across Ireland in recent years. Communities attach significance to their heritage because it means pride of place, social capital and economic advantage. Heritage is part of the distinction that celebrates difference in the best way and allows us to share identity generously and inclusively.



# Promoting research, access and enjoyment of Ireland's Cultural Assets

*"The material culture of this country has contributed enormously to our image abroad and our own self-image as a nation. That image, in terms of our social, cultural and economic activity and the relationship of this activity with the natural and cultural landscape, is represented by millions of objects in the national collections housed in the growing number of museums and galleries across the country".*

**Tom O'Dwyer**, former Chair



## The Museum Standard Programme for Ireland


Launched by the Heritage Council in 2006 the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland now has over 60 sites participating. The purpose of the MSPI is to benchmark and promote professional standards in collections care and visitor experience in Irish museums.

## Collecting data on Ireland's cultural heritage has been a core part of the Heritage Council's work since its first strategic plan in 1997

**The Heritage Map Viewer** ongoing since 2010 is the culmination of years of work spent gathering data on Ireland's disparate heritage. This is an innovative web-based, spatial data viewer involving 25 partners which focuses on heritage assets around Ireland and off shore. Heritage Maps allows you to look at a wide range of built and natural heritage data sets in map form, much of which have never been accessible to the public before.

**An Audit of Maritime Collections** was published in 2005 and it reflected several years work in the area. It included collections of three dimensional objects: seagoing and inland boats; and ancillary objects associated with boat-based activities, such as navigational technology and fishing. Collections of naval and merchant marine memorabilia and collections of shipwreck artefacts were also included. The audit set a reliable baseline at national level for the range and condition of heritage boats and related objects. This was followed in 2007 with the draft *Scoping Study on the Creation of a Naval or Maritime Museum* in Haulbowline, Cork harbour, in partnership with the Irish Naval Service, a great ambition yet to be realised.

**A Survey of Irish Archive Collections** was also undertaken in 2005. Given the fundamental importance of archives to our cultural, political and social heritage, as well as their key role in compliance with legislation, the well being of the archive sector is of concern to us all. The Heritage Council's survey of the archive sector gathered information to provide an indication of the health or otherwise of the sector. Now in 2015, the eve of the 1916 Rising we can look back on this work as foundational in highlighting the importance of our archives for both the public and scholars to better understand the rich texture of Irish identity.



*“The best place for a site or monument to be is where it is meant to be, where it always was, integrated into an evolving social landscape, one where the changes that are occurring do not rob it of its currency, its capacity to teach, to remind us that we have a history, an ancestry and a future.”*

*Conor Newman, Chair*



## Promoting research, access and enjoyment of Ireland's Archaeology

The past 20 years has been an exciting and challenging time for archaeology in Ireland. The Heritage Council has played a unique role during this time.

Through our grants programmes it has supported and encouraged public participation and the idea that archaeology is not just for professionals. Today we have hundreds of community projects across Ireland dealing with medieval graveyards, castles, deserted towns, ritual monuments and urban history.

Support for farmers and owners of large archaeological complexes like Rindoon, Newtown Jerpoint and Clonmines and through the Field Monument Advisor Scheme has seen visits to some 4,000 archaeological monuments with landowners in nine counties across Ireland.

Since 1995 there has been a greater recognition of the historic value of whole areas or landscapes, rather than just individual monuments or special places. Projects using *Historic Landscape Characterisation* and aerial survey techniques supported by the Heritage Council have underpinned this change.

During the 1990s the Heritage Council put a strong emphasis on the need for increased communication and supported archaeological publications in cities like Galway, Cork, Kilkenny and Waterford and in numerous other places across Ireland. In recent years the Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research (INSTAR) programme has changed our understanding of the Neolithic and early medieval periods through research partnerships.

# Promoting conservation, research and enjoyment of Ireland's built heritage

The built environment is part of our lives, shelters our activities and supports our sense of identity. As defined by the Heritage Act, 1995 architectural heritage includes all structures, buildings, traditional and designed, and groups of buildings including street-scapes and urban vistas, which are of historical, archaeological, artistic, engineering, scientific, social or technical interest.

## Buildings at Risk Grants Scheme

Through our early grant schemes the Heritage Council improved the assessment of buildings of heritage value in Ireland. The process of inspecting buildings as well as providing grant aid improved good practice in this sector and ensured that the works were carried out to the highest standard.

**Through this process over 800 buildings have been repaired, ensuring their survival for the long term.**

## Conservations Plans

The introduction of the Conservation Plan methodology by the Heritage Council in 1998, which was first applied to St. Brendan's Cathedral, Clonfert, Co. Galway, provided a practical vision for the repairs and conservation of buildings of national and internationally significance. The Conservation Plan process draws together all the elements of the built and natural heritage in a historic place, as well as providing a forum for all interested parties to come together and agree the way forward. The Heritage Council has undertaken 11 Conservation Plans directly and funded many more to allow essential decisions to be taken in an inclusive and scholarly way, in the spirit of the Venice Charter. *'The conservation and restoration of monuments must have recourse to all the sciences and techniques which can contribute to the study and safeguarding of the architectural heritage.'*

## Research

In recent years the Heritage Council has carried out much needed research on *The Economic Value of the historic Environment* (Ecorys UK, 2012) and *An Assessment of Possible Fiscal Incentives in Relation to the Built Heritage in Ireland's Towns* (Peter Bacon & Associates, 2014). Both reports will inform the Heritage Council's urban policy for the future.





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## Shaping a New Urban Policy for Ireland's Towns

All international research highlights the financial and jobs benefits that arise from the conservation and restoration of historic building stock. Historic and vernacular buildings are the principle assets of our heritage towns. If we want heritage to keep delivering we need to invest in it. This is not just about money. We need the investment of a new philosophy.

### Irish Walled Towns Network

The role of the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN) is to unite and co-ordinate the strategic efforts of Local Authorities involved in the management, conservation and enhancement of historic walled towns in Ireland, both North and South.

In line with the provisions of the *Heritage Act, 1995* the Irish Walled Towns Network seeks to ensure that Ireland's unique cultural and archaeological heritage in relation to its walled and fortified towns and cities is protected and managed in a sustainable and appropriate manner in the long-term. Today 22 towns are members of the network bringing much needed social engagement, pride and tourism benefits to these towns.

### Planning

As a statutory prescribed body, the Heritage Council has championed innovative approaches and policy to ensure better planning and management of our distinctive cultural landscapes including our cities, towns and villages in accordance with the *Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010*. We have made detailed submissions to government as part of the National Planning Referral Programme.

We provide support for community involvement in planning through our Village Design work and through Public Realm Plans for historic towns which has been widely recognised.

## Conserving the rural landscape

Since it was established, and helped by the fact that it is based in Kilkenny, the Heritage Council has built strong networks and partnerships across rural Ireland. The case studies that it has sponsored, facilitated and partnered over the past 20 years prove that an approach based on the principle of shared stewardship works. It delivers quality communal landscapes that generate sustainable employment, social capital, community and functioning ecologies.

### High Nature Value Farming (HNVF)

*“One of the clearest trends in the Irish countryside today is a polarising of the distinction between the commercially viable full-time farmer, and the subsidy-dependent small, mainly part-time farmer and while the impact of agricultural intensification on our environment has been well documented, the threat posed by agricultural decline has scarcely raised an eyebrow”.* **Brendan Dunford**, Council member.

Finding new ways to maintain farming on marginal lands benefits all of us and protects biodiversity, monuments and a way of life. Without this type of farming the Irish landscape as we know it would not exist. **The Heritage Council has long supported the High Nature Value Farming initiative to help maintain our biodiversity and rural heritage.** It has grant-aided the European Forum for Nature Conservation and Pastoralism to undertake work on high nature value farming since 2010 and has produced reports on how HNV farming can be better supported in the Aran Islands, North Connemara and the Iveragh Peninsula.

### Repairing Vernacular Farm Buildings

Working with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine the Heritage Council manages the **REPS 4 Traditional Farm Buildings Scheme Initiative**. Since 2009 322 unique farm buildings have been preserved for future generations.

Farm buildings play a positive role in the scenery of our country. They bear witness to our long lasting relationship with the land and are part of who we are. As well as providing a means of employment in rural areas for professionals and local contractors the scheme encourages many farmers to carry out some of the repairs themselves. As farmers take on the work themselves they learn new skills and ensure a greater availability of craft skills in the local area.

*"I often ask my students 'what is the greatest archaeological monument on earth?' The answer of course is farmland; the fields, walls, hedges, yards, sheds, milking parlors, barns, terraces, droveways, you name it."*

**Conor Newman, Chair**





## Recreation and Heritage

**One of the early projects involving the Heritage Council in recreation and heritage was our work on Ireland's inland waterways.** Ireland's inland navigations have been used since people first sailed up our river estuaries nine thousand years ago. Our man-made inland waterways were created at the beginning of the last century as a means of transporting goods. The development of road and rail networks over the past two hundred years have now made that primary transport function redundant. The potential of the inland waterways as a multi-use tourism resource, and as an amenity for local communities was recognised as early as 1999 when the Heritage Council produced *Proposals for the future of Ireland's Inland Waterways*, driven in large part by the enthusiasm and knowledge of former Chair, Ruth Delaney. Recognising their value for heritage conservation as well as recreation, this early work helped build public appreciation for their potential to contribute to recreation and health, biodiversity and economic development.

**The Pilgrim Paths project** was set up by the Heritage Council in 1997 and involved seven routes across Ireland. In association with local communities, it aimed to develop a network of walking routes along medieval pilgrimage paths. It sought to raise awareness of the different aspects of heritage encountered along the routes, while contributing to sustainable tourism and community development. The medieval pilgrimage was originally a journey that combined prayer, sacrifice and devotion - with an element of physical discomfort - by which the pilgrim could become closer to God. It also fulfilled many of the functions of a modern holiday.

**The Beara Breifne Way** follows the line of the historic march of O'Sullivan Beara in 1602. In the aftermath of the Battle of Kinsale, Donal Cam, Chieftain of the O'Sullivan Beara clan, and his followers undertook this epic 14-day march. The Beara Breifne Way is an ambitious undertaking which will see the development of a walking and cycling route along the spine of the country, from Beara in Co. Cork to Breifne in Co. Leitrim. With 240 farmers living on the Beara Way alone, the scale of community collaboration becomes clear. The Heritage Council has been supporting this project since 2001, leveraging additional support from Interreg Europe and Fáilte Ireland.

# Promoting education, awareness and enjoyment of the national heritage

Education has always been at the heart of the Heritage Council's work programme. Only through education can we fully unlock the wonders of our heritage and learn how to safeguard its intrinsic values.

## **The Heritage in Schools Programme**

The Heritage in Schools programme was set up in partnership with the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) in 1999 and had 15 members on its panel that visited primary schools around Ireland to encourage children to leave the classroom and experience heritage in a hands on way.

Today it is managed directly by the Heritage Council. It has 176 heritage specialist on the panel and 100,000 children annually take part in the scheme. The Council has also supported over 2000 trainee teachers in developing local heritage based projects as part of their teaching resource. Funding for education initiatives through the heritage officer programme has delivered wide ranging and locally relevant educational projects and materials across Ireland since it was first set up in 1998.

As well as specific programmes and grants targeting the formal education sector the Heritage Council has supported wide ranging professional development programmes dealing with landscape, museums, archaeology and traditional skills.

## **The Conservation Internship Programme**

In partnership with national cultural institutions this programme has been running since 2006. The interns are students who have completed specialised conservation courses usually in the areas of paper, book bindings and painting. The scheme is advertised internationally as there are no advanced conservation courses in Ireland and it generates much interest from international students and Irish students studying abroad. In this way, the scheme helps place Ireland on the international scene as well as building up a network with the conservation community at home and elsewhere.



A guide to the  
*Butterflies*  
of Ireland

Whites and Yellows





*“What a country chooses to save is what a country chooses to say about itself.”*

**Mollie Beattie, 1993 - 1996**

## Wildlife

The Heritage Council promotes policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage, including wildlife habitats, flora and fauna.

### **Heritage Council has focused its wildlife work on three areas**

We provide heritage policy advice to a range of government agencies and departments. This work includes the development of the second National Biodiversity Plan and advice on agricultural policies, particularly with regard to the maintenance of high nature value farming and the development of effective and robust agri-environment programmes.

Working with government departments, State agencies, non-governmental organisations and heritage professionals on strategically important heritage initiatives, such as the development of best practice methodologies (e.g. habitat mapping) and the implementation of national policies and plans (such as the National Biodiversity Plan and Local Biodiversity Action Plans);

Promoting the collection, management and dissemination of information on Ireland's natural heritage, most specifically through the National Biodiversity Data Centre, but also by supporting a range of research and survey initiatives, including through the grants programmes.

The diversity of our natural environment is an irreplaceable part of our heritage. In each generation it is a custody we enjoy for a short time. Modern life puts huge pressure on biodiversity, in turn the quality of our own life, and that of our children, is utterly dependent on it. The practical programmes we support, are a tangible effort to ensure that our natural world is enhanced, not degraded, by the time we in this generation spend upon it.

## National Heritage Week

The Heritage Council has been responsible for managing National Heritage Week in Ireland since 2005. In that time the week has grown considerably, from 400 events nationwide in 2005 to **1800 in 2014 involving almost 1000 organisations and individuals across Ireland.**

It is the biggest cultural and educational event in Ireland with **almost 400,000 people attending events** over the week and has grown year on year since 2005.

It is a part of European Heritage Days, a partnership programme with the Council of Europe and the European Commission and is celebrated in over 40 countries across Europe.

This year we are shining a light on an under-appreciated part of Ireland's heritage, its industrial past and very much look forward to promoting this forgotten aspect of our heritage.

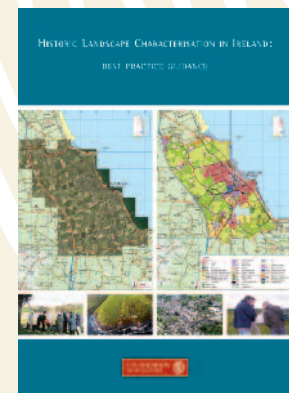
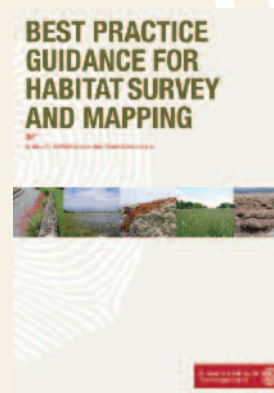
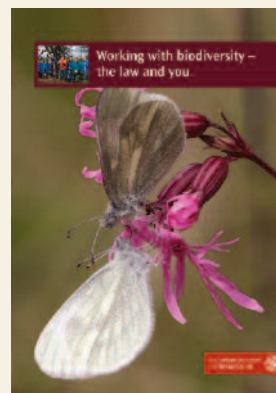
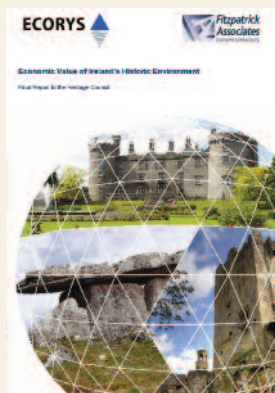
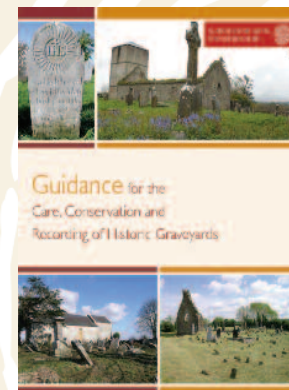
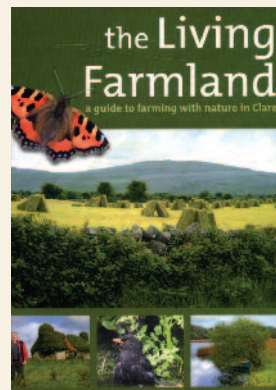


# Publications

Through its grants schemes the Heritage Council has supported the publication of hundreds of heritage related texts ensuring knowledge, research, memories and a love of Ireland's heritage is preserved and passed on to future generations.

It has also produced over 80 publications directly covering many aspects of Ireland's heritage from policy documents, conservation plans, best practice guidance to information leaflets for schools and Heritage Outlook for the wider public.

Here is a sample of a few of these.



# The Heritage Council's Role in Policy Development

Giving thought leadership and expert advice is a core part of our mission. All infrastructure developments impact on the national heritage. The Heritage Council has played a critical role providing expert policy advice to the Minister and has helped Ireland meet its international obligations across a wide range of areas since it was set up.

*Conserving Ireland's Maritime Heritage* (2006)

*Integrating Policies for Ireland's Inland Waterways* (2005)

*Recommendations for the Establishment of a National Biological Records Centre* (2003)

*A Policy Framework for the Irish Museum Sector* (2003)

*Forestry & the National Heritage: A Review of the Heritage Council's Forestry Policy* (2002)

*Policy Paper on Ireland's Landscape & the National Heritage* (2002)

*Policy Paper on Heritage Awareness in Ireland* (2000)

*Proposals for the Future of Ireland's Inland Waterways* (1999)

*Policy Paper on Urban Archaeology & the National Heritage* (1999)

*Policy Paper on: Agriculture & the National Heritage* (1999)

*Policy Paper on: Forestry & the National Heritage* (1999)

Our policy advice has led to important developments for the long term benefit of Ireland's heritage. The establishment of the National Biodiversity Data Centre and the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland grew out of the policy advice developed by the Heritage Council. Our ongoing work on agriculture and the Common Agricultural Policy has ensured a shift in benefits for those farming for nature conservation as well as investments in traditional farm buildings, care for archaeological monuments and developing additional skills for farmers in conservation.

**In more recent years the Heritage Council has used its policy advice function to assist government in its policy formulation in a wide range of areas.**

The Heritage Council's reports on *On-Shore Wind Farm Sector in Ireland: Planning in Harmony with Heritage* 2015, *Landscape Character Assessment in Ireland: A Baseline Audit and Evaluation* 2006 and a *Review of the 'Pilot' Upper Shannon Tax Incentive Scheme* submitted to the Department of Finance in 2005 provide important, independent advice on changing land use and its impact on the national heritage.



## Developing Ireland's heritage expertise in Europe

The Heritage Council represents Ireland on the Executive Board and Steering Committee of the Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage and Global Change (JPICH) . The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is an EU-level initiative, working towards shared trans-national priorities for cultural heritage research in Europe. To this end, the JPICH has recently produced a strategic research agenda for cultural heritage, to which the Heritage Council has made a significant contribution. The JPICH has also recently funded ten cultural heritage research projects across Europe, one of which, A Sustainable Future for the Historic Urban Core, is part-funded by the Heritage Council through a team of urban planning researchers based at University College Dublin. As part of our involvement in the Joint Pilot Call for Research Proposals, the Heritage Council manages the Heritage Portal website ([www.heritageportal.eu](http://www.heritageportal.eu)), an online cultural heritage research community.

The Heritage Council represents Ireland on the steering group of the European Heritage Days programme, referred to as National Heritage Week in Ireland. Every year, the 50 signatory States to the European Cultural Convention take part in the European Heritage Days – a joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, putting new cultural assets on view and opening up historical buildings normally closed to the public. The cultural events highlight local skills and traditions, architecture and works of art, but the broader aim is to bring citizens together in harmony even though there are differences in cultures and languages.

The Heritage Council has also secured funding from 'Erasmus+' in 2015 to carry out a 'Train the Trainer' scheme of information exchange and job shadowing. This is being carried out in partnership with the Building Limes Forum Ireland and several Institutes of Technology in Ireland, and the Scottish Lime Centre Trust, at Charlestown, Fife, in Scotland.

This work cumulatively connects Irish heritage, and our work as a state body to a wider hinterland of experience. Through myriad connections and conversations we both learn from and contribute to the protection of heritage across the continent.

## Our partners

Given our relatively small staff, the Heritage Council delivers its broad policy agenda by working closely with others. Most important is our ongoing relationships with local authorities across the country. Building expertise and resources at local level has been a key objective of Council since it was established. Management and responsibility at local level is often the best means to ensure the long-term care and sustainable use of our heritage.


The Heritage Council has a complex national brief. This fact, combined with Council's relatively limited resources, place a heavy and welcome reliance on the Council to work with others to achieve common aims together. **Council has partners at all levels including:**

- Local (including local authorities, their heritage officers, heritage fora, community groups)
- Regional (including regional assemblies and tourism boards)
- National (including Government departments, semi-state agencies, cultural institutions, NGOs, professional bodies)
- International; Council of Europe, European Commission, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

In addition, Council provides core funding for partners to help meet the needs of the sector and to help achieve shared aims:

- The National Biodiversity Data Centre
- The Museums Standards Programme
- Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN)
- The Discovery Programme
- The Irish Landmark Trust
- Woodlands of Ireland
- Wicklow Uplands Council
- Ireland Reaching Out
- Burren Beo

Many aspects of the Heritage Council's work are delivered in association with one, or a combination of, the above partners.



Ireland has a remarkable, unique and extensive cultural and natural heritage - but like so many important things - heritage is fragile. It delivers so much in terms of important human experience and enjoyment, it enriches lives and allows our society to define itself but it needs constant protection and development. The Heritage Council works with partners, particularly at local level, to increase awareness of our national heritage and to highlight its importance to public policy and everyday life.

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