

2024

Kildare Biodiversity Conference



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Conference Report
Kildare Wildlife Rescue
15/11/2024

Kildare Biodiversity Conference 2024

Date: Saturday 19th October

The Keadeen Hotel, Newbridge, Co Kildare

Introduction

The second annual Kildare Biodiversity Conference was organised by Kildare Wildlife Rescue (KWR) in partnership with Kildare County Council and supported by the Local Biodiversity Action Fund from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. This conference built on the success of the first Kildare Biodiversity Conference held in 2023, with the same aim - to promote biodiversity, conservation and collaboration in Co Kildare. The event, held at the Keadeen Hotel in Newbridge, offered yet again a platform to individuals, organisations and groups, engaged in the area of biodiversity in Kildare.

Conference Objectives:

- Learn from each other, and showcase best practice and case studies
- Identify opportunities for collaboration
- Identify gaps in skills and knowledge
- Network and establish connections to address these gaps on individual and community levels
- Improve action on the ground for biodiversity across County Kildare and further afield



Attendance

The event was completely sold out, with 120 tickets sold and with additional 30 guest attendees present on the day. The diverse audience consisted of volunteers from a large variety of local community groups and organisations, farmers, students and other individuals passionate about biodiversity issues.



Speakers

The programme started with a Welcome Address by Kildare County Council Cathaoirleach Joe Neville, and a video link address by Minister Malcolm Noonan. The schedule then included 12 individual presentations on a wide range of biodiversity topics. The event was concluded by a moderated Panel Discussion, questions from the audience and Closing Statements.

List of Speakers and Topics

Joe Neville

Kildare County Council Cathaoirleach

Welcome Address

Malcolm Noonan

Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Welcome Address via Video Link

Dr Méabh Boylan

Biodiversity Officer – Kildare County Council

A new biodiversity action plan for Kildare County Council

Dermot Doran

North Kildare Farmer

Build it and they will come

Ruairi Mc an Tuile

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Monitoring peregrine falcon populations

Jesmond Harding

Conservation Officer for Butterfly Conservation Ireland and Author

Protecting Butterflies and Moths in Kildare

Tom McCormack

Birdwatch Ireland – Kildare Branch

Championing the Lapwing: Strategies for Successful Breeding and Conservation

Nuala Madigan

Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Peatland Conservation Council
The Hop to It Frog Survey — a citizen science survey

Seán Byrne

Zoologist with Kildare Wildlife Rescue
The Impact of Domestic and Feral Cats on Wildlife

Maria O'Neill

Ballymore Eustace Environmental Group (BEE Group)
A Community Campaign to Control Himalayan Balsam 2024

Dr Jim Carolan

Lecturer and Researcher at the Department of Biology, Maynooth University
Biodiversity and its Management at Maynooth University

Anna Collins

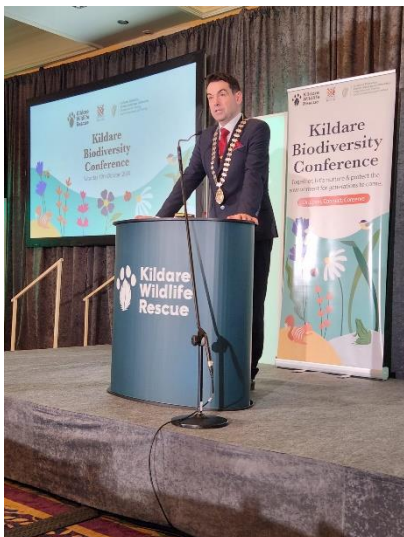
Kildare Bat Group
Projects to Date

Kate Maher

Founder of Dúlra Cill Dara

Lucy Bell

Founder of Growing Wild and Forest School Leader (*Panelist*)



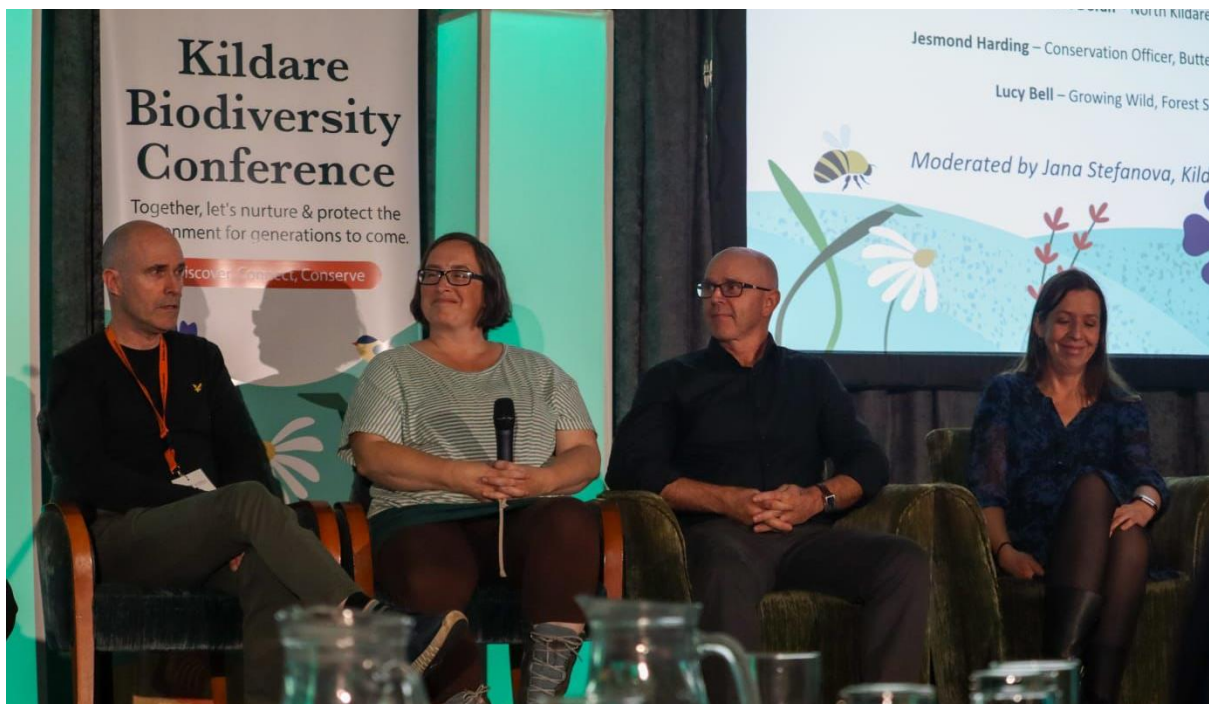
Panel Discussion

A panel discussion addressing a variety of questions and topics provided a lively conclusion of the event. Before lunch break, all attendees were provided with a piece of paper to note down any questions they might have for the panel. These suggestions were then gathered and the most suggested themes, as well as questions taken directly from the audience, were discussed by four panellists: Dr Méabh Boylan, Dermot Doran, Jesmond Harding and Lucy Bell.

Among the topics addressed were suggestions for rewilding of gardens and other spaces, with a variety of recommendations on growing native and wildlife friendly plants. This topic sparked a lively debate on regulations of planting of invasive species by developers and calls for tightening of regulations around import of plants to Ireland to prevent spread of diseases among Ireland's native plants.

Great importance was placed on plant provenance, where both panel and attendees agreed that planting a native species cultivated abroad and imported to Ireland is not enough, and that local nurseries growing from native seeds collected locally should always be the first choice where possible. Among other questions addressed were also the effects of light pollution on wildlife, biodiversity credits and other issues.

The panel provided a platform for meaningful discourse on environmental issues and potential solutions and encouraged further communication and cooperation between the speakers and conference attendees.



Other Speakers and Coordinators of the Event

The organisation of the venue, speakers, programme and the overall coordination of the conference was managed by KWR Manager Dan Donoher, with support of KWR volunteers. The conference was moderated by KWR Rescue Coordinator Pearse Stokes and the Panel Discussion was moderated by KWR Director Jana Stefanova. KWR Training and Engagement Officer Petra Fransas delivered Closing Statements which concluded the event.

Media Coverage

The conference was covered in local media in print and online and was widely shared across social media platforms by all the groups represented at the event.

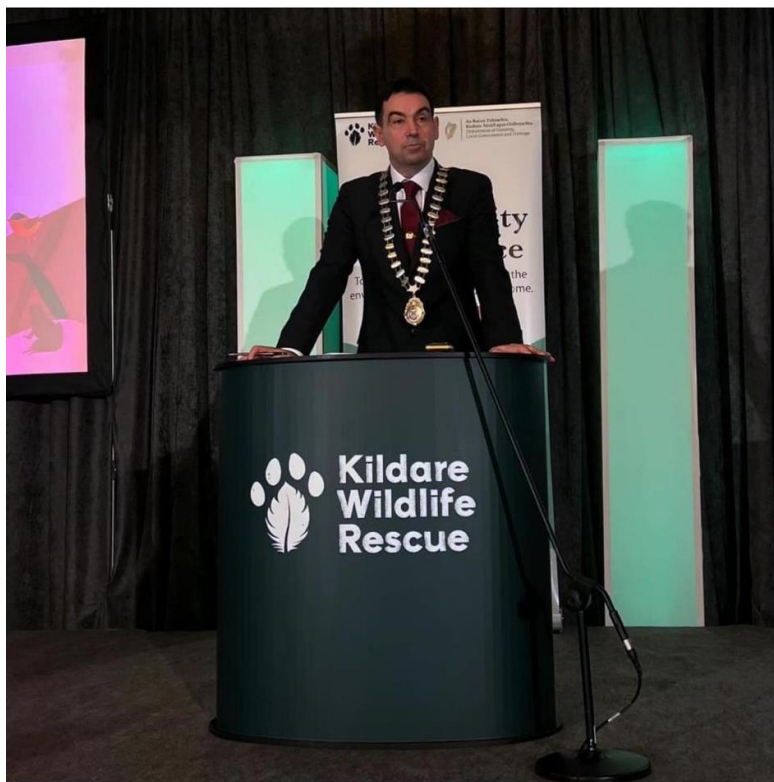


Cllr Joe Neville · Follow

11h · 🌐

Delighted to launch the **Kildare Biodiversity** conference this morning on behalf of **Kildare County Council**.

Thank you so much to the **Kildare Wildlife Rescue** for the invitation and all their work and effort across the county every day.



Sand Martin Wall @SandMartin... · 23h

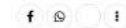
Massive Congrats to Dan & all the gang at @WildlifeKildare ! Excellent presentations throughout the day! As Biodiversity Conference's go this one is right up there at the very top!

SAT, 02 NOV. 2024 - 19:00

Kildare biodiversity conference was a great success



At the recent biodiversity conference in the Keadeen Hotel, Newbridge were Dermot Doran, Kildare biodiversity officer, Dr Méabh Boylan, Dan Donohoe of Kildare Wildlife Rescue and Niamh Redmond Photos: Jimmy Fullan



FINIAN COGHLAN

The Keadeen Hotel in Newbridge recently hosted the second-ever biodiversity conference in the county, and it was a sold-out event with 140 attendees. The inaugural conference took place last October and was a first-of-its-kind event organised by Kildare Wildlife Rescue in partnership with Kildare County Council.

The conference brought together individuals and expert groups, showcasing the wide range of work in ecology, nature and biodiversity across Co Kildare.



Daiglan De Paor, Dr Méabh Boylan, Anna Collins, Una and Trevor Halpin

"By bringing together passionate individuals and organisations invested in biodiversity, we hope to foster collaboration, inspire innovation, and ultimately make a positive impact on the ground for our wildlife and natural habitats," said Dan Donohoe, manager of Kildare Wildlife Rescue, the organiser of the event.

"There's lots of people in the county doing great work for biodiversity in nature, but you can't really achieve goals on your own, so the trick is to bring them all together," he said.

"Kildare appointed its very own biodiversity officer last year, Dr Méabh Boylan. Méabh is putting together a biodiversity action plan, and it is now open for suggestions and ideas, so next year she should have a plan what to do with the county. For example, one thing that everybody agreed on was laurel hedging - it is dead for biodiversity and it should be banned in favour for our native hedges."

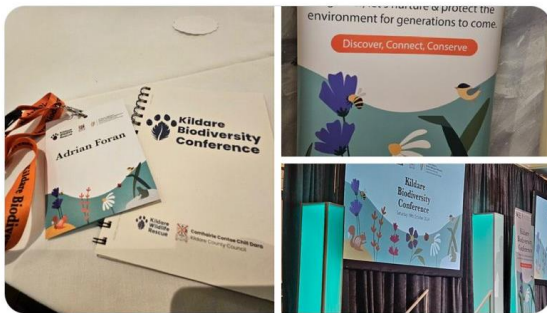
Dr Boylan commented: "We were delighted to be able to run this event again. Last year was a fantastic day of learning, networking and inspiration for the individuals and community groups in attendance. We aimed for even bigger and better this year, which I am sure we will achieve, with the fantastic Kildare Wildlife Rescue team at the helm."



Niamh Cowdell, Margaret Podger, Alicia Geraghty and Ruby Cowdell

Adrian Foran @AdrianForan · 9h

Great to attend Kildare Biodiversity Conference 2024 with [@WildlifeKildare](#) [@KildareCoCo](#) [@HeritageHubIRE](#) and [@NPWSIreland](#). Excellent speakers and information as always. Measures to protect Biodiversity & nature need to be priorities going forward. [@DeptHousingIRL](#)



Invasive Ecology (InEco) Laborat... · 11h

Much needed focus today on biodiversity at the Kildare Biodiversity Conference. We all have a part to play to address the biodiversity crisis. Looking forward to all the speakers. [@KildareCoCo](#) [@WildlifeKildare](#) [@ucdsience](#)



2 16 243

Lorraine Benson @lbcilldara

Congrats to Kildare Wildlife Rescue for Second Kildare Biodiversity Conference. They had to hire a bigger hall this year. Fantastic presentations this morning by [@meabh_tweets](#) on New Biodiversity Action Plan and [@DermotDora98552](#) on why you should Dig a Pond

Bridget Loughlin 5h

Great day at [Kildare Wildlife Rescue](#) and [Kildare County Council](#) Annual Biodiversity Conference. Great projects taking tangible action for biodiversity across the county [BirdWatch Ireland](#) [Kildare Branch Irish Peatland Conservation Council](#) [Butterfly Conservation Ireland](#) [Maynooth University](#)



Rebecca Uí Laighin 1h

What a fantastic day at the 2nd [Kildare Biodiversity Conference](#), many thanks to Dan and all the team at [Kildare Wildlife Rescue](#). Great to meet so many enthusiastic and amazing people, especially Dermot Dorgan who has built an amazing nesting wall for sand martins (fledging up to 1000 sand martins so far 🥰). So much great work being done g done by so many 🙌🏻🙌🏻 gives me hope ❤️🐦🐦🐦



Great to be involved today at the [Kildare Biodiversity Conference 2024](#). Great range of guest speakers and projects. Special mention to local farmer Dermot Doran whom spoke with expert authority on his Farm Wetland and Sand Martin Wall Project. Great day and special thanks to [Kildare County](#) and [Kildare Wildlife Rescue](#).

[#KildareCoCo](#) [#KildareWildlifeConference2024](#) [#Biodiversity](#) [#Kildare](#) [#KildareWildlifeRescue](#)



IPCC had a busy weekend hosting a peatland information stand and presenting a talk sharing information on IPCC's Hop To It Frog Survey at Kildare's 2024 Biodiversity Conference on Saturday. This event was sold out and offered an opportunity for community groups, individuals, eNGO's, farmers and all those with an interest in biodiversity to come together and share their work undertaking citizen science initiatives, managing invasive species, biodiversity education and practical conservation measures. This conference was organised [@kildarewildliferescue](#) with funding support from [Kildare County Council](#) [#LoveBogs](#) [#kildarebiodiversityconference2024](#)



A big shout out to [Kildare Wildlife Rescue](#) for organising the absolutely wonderful Biodiversity Conference at the Keadeen Hotel today. There were fantastic speakers, great discussions and a lot of thought provoking and heartening information. Already looking forward to next year's conference.



Liked by [ablebodiesphysiotherapy](#) [dulra_cill_dara](#) Amazing Saturday at Kildare Biodiversity Conference, hosted by Kildare Wildlife Rescue. Such heartening incredible work from a community who - by and large - work in a voluntary capacity. The enormity of the challenge facing us can be overwhelming, but we've got a good team! [#kildarebiocon24](#) [#Kildare](#) [#biodiversity](#) [#kildarebiodiversityconference](#) [#wildlife](#) [#nature](#) [#climate](#) [#climatecrisis](#)



Liked by [irishforestschoollassociation](#) and others [growingwildireland](#) Great day at the Kildare Biodiversity Conference yesterday hosted by [@kildarewildliferescue](#) and [@kildarecountycouncil](#) great speakers, great catch ups with lovely, passionate, proactive folk, and the kid did well too! Myself and [@dulra_cill_dara](#) had the honour of hosting the [@irishforestschoollassociation](#) stall there promoting Forest School and Kate got to speak a little about Forest School and I had the pleasure of being on the speakers panel to finish the day off! [#biodiversityconference2024](#)



Networking and Socialising

Apart from the scheduled programme, the venue provided attendees plenty of opportunities to network and engage with each other throughout the day. Lunch and coffee breaks were particularly lively and the large room where food and coffee were served also contained a large variety of information stands from local groups, providing additional engagement and educational materials on a wide range of biodiversity topics.



Feedback

The majority of attendees filled in a Feedback Form on the day, providing the organisers with valuable commentary and suggestions. The attendees felt overwhelmingly positive about the venue, quality of sound and visuals and overall organisation of the event. All praised the variety of speakers and quality of topics, with Dermot Doran's talk being the crowd's favourite. There were again multiple of suggestion to make it a 2-day event next year which is an option being considered.

Funding and Sponsorship

The Kildare County Council and the Local Biodiversity Action Fund provided funding for this event.

The event was generously supported by Gorilla Design who provided staging, lighting, sound and overall tech-support on the day free of charge. Their staff were invaluable to providing a very professional experience and comfort for both organisers and attendees.



Conclusion and Acknowledgments

The second Kildare Biodiversity Conference brought together yet again a fantastic group of environmental advocates, local organisations, and political representatives to underscore the critical importance of biodiversity in the county. Building upon connections made last year, the event further fostered collaboration and networking among participants, highlighting the immense potential for collective action in addressing the challenges facing Kildare's natural environment.

With a larger venue, impressive lineup of speakers and dynamic discussions, the conference provided a unique opportunity for attendees to experience all that Kildare's biodiversity has to offer and inspired many to take action in their community.

The sold-out status of the event underscored the community's profound interest in the issues, reaffirming our shared commitment to safeguarding the natural world. Kildare Wildlife Rescue would like to build on this success and make Kildare Biodiversity Conference a two-day event in 2025.

The conference's success was made possible through the collaborative efforts of Kildare Wildlife Rescue, Kildare County Council, and the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage. The organisers extend their gratitude to all participants, volunteers, and attendees for their contribution to this memorable event.