

Welcome to the Maigue Rivers Trust's fourth newsletter. The COVID pandemic and lockdowns impacted communities of the Maigue catchment and many of the planned Maigue River Trust activities. The consequences have been both negative and positive. Without question nature our rivers have provided everyone with hope during the multiple lockdowns. Thankfully, the Maigue Rivers trust continues to develop through the work of its members and funding from the Resilience Pilot Project.

Maugue River Trust Directors

Photos of the Maigue

The rivers of the Maigue have provided us with sustenance, inspiration and places of calm particularly over the last difficult months. The following images were capture by Maigue River Trust (MRT) Project Officer Liz Gabbett.



A frosty view of the Maigue River from the Old Cork road walk in Croom 10th of January 2021



Loobagh and Maigue Meet South of Bruree, Sunday 6th Sept 2020

New Trust Directors

We welcome four new directors to the Maigue Rivers Trust in 2020/1.

Mary Fitzgerald has joined the trust representing the 'Business' sector. Mary is the owner of Woodlands House Hotel & Spa, in Adare, an 89-room award-winning four-star hotel employing more than 200 people

The Resilience pilot Project is funded through the Local Authority Waters Programme by the Department for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and is managed by The Rivers Trust.



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Aitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



The
Rivers
Trust



clean communities | sustainable resources | healthy waters

Kevin Cribbin is the new trust director representing 'Community' interests. Kevin is a committee member of Adare Community Trust.

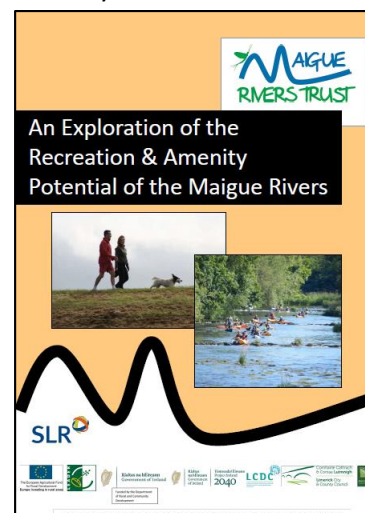
Michael Donegan has joined the trust as the 'Community Elected Representative'. Mike is a Fianna Fáil Councillor and a member of Limerick City and County Council representing the municipal district of Capamore-Killmallock.

Jennifer Liston a native of Croom and lecturer in Mary Immaculate College joins the trust representing 'Education'. Jennifer comes from an agriculture background and has seen her father convert the family farm back to an organic system.

Many thanks also to former directors Veronica Santorum and Noreen Ryan who stepped down in the past year.

Amenity and Recreation in the Maigue Rivers

Over the last 6 months the Trust have been examining the current provision and future potential for developing recreation and amenity activities in the Maigue River catchment area as part of a LEADER funded project. On behalf of the Trust, Deirdre Lewis SLR Consultancy has been mapping the current recreational and amenity provision (Walking, Cycling, Angling, Boating, Nature Viewing and Heritage Amenity) and engaging with various players to identify gaps and opportunities.



The final report will be launched **August 17th at 7-8pm online** during Heritage Week. Keep an eye on our social media for the registration link.



River paths provide safe walking and cycling infrastructure for families to enjoy

Community Outreach

COVID impacted on many planned events over the past year. The Mague Festival was reimagined as an Autumn Winter Series of events (funded by Creative Ireland). A very successful guided **Nature Walk** took place in September with Kilmallock Travellers Women's Group. In October **Working with an Artist** partnered Mary Conroy with Knockainey Historical and Conservation Society in a ceramic workshop.



*Knockainey Ceramic Workshop
– Creative Ireland Fund*

Citizen Scientists

Knockainey Training

The Trust organised a Citizen Science Training event in Knockainey in September. This course facilitated local community stakeholders to learn about the important links between high status local water quality and its benefits to human health, biodiversity, sustainable high-nature-value farming and local enterprise through practical field visits and an “outdoor classroom” workshop.

Questionnaire Survey

Donna Weiner is conducting project on the Mague (funded by the Environmental Protection Agency and

Mary Immaculate College). Donna has been undertaking a questionnaire survey entitled [Connections, Concerns and Caring for your Local River](#) over the last number of months. Donna is still anxious to reach as many people as possible within the Limerick region. Please share this link with friends and families. For more information please contact donna.weiner@mic.ul.ie.



*MRT Citizen science day in Knockainey
September 2020*

River Insects

On the 5th June, the Mague Rivers Trust was delighted to host Dr Mary Kelly-Quinn, lecturer and freshwater research scientist from UCD to train-the-trainers on how to teach freshwater biomonitoring (using river insects) to citizen scientists. Our training venue was provided by Scoil Pól Principal, **Mike O'Hara**, who very kindly gave us permission to use their science laboratories and Agriculture Science teacher, **Claire Birmingham**, was part of our group of trainers. We spent the morning looking down microscopes getting familiar identifying species by their appearance, and in the afternoon we were out in a local stream of the Loobagh practicing our sampling and identification skills. We are happy to report the water quality was of good ecological status.



Dr Kelly-Quinn and trainee citizen scientists in Kilfinnane

2021 EU Water Blitz & Earthwatch Europe

MRT took part in EU Waterblitz 7-10th May in conjunction with



DCU Water Institute using water testing kits fund by the EPA and Mary Immaculate College. Some 400 samples were taken across the country including 12 samples from the rivers of the Mague which measured

nitrates and phosphate levels. Maigue citizen scientists were **Conor Kirby, Mikey Foley, Rhiannon Laubach, Nicole Dennehy and Morgan Murphy.**

Educational Leaflet on the Maigue

The MRT have published a new educational factsheet entitled **'Understanding the Maigue Rivers'**. The factsheet is for 2nd level students and communities of the Maigue catchment and focuses on riverine processes and controls as well as human modifications and their consequences.



Giant Hogweed

ALERT Giant Hogweed contains a 'toxic sap' in all plant parts [Staying Safe around Giant Hogweed](#)



Giant Hogweed at Howardstown

Giant Hogweed is regarded as one of the world's worst invasive alien plants and is increasingly becoming a major issue across the Maigue catchment. Alarming, it is now increasingly found at field boundaries, along road verges and in people's gardens. The weed has a damaging effect on the native habitat, and reduces value of land and can hinder anglers from river. The MRT advise all communities of the catchment to be alert to this increasing threat and will continue to campaign for national government and local councils to devise and implement methods that control the dispersal of Giant Hogweed. Recently, the Trust won a contract to devise a management strategy for Giant hogweed on the Morningstar. Work has commenced in August 2021 and the report is due in Nov 2021.

Crayfish Plague Update

The Crayfish plague eDNA results were received from the Marine Institute in February. Unfortunately all sites tested are positive for the presence of the crayfish plague. The Loobagh at Garoose Bridge, Bruree,

Athlaca – Morningstar, Manister – Camoge, Croom, Castleroberts and Adare. As of June 2021 Crayfish plague is now confirmed in the Loobagh at Kilmallock. For more information see the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) web site [Crayfish Plague](#).



Possible Crayfish Ark site

Crayfish Ark

The Trust are examining the potential of establishing "Ark" sites for White-clawed crayfish to conserve this threatened invertebrate. An Ark is an isolated refuge site where new plague-free populations are established, safe from threats. An application to LEADER to undertake a feasibility was successful and work to identify suitable sites is currently underway. Niamh Sweeney of Aktins Global has been commissioned to carry out the feasibility study.

MRT Strategic Plan

The MRT are in the process of developing a Strategic Business Plan. The strategic plan will articulate the goals and objectives of the Trust, and the essential steps and actions need to be taken to accomplish those goals. Ballyhoura Development Company appointed Tom O'Leary of 'Result' to be the MRT business plan mentor.

'Reimagining Irish Rivers' Online Conference



The Maigue Rivers Trust co-hosted a hugely successful online conference on Reimagining Irish Rivers on March 22nd and 23rd. The speakers were from community, agency and environmental organisations and inspired audience members with their descriptions of functioning unimpacted rivers and their efforts go the extra mile for nature-based solutions for degraded rivers. Over one thousand people registered for the conference exceeding all our expectations. Conference talks are publicly available on the [Limerick European Green Leaf City Youtube channel](#).

Public Meetings and Trust Presentations

- The Mague River Trust made a response to the N/M20 public consultation
- Project Officer Liz Gabett (& Trish Murphy (Inishowen Rivers Trust) spoke at the Reimagining Irish Rivers Online Conference on 'The Role of Rivers Trusts in Connecting Communities and Other Stakeholders'
- MRT had an information stand at the Ballyhaura Beo family fun day in Croom Town Park 19th June.



Ballyhaura Beo family fun day

University of Limerick BA Arts (Geography & Politics) student, **Milla Leppänen** undertook her cooperative work placement with the MRT from January to June 2021. The placement programmed at the University of Limerick is a core element of all undergraduate degrees.












Milla is originally from Finland, and because of the pandemic, she was back home in Tampere and worked remotely for the Trust. Milla loves nature and hopes that she'll get her pay check working in environmental protection in the future. Work undertaken by Milla for the trust included: georeferencing historical and contemporary river corridor features (natural and artificial), collating historical newspaper articles, schools and business lists.



Milla Leppänen: MRT Placement Student

Placement Student

Current Mague River Trust Directors

Conservation & Wildlife (Chair) TOM HARRINGTON : Retired lecturer in Biology (University of Limerick)		Elected Representative: MICHAEL DONEGAN Limerick City and County Council	
Research & Education (Vice Chair) CATHERINE DALTON Lecturer in Geography Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick		Local Development RHIANNON LAUBACH Ballyhaura Dev. CLG	
Business: MARY FITZGERALD Owner Woodlands House Hotel & Spa, Adare		Outdoor Leisure & Tourism SYBREN OGGE Croom Development Ass.	
Community: KEVIN CRIBBIN Adare Community Trust		Education JENNIFER LISTON Lecturer in Dept. of Learning, Society and Religious education, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick	
Farming AIDAN GLEESON : Cattle farmer and IFA nominee		Finance ROTATING 2021	
Angling DAVE BUSTEN : Bleach Lough Anglers		 Local Authority Liaison ANNE GOGGIN LCCC	

Reports on the Mague River and Catchment (*click on image to access pdf files*)

