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Project Marine Newsletter

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Prepared by the Marine Planning, Policy and Legislation (MPPL) Section
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Introduction

The Marine Planning Policy and Legislation (MPPL) unit welcomes you to our sixth Project Marine Newsletter. We would once again like to thank those of you who provided us with feedback and suggestions for future topics, and we will do our utmost to include these in future issues. As always we are appreciative of all feedback and can be reached at mpp@housing.gov.ie.

We start off with the announcement that the Government approved the **Climate Action Plan 2024** subject to public consultation and an SEA which will take place early this year.

Marine Planning Advisor Tom Woolley gives an update on the **Greater North Sea Basin Initiative** held in The Hague last November.

We continue with our regional round-up with articles from Wexford, Waterford, Clare and Dun Laoghaire. Our **FREE COMPETITION** was such a success last time round, we have decided to run another called “Lights, Camera . . . Coastal Location.”

The Association of Marine Pilots Ireland give us details of their recent conference in Galway. The Marine Institute give us all their latest news including the appointment of their new CEO **Dr. Rick Officer**.

The Clean Coasts Award Winners were announced in December and there was also a huge amount of entries for the “**Green Schools/Marine Spatial Planning Poster Competition**”, in association with **An Taisce**.

As ever, we also have our usual informative column “**A View from Europe**” with **Maritime Attaché Eoin Leahy** making our sixth edition another bumper publication.

All that and much more, please enjoy and let us know what you think.

Recent Legislative & Policy Developments

This section of the newsletter highlights significant legislative and marine related policy developments recently announced.

Government approves Climate Action Plan 2024 for public consultation

In late 2023 the Government approved **Climate Action Plan 2024**, subject to public consultation and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which will take place in early 2024.

Climate Action Plan 2024 is the second statutory update to the plan since the **Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021** was signed into law, committing Ireland to 2030 and 2050 targets for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It builds on Climate Action Plan 2023 and outlines how Ireland will accelerate the action required to respond to the climate crisis, putting climate solutions at the centre of Ireland's social and economic development.

Climate Action Plan 2024 sets out that Ireland is making progress across many key sectors, but that measures must continue to be implemented at greater speed and scale to reduce emissions further while ensuring that quality of life is improved.

The most recent **Environment Protection Agency (EPA)** inventory figures show that Ireland's emissions fell by just under 2% between 2021 and 2022 — with reductions across the agriculture, industry, energy and residential sectors — at a time when the economy and population were increasing. It is anticipated that these will fall further this year with continued changes.

You can view Climate Action Plan 2024 and its annex of actions [here](#).

Minister Noonan announces 'Seas off Wexford' – Ireland's largest Special Protection Area for seabirds

Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD has announced another significant addition to Ireland's Natura 2000 network. The new Seas off Wexford Special Protection Area (SPA), which is to be designated under the EU Birds Directive, will cover more than 305,000 hectares of important marine waters for a range of bird species throughout the year.



Minister Malcolm Noonan TD

Surpassing the Northwest Irish Sea SPA that was designated as the largest site for marine seabirds just last year, the Seas off Wexford SPA, at more than 3,000 square kilometres, becomes the largest Special Protection Area in Ireland. The designation increases the percentage of Ireland's protected marine waters to just under the 10% for Natura designations promised by the Minister under the EU Biodiversity Strategy, and makes that 10% milestone realistically achievable within the current year.

The new SPA adjoins eight existing SPAs already designated in this area, four of which are designated for breeding seabirds, and the publication of detailed information and maps for the site brings certainty and clarity to a long-mooted proposal for protections for marine birds in this area.

Speaking at the announcement, **Minister Noonan** said:

"At 305,000 hectares, the Seas off Wexford SPA is bigger than County Wexford itself and the largest ever area to be protected for birds in the history of the State. I'm delighted to be able to announce this significant step forward for nature, and particularly for marine seabirds. This Government is working hard to ensure robust biodiversity protections, just as we are working hard to deliver on our offshore renewable energy objectives. Biodiversity action and climate action must go hand in hand, and we must continue to work together to protect nature while delivering a swift transition to more sustainable and renewable forms of energy."

Director General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Niall Ó Donnchú, said:

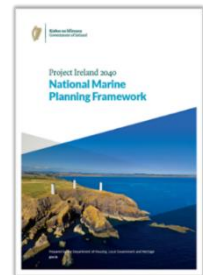
“This designation of the Seas off Wexford is another determined step by Ireland to protect our marine birdlife. The 20 species protected at this site are some of our rarest and most threatened birds, and these waters are a valuable feeding resource for the seabirds that return every spring to Wexford’s coastal and island colonies to breed. Outside of the summer months, these relatively shallow coastal waters provide safe feeding and roosting opportunities for a range of marine birds overwintering here or on passage.

These protections are vital in a time when the pressures on our nature and biodiversity have never been greater, and the challenges of the climate emergency have never been more pressing.”

Source: [Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage](#)

NMPF Copies Still Available

Our National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) is still available. The NMPF is Ireland’s first national framework for managing marine activities and outlines the Government’s vision for how we want to use, protect and enjoy our seas in the years up to 2040.



Please click the following link to find all relevant details of the development history of the [NMPF](#). Should you wish to acquire a hard copy of the NMPF, please email msp@housing.gov.ie and we will be happy to post one out to you.

Requests for a copy of the NMPF **as Gaeilge** will also be facilitated.

Greater North Sea Basin Initiative Update:



Signatories to the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI) Ministerial conclusions representing the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom

On the 20th-21st of November 2023 the Department for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) led Ireland's representation at the signing of Ministerial Conclusion for the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI) at an international meeting organised by the Dutch and French Governments in The Hague.

Link: <https://www.government.nl/documents/discussion-documents/2023/11/21/greater-north-sea-basin-initiative---ministerial-conclusions>.

This followed discussions at the initiative's initial meeting in May 2023. GNSBI is focussed on the changes being brought about in the Celtic and North Sea as a result of countries growing and accelerating development of offshore renewable energy. Led by Ministers and representatives responsible for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), Ireland joined attendees from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and the European Commission in committing to a number of working tracks that will improve common understanding and co-operation. With Ireland being at comparatively early phase of its ORE development lifecycle, the GNSBI represents a unique opportunity to learn from the experience of others with participation focusing on Governance, Cumulative Impacts and the Long term perspective of fisheries.

Involvement in the GNSBI will be informed by Ireland's experience in other international initiatives examining related topics and a similar spatial area including North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC)

Link: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/infrastructure/high-level-groups/north-seas-energy-cooperation_en and work under the Oslo and Paris Conventions carried out by the OSPAR Commission.

Link: <https://www.ospar.org/about>.

In 2024 programmes to achieve common objectives will be developed for the GNSBI working tracks and joint work will be carried out leading up to a comprehensive ministerial summit to be organised by the Belgian Government later in the year.



Irish delegation led by Assistant Secretary for Water, Fintan Towey (right), joined by Marie Minihan (Principal Officer) and Tom Woolley (Adviser) from the Marine Planning Policy and Legislation (MPPL) team

Regional News

Other Government Departments and organisations work in tandem with our local authorities in improving our Maritime/Coastal areas. The following articles are just some examples of the excellent work they have carried out. The Marine Planning, Policy & Legislation Section are happy to further promote the work of all these organisations and wish all parties concerned every continued success.

WEXFORD

Emigrant Park officially opened on New Ross Quay



The official ribbon-cutting ceremony at The Emigrant Park, New Ross

Minister for Rural and Community Development and Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys TD was welcomed to New Ross, Co. Wexford last October where she performed the official opening of the new Emigrant Park on the town's quayfront.

Also present were Councillor John Fleming, Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council, Councillor Anthony Connick, Cathaoirleach of New Ross Municipal District as well as the Elected members of Wexford County Council, Wexford Oireachtas

members, the Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, Nancy Smyth, the Irish Ambassador to Canada, Eamonn McKee and other invited guests.

The Park, funded by the **Department of Rural and Community Development** through the **Rural Regeneration & Development Fund (RRDF)** and **Wexford County Council**, is located on the site formerly occupied by five large oil tanks that had been an eyesore on the quay for many years. The park further enhances the existing award-winning boardwalk, with its eternal flame, and the beautiful Dunbrody Visitor Centre.

Chief Executive of Wexford County Council, Tom Enright said:

“ I would like to warmly welcome the opening of The Emigrant Park and to thank all those involved in bringing this project from an idea to a magnificent public realm space, representing and commemorating the emigration

story of New Ross. We are very grateful to the Department of Rural & Community Development for supporting this project and to the Elected Members of Wexford County Council for providing the significant match funding which has transformed a site which for many years had rusting oil tanks to a superb public park.”



Source: Wexford County Council

DÚN LAOGHAIRE

St. Patrick's Day Parade returns to town in 2024

Dún Laoghaire Harbour provided the perfect backdrop to announce the great news that the St. Patrick's Day Parade will return to town in 2024. After a long absence, organisers and patrons will be set to celebrate March 17th in style.

Led by the **Dún Laoghaire Business Association** and supported by **Dún Laoghaire/Rathdowney County Council**, the parade aims to unite

local businesses and community in celebration and showcase the spirit and pride of the town. More information is available on all DLR County Council social channels

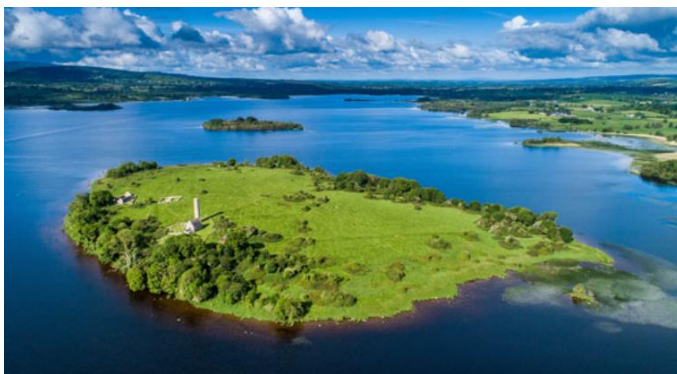
Source: Dún Laoghaire/Rathdowney County Council



Official announcement of return of St. Patrick's Day parade to Dún Laoghaire in 2024

CLARE

Landmark Inis Cealtra Visitor Experience project



Inis Cealtra (Holy Island)

The most significant tourism project ever to be undertaken in East Clare moved a step closer in late 2023 following the signing of a contract for the development of the Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) visitor centre in the heart of Mountshannon village.

Overlooking Mountshannon Harbour and Lough Derg, the Old Rectory is an historic period house dating from 1905 and is set to repurposed and extended into a visitor and interpretative centre for Inis Cealtra (Holy Island).

Clare County Council signed a contract with **M. Fitzgibbon Contractors Ltd** for the redevelopment of the visitor centre building, which, once completed, will comprise a revitalised exhibition area that interprets local stories and the island of Inis Cealtra, a reception area, an upstairs café and rectory garden.

The successful funding awarded for this project, which includes the repurposing of the Old Rectory as well as waste-water optimisation works and public realm works at Mountshannon, is €4,290,765 from the **Department of Rural and Community Development** as part of RRDF Category 1 funding, with an additional 20% match funding committed from Clare County Council.

With important links to the last High King of Ireland Brian Boru, Inis Cealtra is one of the most important historical and ecclesiastical sites in Ireland with additional links to other religious sites and heritage attractions, such as Tuamgraney and Craggaunowen. Still used as a burial ground, the ruins and buildings still standing on the island date back to the 7th century when the monastic site was established by St Caimin. Buildings on the island include a 24-metre-high Round Tower, an Oratory, and several churches.

Having taken 41 acres on the island into public ownership in 2015, Clare County Council acquired the Old Rectory building in 2021. The Local Authority has confirmed that plans to enhance access to and interpretation on the island, including upgrades to island and mainland access, the introduction of wayfinding infrastructure and the provision of public car parking facilities as well as future proofing an expanded visitor centre. All of these plans will be submitted to **An Bord Pleanála** during the first half of 2024.

WATERFORD

New €5.2 Million Coast Guard station in Bunmahon

Minister of State with responsibility for the Irish Coast Guard, Jack Chambers TD, officially opened the newly constructed €5.2 Million Coast Guard station in Bonmahon, Co. Waterford in December.

With a significant investment by the **Department of Transport**, volunteers at the unit have attended 89 incidents and this new facility will enhance the Coast Guard activities they undertake.



Official opening of new Bunmahon ICG Station and presentation of 'Proof of Service' Tokens last December.

Minister of State Chambers commented:

“The men and women of our Coast Guard undertake incredible, lifesaving work - often in the very worst conditions - and it essential they are supported in their role which is at the very heart of our coastal communities. The new station provides state-of-the-art facilities including training rooms, operations rooms, offices, garage space, welfare facilities and vehicle parking.”

Construction work on the new station was organised by the Office of Public Works with **Minister of State with responsibility for the OPW, Patrick O'Donovan TD** also in attendance.

Minister Chambers presented the 200th year commemorative 'Proof of Service at a Wreck' tokens to the Bonmahon unit to acknowledge the IRCG's 200th anniversary since 1822.

“These tokens are a symbol of appreciation for the work the volunteers do in search and rescue. And as the final unit of the 44 units to be awarded these tokens, I am delighted it coincides with the opening of this new station,” he said.

Source: Irish Coast Guard, Department of Transport

FREE Competition: Lights, Camera . . . Coastal Location

For our quiz this issue, we have decided to challenge your geographical as well as your 'celluloid-al' knowledge. That's right, it includes a list of striking coastal locations from across the globe as well as some photos from classic (and lesser known) film and television productions. All you have to do is match the location with the big or little screen production that was set there. As always we have a few bonus questions at the end. We've even given you a few clues in the film icons.



1



2



3



4



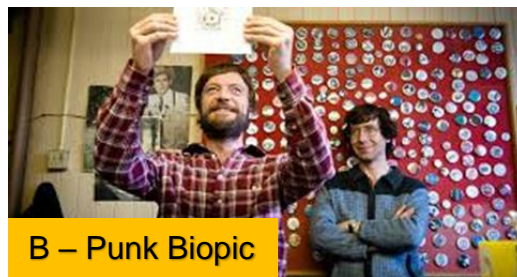
5



6



A – Brotherly Love



B – Punk Biopic



C – Bloodsucking Comedy



D – Pre- Fab



E – Scandi Noir



F – Gangland Grit

A vintage style ceramic mug featuring 13 iconic Irish Lighthouses will be sent out to the first 5 correct entries received – Email your answers to msh@housing.gov.ie with 'Newsletter Competition' in the subject box. Correct Answers in next edition



Bonus Questions for “Lights, Camera . . . Coastal Location:

- A. The real life musical icon played by Ian Hart in film D, was also played by Robert Carlyle in which 2019 fantasy film?
- B. Two cities feature in the television series E, what is the other one not included in this quiz?
- C. The Actor tied to a chair in film C once featured in commercials for what product?
- D. The star of film B brandished a sword of fire in which TV series?

Answers to our Autumn Newsletter’s “Oh Captain, My Captain!” Comp:

Many thanks to all those that replied with answers to our autumn issue competition, marineplan.ie stationary has been sent out to the lucky winners.

A: [Birdseye](#)
G: [Barbossa](#)

B: [Jack Aubrey](#)
H: [Pugwash](#)

C: [Ahab](#)
I: [Davos Seaworth](#)

D: [Bligh](#)

E: [Quint](#)

F: [McCallister](#)

Bonus Question Answers for Oh Captain, My Captain:

Russell Crowe portrayed Captain Jack Aubrey in ‘Master and Commander: Far Side of the World’, Gregory Peck played Captain Ahab in ‘Moby Dick’, Anthony Hopkins was Bligh in ‘the Bounty’, Robert Shaw was Quint in ‘Jaws’ and Liam Cunningham was Davos Seaworth, the Onion Knight and former smuggler in the ‘Game of Thrones’ series.

Patrick O'Brian created the brilliant Aubrey and Maturin series of books that includes ‘Master and Commander’, Herman Melville wrote ‘Moby Dick’ and George R.R. Martin continues to write the Game of Thrones novels.

Captain William Bligh is the only real life Captain featured in this competition although he does come face to face with the fictional Jack Aubrey in Patrick O'Brian's ‘Desolation Island’.

Captain Horatio McCallister is the owner of the Frying Dutchman seafood restaurant in Springfield which operated a short-lived all-you-can-eat menu until that particular financial model was tested when ‘out of the mist came a beast more stomach than man’.

Youghal was used as the backdrop for John Huston's filming of Moby Dick and a fine town it is too.

Fletcher Christian was the English sailor who led the mutiny aboard the Bounty in 1789. He was played by Mel Gibson in ‘the Bounty’ (1984), Marlon Brando in ‘Mutiny on the Bounty’ (1962), Clark Gable in ‘Mutiny on the Bounty’ (1935) and by Errol Flynn ‘In the Wake of the Bounty’ (1933) – (thanks Wikipedia).

The boat that Bligh most famously commanded was ‘the Bounty’ until a portion of his crew turned against him (we’ve all thought about taking that same course of action at some point!). He was also in command of many other vessels including the HMS Providence, the HMS Calcutta, the HMS Director and the HMS Monarch (thanks again Wikipedia).

Captain Ahab's whaling ship in Moby Dick was ‘the Pequod’. The story is also the inspiration for Atlanta band Mastodon's progressive metal concept album ‘Leviathan’. Rock!

John Huston directed ‘Moby Dick’ and Steven Spielberg directed ‘Jaws’. In addition, Peter Weir directed ‘Master and Commander: Far Side of the World’ and Roger Donaldson directed ‘the Bounty’. The Pirates of the Caribbean series of films that features Barbossa were directed by Gore Verbinski and Rob Marshall among others.

Cut-throat Jake was Captain Pugwash's villainous enemy and his dastardly ship was the ‘Flying Dustman’. The heroic Captain Pugwash commanded the ‘Black Pig’ and while his crew included Tom the cabin boy, Barnabus, Willy and Master Mate, we’re sorry to say that any other less wholesome crew names are just urban myths!

Anthony Hopkins won his 1992 Oscar playing everyone's favourite therapist/cannibal Hannibal Lector in ‘Silence of the Lambs’ and Geoffrey Rush won his 1996 Oscar playing the less threatening but probably more unpredictable pianist David Helfgott in ‘Shine’.

Captain Birdseye sold his range of frozen fish fingers under the name Captain Iglo in Spain, Portugal and France. In Italy he was known as Captain Findus. You can still find him in the frozen food aisle in all good supermarkets.

Marine Pilots Association host their conference in Galway



(L-R): Donal Keaney, Patrick Galvin, Padraig Condon, Arie Palmers, Aileen Van Raemdonck, John Conlon, Brian Sheridan & Andy Nattrass at the AMPI Conference Galway



The Association of Marine Pilots Ireland (AMPI) were delighted to host their first conference in Galway late last year. Keeping to the theme of **“The Importance of Regulation and Best Practices,”** the AMPI has been campaigning for several years to establish a minimum entry requirement and standard for training and certification in Irish legislation for Marine Pilots.

The conference was also a chance to see how their European neighbours organise Pilotage and used it as an opportunity to take inspiration from them. An excellent line-up of speakers addressed the event.

Senator Gerard Craughwell commenced the gathering and imparted invaluable perspectives on how the AMPI can advance towards achieving its objectives within the intricate and nuanced Irish political landscape. He also stressed the importance of conveying the AMPI’s message clearly and regularly.

Captain Brian Sheridan gave some insights on existing regulations and he also detailed the Port of Galway's plans for developing new but necessary infrastructure.

Captain John Conlon, who holds the position of Designated Person Ashore at Arklow Shipping, provided an overview of the company's ongoing new build projects and discussed accidents involving their vessels while under pilotage.

European Marine Pilots’ Association (EMPA) Secretary General Aileen Van Raemdonck provided a comprehensive overview of the successful advocacy efforts for European Pilots. Aileen did a fantastic job of breaking down how Pilotage is

organised and legislated in France, the Netherlands and Germany. Her presentation was informative and shed light on each country's training requirements.

Donal Keaney has over 25 years of experience in the shipping sector, 10 of which have been spent in a legal environment and gave a very informative presentation on “what to expect when the unexpected happens”.

Arie Palmers, a skilled Dutch Pilot with exceptional knowledge of regulations and recommendations regarding Pilot ladders and all aspects of Pilot Transfer Arrangements (PTA's) discussed the prevalence of improperly rigged PTA's and the training Dutch Pilots receive should they fall into the water during a transfer.

The presentations finished with **Andy Natrass**. Andy is a former seafarer who works ashore for Trelleborg, a large company involved in many aspects of the maritime industry. During his presentation, he discussed the importance of Portable Pilot Units (PPUs) in improving situational awareness for Marine Pilots. However, he emphasised the need for proper training on the specific PPU system being used and reminded the audience that PPU's are aids to navigation

Exhibitors at the conference included:

Safehaven Marine - MTU/NMCI Services - Port Revel/Aurelia – Trelleborg - Amura/Hiades

AMPI is a non-profit organisation that promotes professionalism among marine pilots in Ireland. They work closely with the EMPA and the International Marine Pilots Association to exchange and disseminate information to members with the goal of improving professional and technical proficiency.

Pilots guide ships from a designated area to a designated berth or anchorage area within port limits. Their main concern is the safety of the ship, its crew and the protection of the environment. They accomplish this by working closely with the ship's Captain and crew when navigating all vessels on their final approach to its port of destination. Pilotage is a mandatory service in all Irish Ports and are regulated by local port regulation and the Harbours Act of 1996.

Source: www.ampi.ie

MSP/CPD Online Series a huge success

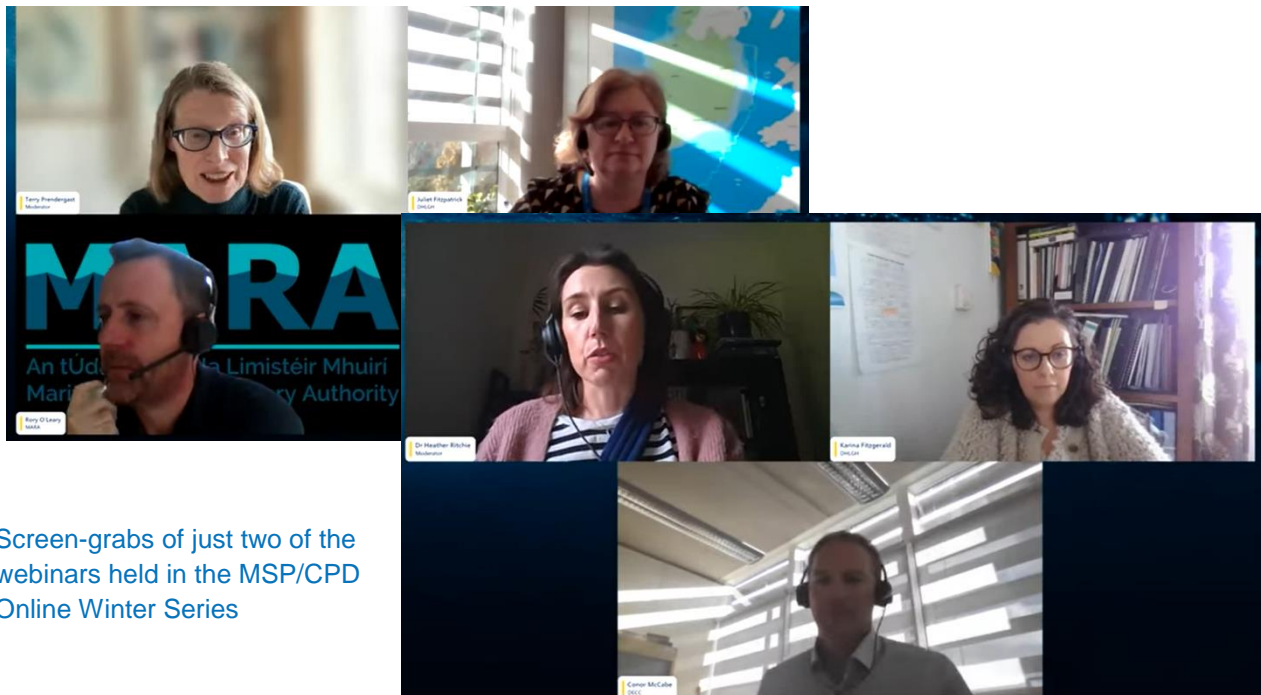


The recent “Marine Spatial Planning/Continuing Professional Development (MSP/CPD)” Online Series held by the **Irish Planning Institute** (IPI) over the last quarter of 2023 were very successful events, each of which attracted high attendances over the course of the series.

The Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage were delighted to work with the IPI in delivering this programme. It brought together professionals from both the academic and policy areas as well as bodies from relevant maritime authorisations and highlighted the benefits of a trans-disciplinary approach to the planning and management of the marine resource.

For those who may have missed out, the IPI recorded each webinar complete with slides, available now at:

<https://ipi.ie/professional-development/marine-spatial-planning-cpd-series-2023/>



Screen-grabs of just two of the webinars held in the MSP/CPD Online Winter Series

Source: www.ipi.ie

All the latest news from the Marine Institute



Click on each of the links below for more details

Marine Institute welcomes appointment of Dr Rick Officer as new CEO

Dr Rick Officer has been appointed as the next Chief Executive Officer of the Marine Institute, Ireland's state agency for marine research, technology development, and innovation. Dr Officer joins the Marine Institute from the Atlantic Technological University (ATU) where he held the position of Vice President for Research and Innovation.



Marine Institute CEO
Dr Rick Officer

For more information please [CLICK HERE](#).

INFOMAR concludes Blue Scale Map Series with the Aran Islands and release of all 18 maps as Gaeilge

Ireland's national seabed mapping programme, INFOMAR (Integrated Mapping for the Sustainable Development of Ireland's Marine Resource) announces the completion of its "Blue Scale Map Series", culminating with the release of the stunning Aran Islands Map. In parallel, INFOMAR are also delighted to announce the release of all 18 maps as Gaeilge.

The series, released on a weekly basis and launched on August 11th, has seen the release of 18 bespoke, high resolution bathymetric maps of Irish Coastal waters. Developed by a dedicated team of hydrographers, data processors and cartographers, the maps highlight the topography of the coast in remarkable detail. In addition to the launch of the final map of the series, this week also sees the launch of all 18 maps available in Irish, which are available free to download in their own dedicated gallery at www.INFOMAR.ie

For further information please [CLICK HERE](#)

Marine Institute's Fish Stock Book 2023 released

The Marine Institute has published the 2023 edition of the Stock Book. This detailed annual publication provides the latest impartial scientific advice to government on the status of 74 key fish stocks of interest to Ireland.



Fish Stock Book 2023 was published in December

Minister for Agriculture, Food & The Marine, Charlie McConalogue TD said,

"I am delighted to receive the Fish Stock Book for 2023. This provides essential information reviewing the state of fish stocks in 2023 and provides management advice for the setting of quotas for 2024. The exemplary work done by the Marine Institute scientists, feeds into the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES), to generate best available independent scientific advice which guides my negotiations at the December Fisheries Council and with Third Countries, including the UK. It is important that the science and advice is made accessible to industry and other stakeholders through the continued annual publication of the Fish Stock Book."

For further information please [CLICK HERE](#)

Global experts gathered in Galway for major Oceanographic Conference

The 10th EuroGOOS International Conference took place in Galway and provided a critical opportunity to mobilise partnerships and efforts to enhance global ocean observations to provide the vital data needed for improved forecasts and early warning systems to protect people and planet.

The triennial conference united ocean science observers, forecasters, technology developers, policy makers, data services and users, and other international experts. The event has been endorsed by the UN Decade of Ocean Science as an official Ocean Decade Activity. The three-day programme addressed a wide range of oceanographic topics with a focus on further developing services for society at large.

Conference themes included marine knowledge value chain, ocean data and forecasting services, EU priorities including the Digital Ocean Twin, and the science behind Europe's oceanographic capacity.

For further information please [CLICK HERE](#)

Pioneering Joint Action on Microplastics - How science is helping us to deal with the problem of plastic pollution in our oceans

The final meeting of JPI Oceans Joint Action on "Ecological Aspects of Microplastics" was held in Galway on the 14th and 15th September, 2023. At this meeting hosted by the Marine Institute, JPI Oceans successfully concluded its ground-breaking Joint Action on the "Ecological Aspects of Microplastics". converged both physically and virtually, signalling the global importance of this pressing issue.

During the two-day event, the research teams from the six funded JPI Oceans projects (ANDROMEDA, HOTMIC, FACTS, MicroplastiX, i-plastic and RESPONSE projects) detailed their findings and summarised the impacts and outputs of the projects, including scientific publications, education materials, policy briefings for stakeholders, monitoring tools including the ANDROMEDA app.

Irish partners in these projects are supported by the Marine Institute and the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government funded by the Irish Government under the framework of JPI Oceans.

For further information please [CLICK HERE](#)

Have You Any Marine-Related Photos?

We at MPPL are always interested in marine-related photography, so please feel free to submit your marine photos to us and we will feature the best ones in future editions and we will make sure your name appears with them.

Send them onto msp@housing.gov.ie and put "Photos for Newsletter" in the subject box.

Clean Coasts' Ocean Hero Awards

Clean Coasts celebrated groups and individuals from all over Ireland who made a difference to our marine environment with an awards ceremony as part of their Annual **Ocean Hero Awards**.

In December Clean Coasts hosted the Ocean Hero Awards Ceremony at the Radisson Blu Royal Hotel, Dublin to celebrate the groups, individuals, communities and businesses who, throughout the year, have done outstanding work to protect their local coastline and environment.

The awards honour the invaluable contribution Clean Coasts volunteers, groups and communities have made towards conserving our spectacular coastline. Over the years, the program has evolved, engaging over 2,000 Clean Coasts groups and 40,000 volunteers, becoming an integral part of coastal communities nationwide.

This year the awards took on special significance as Clean Coasts celebrated its 20th Anniversary. For the past 20 years, Clean Coasts has expanded and created campaigns and initiatives aimed at enjoying, protecting and celebrating the beauty of our coast. None of that would be possible without the groups and volunteers all across Ireland that have helped make and grow the programme into what it is today.

This year, a total of 33 groups, organisations and individuals were shortlisted. During the ceremony, the work and achievements of all groups was showcased and celebrated.

WINNERS ON THE NIGHT WERE:

Group of the Year: **Tomhaggard Clean Coasts Group**

Individual of the Year Award: **Martha Farrell**

Youth of the Year Award: **North West Home Education Group**

Event of the Year Award: **Clean Coasts Ballynamona & St. Colman's Community College**

Campaigner of the Year Award: **Friends of Rosstownlagh**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award: **Western Care Group**



Furthermore, another category entitled the **Tourism and Special Recognition Award** (Sponsored by **Fáilte Ireland** and supported by the **Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage**) was created to acknowledge outstanding contributions in promoting sustainable tourism along our coastlines. This accolade honoured individuals or groups who have significantly enhanced the visitor experience by fostering environmental stewardship and conservation practices. Those who were honoured in this category included: **Bettystown Tidy Towns, Bull Island Action Group, Falcarragh Clean Coasts, Rush Tidy Towns and Streedagh Clean Coasts.**

In celebration of their 20th birthday, the Clean Coasts programme dedicated special attention to its invaluable volunteers and their contributions to the programme.

The commemorative events featured a compelling keynote address by **Conall O'Connor** from the **Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage**; an engaging quiz and presentation by Clean Coasts biodiversity officer **Liane Costello** and an enlightening talk by author and marine biologist **Lucy Taylor**, who graciously provided attendees with copies of her book, 'Ireland's Seashore: A Field Guide'. Notable contributions were also made by **Shane Dineen, Environment & Planning Manager at Fáilte Ireland.**

The venue was adorned with various displays showcasing Clean Coasts campaigns and initiatives, highlighting collaborations such as the **#2MinuteBeachClean** and featuring information stands on topics like Biodiversity and Marine Litter.

Further information on the Clean Coasts website: <https://cleancoasts.org>



Group of the Year: Tomhaggard Clean Coasts Group



Individual of the Year: Martha Farrell

Repurposing End-of-Life Wind Turbine Blades

Authors:

Peter Deeney (MaREI at UCC)

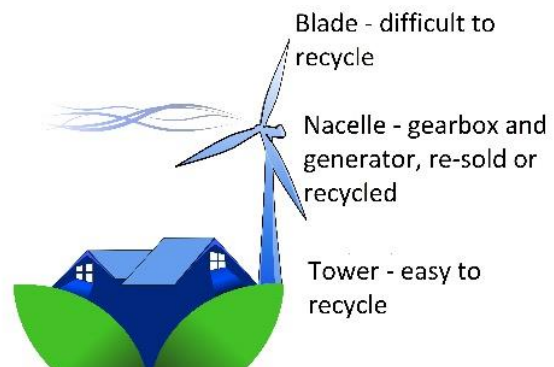
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What is the problem?

The blades on a wind turbine are very difficult to recycle, this is because they are made from a mixture of materials including carbon or glass fibre reinforced plastics. These composite materials are very strong, lightweight and durable. The durability makes them hard to recycle. What then can be done with hundreds of wind turbine blades which will be left after hundreds of existing wind turbines are decommissioned in Ireland over the next few years?

What is a solution?

There has been a great deal of work done looking at methods of breaking down the blades and separating the epoxy resin from the fibres to recycle the blade material. Researchers in [MaREI, the SFI Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine at UCC](#) and [MTU](#) with colleagues in the [International Energy Agency \(IEA\) Wind Task 45 group](#) and the [Re-Wind Network](#) have examined ways to recycle blades by chemically breaking them down, but have also looked at repurposing the blades. Repurposing means cutting the blades and using the pieces to make new products. Repurposing takes advantage of the strength and durability of wind turbine blades, and uses these in relatively high value applications, compared with the lower value

available from extracting fibres for recycling. A team from [UCC](#) and [MTU](#) together with [Cork County Council](#) have built a pedestrian bridge made from two used wind turbine blades (*Fig 1*), and have installed it on the Midleton Youghal Greenway (*Fig 2*). The bridge, which is the world's second blade bridge, was made using three blades from a disused wind turbine. The first blade was tested to destruction to be sure of the load bearing capacity. The other two were used to replace the steel girders in a traditional bridge design. The resulting bridge can carry 12 tonnes, so that emergency vehicles can cross over if needs be. This bridge was a little more expensive than a conventional steel one, but now that it has been made the cost of future bridges made from blades will compete with steel girder bridges. More technical details can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Colleagues from [QUB](#) and [Georgia Tech](#) have recently tested another bridge in Draperstown in the hope of finding its maximum load, the test was a “failure”; they couldn't get the bridge to break despite putting six times the planned load on it! It deflected by 9mm in the centre of a 6metre span with a load of 35 tonnes.

Given the durability and strength of the blade material other products have already been made such as a bicycle holder/bench which has been installed in Achill, Co. Mayo (*Fig 3*). There is a spin out company, [BladeBridge.ie](#), which is working on more



Fig 1: Construction of the Blade Bridge



Fig 2: The Blade Bridge on the Midleton Youghal Greenway

outdoor furniture ideas as well as pedestrian bridges. Members of the [Re-Wind Network](#) have been working on using blades to make electricity poles, and poles to hold mobile phone transmitters as well as other products, see the [Re-Wind Design Catalogue](#) for many more ideas.

What are the opportunities?

Ireland has led the way with some really excellent research on turbine blade recycling, such as the [WindLedErr](#) and [EirBlade](#) projects, and joined with international colleagues for [IEA Wind Task 45](#) and for the [Re-Wind](#) project.

The future opportunities are exciting. The decommissioning of offshore wind in Ireland will begin with the bottom fixed turbines, which are similarly proportioned to onshore turbines and eventually the much larger blades from floating offshore will be decommissioned. Ireland can continue to be a world-leader in renewable energy and recycling.

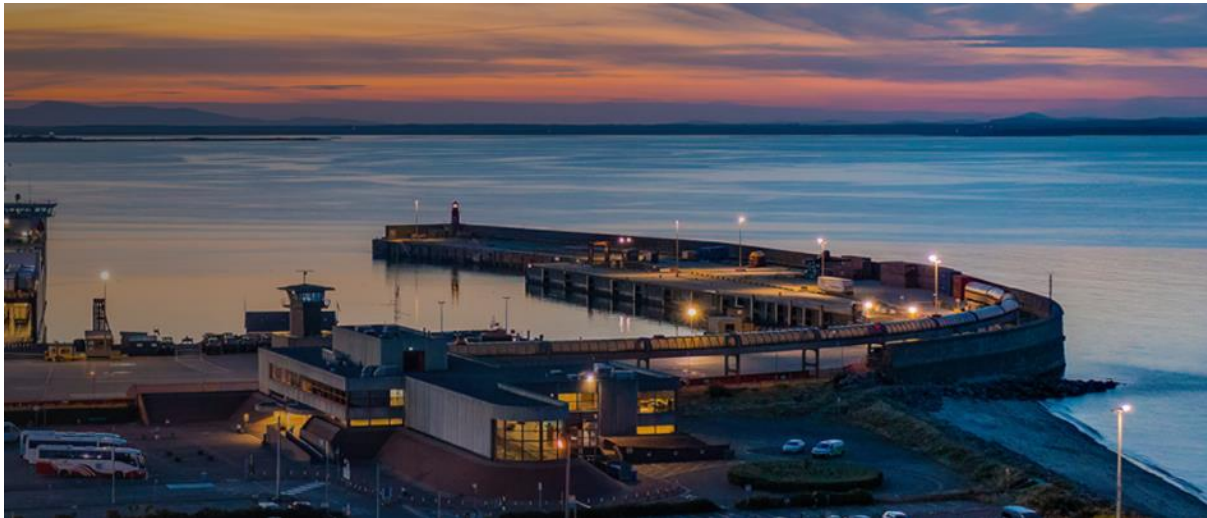
For further information: see [RTE Brainstorm](#), [RTE Heated](#) (Episode 2 starting 1:04), [The Conversation](#) and for a more academic approach, search for “Repurposing, Wind, Turbine, Blades, End-of-life” on [Google Scholar](#).

Funding: Irish Participation in IEA Wind Task 45 and WindLedErr have received funding from the [SEAI](#), EirBlade and Re-Wind have received funding from [SFI](#). [Wind Value](#) (Peter Deeney) has received funding from the [IRC](#)



Fig 3: Bicycle stand and bench in Achill

Exciting times ahead at Rosslare Europort



Plans for Rosslare Europort are progressing at great pace

A massive €200m re-development for **Rosslare Europort** edged one step closer in mid-December after the port authority, **Iarnród Éireann**, made a formal application to **MARA** for a Marine Area Consent (MAC).

Additionally, a design contract for an Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Hub was awarded to **Nicholas O'Dwyer (NOD)** and partners **Gavin and Doherty Geosolutions Consultants (GDG)** – all of whom have massive experience in specialised civil engineering and marine projects.

These exciting announcements follow on from the granting of a foreshore licence from the Department of Housing Local Government & Heritage, facilitating the commencement of site investigation works at the port.

The design will encompass key engineering elements, including quay walls, piling, breakwaters, surfacing, services, a new small boat harbour and ancillary facilities, while the planning and consenting elements include obtaining a Marine Area Consent from MARA and preparation and submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report, Appropriate Assessment and planning application to An Bord Pleanála.

The project is set to progress to public consultation in 2024, with a planning application intended for submission to An Bord Pleanála later next year. Construction is scheduled for 2025/26, with project completion anticipated in 2027.

Speaking at the contract announcement, **Glenn Carr, Director, Commercial Business Units for Iarnród Éireann**, said,

"The Irish Government has been accelerating policy on renewable offshore wind energy. Just last month, Minister Eamon Ryan announced the publication of an 'indicative roadmap' outlining a timetable towards Ireland's next offshore wind energy auction, the Offshore Renewable Energy Support Scheme (ORESS), which will take place off Ireland's south coast and procure up to 900MW of offshore wind

Jim Oliver, Managing Director of Nicholas O'Dwyer an RSK company, said,

"We are honoured to have been selected for a project of such importance in advancing Ireland's ambitious pursuit of its 2030 renewable energy goals. The visionary approach demonstrated by the Rosslare Europort team is truly commendable, reflecting a strategic foresight that will undoubtedly play a critical role in supporting the growth of Ireland's offshore wind farms and positioning Rosslare Europort to efficiently serve European projects as well."

Paul Doherty, Director and founder of Gavin and Doherty, added,

"GDG has an impressive track record in successfully delivering offshore wind projects worldwide. This particular project exemplifies the extensive capabilities and expertise that GDG brings to our clients. It underscores the global presence of both GDG and our parent company the Venterra Group. Our Ports and Harbour and Marine Advisory teams, both based in Ireland, specialise in marine engineering and environmental consenting, and can draw on the collective knowledge of our engineering expertise across our global group companies when required."

In mid-2023, Rosslare Europort won the coveted **"European Ferry Port of the Year"** at the European Ferry Shipping Summit in Malmo Sweden – making it the first time such an award was won by an Irish port.



Green Rebel announce 75 new jobs

There was some more good news on the jobs front late last year when it was announced that Green Rebel, who provide survey and data services to the offshore renewable energy sector, are set to create 75 new jobs over the next two years.

The new jobs include oceanographers, geophysicists, data scientists, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, survey vessel crew, technicians and project leads. The positions will be based in Limerick, Cork and on board Green Rebel's survey vessels. The company said it is actively recruiting for 25 of the jobs, and expects to hire another 50 people over the next two years to meet demand for its services.

Green Rebel which was established by **Irish entrepreneur Pearse Flynn** in 2020 specialises in acquiring, processing and analysing marine, aerial and met-ocean data. The company has current and upcoming projects in Ireland, Scotland and off the coast of mainland Europe.

It uses survey boats and aircraft as well as LiDAR buoys and other technologies that are designed and assembled in Limerick. It also has a number of potential projects in international markets such as the United States and Australia.

Kieran Ivers, CEO of Green Rebel said,

"This jobs announcement is a reflection of the progress we've made in developing world-class services that will inform offshore wind farm developments in Ireland and abroad. Green Rebel is competing on a global scale."

Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Simon Coveney TD added:

"Green Rebel is beating down a path for other Irish supply chain companies to follow and is building confidence in this sector. Green Rebel has deployed high level engineering and instrumentation to design and manufacture essential technologies for the offshore wind sector. Already we're seeing the opportunities internationally with Green Rebel's technologies being used by a number of tier-one ORE developers in this field," he added.



Appointments/Opportunities

Exciting PhD Opportunity in Marine Spatial Planning in Queen's University Belfast

This PhD opportunity is funded by the **Marine Institute** (Ocean Law and Governance Call) under the **CoCoMar Project: Enabling Co-existence and co-location in shared ocean spaces through better governance.**

PhD Title: *The Role of Maritime Spatial Planning in resolving demands for space on the island of Ireland: Competition, Conflict and co-existence*

Supervisors: Dr Heather Ritchie and Dr Wesley Flannery

Application deadline: **31st January 2024**

Start Date: **1st March 2024**

Application via: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate-research/phd-opportunities/the-role-of-maritime-spatial-planning-in-resolving-demands-for-space-on-the-island-of-ireland-competition-conflict-and-coexistence.html>

The *Enabling Co-existence and Co-location in Shared Island Marine Governance* (CoCoMar) Project is seeking a social science candidate for a PhD focused on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP). CoCoMar aims to enable co-existence and co-location as mechanisms to deliver more integrated marine governance in the shared waters around the island of Ireland. Sectoral demands are increasing in marine spaces and are not without conflict. MSP is widely advocated as the preferred approach to planning and managing such interactions, but its implementation is still relatively new. Furthermore, academic assessments of MSP question whether the implementation of MSP will transform unsustainable marine governance and management practices and whether it substantially addresses conflict in the marine environment. The literature illustrates that the current trajectory of many MSP initiatives is to preserve the status quo and that they fail to adequately address longstanding marine governance issues.

Increasing Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) is a pressing law and policy objective within the island of Ireland. Ireland's electricity market operates on an all-island basis via the Integrated Single Electricity Market, and similarly aquaculture is being

advanced in both jurisdictions, including the shared loughs. Both of these sectors will face the potential for conflict with each other but also with other marine sectors. This PhD will examine the role of MSP in resolving demands for space on the island of Ireland. Specifically, it will critically examine the planning, consenting, and management regimes for the advancement of offshore renewable energy and aquaculture development to identify the issues preventing greater coordination between them and other sectors. The research will examine how co-existence can be managed and will seek views of actors and stakeholders concerned. It will take a broad definition of conflict and move beyond assessing competition for marine space and examine broader and competing discourses around the future of marine spaces.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT:

Heather (heather.ritchie@qub.ac.uk) or Wesley (w.flannery@qub.ac.uk)

if you want to have an informal chat about the project.



**QUEEN'S
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CoCoMar
Enabling Co-existence and Co-location
in Shared Island Marine Governance



Marine Institute
Foras na Mara

2,500 entries for Green Schools/MSP Poster Competition



At the start of the 2023/2024 Academic Year, the **Green Schools/Marine Spatial Planning Poster Competition** was announced and over 2,500 entries were received from schools all over Ireland.

Under the heading of “**What I'd like to see for the Sea**,” the competition was open to Primary and Secondary Schools nationwide. The aim of the competition was to find out how students from around the country wanted our seas and oceans to be used in the future. They were asked to consider different activities that work well together at sea; plants and animals that co-exist on the seashore and in the ocean, as well as why and how we can protect the ocean for the future.

The artistic talent of students was fully evident considering the extremely difficult job our judges had in selecting each of the winners and runners-up. Categories were as follows: **Infants (Junior & Senior Infants); Junior Primary (1st – 3rd Class); Senior Primary (4th – 6th Class); Secondary School (1st – 6th Year).**

Prizes included an Art Workshop for the winner's class, framed versions of their poster, a certificate and a One4all Voucher. The competition was entered by schools working on the **Global Citizenship Marine Environment** theme for the 2023/2024 academic year and those who have achieved their Marine Flag already.

The prize-giving ceremony takes place on 19th January 2024 amid great excitement in the Radisson Hotel, Little Island, Cork. Congratulations to all who took part and special congratulations to our winners in each category. Details of all our winners and some photos will be available on www.marineplan.ie and also in our next newsletter.



Source: www.greenschoolsireland.org and www.marineplan.ie

A View from Europe



Eoin Leahy
Maritime Affairs Attaché



An Roinn Gnóthaí
Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade

Autumn 2023 in Brussels was pleasantly mild as I continued my work across an engaging variety of maritime areas. The Spanish Presidency was, in truth, somewhat underwhelming on the maritime front, with the Integrated Maritime Policy working party only meeting twice and the EU Maritime Security Strategy working party meeting five times – no doubt the effects of the political situation in Madrid was being felt in Brussels. Ongoing delays to a legislative file on ocean observation also contributed to this.

Once the heavy lifting of getting the updated EU Maritime Security Strategy over the line in October, focus on that file turned to implementation as member states, EU institutions and agencies considered how to implement the new strategy. Belgium takes over the Council Presidency for the first half of 2024 and already, indications are that we will have a busy agenda under this Presidency.

In a wild and windy Porto in October, the Atlantic Strategy Ministerial and Stakeholder Platform Conference went very well, with Ireland's delegation led by **Assistant Secretary Sinead McSherry from the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine** where she represented Minister McConalogue at the high-level Ministerial session. At this meeting we adopted a declaration to reaffirm political commitment to the Atlantic Strategy with a focus on renewables, skills and multi-use of maritime space featuring. There was also an opportunity to engage with Portugal's Secretary of State for the Sea and the Deputy DG from DG MARE as well as many other Atlantic colleagues. At the following Stakeholder Platform Conference, the **Prep4Blue** project received an award – this project has strong Irish links.

Work on European Maritime Day planning is beginning, with Cork City Council visiting Brussels in December. As part of this visit they met the DG MARE team to begin the conversation on delivering this prestigious event in 2025 in Cork. Dates are

pretty much agreed now and it's likely to be a three-day event, given the interest from across the EU to add to the agenda. Expect to hear more in the coming months on ways to get involved as we socialise the discussion on delivery across our maritime Departments.

Another interesting topic that I have been following is around discussions for Ireland to join a consortium for a call on an **Ocean and Water Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC)**. These KICs are a network of universities, research institutions, and companies that work together to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in a specific area or field. A report is due to the EU Parliament in early 2024 before deciding whether to allocate the funding to this topic. The KIC is expected to proceed with a call being launched in 2025 where we are positioning now to be ready for this call – a good opportunity for Ireland!

In mid-December, in a very unusual manner, the Spanish Presidency introduced a last minute topic to the General Affairs Council to consider developing a Macro Regional Strategy for the Atlantic. This topic hadn't been considered by the affected member states in advance with the supporters (mainly Spanish regions), wishing to replace the existing Atlantic Strategy with this new Macro Regional Strategy.

Ireland's views will need to be considered on this topic as we discuss next steps on this with the Commission and the other Atlantic Member States. For context, in the 2020-2023 period, there were about 830 Atlantic projects materialized with an EU contribution of about €3.7 billion so it's clear that we need to follow this topic closely.

During December I was pleased to be invited to speak to a class of Defence Force colleagues on the Joint Command and Staff Course Masters in the Curragh. The topic for the day was to share with them the updated EU Maritime Security Strategy, how it came about, its features and some implications for Ireland. This led to some engaging discussions and while I hope the students found it worthwhile, I certainly did.

Following Ireland joining the US led Partnership for Atlantic Co-operation in September in New York, the Senior Officials met in late November to move this initiative towards actions. Spain are likely to co-chair a working group on Marine Spatial Planning with the chair open to ideas from Partnership members for

additional topics. This group will meet again in January and there is opportunity for Ireland to engage with the working groups – please get in touch if interested.

Finally, as I write this, 2023 is drawing to a close. Looking back, the view from my desk is that much has been achieved during the year and I am as always, incredibly grateful from the support from home from across our maritime Departments on the broad range of important topics that we work on. I very much look forward to 2024 and continuing this momentum where I anticipate that “blue” matters will take on an increasingly important focus across the EU institutions.

**The next issue of
“Project Marine Newsletter” is
scheduled for release in early
Summer 2024.**

gov.ie/housing

The Department of
Housing, Local Government and Heritage



Rialtas na hÉireann
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