



**Heritage
Keepers**

EXPLORE AND ENHANCE YOUR PLACE

Resource Book

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Heritage Keepers

EXPLORE AND ENHANCE YOUR PLACE

Resource Book

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PRODUCED 2022 TO SUPPORT DELIVERY OF THE HERITAGE KEEPERS PROGRAMME.

What is Heritage Keepers?

Heritage Keepers is a free programme for schools, youth groups or communities to work together to discover your local built, cultural and natural heritage.

Over five 2-hour workshops you will explore your local Place and then plan an action or actions to enhance that Place.

Heritage Keepers involves learner-led exploration and discovery and for this reason we have put together this resource booklet to support your participation in the programme.

Worldwide we face a biodiversity and climate crisis. Action is needed at many levels to counteract this. Alongside these global issues, there are more localised concerns around isolation, decreasing connection to our local environment and a feeling of community disempowerment.

Burrenbeo Trust has over 10 years experience working with communities to address issues related to the biodiversity crisis, climate change, community fragmentation and heritage conservation. Community stewardship initiatives, where communities and individuals feel empowered to take action locally to the benefit of the community and the local heritage and environment have been shown to be effective in bringing about real and meaningful change and action.

Therefore, exploring and enhancing a Place is very much connected to investing in and enhancing the lives of the people who live in that Place.



Oranmore Boys National School, Co. Galway



Elphin Community College, Co. Roscommon



Kilkeedy Community Group, Co. Clare



Bere Island Projects Group, Co. Cork



Kilnamona Heritage Keepers, Co. Clare



Labasheeda Projects Group, Co. Clare



Scoil Iognáid, Galway City



Holy Trinity National School, Westport, Co. Mayo



Cabinteely Tidy Towns and Friends, Co. Dublin



Cloontuskert Development Association, Co. Roscommon

TIMELINE

- Week 1 to 5**
Participate in 5 workshop sessions (total 10 hours) culminating in development of a PLACE plan where an action or actions are proposed.
- Week 6 to 10**
Apply for PLACE plan grants.
- Week 11 to 21-23**
Groups and schools complete their action projects
- Afterwards**
Groups submit a (short!) report on their action. A networking and showcasing event is held.

Content overview

1 Introduction and My Place

This module will introduce participants to the Heritage Keepers approach. We will begin to consider the layers of your Place, what you like or dislike about your Place and the many local assets which exist.

2 Culture and the Past

Using a variety of online resources we investigate what life was like in our Place in the past. We learn about the legacy left by our ancestors; the stories and folklore, monuments and buildings.

3 Biodiversity and Land Use

The natural heritage which surrounds us all is the topic of module three. We look to identify the changes in land use and our local environments and think about what we can do to protect biodiversity locally.

4 The Future

Having considered our Places as they currently are, we look to the future and how we would like it to be. Initial ideas for potential actions are discussed and a framework for moving them forward will be shared.

5 Planning for Action

How to finalise local action plans and how to engage the wider community in Heritage Keepers are the topics for our last session. We also share some inspiration from actions already taken by groups just like yours.



1 Introduction and My Place

We will begin by taking a look at the Heritage Keepers approach and what we want to achieve in the 5 sessions. We will also look at what connects people to Place in general and what roots people to their local Place. We will take a step back and use maps to consider what we know or don't know about in our locality. We will also examine what people like and dislike about their local Place and conduct a simple audit of who and what makes up our local community.



Activity 1.1

What connects us to a Place?

Look at a map of Ireland. Where do you have a special connection to? Lots of different things connect us to a Place, where our ancestors are from, where we have happy memories of holidays, Places we have heard stories about, maybe even a Place where our favourite author is from!

Example of questions to consider; Where were you were born? Where do you live? Where is your favourite part of Ireland to go on holiday? Can you think of a Place where you feel particularly attached to?

Activity 1.2

What I know/didn't know about this Place

In this activity we are going to look at the Ordnance Survey (OS) Map for your area. This topographical map presents your local area in detail, giving you a fresh perspective of your Place. The map is at scale 1:50,000 (ie. 1cm on the map is equivalent to 0.5Km in reality). **Click here** to follow the link to the video on how to use OS maps to explore your local Place. You might be surprised to see some things on the maps you didn't know about before looking. You can also always use paper OS maps for this exercise if you have them.

Activity 1.3

Feelings towards your local Place

What do I like/dislike about my Place? What one thing would I change about my Place. Perhaps these likes or dislikes can inform the action you will take at the end of this programme? In pairs ask these each other these questions and then compare the answers to other pairs in your group. Does everyone feel the same about your local Place?

Activity 1.4

Local audit - People/Place/Things

Who and what makes up my community? List community groups/sports and activities clubs/individuals (particularly those who might be interested in community building)/businesses/physical infrastructure including community spaces. The details of a community audit should help you to identify people and facilities to support and celebrate your Heritage Keepers project and work towards further projects down the line. Have any community services/amenities been lost in recent years? How could these be restarted or restored?

Have I discovered anything new that I would like to explore further?
Have the activities inspired any ideas for possible actions?

Optional extras

GEOLOGY

The rocks beneath our feet – geology affects everything on top of it! Find out more about your local geology at www.geoschol.com (which includes a handy county by county guide) and www.gsi.ie.

PLACE NAMES

Are you curious as to what your local Place names mean? www.logainm.ie is a great resource to get you started. Minor Placenames for some counties have also been recorded on <https://meitheal.logainm.ie/en/>

The following website also has some useful information on Irish Place names www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/2016-family-history/modules-courses/placenames



2 Culture and the Past

In this session we are going to look at culture and the past in your area. We will be thinking about how life has changed in our area and how it will continue to change in the future.

Does your Place have its own local cultural identity? Are there local legends, customs, music, song, dance, art, literature, food or traditions that are unique to your area? How does cultural heritage intertwine with built and natural heritage?

We will begin by using the Heritagemaps.ie resource to explore our local built heritage.



Activity 2.1

Exploring my local built heritage

Very often monuments from the past, be they holy wells, megalithic tombs, ringforts or something from the more recent past such as a village pump, form an integral part of our Place. They tell us stories about our ancestors and help us form a deep connection with our Place. Informed pride of Place is crucial in developing community stewardship – nobody is going to take care of a Place if they don't know about their Place. Click on this [link](#) to see how heritagemaps.ie can help you discover the ancient monuments and historical buildings in your area.

Activity 2.2

Delve into the Schools Collection

What is the value of the past and its stories? In Ireland folklore is an important way for us to connect with our local Places. Folklore can act as a bridge to our Places in the past and to our ancestors. It can also help us understand our local culture and traditions in the present day.

Approximately 740,000 pages of folklore and local tradition were compiled by pupils from 5,000 primary schools between 1937 and 1939 (many in the pupils' original exercise books), initiated by the Irish Folklore Commission with the cooperation of the Department of Education.

More than 50,000 schoolchildren were enlisted to collect folklore in their home districts - oral history, topographical information, folktales and legends, riddles and proverbs, games and pastimes, trades and crafts. The children recorded this material from their parents, grandparents, and neighbours. The scheme resulted in the creation of over half a million manuscript pages, generally referred to as 'The Schools' Collection'.

The www.duchas.ie website houses 'The Schools' Collection' online. Click on this [link](#) to see how to find stories from your local school. Read the stories from your Place – what does the story say about how life has changed in your area? Do these changes relate to natural or cultural heritage?

Activity 2.3

Searching the census records

The census records represent an extremely valuable part of Irish Heritage. They are a window into the past of our local Places.

A government census of the Irish population was taken every 10 years from 1821 until 1911. No census was taken in 1921, due to political unrest as a result of the War of Independence and Civil War, but the work of taking census resumed in 1926. All census returns from 1926 onwards are closed to the public for 100 years in accordance with section 35 of the Statistics Act, 1993. The 1926 census will be released in 2027.

The 'National Archives' Census website (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>) comprises digitised images and a searchable index of household returns and ancillary records for the censuses of Ireland of 1901 and 1911.

See [link](#) to video for how to use website.

**Have I discovered anything new that I would like to explore further?
Have the activities inspired any ideas for possible actions?**



2 Culture and the Past



Optional extras

There are vast amounts of information available on Irelands local history. Here are some good resources:

19TH CENTURY PLACES

An A-Z of Irish Places written in the 19th century can be found in Samuel Lewis' Topographical Dictionary of Ireland available at <https://www.libraryireland.com/topog/placeindex.php>

CARTOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

Looking at old maps of your area is a fun and interesting way to see what changes have occurred in your local Place in the past 100 to 200 years.

There are three main maps to consult, all available as base maps on heritagemaps.ie (see video on how to use this website). The Historic 6 inch maps date from the 1830s and 1840s and were the first detailed maps of the entire country. They are often referred to as the first edition maps. They are available in colour and black & white. The next major mapping of Ireland took Place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These maps, called the Historic 25 inch maps or second edition maps, show a fascinating amount of detail.

The third useful maps to consults are the more recent

Cassini 6 inch maps mainly date from the 1940s. You can use the swipe layer feature to compare the earlier maps with the later maps.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs are an excellent tool for exhibiting what life was like in our local Places in the past as well as being a window into our ancestors lives.

There are a number of sources:

- www.duchas.ie have a large photographic collection which is searchable by Placename or by county. The National Folklore Collection's photographic collection consistsof some 80,000 photographs, the majority of which were taken by members of the Irish Folklore Commission (1935-70) and its successors.
- National Library of Ireland <https://www.nli.ie/>
- Royal Irish Archive www.ria.ie
- Local County Library

MUSIC

Music is a massive part of our culture. To explore local traditional music, the following resources could be useful.

- Music links from National Library of Ireland www.nli.ie/en/music-links.aspx
- <https://www.itma.ie/> Irish traditional music archive

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Intangible cultural heritage 'refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity'.

Was there some craft practised locally that your Place was famous for in the past (and maybe still is today), e.g lacemaking, blacksmithing, hurley making, weaving, basket making? It is worth looking at this national inventory to see examples <https://nationalinventoryich.chg.gov.ie/>

3 Biodiversity and Land Use in your Area

In this session we consider the nature/biodiversity in our local Places. Using online resources we research our local biodiversity and habitats and look at local land use – is local land farmed/forested/urbanised? We also consider the changes to land use and biodiversity in the recent and not so recent past. We will discuss local threats to biodiversity and look at human attitudes to various aspects of nature/wildness.

Activity 3.1

Species numbers

Only 10% of Irelands species are familiar plants, birds and mammals. At least 60% are invertebrates (insects, crustaceans, molluscs etc). There are an estimated 7,000 species of algae and fungi that have yet to be discovered in Ireland. Having a look at this website <https://biodiversityireland.ie/taxonomic-groups/> can give us an insight into the vastness and richness of Irelands Biodiversity.

Activity 3.2

What plants and animals have been recorded in my area?

Interested to see what species have been previously recorded in your local area? The National Biodiversity Data Centre website (www.biodiversityireland.ie) have made this possible. You can generate a report on any 2km² or 10km² area in Ireland, listing all the flora and fauna recorded through national surveys and citizen science. While the list doesn't include all species found in your area, it offers a fascinating insight into your local biodiversity. **This video** outlines how to use the biodiversityireland.ie website to search what plants and animals have been recorded in my area.

Activity 3.3

What nature is protected in my Place?

There are various types of protection that can be assigned to natural and semi natural habitats. In this activity we look at how to check if there are any of these protected sites in our local area.

First, let's briefly explain the different types of protection natural habitats can have.

The basic designation for wildlife in Ireland is a Natural Heritage Area (NHA). This is an area considered important for the habitats present or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. In addition there are proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) which are offered limited protection.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated for the protection of endangered species of wild birds and for the protection of areas which home a lot of migratory birds. Most SPAs are coastal or wetland areas.

Collectively these sites are known as Natura 2000 sites. There are a total of 913 protected areas in Ireland, 14% of the total land area. **See video here** on how to check if there are any protected sites in your local Place.



Optional extras

CONSERVATIONS STATUS OF PROTECTED HABITATS

14% of Irelands total land is protected under European and Irish law. If you want to check out the conservation status of these protected habitats go to <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/countries/ireland>

HOW CAN WE HELP NATURE IN OUR LOCAL PLACE

Irelands national biodiversity database centre have an excellent website, with many great resources on how to help your local biodiversity <https://biodiversityireland.ie/>. The All Ireland Pollinator Plan is a key project of the NBDC. Check it out here <https://pollinators.ie/>. Remember what is good for pollinators is good for wildlife in general!

3 Biodiversity and Land Use in your Area

Activity 3.4

Land use in my area

Looking at aerial imagery is a useful way of understanding land use in your local Place. The most recent aerial photos on heritagemaps.ie are called 'The Digital Globe' aerial photos and are from 2012.

Has any new development happened in your area? Have any new services been lost/added? Has any area of nature being removed/added? Could you connect areas of nature to provide wildlife corridors?

Compare the old maps of your Place with the aerial photography of your local Place. This is useful for tracking land use changes over the past 100-200 years. **Click here** to see a video on how to explore landuse and landuse changes in your area.

Activity 3.5

Goodies versus baddies?

Sometimes plants that are very important for biodiversity such as ivy, nettles, thistles and briars are viewed negatively by people for various reasons. Lets explore our own feelings to some of these plants, do they deserve their reputation?

Activity 3.6

Threats to local biodiversity

The natural world is an essential part of our local Place. It provides essential services for the human population (clean air, clean water, healthy soil etc). More than that, the nature that surrounds us is part of what makes our Places unique. It will come as no surprise to you that our biodiversity/natural world is under threat.

Biodiversity loss in Ireland is caused mainly by;

Habitat destruction: For example through construction and wetland drainage or infilling

Invasive alien species: Such as Japanese Knotweed and Zebra Mussel

Pollution: For example from use of excess fertilizer leading to excessive levels of nutrients in soil and water

Land use change: Such as conversion of land to plantation forestry or agriculture

Climate Change

What are the local threats in my area? Discuss amongst your group. Are these threats similar to what other groups are experiencing or are they unique to your area? How could we begin to tackle them?

Have I discovered anything new that I would like to explore further?
Have the activities inspired any ideas for possible actions?



Optional extras

WATER QUALITY INFO

The Environmental Protection Agency have an excellent resource on their website, where you can view the water quality of your local river or lake. Go to <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/Water> and under Layers select 'Latest River Q Values'. Rivers and lakes are colour coded depending on the quality of their water.



4 The Future

Session 4 begins with a recap of all we have discovered in our local Places in Sessions 1 to 3. We also will examine the problem of reaching consensus on project decisions, what would make our local Place 'perfect' and what local issues there might be and how we can tackle them. We will look at a PLACE plan and how we can use it to plan our project and also consider the idea of a local PLACE day.

Recap

Let's begin with a recap of what we have discovered so far in this programme:

- What built, cultural & natural heritage have I discovered in my area?
- What ideas have come up for possible projects, short term and long term?
- What would it take to make these ideas into concrete projects?

Activity 4.1

Coming to shared decisions

Coming to shared decisions in a group isn't always easy. In this activity we examine some possible dilemmas e.g. donating money to environmental charity vs. a local youth club. How can we reach consensus? Have we lost the middle ground? Is everything always black and white? Often, we need compromise to reach decisions and take action.

Activity 4.2

My dream Place

What would make your Place perfect? Try to come up with 3 - 5 ideas per group. At least one of these ideas can be a 'blue sky' idea – something to aim towards! Try to have at least a few ideas that fall under the broad remit of built, cultural or natural heritage. Hopefully some of these ideas will inspire your project!

Activity 4.3

Place issue: Think, Discuss, Share

List a few issues in your local Place and discuss each one. If you are working with groups from other areas you will see that often different Places have similar issues. Can we learn from each other?



WHAT IS A 'PLACE DAY'

Would it be possible to have a day to celebrate your local Place? Perhaps look at having information available on local built, cultural and natural heritage. This could be as simple as having a person stand at a local historical building and telling its story. Cultural heritage could involve local musicians playing, dancing, a local storyteller or even printing out old photos or old stories from the folklore collection for display. A local nature walk is a great way to celebrate the beauty on your own doorstep. You can also use the day to rally the community and explain what you are doing as a group.

Have I discovered anything new that I would like to explore further?
Have the activities inspired any ideas for possible actions?



5 Planning for Action

We begin our last session by examining how local actions can impact on global problems. Looking at each of our project ideas through an impact/effort matrix we consider which of our project ideas we should put into action. We then work to completed our PLACE plan for our selected project. We will examine who can help us with our project and what might hold us back. Session 5 concludes with a look at previous Heritage Keepers projects and details the support available for getting our projects off the ground.

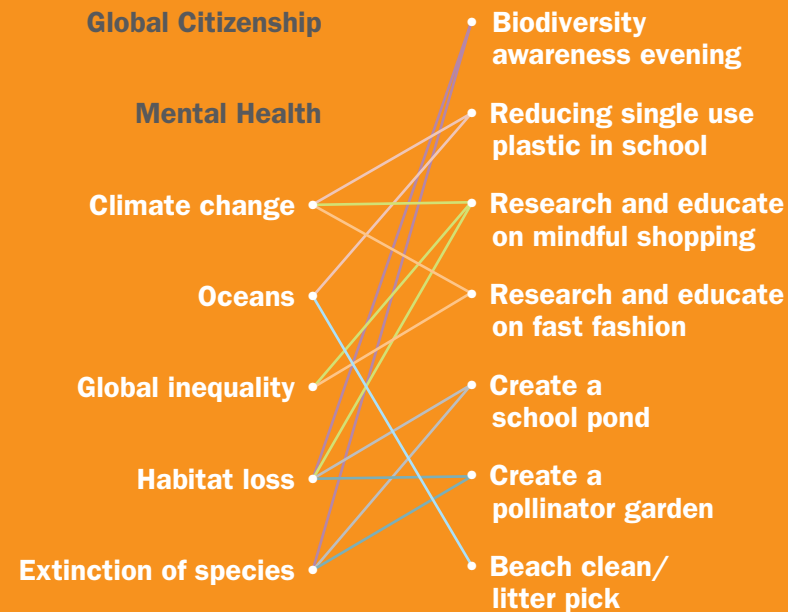


Activity 5.1 Local to Global

We are all aware of the problems affecting the world right now but can these global problems be tackled locally?

Each community can make a difference in their local area and 'blaze a trail' as humanity sets out to tackle these global problems. Example; undertaking a local beach clean improves the health of the ocean. As Heritage Keepers groups (and others) all over Ireland work to address local issues and share their actions with others they can inspire and prompt action on a wider scale.

IMPACT ON LOCAL PLACE



Activity 5.2 Decisions, decisions!

Using an impact/effort matrix is an effective way to help decide on a project. If you have more than one project proposal in mind, examining the impact each project could potentially have, along with the effort it is going to take to achieve your project aims, can be very helpful and can help you pin down which project to carry out.



Have I discovered anything new that I would like to explore further?
Have the activities inspired any ideas for possible actions?



5 Planning for Action

Activity 5.3

Complete a PLACE plan

Setting out objectives is a good way to plan the steps needed to put a plan into action. Our PLACE plan is simple yet effective.

Project Title

Logic

Activities

Committee

Evaluation

Taking on an action that your group is passionate about is key. Remember also to make it achievable. If you feel it is not all achievable between now and June it might be a good idea to break the project into smaller parts.

Try to make your project as environmentally friendly as possible e.g. If you are making a local heritage trail map, try to use a local printer and recycled paper, limit the number of paper copies available and consider making it available widespread online instead.

Project Title What will you do?	Build a childsafe, wildlife-friendly pond behind community centre.	
Logic Why do you want to do this? Is it achievable?	We want to build a pond because it is one of the best ways to help nature. Ponds provide a home for many aquatic plants and insects. This in turn provides food for amphibians, birds and bats. Ponds are also a source of drinking water for wild animals. We want to cover the pond with a metal grid to make it childsafe. We believe it is achievable because it is relatively low cost and the Community Centre previously showed interest in such a project.	
Activities What do you need to do? How long do you need?	WHAT? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide location and size Get permission from landowner (Community Centre) Apply for funds to Heritage Keepers fund for pond liner and grid cover costs. Team familiarise themselves with 'Creating a wildlife pond' by Juanita Browne (available online). Buy liner and grid. Arrange day to construct. Hold pond construction day. Publicize new pond on local social media and arrange local expert to give talk in the National School on the benefits of pond for biodiversity. Complete report to Burrenbeo. 	BY WHEN? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid March Mid March End March Mid April End April End April Mid May Mid May End May
Committee Who needs to do what?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide location and size (HK team) Get permission from landowner (MW) Apply to Heritage Keepers fund for recycled pond liner and grid costs (MW & GT) Buy liner and grid (MN) Arrange day to dig (MW & GT) Have pond construction day (HK team and helpers) Publicize new pond on local social media and arrange local expert to give talk in the national school on benefits of pond for biodiversity (PL & TR). Complete report to Burrenbeo (MW & GT) 	
Evaluation How will you know the plan is completed? How will you share and celebrate what you've done?	<p>Project will be completed when pond is finished with grid in Place.</p> <p>We will share what we have done via social media and parish newsletter. We will arrange for local expert to visit the national schools and talk about ponds. We will also attend Burrenbeos 'Communities for Heritage day' where we can share the story of our project.</p> <p>We will celebrate in Heritage Week by including our new pond in our annual local nature walk.</p>	



Activity 5.4

Help or Hinder

Who or what will help?
Who or what will hinder?

List the people/groups/services that can help you and hinder you in achieving your project aims.

HELP

The community centre can help us by providing space to exhibit our project

HINDER

The small number of people in our group may make it difficult to complete our aims

Try to find ways to mitigate any of the elements that might hinder.

We also have a list of resources, organisations and guides that might help on our website www.heritagekeepers.ie

Inspiration

We are lucky enough to have worked with many inspirational groups and schools. Here is a tiny selection of groups and their projects that may inspire you.

Holy Trinity NS The Crows Foot Trail of Westport



The senior room in Holy Trinity NS, Westport created a treasure trail with a difference – a trail of the Crows feet benchmarks of Westport. These benchmarks (used by surveyors measuring height above sea level) are nearly 200 years old and are engraved on old

stone buildings, walls and bridges, including on the wall of their school! The children and their teacher identified all the remaining Crows feet benchmarks in Westport, photographed them and did some research on the buildings where they were engraved. With the help of a graphic designer (funded by a Heritage Keepers grant) they produced a trail map with clues and information sheet. Initially available online, the Westport chamber of commerce were so impressed with the project that they came on board to print the map and made it available in all the public buildings in the town. What a great group of kids!

Bere Island Projects Group Oral History Project

The Bere Island Projects group chose to kickstart an oral history project as their Heritage Keepers action. With funding from the Heritage Keepers programme the group invited Dr Angela Maye-Banbury, a leading oral history expert, to give a weekend of workshops. They also held a public meeting to spread the word about the project. By recording an oral history of Bere Island the group are aiming to preserve the stories of the island's past for the future. The group used the resources and facilities of the local community radio station to record the stories and are sharing the recordings on their local website www.bereisland.net. The group was subsequently accepted onto ICAN (Irish Community Archive Network), where the recordings from the project will also be shared.



The Comeragh Uplands Communities Group Comeragh Uplands Fieldtrips

The Comeragh Uplands Communities Group carried out a lovely Heritage Keepers project; they organised a visit to local farmers on the Comeragh Mountains for senior classes from six local schools. Liam Beresford, one of the farmers, said “we wanted to tell the children about how we look after our mountain sheep flock and how we are trying to mind our mountain biodiversity to make it better for everyone to live and work”. Fiona Fitzharris of Rathgormack National School said “we learned so much from the farmers about the flora and fauna of the mountain. The children particularly enjoyed experiencing sheep shearing and a sheep dog at work as well as getting a cuddle from the lambs!”



Heritage Keepers

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www.heritagekeepers.ie

burrenbéotrust
connecting people and place



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

Delivered by Burrenbeo Trust in partnership with the Heritage Council