

HNV Farming Networks in Ireland – What we have and what we need



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What is a HNV network?

- *Interconnected Groups*
- *Individuals and organisations*
- *From a range of disciplines and backgrounds*
- *Collaborating for the protection of HNV farming.*



Why do we need them?

- *Ability to achieve objectives across a range of disciplines.*
- *More and more groups taking ownership of the HNV farming idea.*
- *Being increasingly highlighted on the political agenda.*
- *Now a need for greater cohesion and integration between these groups – sharing, connecting and collaborating through innovative network.*

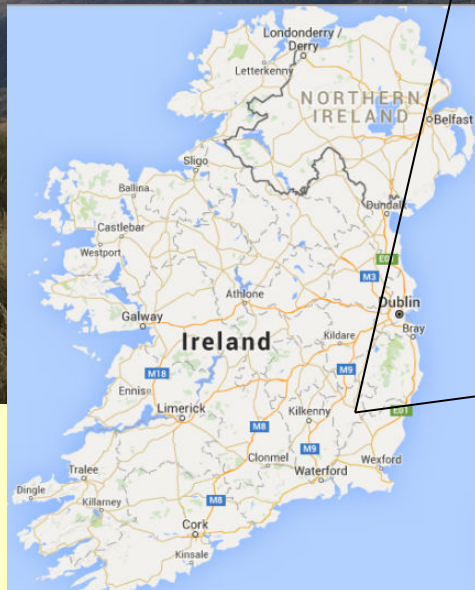


What do we have?

- *EFNCP continues to network between HNV farming groups.*
- *Research - Ideal HNV – identifying and mapping HNV areas and creating HNV networks*
- *Other NGO's, Farming, Nature conservation and research groups working directly with community groups.*
- *No platform that links all involved*

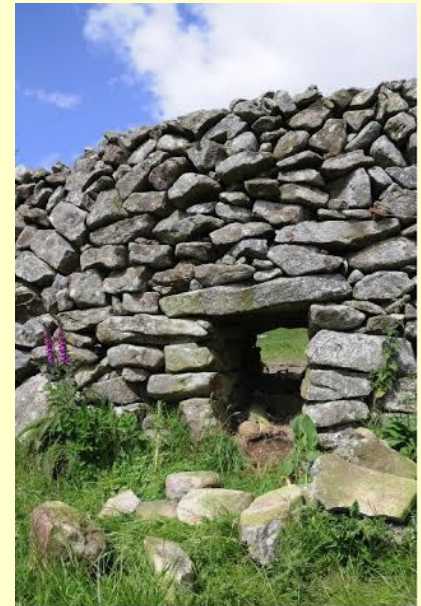


The Blackstairs Farming Group



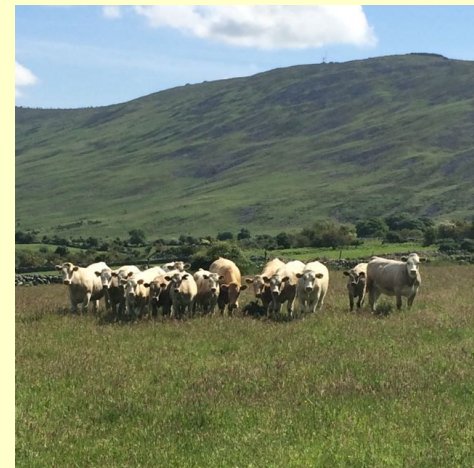
Creating their own vision

- Mission: Working towards the sustainable management and development of the Blackstairs uplands and their hinterlands using a community based partnership approach
- Objectives: *To advocate for the farmer and farming community's essential role in maintaining and enriching the built, natural and cultural heritage of the Blackstairs and the Barrow Valley.*



Starting out

- *The journey started by targeting National funding streams.*
- *First recognition and funding came from the Heritage Council.*
- *Provided the motivation and impetus to continue their journey.*
- *Showed others that they were serious and gave weight to proposals.*



Building on a the foundation

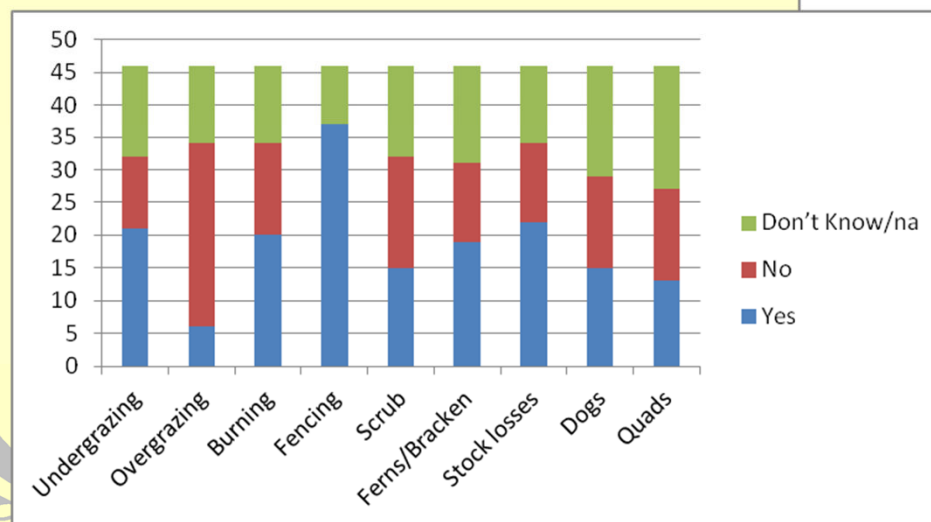
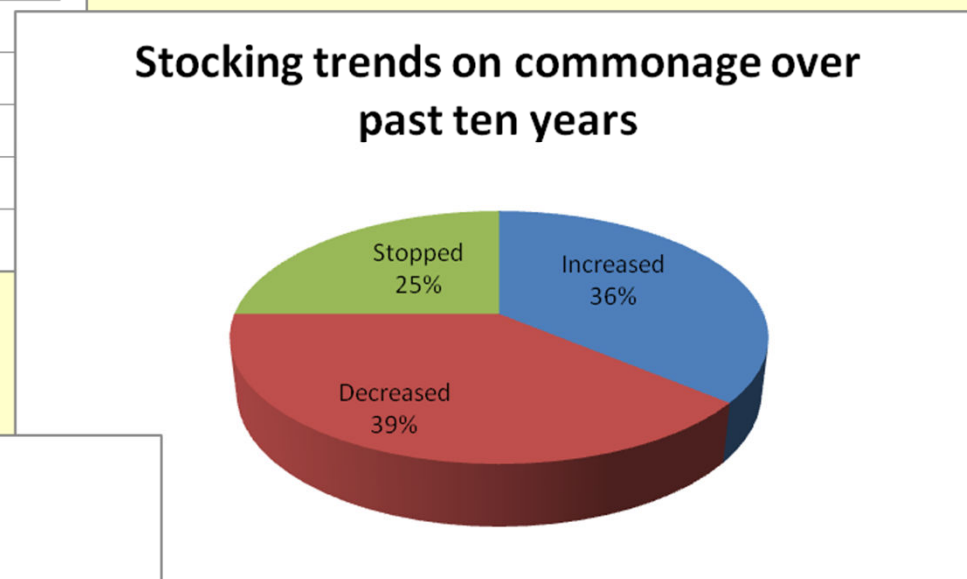
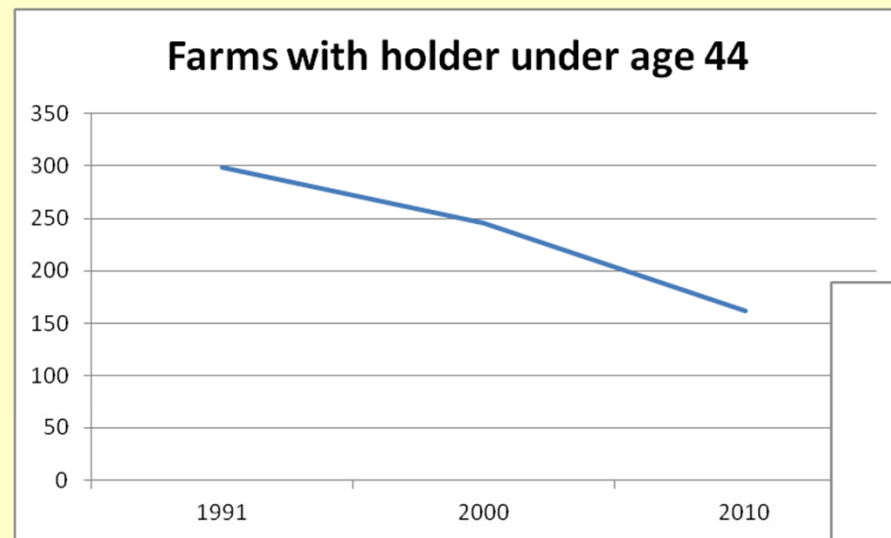
- *Secured funding from both Wexford and Carlow County Councils to expand on the initial habitat survey.*
- *Trip to the Burren and MacGillycuddy Reeks to look at other locally led initiatives and network with other farming groups.*
- *Secured support funding from EFNCP for the role of Coordinator.*
- *Strong social media presence – Its not who you know, it's who knows you!*



Developing the partnership approach

- *Important phase of engagement with farmers and local community (Combination of face to face interviews and organised field walks)*
- *Engagement and networking with other relevant stakeholders – NPWS, Coillte, Govt Depts, Fisheries Ireland, Teagasc, Farm Planners and advisors, etc..*






Consensus through cooperation

- *Networking continues between local, regional and national stakeholders.*
- *Local workshop groups will be established - develop appropriate measures to be included in any proposals.*
- *Aim to have an initial proposal for a locally led outputs based scheme prepared by end of 2015.*



Locally Led Agri-Environment Projects and the Blackstairs



Locally Led Agri-Environment Projects

- €70 million has been allocated in the Rural Development Programme for Locally Led Agri-Environment Projects.
- The objective is to encourage local groups to develop locally focused projects, designed to respond to specific local environmental challenges with locally driven solutions.
- It would not be a substitute for Glas but a complementary addition. Any payments under a successful locally led project would be made in addition to Glas.
- The "conservation/restoration of upland peats" has been identified as a specific theme which offers a particular opportunity for upland communities.
- Multi-annual grant for successful applications.

Why the Blackstairs?

- A long history of farming these slopes that run between counties Carlow and Wexford are what have shaped this major natural attraction; rich in cultural and natural heritage.
- A range of social and economic factors have led to changes in how these uplands are farmed and how they fit into the modern farming enterprise.
- Farmers are faced with many challenges in grazing the uplands in an efficient and sustainable manner.
- The decline in traditional hill sheep farming and management practices threaten the important wildlife of these areas.
- This locally led project offers an opportunity to overcome these challenges in a way that suits local people.

How can we apply for a locally led project?

- Local partnership and participation is key - a successful project can only be achieved with local input. The Blackstairs Farming Group, a working group, has been formed to investigate the potential for this approach in Mt Leinster and The Blackstairs.
- Input from farmers is essential so that there is an understanding of local farming practices and the challenges faced by the local hill farming community.
- A range of expertise is needed to make it work. The Blackstairs Farming Group are receiving advice and support from the Irish Uplands Forum, IT Sligo and The European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism.
- The Blackstairs Farming Group have secured funding to carry out an assessment of the flora and fauna and the overall condition of mountain range.
- The results of the habitat assessment and consultation process with local farmers and stakeholders will result in a plan for a locally led agri-environment project being drawn up for the Blackstairs.
- With local agreement on a final plan, an application will be made for a locally led project for the Blackstairs once the call for expressions of interest comes from the Department of Agriculture.

For further information please contact either Helena Fitzgerald, BFG Coordinator, Boms (087 7820229); Martin Shannon, BFG Chairperson, Kilsaly (085 7497314) or Colin Gallagher, EFNCP HNV Ireland Officer (087 9827333).



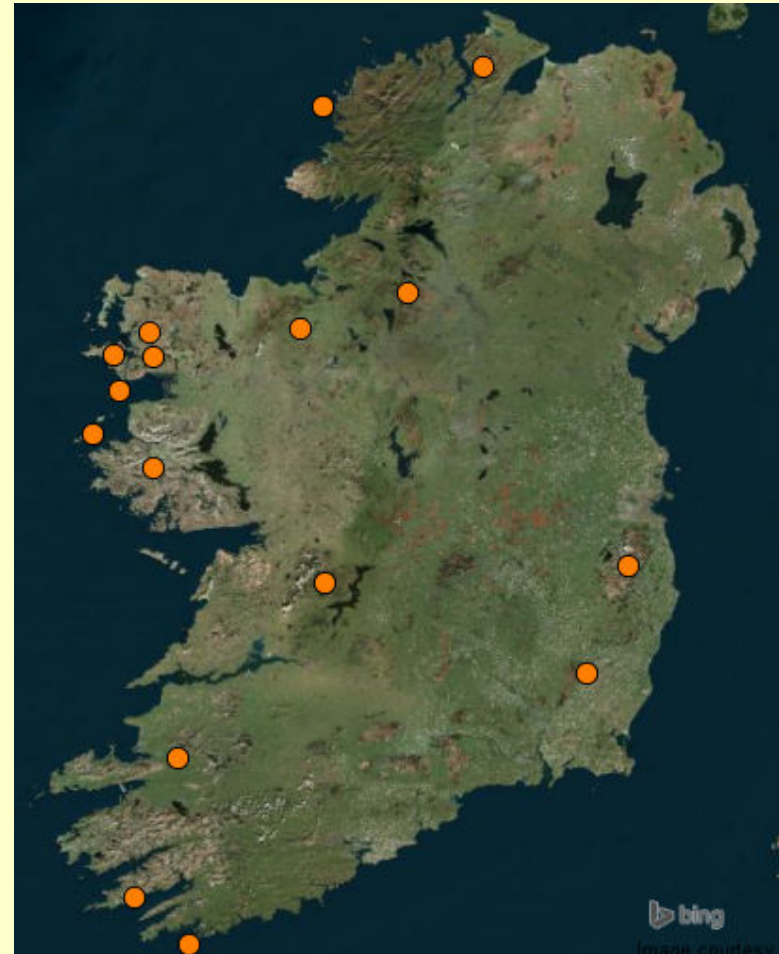
Adapting to change

- *The group secured the initial capacity it needed but success completely depends on continued support.*
- *The funding landscape is ever changing but the group is confident and capable of adapting.*
- *As opportunities present themselves the group and the community will develop around these.*



Challenges for local HNV groups

- *Lack of capacity (support and professional advice for the group, its structure, organisation and direction)*
- *Gaining trust*
- *Maintaining independence and control of their own destiny*
- *Maintaining momentum*
- *Keeping motivated and confident of a successful outcome*



What do we need?

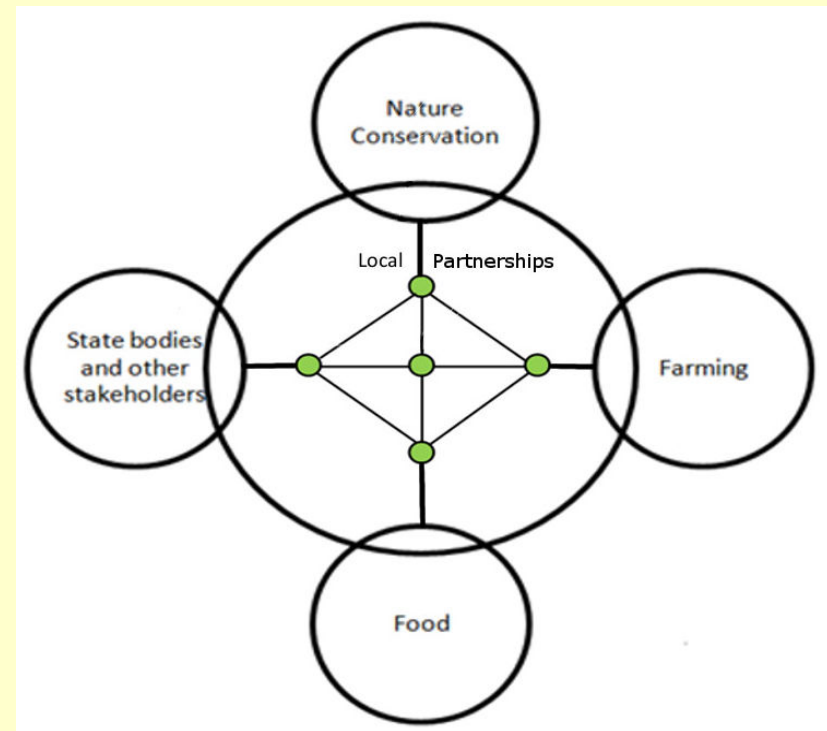
- *To be recognised.*
- *Assistance with capacity building.*
- *Build a culture of trust between local HNV groups and their funding sources.*
- *Access to expertise and advice.*
- *Increase the flow and transfer of knowledge.*
- *A network with a solid structure - enable groups to make the meaningful connections they need to make.*
- *Reward good networking behaviour between local groups.*

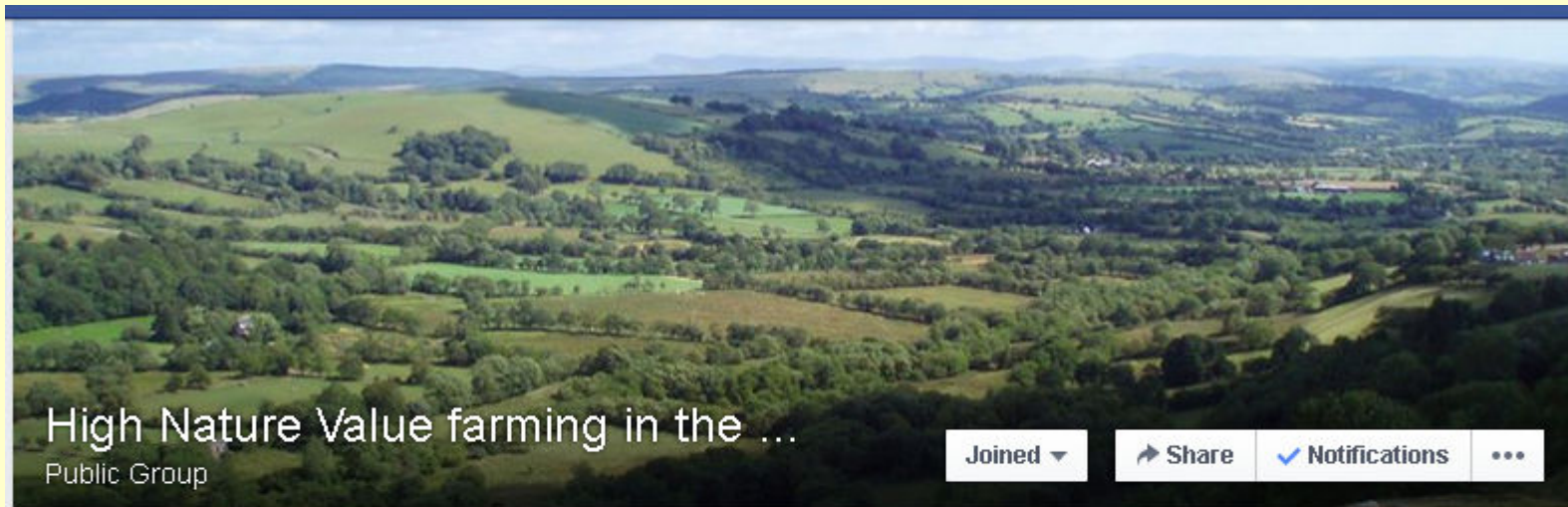


How do we get there?

- *Identify HNV areas – Ideal HNV linking research to the farmer.*
- *HNV Coalition*
- *Greater commitment in RDP for targeted schemes for HNV areas.*
- *Raise general awareness and education among public.*

HNV Coalition





Discussion

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Colin Gallagher

13 mins



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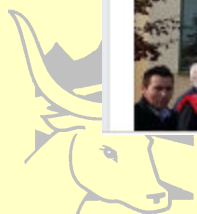
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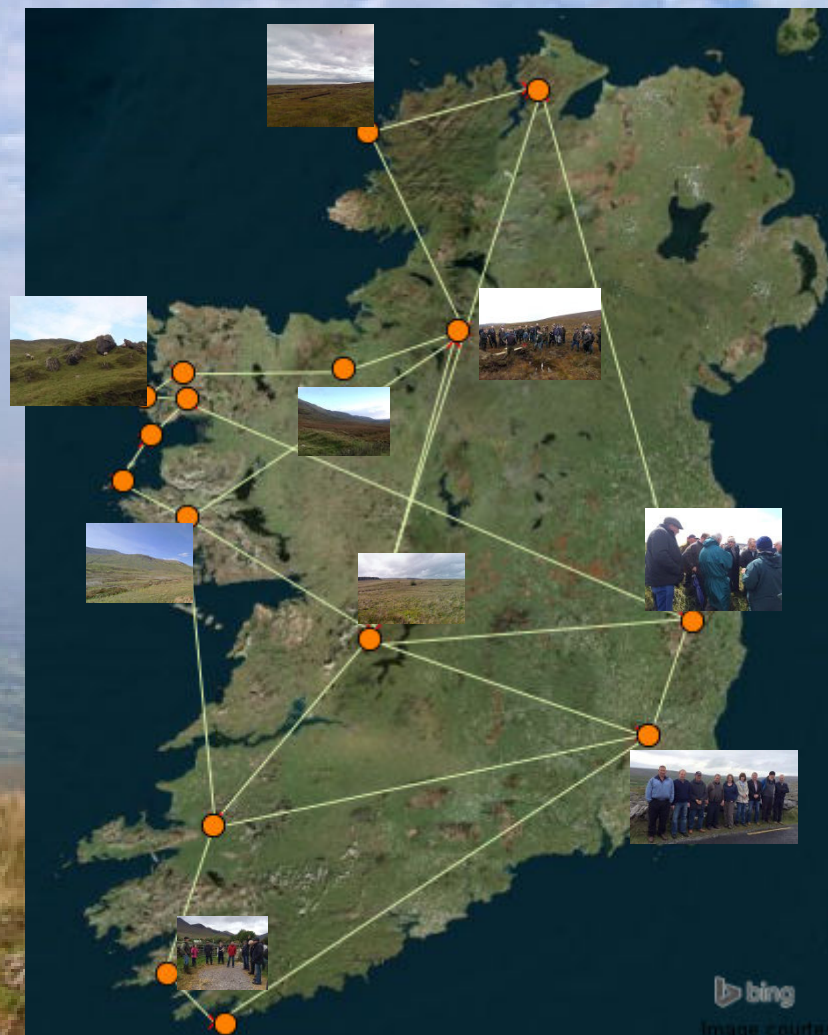
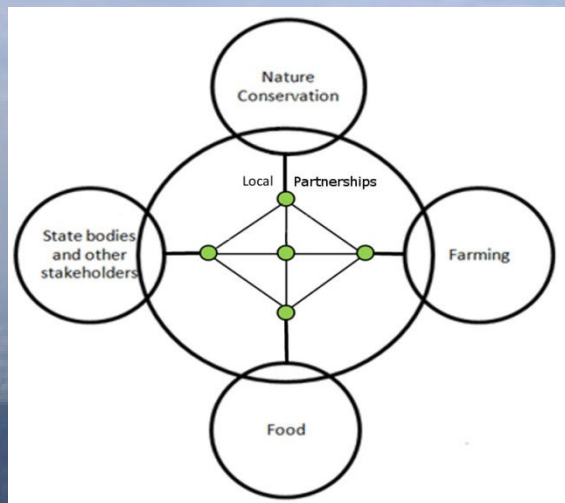
CREATE NEW GROUPS

Groups make it easier than
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A vision for HNV networks in Ireland



Thank you

