

## FOREST FRIENDS IRELAND 2019-Chairman's Report

---

INTRODUCTION: 2019 has been Forest Friends Ireland most successful year to date in the whole of its 20 years existence. There have been many highlights since our foundation, not least the **launching of our Cross Border Peace Forest in 2014**. But 2019 was especially unique because it saw the emergence of **Forest Friends International**, whose birth was facilitated by Forest Friends Ireland. Forest Friends International functions as a completely independent organisation and has branches in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and several other African countries. This initiative is unique in that it includes the creation of a **World Peace Centre** in Ethiopia. This centre will be modelled on the **Auroville World Peace Centre** which I visited recently. It is located in Tamil Nadu in South Eastern India. Land for the World Peace Centre project will be provided by the government of Ethiopia, whose president was awarded the Nobel Peace prize 2019 for his work in bringing peace to the Horn of Africa. The awarding of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize to Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed lends a great impetus to Forest Friends International in the development of the World Peace Centre in the region. The Prime Minister was awarded the 100th Peace Prize for his efforts to "achieve peace and international cooperation". A total of 301 candidates had been nominated for the prestigious award, including 223 individuals and 78 organisations. Ethiopia is making available a whole village for the World Peace Forest project.

Forest Friends also organised a **major seminar about Irish Forestry** and its rampant monoculture and use of carcinogenic pesticides. This was held in the Skylon Hotel Drumcondra, Dublin, details of which can be found on Forest Friends Facebook.

- **Peace Forest Ireland Project** This project involves planting peace trees in the cross border counties along the border between north and south Ireland on an ongoing basis. Thousands of trees have been planted in the counties involving local communities. It has an objective of bring local communities together in tree planting and co-operative endeavour. The project was launched in 2014 in Derry when the first tree an oak was planted by the then president of Rotary International, Sakugi Tenaka in St. Columba's Park in Derry. **Forest Friends Peace Forest project was re-launched in 2019**
- **Young Forest Friends** report pending by **Donna Cooney, PRO Forest Friends Ireland**. Donna Cooney [donnacooney1@yahoo.ie](mailto:donnacooney1@yahoo.ie), this initiative is driven by her and students of Dominican College Griffith Avenue-The project is promoted in social media by the YFF instegram twitter and facebook social media. The students who are managing social media aspects of the Young Forest Friends initiative are: Eva Baudson, Alice Baltazar, Ann Fox Mallon, Lorraine Morana and Ellen Quigley. These transition year students are also doing voluntary work at Forest Friends Drumcondra.
- John Maguire is Forest Friends web master and posts important information on it on a regular basis. [john@themaguire.ie](mailto:john@themaguire.ie)
- **Living Sustainably in Rural Ireland**-report by one of our new directors, Jack O'Sullivan- pending. [jackosullivan2006@gmail.com](mailto:jackosullivan2006@gmail.com)
- Forest Friends who are located in the Arts and Business Campus 40 Lower Drumcondra Road have developed demonstration projects illustrating aspects of **biodiversity, pollination, herb and organic vegetable growing on an ongoing basis. It includes a small 'Healing/biodiversity' Garden** at 400 North Circular Road Dublin tree nursery projects and associated ongoing workshops A main emphasis for 2020 is tree propagation from seeds.

## FOREST FRIENDS IRELAND 2019-Chairman's Report

---

- Progress report on the Forest Friends **Ireland South-East branch** by Eli McBett [beithedeoir.forestfriends.ie@gmail.com](mailto:beithedeoir.forestfriends.ie@gmail.com)
- Progress report on **Forest Friends International** project and the Forest Friends World Peace Centre Ethiopia and the Forest Friends Ethiopia village project by Felix Daramola [felix@eurolegacy.org](mailto:felix@eurolegacy.org)
- Each year Forest Friends collect tree seeds locally and grow them on and make them available for tree planting on an ongoing basis, working with local communities and volunteers. The most recent Seed Collections took place in October 2019.
- **Tree plantings**- on-going tree plantings have taken place including the planting of 100 oak trees at the Festina Lente site in Bray Co. Wicklow.
- **Outreach projects** with local schools/colleges and communities are ongoing. Foremost among these is the commencement of Forest Friends working with **Phibsboro Community** which will begin with the planting of Forest Friends donated oak and maple trees in the next few weeks. The Phibsboro community is well organised and advanced has quite a number of initiatives and an interesting structure for developing many varied outreach projects. We hope to identify joint projects with them in the new year.
- . Our annual **Summer School Internship project**. In 2019 this project accommodated some 50 students. This provided much needed additional manpower during the summer months. It involves mainly third level students, many of them studying marketing and learning about the natural environment and sustainable living and development.
- **Biodiversity Week2019** – Each year FF take part in the Irish Government sponsored National Biodiversity Week. Our extensive biodiversity week program which took place in May can be seen on our Facebook.
- **The' Golden Leaf' (poem) Award project**. Details of this project can be seen on our Facebook also. The idea in this project is to encourage people to write about their experience and special relation with trees. The closing date for submissions has been extended until the 30<sup>th</sup>. September 2020.
- **Forest Friends Herb Project**: We have been developing our herb project as herbs are so important for culinary and healing and are devoting part of our gardens for that purpose.
- **Workshops** We organise gardening and biodiversity workshops in our organic garden in Drumcondra on a regular basis.
- **Marketing of Forest Friends**, Forest Friends have found it a difficult proposition to market environmentally. We have been working on this with the printing of business cards, promotional literature, social media, leafletting, and press releases and merchandise all these need to be further developed in 2020as part of our marketing strategy.
- We hope to organise fundraising events in 2020 And to identify and utilise **alternative funding streams**.

## FOREST FRIENDS IRELAND 2019-Chairman's Report

---

- **Joint initiatives** with Dublin City University and Raheny Rotary. It is intended to build on the joint initiatives we have developed with Dublin City university and our Raheny Rotary partners. We are working jointly with the Ballyboughal Hedgerow Fingal Co. Dublin project organised by local resident Ann Lynch Ann Lynch [lynchjustice@gmail.com](mailto:lynchjustice@gmail.com) Ann has agreed to join Forest Friends as a new director.,
- Forest Friends Newsletter/**Magazine project**. We have produced a yearly magazine and propose to continue with this project which identifies useful projects and information. Details of the yearly project can be found on our website [www.forestfriends.ie](http://www.forestfriends.ie)
- **Enviro radio programme** Forest Friends Ireland is unique among Irish ENGOS in having access to the airwaves of NEAR 90.3 FM on a weekly basis with complete editorial and content management of the weekly Enviro program which goes out live for an hour each week. The podcasts of these programs can be found on NEAR 90.3 FM. [www.nearfm.ie](http://www.nearfm.ie)
- **Re-structuring and building capacity:** Our re-structuring and capacity building process is ongoing and new people are coming on board including our new directors and Asfand Bakht Yar, a highly skilled and experienced engineer and environmentalist who wishes to join us in January 2020. We hope that he can move the **Peace Forest Ireland project** forward and accelerate the progression of some of our other projects in 2020.
- **Possible projects for 2020-** We will examine the feasibility of developing **micro renewable energy** projects and set up a feasibility facilitation group to progress some initiative. This can be done in partnership and we are inviting potential partners to contact us. The Environment Minister Richard Bruton recently launched a new renewable energy promotional scheme 'The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS). We will carefully examine this to see if we can develop suitable partnership in order to participate in this scheme.
- **We hope also to extend the capability of the existing structures and branches** and to develop new branches to cover the widest possible remit in the shortest possible timescale.

John Haughton Report produced for the Forest Friends AGM 6 December 2019  
Chairman Forest Friends Ireland.

[www.forestfriends.ie](http://www.forestfriends.ie) [www.facebook.com/forestfriendsireland](https://www.facebook.com/forestfriendsireland)  
[www.facebook.com/peaceforestireland](https://www.facebook.com/peaceforestireland) [www.forestfriendsinternational.org](http://www.forestfriendsinternational.org)