



## Environmental Policy Statement

### Working Together:

We co-operate with all members to develop the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark as a sustainable tourism destination. We attend training and networking events throughout the year and participate in sub groups set up by the Burren Eco Tourism Network. We plan to collaborate with other BEN members across all the 6 key principles of the Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism.

### A cared-for landscape:

One of our main focuses is to conserve our cultural and natural heritage. We adopt the Leave No Trace principles at the Michael Cusack Centre and on the Cusack Way Walk from the Centre to Cahercommaun Stone Fort (OPW owned).

### A well-understood heritage:

We give talks on local, and national GAA history. One staff member is a WAW champion (Fáilte Ireland). We encourage our visitors to visit other local businesses and attractions.

We have a Geo Park map at our reception area and a large one on the wall which we use to show visitors the location and local attractions and we also provide advertising literature for these businesses.

### Vibrant Communities:

We contribute to the local community by hosting the following at the Michael Cusack Centre.

Computer classes, run by Clare Co. Council, Burren Beo and leader classes and seminars, organised by Burren Beo and LEADER.

We host the annual Samhain Puca Storytelling Festival over the October Bank Holiday weekend and link with the Burren Winterage and BEN Food Fair Festivals.

Going WeLL National Wellbeing programme for post primary schools in Clare (18 schools) and Limerick (27 schools). We are working closely with the only post-primary secondary school in the Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark (Mary Immaculate, Lisdoonvarna) to enhance the wellbeing of all students.

We have developed a Primary schools Heritage Education Programme.

We co-ordinated the Carron Community Development Plan (see attached) which has a number of progressive environmental actions to be implemented.

### Strengthened Livelihoods:

We contribute to the local economy by employing local people. We use local services and maintenance companies, we also shop locally and co-operate with other local businesses to promote the region.

- Since May 2000 we have purchased all our electricity from Energia. This electricity is generated in Ireland from wind energy. All garden waste is composted and then reused in the garden.
- Cardboard packaging, newspapers, magazines, glass, cans, plastic bottles and used light bulbs and batteries are all collected for recycling in the correct manner. We are committed to further reducing waste to landfill.

- Over the past 30 years our tree planting has created a new habitat for birds and other wildlife. Native Irish red squirrels have moved into our garden as well as other wildlife.
- We support local community fundraising events and help fundraising efforts for local charities.

### **Leave No Trace**

Leave No Trace Ireland is a network of organisations and individuals with an interest in promoting responsible recreational use of the outdoors. As large numbers of people seek the beauty and exhilaration of outdoor recreation, our collective mark on the environment and its natural processes, increases litter, water disturbance, disturbance to vegetation, wildlife, livestock and are all indicators of the need to develop a national ethic that protects both natural and cultural heritage. Techniques designed to minimise the social and environmental impacts to these areas are incorporated into the Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics Education Programme.

### **The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace:**

At the heart of Leave No Trace are seven principles for reducing the damage caused by outdoor activities.

These are:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Be Considerate of Others
3. Respect Farm Animals and Wildlife
4. Travel and Camp on Durable Ground
5. Leave What You Find
6. Dispose of Waste Properly
7. Minimise the Effects of Fire

Leave No Trace Ireland promotes and inspires responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships. The programme strives to build awareness, appreciation and respect for Ireland's natural and cultural heritage and is dedicated to creating a nationally recognised and accepted outdoor ethic that promotes personal responsibility.

It encourages all outdoor enthusiasts (e.g. walkers, mountain bikers, canoeists, orienteers, horse riders) to do their part to maintain those lands used by the public for the benefit of the environment and for future generations. Practicing a Leave No Trace ethic is simple. Make it hard for others to see or hear you and LEAVE NO TRACE of your visit.

### **Sustainable Tourism Management**

The Michael Cusack Centre action plan regarding the environment going forward includes targets for improvement of the following, these will be reviewed annually.

We will be putting in place effective systems of monitoring and managing our water consumption, waste water, general waste and energy consumption. This should result in a significant reduction of landfill waste, energy consumption and water consumption.

### **The Michael Cusack Centre is committed to adopting the following Environmental policies.**

- Producing an annual Environmental Plan, stating our targets, objectives and an action plan going forward.
- Being totally compliant with all relevant legislation.
- Reduce our consumption of water where possible, minimise our waste, reuse and recycle where practical.
- Encourage our customers and suppliers to participate with us in protecting the environment.
- Providing employees with training to meet our objectives.
- Monitor and record our environmental impacts regularly and compare with our policies, targets and objectives.
- Inform interested parties of our policies.