

TURAS: JOURNEYS IN STEWARDSHIP

Final project report for Creative Ireland Creative Climate
Action 2024



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



burrenbëotrúst
connecting people and place

Burrenbeo Trust

Glebe House, Glebe Road, Kinvara, Co Galway

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Cattle Drive 2024 by Donal Hogan

1. Executive Summary

It is widely recognised that everyone has a role to play in addressing the biodiversity and climate crises. Yet, for various reasons, many people remain disengaged from actions that could make a positive impact. Research suggests that factors such as "apocalypse fatigue," uncertainty about effective actions, limited awareness of available support, or a belief that individual efforts are insignificant can all contribute to this disengagement.

In contrast, Burrenbeo Trust's approach to fostering public engagement has proven highly effective. By supporting individuals in taking incremental actions, the organisation enables participants to experience "small wins." These initial, manageable steps often spark further interest and lead to sustained involvement. A common obstacle to taking that first step is a lack of personal connection to the issues at hand. When people feel that topics like biodiversity loss or climate change don't directly apply to them, they may be less likely to engage.

This is where the approach taken through *Turas* proves valuable, as it engages a broader audience without overwhelming them with data and statistics. By creatively framing these issues within the context of local culture and heritage, *Turas* encourages participants to connect with environmental stewardship in an accessible way. These initial interactions then seamlessly link into the broader range of Burrenbeo Trust programmes, which continue to support and build upon this newfound interest.

Participation in community-focused initiatives, which emphasise collective action, has been shown to have a more profound impact on addressing the environmental challenges we face. Through *Turas*, people are invited not only to consider their roles in these crises but also to experience the sense of belonging and shared purpose that can transform individual actions into meaningful, collective progress.

2. Introduction/background

Turas – Journeys in Stewardship engaged the broader Burren community in a collaborative effort to foster environmental stewardship. This project created a unique opportunity for a diverse audience to reflect on their potential roles in shaping the future of their local landscapes. By creatively sharing stories of inspiration alongside practical supports for those ready to take action, *Turas* has introduced a new audience to Burrenbeo's mission. The project's legacy will extend well into the future, as new communities, creative outputs, and networks formed during this initiative will continue to grow and evolve over time.

The programme, deeply rooted in the Burren's unique landscape and its transhumance traditions, used the metaphor of movement and journey throughout its activities. It explored cultural heritage through dance and straw craft workshops facilitated by Edwina Guckian in a celebration of local traditions, and shared the stories of Farming for Nature ambassadors as interpreted through the poetry of Jane Clarke. Mythology and nature conservation were woven together in a film featuring the Hare's Corner initiative, complemented by original music composed by Jack Talty. Thought-provoking discussions, facilitated by Anja Murray, encouraged participants to examine their personal motivations for environmental action, while practical workshops led by Max Jones focused on sustainable food practices and focused on cheese and butter making. These creative endeavours collectively empowered participants to begin their stewardship journey, highlighting simple yet effective nature-based solutions for addressing climate change.

As part of the 2024 Winterage Weekend events, participants will be invited to make personal pledges toward sustainability. Through a dynamic and interactive visual installation, individuals can share their commitments and specify the support they need to fulfil these pledges. Burrenbeo plans to continue supporting these efforts, building on the momentum of *Turas* to foster long-lasting community involvement in environmental stewardship.



Edwina Guckian Dance Workshop by Karen vanDorp

3. Outline of team and key participants

Burrenbeo Team

Áine Bird was formerly an education officer for the NPWS and she has a background in diverse activities from botany to scientific writing. Áine holds a BSc (Hons) in Science, an MSc in Science Communications and an MEd where she focused her research on the Primary Teachers perspective on place-based learning. Áine recently completed an Irish Research Council funded employment-based PhD in partnership with the School of Geography at University of Galway. This project titled ‘ Exploring Community Stewardship through Place-based Learning- a case study from the Burren’ which included an evaluation of the role of place-based learning in community stewardship and mechanisms for sharing the learnings from Burrenbeo Trusts work with others.

Pranjali Bhave’s role includes managing Burrenbeo’s communications work, coordination of its conservation projects such as The Hare’s Corner and The Burren Pine Project and facilitation of Burrenbeo’s monthly and annual events. With a background in life sciences and postgraduate qualifications in social communications as well as natural history communications, Pranjali has previously worked as a media professional producing content for television, film, radio and digital media. From biodiversity, agriculture and social impact, to health and history, she has produced a diverse range of stories for clients like RTE Radio 1, TG4, the Irish Film Board, Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. She also has experience developing educational media and has worked as a mentor in community-based training projects in Galway.

Brendan Dunford has spent the past 25 years living and working in the Burren region where he led the award-winning BurrenLIFE Project and its successor, the pioneering ‘Burren Programme’ between 2010-2022. Brendan is a founding member of the Burrenbeo Trust. Brendan is a former board member of the Heritage Council, the EPA Advisory Committee and the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism. He is an Ashoka Fellow for Ireland and was awarded an honorary doctorate by NUI Galway in 2018 for his work in championing farmland biodiversity. He is a regular contributor to the Irish Farmers Journal covering sustainability themes.

Creative Partners

Anja Murray is an independent ecologist with a background in environmental science. She is involved in research, policy and advocacy relating to nature conservation, forestry, European and national agricultural policy; peatland conservation, water quality, natural flood management and other areas where improvements are needed in how we manage our natural environment. Anja presents the environmental television programme ‘Eco Eye’ on Ireland’s national channel and has her own small weekly radio series, called ‘Nature File’, on the national broadcaster Lyric FM.

Jane Clarke grew up on a farm in Co. Roscommon and now lives with her wife in Glenmalure, Co. Wicklow. Her first collection *The River* was published by Bloodaxe Books in 2015. Her second collection *When the Tree Falls* was published by Bloodaxe Books in September 2019. *All the Way Home*, an illustrated sequence of poems in response to a soldier's letters from the Front during World War 1, was published by Smith|Doorstop in April 2019, in collaboration with the Mary Evans Picture Library,

London. Her third collection *A Change in the Air* was published by Bloodaxe Books in May 2023.

Jack Talty is a traditional musician, composer, producer, academic, and educator from Lissycasey in county Clare. As a performer Jack has travelled extensively throughout Europe, the United States, Australia, and Asia, and has contributed to over 100 albums to date as a musician, producer, composer, arranger, and engineer. A regular contributor to traditional music programmes on television and radio, Jack is also the Artistic Director of Raelach Records, a label that he founded in 2011.

Max Jones is a traditional food conservationist and founder of Up There The Last. A writer, photographer, food producer, speaker and educator, he works internationally as an active archivist of traditional food preservation. His life is split between coastal West Cork in Ireland and the mountains of the Biellese in Italy, with lifelong connection to London and West Wales in the UK.

Dancer **Edwina Guckian** hails from outside the village of Drumsna in Co. Leitrim. Coming from a family steeped in the tradition of music and dance, her style is greatly influenced by the style of local music she grew up with across Leitrim and Roscommon. Having started teaching dancing at the age of 16, Edwina has now taught her steps and shared the stage with some of Ireland's most influential acts. She set up *Áirc Damhsa* Culture Club for youths in her area to have a space to be immersed in traditions and cultures from home and all across the world in a fun and non – competitive environment. Now in its 20th year, the club has over 500 members in 9 counties.

Additional Creative Practitioners;

- Kinvara Community Orchestra
- Floriane Blancke
- Brendan O'Regan
- Anne Messner
- Dance event musicians
- Cattle drive musicians



Edwina Guckian Dance Workshop by Doorusphoto



Making Space for Nature walk with Anja Murray by Áine Bird

4. Outputs and outcomes

Outputs per SLA	Outputs achieved
<p>Winterage, October 2023:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bringing together our creative team as part of a residency in October 2023 to develop the project ideas and potential for collaboration ; 2. Schools art workshops and exhibition on the theme of Winterage; 3. Bringing together transhumance practitioners from across the globe, virtually and in person to share their stewardship journeys; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We gathered our creative partners to experience the Winterage Weekend and share their ideas for the <i>Turas</i> project. 2. The schools art workshops produced a display which was shared with the over 600 attendees at the Winterage Cattle Drive. 3. The 2023 Winterage Weekend provided a launch and inspiration for the years' work and events.
<p>Interim events:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Connecting creative partners with stewardship participants (Farming for Nature ambassadors, Heritage Keepers and Hare's Corner participants, Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers) to inform and cocreate; 5. A series of short audio recordings reflecting on journeys of change (informed by the stewardship participants), including music, poetry and interviews with selected contributors; 6. Burren in Bloom 2024 in collaboration with the Fleadh na gCuach music festival in Kinvara will explore the connection between our biodiversity and climate crises, the local-global nature of these crises, and the theme of 'journeying' as applied to nature; 7. Schools art workshops and exhibition on the theme of Burren in Bloom; 8. Concert in conjunction with Kinvara Community Orchestra and guests on the theme of Place; 9. Dancing at the Crossroads Lunasa/August 2024 Traditional and contemporary dance event based on the journeying themes of 'movement' and decision making ('crossroads'). 10. Community workshops on food heritage and sustainability; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Introductions were made between the creative partners and relevant programme participants. 5. This was not completed however, there are audio recordings and videos of the poems which were written. There was also events held such as the concert and panel discussion which reflected these ideas. 6. Over the course of the Burren in Bloom programme there were a range of events which spoke to that theme. We included eco-art workshops, dance and calendar traditions events and a walk to a Hare's Corner pond. 7. The Burren in Bloom schools workshops were held through the Calf and Cuckoo programme. 8. Jane Clarke read her poems inspired by Farming for Nature ambassadors and Jack Talty played a piece inspired by the Hare's Corner. Over two concerts 394 people attended. 9. These events were held over two workshops and a culmination event on the June Bank Holiday weekend.

	<p>10. A butter making and cheese making workshop were held over the 2024 Winterage Weekend.</p>
<p>Winterage, October 2024:</p> <p>1. Inclusion of the creative partners and outputs in the programming of the event to include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry reading on themes of stewardship and journeying; • Concert of music focused on the themes of celebration and loss, both evoking a celebratory pride of place in the Burren region, and loss associated with the imminent challenges linked to climate change and risks to biodiversity; • Schools art workshops and exhibition on the theme of Winterage; • Sharing of outcomes from the community food workshops. 	<p>The 2024 Winterage Programme included a panel discussion chaired by Anja Murray on the theme of ‘Making Space for Nature on your Land’ where a Farming for Nature Ambassador, a Hare’s Corner participant and a Heritage Keepers participant shared their motivations and the practical actions which they had taken for nature. There was also a culminating event which brought together Jane Clarke, Jack Talty and Edwina Guckian to share their art and inspiration. The community cattle drive included the schools art exhibition and an installation which asked the over 700 participants to consider the steps they could take for nature.</p> <p>9 poems written for the project. These have been turned into short videos featuring each of the farmers who have inspired the poem. Publishers have been approached and the poems, along with additional stories of inspiration, may be turned into a book.</p> <p>A short film, featuring a specifically written poem and newly composed music, has been showcased at the Winterage Session.</p>



Jack Talty with Kinvara Community Orchestra by Doorusphoto

Outcomes per SLA	Outcomes achieved
<p>The impacts which we hope to achieve are greater awareness among our target rural communities around climate change and the journey that lies ahead, drawing on the sense of adventure and opportunity that this journey can bring.</p>	<p>The events which were held over the year definitely brought a new audience to the work. Of those that attended 54% had never attended a Burrenbeo event before. This legacy will continue as the works produced are further disseminated by the artists and ourselves.</p>
<p>We also want to incite and support tangible actions that foster ongoing engagement with the transformative journeys that are now needed in the shift to more sustainable and restorative practices.</p>	<p>Following the culminating Winterage Weekend events we asked participants to let us know what actions they plan to take and how we can support them. We will focus on how we can develop our supports to address these needs.</p>
<p>Through creative presentation of the actions which many have already taken, we will inspire others to take their own actions and where relevant be supported to do so by Burrenbeo.</p>	<p>The various outputs have achieved this – the poems, music, dance, panel discussion and workshops have all focused on the actions which others have taken and sharing the pathways available for those that wish to do similar.</p>
<p>Another planned impact is with regard to Burrenbeo’s own work. Our aspiration is to build on the creative energy of <i>Turas</i> to generate greater impetus in expanding our emergent networks of Hare’s Corners and Heritage Keepers, and to grow the reputation of the Winterage festival as a creative space for rural regeneration, so that we too can play our part in addressing the climate and biodiversity crises.</p>	<p>The building of relationships with our creative partners and the other collaborators over the course of the project has been very beneficial. This is something which will continue to develop and grown. As an organisation we have also been inspired by the creative practices which this project has given us the opportunity to engage with. We will continue to look for ways to work with creative partners, expand and develop our networks and support action addressing the climate and biodiversity crisis.</p>



Max Jones Buttermaking Workshop by Martin Kiely

Calendar of events		Participant Numbers
13/04/2024	Dance and Calendar Customs Workshop, Kilfenora	41
14/04/2024	Dance and Calendar Customs Workshop, Tubber	50
May 2024	Schools Burren in Bloom workshops	171
06/05/2024	May Tree Celebration, Carron	55
02/06/2024	From Stone to Sea concert, Kinvara	228
03/06/2024	From Stone to Sea concert, Kinvara	166
October 2024	Schools Winterage Weekend workshops	240
25/10/2024	Making Space for Nature on your land -walk & panel discussion, Kilfenora	45
26/10/2024	Butter Making Workshop, Tubber	25
26/10/2024	Cheese Making Workshop, Tubber	25
26/10/2024	A Winterage Session; poetry, music and dance in celebration of actions for nature, Kinvara	120
27/10/2024	Winterage Cattle Drive commit to your step to sustainability.	700

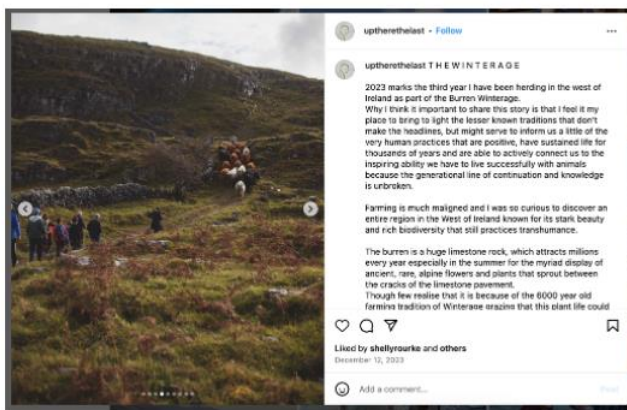
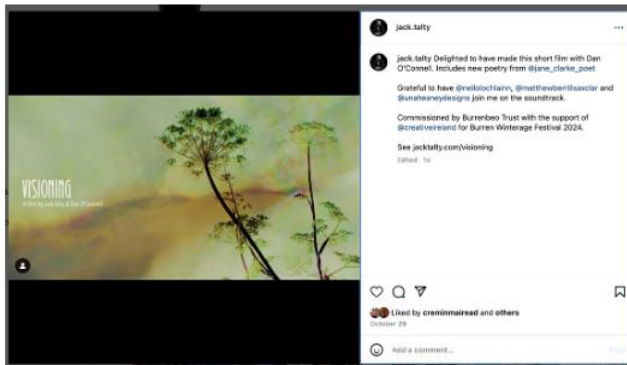


May Tree celebration at the Michael Cusack Centre by Eamon Ward

5. Public Engagement outcomes

- As indicated above there were 1866 participations over the course of the project.
- All events were shared on the Burrenbeo Social Media Platforms as well as by the creative partners where relevant.

A sample of the posts are included below.



6. A summary of the Project evaluation

We aimed to evaluate the success of this project in a number of ways;

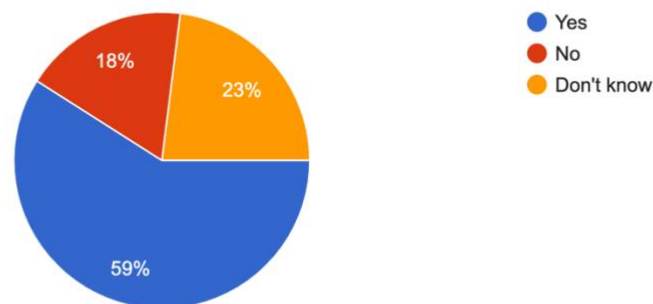
- Tracking participant numbers
- Determining the number of 'new' attendances
- Feedback forms for participants
- Cattle Drive installation which allowed for pledges for action

The participant numbers are detailed above. There were 1866 participations over the course of the project. Of these, for the dance events, the Stone to Sea concerts, Making space for nature panel and the Winterage Session, participants were asked if they had ever previously attended a Burrenbeo Trust event. 54% had never attended before. This gives a clear indication of a new audience attending the *Turas* events.

The Winterage Weekend attendees were asked for feedback on the event. One of the questions included was whether their attendance has inspired them to take action. The results are indicated below.

Has attending the event/s inspired you to take any action for nature, heritage or community?

100 responses



The follow up question was, If yes, what kind of support would you need to take this action?

The following are a selection of the responses received;

- a network of others who are starting off community projects and are more advanced in their efforts to be a support for when there is resistance, when I'm stuck in ideas, etc.
- More info on how to participate
- Plant some native species
- funding
- Community involvement in my own area
- Community support near where I live and further education going forward.
- Lots of different ideas - Edwina Guckian was very inspiring in terms of her community actions - growing oats etc - I suppose initially getting together with

like minded people or reaching out to people who might be interested would be a bit of a challenge and I wouldn't know where to start!

- Be more conscious of my impact and also am keen to understand what I can do in my community to do so
- The protection of habitats, traditions and community support
- Financial
- I will ask for Advice!!
- Help in developing ponds, stone wall restoration

Many of the supports specified are areas which Burrenbeo Trust can engage with. This is something that we will work on in the future.

We also designed an installation (pictured below) which the cattle drive participants could engage with and indicate what steps they commit to taking for climate, heritage, nature or community. Unfortunately due to the weather there was less interaction with the installation than hoped, however this is something that we will continue use for future events.





Winterage Session - Edwina Guckian, Flo Blancke, Jack Talty, Brendan O'Regan, Fionnuala Fahy, by Karen vanDorp



Edwina Guckian, Jane Clarke, Jack Talty at the Cattle Drive 2024 by Áine Bird



Children's art exhibition at Cattle Drive by Karen vanDorp

Videos available;

- Jane Clarke at Stone to Sea Concert:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOyZDM9s0eM&t=138s>
- Jack Talty at Stone to Sea Concert:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voq_OCU1Eew&t=1068s
- Visioning, a film by Jack Talty and Dan O'Connell
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08YTXvrl5vw&t=31s>
- Additional videos with footage from the Winterage Weekend 2024 and the Jane Clarkes poems will soon to available.

7. Any relevant findings

Engaging in the *Turas* project has been a transformative experience for Burrenbeo Trust. Collaborating with five talented creative partners, each with distinct expertise and approaches, has enriched our understanding and broadened our methods. The insights gained from these collaborations will undoubtedly continue to shape and enhance our work for years to come.

One of the most rewarding aspects of *Turas* has been the opportunity to explore new ways of engaging with our audience. By diversifying our communication strategies, we successfully reached individuals who might not have been previously aware of or engaged with Burrenbeo's mission. Through the project, we developed a suite of communication tools, including custom-designed cubes, informative signage, and a project brochure. These tools not only served the immediate goals of the project but will also become enduring resources to help share our story and foster connections in the future.

Working closely with our creative partners also highlighted the value of adapting to diverse creative processes. Each partner brought a unique perspective to the project, which prompted our internal team to embrace flexibility and open-mindedness. While we began with a set of desired outcomes, we soon realised that the most meaningful results came from trusting each partner's artistic process rather than adhering strictly to our initial vision. This collaborative approach allowed for more organic and impactful outcomes than we could have anticipated.

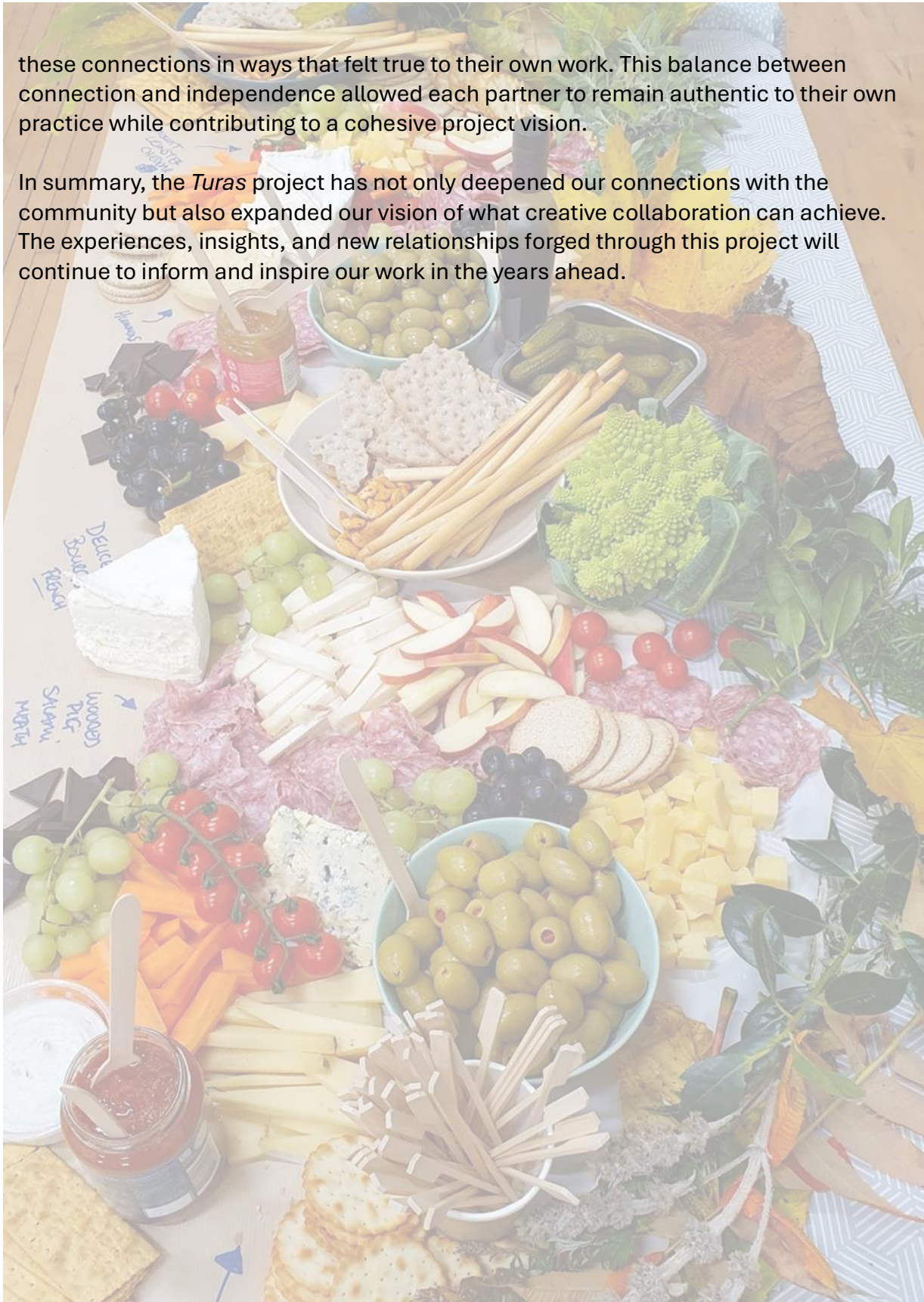
A standout success of *Turas* was our partnership with the Kinvara Community Orchestra, which offered a platform to showcase the work of acclaimed creatives Jane Clarke and Jack Talty. Through this partnership, we could share their work with a broader audience, which was met with enthusiastic and positive feedback. The collaboration underscored the power of community partnerships in amplifying creative work and reaching new audiences.

Throughout the project, we also engaged in ongoing discussions about measuring its impact, particularly in terms of any behavioural or attitudinal shifts among participants. While it proved challenging to attribute direct changes to specific project elements, these conversations helped clarify our approach to fostering change. We realised that, by simply sharing stories and pathways available through Burrenbeo Trust's programmes, we could inspire incremental, meaningful shifts among our audience. These efforts to motivate change—by showcasing those who have already embraced sustainable practices—will likely resonate and inspire action over time. This was also seen in the feedback received after the Winterage Weekend, where many indicated that connection to a network or community of similar interests would support them taking action.

Each creative partner brought a distinctive approach to weaving Burrenbeo's values into their practice. Through discussions and by connecting with past Burrenbeo participants, our partners found new inspiration, ultimately interpreting and integrating

these connections in ways that felt true to their own work. This balance between connection and independence allowed each partner to remain authentic to their own practice while contributing to a cohesive project vision.

In summary, the *Turas* project has not only deepened our connections with the community but also expanded our vision of what creative collaboration can achieve. The experiences, insights, and new relationships forged through this project will continue to inform and inspire our work in the years ahead.



Sharing table for Winterage Session by Karen vanDorp

8. Conclusion

The *Turas* project has proven to be a transformative initiative, deepening community engagement and broadening the reach of Burrenbeo Trust's mission. By embracing creativity and collaboration, *Turas* has not only raised awareness of environmental stewardship but also inspired practical, actionable steps toward sustainability among a diverse audience. The project's unique blend of cultural heritage, art, and practical workshops has enabled participants to connect personally with the pressing issues of biodiversity and climate, fostering a lasting sense of responsibility and empowerment.

The partnerships with creative practitioners—each contributing their unique talents and perspectives—have allowed Burrenbeo to reach individuals previously disengaged from environmental action. These collaborations have also expanded the Trust's toolkit for community engagement, creating resources that will continue to support its outreach and education efforts. Through innovative events like the Winterage Weekend, where personal pledges toward sustainability were shared, *Turas* successfully cultivated a sense of shared purpose, reinforcing the idea that individual actions contribute to a larger, collective impact.

Looking forward, the lessons learned from *Turas* will shape Burrenbeo's future projects, guiding its approach to fostering environmental change. The connections made, insights gained, and methods developed through *Turas* will continue to support the Trust's vision of a community-driven model of stewardship for years to come. By building on the momentum and interest generated, Burrenbeo Trust is well-positioned to further empower communities in the Burren and beyond, inspiring a new generation of environmental stewards dedicated to preserving and celebrating our natural and cultural heritage.