



## Key partners

Carina Filipa da Silva Castanheta

This project was possible thanks to the financial support provided by Community Foundation for Ireland. In 2022, the foundation distributed 25 million euros in grants to local groups and organisations who strive towards sustainable communities. Since 2019, they also started a Biodiversity fund strand to support the development of community Biodiversity Actions Plans.

Heather Bothwell was the consultant ecologist for the Ballinaglera Biodiversity Project. She led the field work brilliantly through her passion for ecology and her extensive knowledge. Her work extends way beyond this action plan, she is also part of Heritage in schools and Dowra tidy towns where she brings biodiversity and nature closer to the communities.

St. Hugh's National School gave us the opportunity to launch the project within their classroom. Their school year program already included biodiversity as a topic, but the principal and teachers take it further with field trips and workshops provided by ecologists such as Heather. The local youngsters will be agents of change, hence why it is important for schools to include climate literacy programmes.

The landowners were another crucial part of this project. Without their permission to study the biodiversity in their land, it would not have been possible to discover some amazing species. It is also important to highlight that without the landowners' efforts to promote and maintain both historical and natural heritage, some of our findings would not have been made.

The Leitrim County Council and Leitrim Development company carry an important role in keeping biodiversity at a local level. As of 2023, the county councils will include an ecologist, one of the actions deemed necessary in the Leitrim Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027. The report was commissioned by Leitrim Development company in partnership with the County Council and funded by Rural Development LEADER programme 2014-2022.

The Ballinaglera Development Company is managing the section of the Leitrim Way which includes St. Hugh's Well and the Sweathouse. They continue their efforts to promote these heritage sites, as well as to protect the local landowners' interests.

The National Biodiversity Data Centre, part of the heritage council programme, provide freely an assort of biodiversity data and other resources useful for organisations, ecologists and individuals with an interest in science.

Anne Marie O'Rourke is a local artist who paints local flowers and landscapes. Her amazing work, showcased in the cover of the action plan, helps to promote local biodiversity. In her social media, she actively defends environmental causes and sustainability awareness.

Finally, individual efforts from locals must be recognised. These efforts take many shapes, litter picking, planting of native flowers in gardens, among other initiatives.