



The Foundation for the
Economics of Sustainability



Annual Report 2017

Feasta, the Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability, aims to identify the characteristics (economic, cultural and environmental) of a truly sustainable society, articulate how the necessary transition can be effected, and promote the implementation of the measures required for this purpose.

Cad a dhéanfaimid feasta gan adhmaid?

Tá deireadh na gcoillte ar lár

What will we do in the future without wood?

The end of the forests has come

Cover photo: Wild Iris in fields past Dun Brendan, taken by Sean Farrelly, who was the under 16 category winner in our Biodiversity Week Photo Competition (see page 6).

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Introduction

Feasta members, working groups, partnerships and collaborations have in 2017 continued their pioneering thinking and practice concerning key system interventions that can help to deliver a sane, humane and ecologically stable future. Feasta recognises that the interlinked environmental, social-justice and economic problems faced by the world today are caused by poorly designed systems rather than by people. This leads us to explore fundamental and comprehensive change in systems-design. In this, Feasta makes a distinctive contribution to the Irish Environmental Network.

We rely heavily on the voluntary work of our members in our exploration of systems-level transformation and the related concept of commoning. This systems and commoning emphasis also means that our activities and focus are global in scope and we attract both international and Irish members. In addition, this emphasis means that many of our members have multiple involvements across many organisations and practical projects. In this way, Feasta-developed thinking permeates the activities of many other organisations.

The theory and practice of the commons and commoning are central to the systems-oriented vision of Feasta for a positive future for society and economy. The transformative capacity of the commons is significant for both politics and for how people understand themselves in the world. It emphasises our human capacity for sharing, for living



Photo by Sean Farrelly, in the under 16 category of our Biodiversity Photo competition

within limits and ensuring sufficiency for all. Moreover, it offers a new dimension of the concept of ‘public’, as a way of managing resources. This is both necessary and convincing and adds an important element to the discussion of how resources can be managed, a discussion currently dominated by a stark either/or discourse of state vs private management.

Commoning has continued to be a strong overt theme during 2017, especially in the work of Feasta’s CapGlobalCarbon group, which focuses on carbon emissions and treats the atmosphere as a commons, as well as in the work of the Water Commoning Group.

Other tools and frameworks for responding to the interconnected challenges of our times are equally, though not as obviously, influenced by commons- and systems thinking. They include appropriate metrics for measuring wellbeing, democratic money systems, basic income, food security, citizen engagement, opposing fracking, keeping other fossil fuels in the ground, as well as the collection of economic rents, particularly in the form of land-value taxes and more latterly with regard to the privatisation-for-profit of ‘big data’. In 2017 we have continued to lead and to collaborate with others on thinking and practice on all of these issues.

Partnerships and collaborations with other groups have continued to be important in the work of Feasta in 2017. Our website also continues to provide original commentary and a platform for discussion and many articles are taken up and reposted by other international websites.

These help to extend the reach of Feasta’s work and to maximise the efforts of our two (very) part-time staff and all our members. This report outlines the practical outcomes of their pioneering work and provides evidence of the organisation’s capacity to continue such work into 2018 and beyond.

Anne B. Ryan (chairperson)

Climate Group

(i) CapGlobalCarbon



CapGlobalCarbon is an initiative launched by Feasta climate group members in 2015 that proposes placing a cap on global fossil fuel production, charging fossil fuel companies for production permits, and distributing the revenue from the sale of the permits on a per-capita basis. Over time, the cap would be tightened until production ceased. This would ensure that fossil fuel emissions were truly eliminated over time, while protecting the vulnerable and freeing up substantial funds for household and community investment.

"Those who use fossil fuels sparingly [could] receive substantial financial support."

In February 2017, Caroline Whyte spoke at the packed World Basic Income conference in Manchester, UK about the possibility of using the revenues generated by CapGlobalCarbon for a global basic income. This would be a logical outcome of the principle that the atmosphere belongs to everyone, and would



Caroline Whyte of Feasta, with Steve Jannsen of the NGO Eight and Hillel Steiner of the University of Manchester, on a panel discussing the practicalities of a global basic income at the World Basic Income conference, February 2017

ensure that those who use large amount of energy compensate those who have very little access to it. However, she noted that such an income would be temporary in nature, and that a rapid shift towards a degrowth-based economy will also be required in order to avoid widespread hardship. A summary of her talk, including some number-crunching on the kind of income that could be generated, is on the CapGlobalCarbon website.

CapGlobalCarbon made a submission to the Irish Citizens' Assembly in August 2017 arguing that Ireland could form a partnership with a low-income country and implement Cap and Share bilaterally, ensuring not only that the two countries' fossil fuel emissions were eliminated but that those who use fossil fuel sparingly receive substantial financial support. This scheme could be expanded to other countries or regions over time.

We were very saddened by the death in October of our colleague Robert Hutchison, after a short illness. Robert, a dedicated climate activist based in Winchester in the UK, was part of the group of five Feasta climate members



Mike Sandler holding up a Dividend Check at the Peoples' Climate March in Washington D.C., April 2017

who launched CapGlobalCarbon at the COP-21 in Paris. We very much appreciated his personable and friendly style as he talked to delegates from all over the world about CapGlobalCarbon. His insights, drive to do good and support were of great value to us. Our condolences go out to his family.



Robert Hutchison 1941-2017

(ii) Legal action and Anti-fracking

In the UK, representatives from Feasta's climate group met regularly with legal advisors and climate experts to explore the feasibility of taking legal action against the UK government seeking to

"....the [fracking] industry has mainly lost the battle for hearts and minds in the places they want to frack. There is no 'social licence'."

reduce UK carbon emissions. They were encouraged by the increasing number

of climate lawsuits that are being filed around the world, including one challenging 27 European countries. They are currently getting advice from several of the groups and individuals involved in these other lawsuits. The group is also encouraged that the Supreme Court will hear an appeal against the High Court's ruling that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government was justified in calling in and overturning the Lancashire County Councillors' decision not to allow fracking. The group's own future steps will depend partly on whether there is a change of government in the UK in the near future.

Anti-fracking in the UK

by Brian Davey

The anti fracking struggle in the UK has changed. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have taken decisions against fracking leaving only England threatened. In England the task at hand is no longer mainly one of explaining the basic dangers to threatened communities. That has been done by a grassroots community movement which is well informed and professional in its approach. Everywhere the fracking industry threatens there has been opposition and the industry has mainly lost the battle for hearts and minds in the places they want to frack. There is no "social licence".

"..two of the key actions which led to the [fracking] ban...were the alliance with Healthcare professionals, and the international support from other activists"

For myself as a Feasta member the task is to support this movement - but also to try to contextualise the anti fracking struggle in the wider issues familiar to Feasta members. An example was suggesting and then promoting a conference

to remember and celebrate the 800 year anniversary of the English Charter of the Forest in Sherwood Forest Nottinghamshire. The successful concert by the major oak and then a conference which featured historian Peter Linebaugh and economist Guy Standing, drew many



anti fracking activists to hear about the history of land rights, about the commons and enclosure over centuries. The drive of the gas companies backed by the government to impose their use of land and water at the expense of other uses and against the interests of local communities was suddenly understood by participants as being part of a long history of having to fight to protect the local environment for the uses of local people.

The End of Fracking in Ireland

The year 2017 saw the culmination of many years work in Ireland by Feasta members and particularly by the local



community group Love Leitrim (CuisseLiatroma), when the Dáil passed Legislation just before the Summer recess. The legislation - supported by all parties - banned fracking in Ireland. The journey of Love Leitrim, initially a small group of concerned citizens in Leitrim, took many side-tracks, and overcame many challenges both local and national. This included multiple submissions, protests, fundraising events, international alliances, Freedom of Information requests, community events, parades as well as many workshops, radio and TV interviews and strategic sessions.

For Feasta trustee Seán Ó Conláin, two of the key actions which led to the ban, however, were the alliance with Healthcare professionals, and the international support from other activists. Engaging with, educating and ultimately winning over local, national and European public representatives was very rewarding for all involved. The success was further celebrated in the Autumn at an international evening in Leitrim.

Feasta was also active in the coalition campaigning group Stop Climate Chaos (see page 14).



Anti-fracking protestors, including Feasta's Seán Ó Conláin, celebrate the banning of fracking in Ireland

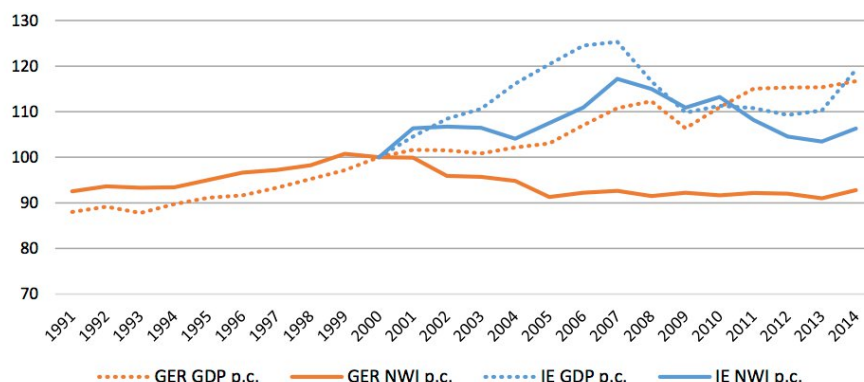
National Well-being Index

In October 2017, following a two years of preparation, Feasta, in collaboration with the German research institute FEST, published a feasibility study for the development of a National Well-being Index (NWI). The collaboration stems from long-standing German interest in the work of Richard Douthwaite and in particular, for the adoption of an alternative to GDP as a measure of economic progress. The initial results are based on existing data available in Ireland which is comparable with similar German data.

The NWI is a single index that is produced by aggregating 20 monetised components. Data used for the Feasibility study applied to the years 2000-2014. Whilst FEST has considerable experience in producing the index at different government levels in Germany, this is the first time that a transnational

"...during the period when Ireland experienced its highest GDP, from 2001-2004, the NWI remained static and, at times, even declined slightly...in addition, income inequality increased."

NWI and GDP p.c. in Germany and Ireland (standardized, 2000 = 100)



Sources: EUROSTAT (IE), VGR des Bundes (GER), FEST

This graph from the NWI feasibility report compares the National Well-being Index and the GDP per capita for Germany and Ireland from 1991 to 2014.

comparative study has been carried out.

Amongst other findings, the study indicates that during the period when Ireland experienced its highest GDP, from 2001-2004, the NWI remained static and, at times, even declined slightly: While consumption and expenditure on health and education increased considerably, other social and environmental components mostly did not improve. In addition, income inequality increased.

The Feasibility Report includes a comparison with German findings, and is intended as a first step towards producing a more comprehensive index for Ireland. The report has enabled the identifica-

tion of missing or poor quality data and work is continuing with the assistance of various Irish agencies including the Irish Central Statistics Office. While the report focussed on data from the Republic of Ireland, collaboration with Queen's University Belfast is exploring the feasibility of an all-island approach with potential comparisons between the two jurisdictions on the island. This would be particularly interesting in the context of Brexit and its impacts on the two jurisdictions. The development of further transnational interests is also being reviewed by FEST so as to include comparisons with other European countries.



Is more economic activity always better? Photo source: William Picard, freeimages.com

Water Commons

The Feasta Water Commons Group participated in the organisation of a 'Thinkery' in UCC on June 23rd on the theme of Water Commons, attended by over sixty people.

"Themes explored included the growing phenomenon of 're-municipalisation' of water ...and the recent Dakota Pipeline protests"

There were three facilitators: Orla O'Donovan from UCC, Patrick Bresnihan from TCD and Mark Garavan of Feasta. Three key-note speakers provided ideas: Miriam Planas from Aigua es Vida (Barcelona) and the European Water Movement, Marco Iob from the Italian Forum of Water Movements, and Chas Jewitt, a Standing Rock Water Protector.

Themes explored included the growing



Some of the participants and presenters at the Water Commons Thinkery

phenomenon of 're-municipalisation' of water in Europe, and the recent Dakota Pipeline protests in the U.S. that stem from the deep oppression and genocide of the indigenous peoples of the American continent since the European Conquest 500 years ago.

Several public-water activists attended, who had not previously been familiar with the concept of commoning.

The next action is to participate in producing a special edition of the Community Development Journal on the theme of Water Commons in 2019.

Currency Group

Following the successful Cloughpenny workshop held in October 2016, Feasta continued to work on a prototype for the Irish Research Council-funded virtual currency, along with NUI Galway School of Law, Cultivate, McSherry Labs and the Cloughjordan-based institutions. A prototype based on an Ethereum-fork was delivered in June 2017 and acted as a focus for a number of subsequent meetings at the ecovillage to discuss the terms of use and governance of the project. A co-ordinator for the project based at Cloughjordan ecovillage was identified and a work programme agreed pending allocation of funding. As of January 2018, such funding has not been arranged. It is hoped that the workshop and the delivered prototype, together with the accumulated IP will

represent sufficient proof of concept to unlock new funding tranches in 2018. More details and videos from the workshop are at <http://ict4er.org/cloughpenny/>.

The group continues to field calls regularly from local activists seeking to explore the potential for local currencies to aid local economic development, and assists wherever possible in the scoping, research and detailing of such explorations, seeking to moderate early-stage energy with hard-won experience without dampening enthusiasm.

A request to Feasta's trustees to take a small position with FairCoin (cryptocurrency with first-sight-credible ethical credentials) foundered on the twin rocks

"The group continues to field calls regularly from local activists seeking to explore the potential for local currencies to aid local economic development"

of the perceived dangers to Feasta's reputation as a registered charity (association with tainted crime-laden cryptocurrencies) and unfathomable arcane design. Thus, arguably, the currency group was deprived of the chance to learn by doing from an inside position on this interesting (but not risk-free) project.

Events

Feasta-led/ Feasta-partnered

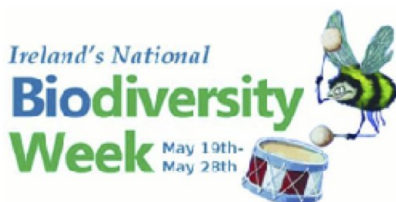
May 4: Webinar on the work of David Fleming: “Surviving the Future: Culture, Carnival and Capital in the Aftermath of the Market Economy”. We were delighted to offer the opportunity to engage with the inspirational thoughts of the late David Fleming – an original, radical thinker whose time seems to have come only after his death – in the company of the widely acknowledged expert on his work, Shaun Chamberlin.



David Fleming

Shaun Chamberlin

May 20: Feasta and Lisdoonvarna Tidy Towns hosted a photo competition throughout the month of May and a biodiversity awareness workshop on May 20th during Biodiversity week.



June 23: Thinkery on water, anti-privatisation struggles and the commons at UCC, Cork. See page 5 for more information.

June 26: “The Water Protectors”. Workshop in Dublin on the water commons organised by Afri, Comhlámh, Feasta and Friends of the Earth (see flyer above right).

June 27: Feasta hosted a public meeting and discussion entitled ‘An American in Post-Paris’ featuring our American trustee, Mike Sandler, when he visited Ireland in June. Mike’s presentation included

views of the Paris Climate Accord following the 2016 election, and future prospects for Cap and Share, CapGlobalCarbon, and basic income.

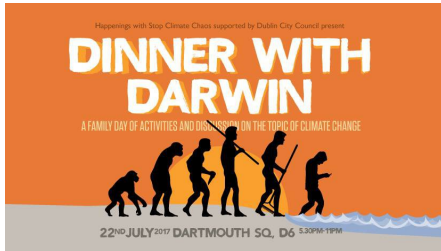
About twenty people attended and a highly participative discussion followed Mike’s talk, facilitated by Feasta trustee Anne Ryan.

End of June: Feasta week in Rossbeigh. This featured talks by Angela Espinosa and Jon Walker, Brian Davey, Oscar Kjellberg, Tim Clarke, Treacy O’Connor and Paul Byrne, and Barry McMullin, on a wide range of topics including the Viable Systems Model, the Swedish concept of “sambruk”, negative emissions technologies, understanding Trumpism and

the implications of Brexit. Plans were also made for future Feasta weeks and how the event might be improved and made more attractive to members.

As an outcome of this learning event, further exploratory meetings supported by Feasta have taken place in order to explore synergies in thinking between the various concepts (particularly VSM and sociocracy) discussed in Rossbeigh. Swedish Feasta member Oskar Kjellberg is drafting a paper, which is expected by March 2018.

July 22: “Dinner With Darwin”. This event in Dartmouth Square was organised by Happenings in partnership with Dublin City Council and Stop Climate Chaos. The evening featured an array of fun and informative activities for kids and adults alike with a focus on climate change and sustainability, including talks and a panel discussion from important figures leading the climate change and sustainability action in Ireland chaired by Manchán Magan.



Feasta, through Stop Climate Chaos, hosted Climate Fest - an interactive exhibition that creatively explores what can be done to tackle climate change. Deirdre Lane assisted in planning and set up, and brought Yarnbombing representing nature to decorate the park.

Sept 22: “Engaging Citizens in Community-Led Transitions”: conference in Cloughjordan. See page 13.



Presenters and organisers of the Water Commons Thinkery at UCC in June 2017. From left to right: Roisin O’Gorman, Patrick Bresnihan, Mark Garavan, Marco Job, Orla O’Donovan, Myriam Planas, and Chas Jewett. For more information on the event see page 5.

Events with Feasta participation

Feb 4: Caroline Whyte participated on a panel at the World Basic Income conference in Manchester, UK. See page 2 for more information.

Feb 24: International Seminar organised by Teacht Aniar (see also page 12, Network and Partnership) An Ghéarchéim Éiceolaíoch agus Múscailt Comhfheasa / “La crise écologique: prise de conscience” : presentation by Seán Ó Conláin with participation of Anne B. Ryan.

Sept 16: “Work: What’s Basic Income Got To Do With It?” This annual forum at the Carmelite Centre in Dublin was

organised by Basic Income Ireland and featured film director and actor Gerard Stembridge as the keynote listener. Anne B. Ryan was a principal organiser and facilitator.

Oct 7: “A Basic Income – A Future with Dignity” This event in Derry offered an afternoon of participative information sharing and conversation about basic income. Anne B. Ryan was a keynote speaker.

Oct 12: “How do we survive tomorrow?” This conversation organised by the University of Nottingham, UK featured Brian Davey of Feasta and Alan Simpson,

the sustainable economics advisor to the shadow chancellor in the UK. The event was chaired by Andreas Bieler, Co-Director of the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice (CSSGJ) at Nottingham University.

Oct 27: Workshop on basic income given by Anne B. Ryan at the European Ideas Lab. See page 12 for more information.

Nov 1-3 Healing Organisations 11th International Metaphorum Conference 2017 1st – 3rd November, Liverpool UK; Seán Ó Conláin speaker - ‘the story of the European Health Futures Forum’.

Feasta in the media

A long letter by Anne B. Ryan on basic income and land value tax, including references to Feasta’s 2012 book *The Fair Tax*, was published in the *Irish Times* on November 30.

Reddit threads were posted by readers of Tim Clarke’s January article on the end of the oilocene and Caroline Whyte’s Au-

gust article on basic income in history (see website section below.)

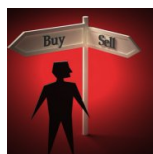
Mike Sandler’s Huffington Post article “Monetary Reform Should Be Sustainable, And Bitcoin Isn’t,” posted December 19, 2017 during the Bitcoin price spike, refers to Feasta’s efforts on cryptocurrency and environmental sus-

tainability.

Members and trustees continued to develop the Slack workgroup platform as a means of communication between meetings and in order to make minor decisions, and Feasta’s Facebook page and members’ group, and Twitter account, continued to be active.

Website

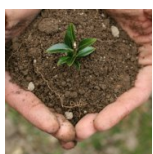
The website continued in its role of providing original commentary and a platform for discussion on the wide-ranging but tightly interrelated issues that Feasta explores.



In a January article entitled **“Carbon markets at the end of 2016 – what can we expect in the future?”**, Sadhbh O’Neill, who attended the COP-22 climate summit in Marrakesh, provided some thoughts on the limitations of carbon trading, arguing that not only does trading completely fail to address the ethics of climate change, but it fails in terms of climate policy too.



Later that month Tim Clarke argued, in a lengthy article entitled **“End of the “Oilocene”: the Demise of the Global Oil Industry and of the Global Economic System as we know it,”** that the oil industry is in deep trouble and we will soon have to deal with rapid economic contraction.



Anne B. Ryan argued in her article **“Why I put time and energy into advocating universal basic income”** that a basic income is essential in order to enable us to achieve a sane, humane and ecological society worldwide. In addition, she wrote, basic income is something that is immediately do-able in many countries, even within the dysfunctional money systems that exist.



In a presentation entitled **“Negative Emissions Technologies: Curse or Salvation?”**, Barry

McMullin, who is involved a Dublin City University-based project that examines the potential for Negative Emissions Technologies in Ireland, warns us to be aware of “magical thinking”.

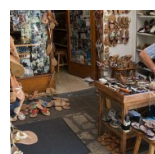
Several more chapters were published from Brian Davey’s book *Credo*:



In **“Entrepreneurship – the narrative of creative destruction”** Brian critiques the role played by entrepreneurs in the economy, pointing out the the behaviour of certain entrepreneurs is psychopathic and the criminals are also entrepreneurs.



In **“Entrepreneurship in the social and solidarity economy”** Brian points out that co-operatives employ more people than multinationals and provide services to 3 billion people weekly. They also tend to last longer than other forms of enterprise, and therefore present a clear challenge to more hierarchical forms of business.

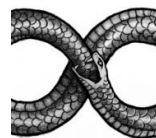


“Specialisation and trade – David Ricardo versus Frederick List” explores the historical roots of the theory that free trade is inherently beneficial, and describes seven factors that tend to be left out of arguments in favour of free trade.



“Economics as priesthood – a religion based on assumptions” describes some of these assumptions: the methodology that stresses individual de-

cision-making; the assumption that decision-makers have the information that they need; the assumption of honesty; the default assumption of competition.



“Using energy to extract energy – the dynamics of depletion” argues that transferring resources out of the luxury consumption of the rich is a necessary part of the process of finding the wherewithal for energy conservation work and for developing renewable energy resources.



“Mismodelling human beings – “rational economic men” in love, politics and everyday life” uses the example of Britain after World War II to show how values shift according to social, economic and political conditions.

In **“The climate crisis as seen by the economics mainstream”**, Brian critiques the ways in which economists generally try to calculate the costs associated with action on climate change.

The whole book is also now available free of charge online in PDF format. Brian also contributed some stand-alone articles:



“Limits to Economic Growth?”, a presentation given by Brian at the University of Nottingham on April 4, investigates the historical roots of the growth-based economy. He critiques the assumption that renewable energy could take over from fossil fuels while maintaining economic growth, and goes on to discuss some ways forward.



A commentary later in the year by Brian, also entitled “**Limits to Economic Growth?**”, describes how mainstream economists typically concentrate on science, technology and innovation to explain economic growth – but virtually all these new innovations are new ways to use energy and it is the energy of coal, oil and gas that does the work.



Brian draws on the work of Joseph Tainter and cybernetics research in his article “**Brexit and Complexity**” to argue that the least risky approach to Brexit is to follow Yanis Varoufakis' advice and go for an interim, off the peg solution.



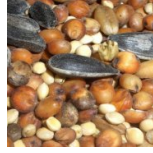
Brian suggests in “**King Donald and his Court**” that Trump's administration is a symptom of a crisis in US democratic institutions and US society, arising from over-complexity, and that resistance needs to start on a local level.



“**The future of renewable energy**” argues that it will be difficult to bring a new, renewables-based energy sector into existence when the economy is stagnant. Paradoxically in these circumstances it is likely to be many older technologies that will make sense again - perhaps in a re-worked form.



With a possible change of government coming up in the UK, Brian explores the implications for the commons movement in “**Commons in the political mainstream**”, warning that there is likely to be a counter-reaction by the political and economic elite, and that the limits to growth will also need to be addressed.



Caroline Whyte contributed an article entitled “**CapGlobalCarbon and basic income: How could climate action be coupled to economic empowerment?**” in which she described how a global basic income, funded from commons-based revenue including the revenue from CapGlobalCarbon, could help to heal the divisions that are currently plaguing us. (See page 2 for more details.)



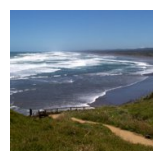
Caroline's article “**Stability and sharing: basic income in history**” looks at examples from the past of people who received a basic income (although it was not described using that term at the time) and who made major contributions to healthcare, science and culture.



A third article by Caroline, “**Ireland continues on its grotesquely unjust and irresponsible trajectory with regard to climate change,**” argues that there are a great many positive things the Irish government could and should be doing about climate change, instead of its current approach.



Martin Peck provided some **reflections on the Compassion in World Farming conference**, which was held from October 5-6 2017. He questioned the wisdom of replacing industrially-farmed and processed meat with industrially-farmed and processed plant-based food. Instead he argued that farmers should adopt agroecological, organic, regenerative and mixed farming practices.



Patrick Noble contributed some extracts from his book *Towards a Convivial Economy*, and

some stand-alone articles. In “**The Music of Narcissus,**” he suggests that the oil-based economy has made us dependent on an idle elite, and that “we can evacuate most of what the oil enclosure provides.”



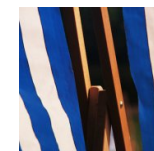
In “**Reclaiming Commons through Land Value Tax, or a Wing and a Prayer,**” Patrick focuses on basic income combined with a land value tax, as he believes these two initiatives could together provide the simplest, most elegant regenerative tool for social justice.



In “**The Joke,**” Patrick describes how existing commons are all around us and yet are generally disregarded, and how our species has evolved, less by advantageous individuals, and more by advantageous groups.



Patrick critiques biomass production in “**End the Burning – Begin the Growing,**” arguing that we have powered our way of life by combustion, and that the combustion - internal or external - must end. In a second article, “**Biomass is a Common**”, he goes on to challenge the widespread assumption that carbon sequestration is a virtue.



“**The tyranny of enlightenment**” suggests that we need to resurrect our knowledge from the past in order to be able to safely navigate the future.



“**In search of the good ordinary wine and the good ordinary household**” describes how it is individual contributions to a culture, which together make the whole, and their complexity and sheer

number can make them more powerful than the actions of governments and corporations.



In **“How destructive is the middle class?”**

Patrick asks us to consider that the current middle class is a defended enclosure by those whose income is largely composed of rent. “If we remove that fixed, defensive gaze on our land and status properties, and then look up, and then, out and about, we’ll see the world expand.”



Several articles on money systems were contributed by Graham Barnes. In **“Limits to Incentives”**,

he points out that means of exchange are never neutral as orthodox economists assume, and explains how Intentional Currencies respond to this by being explicit about the values they seek to promote and the outcomes they seek to achieve.



“The Future Monetary Ecosystem” argues that over the next generation or two, there will be increasingly visible turf wars between money-suppliers with four very different motivations.



In **“Qualitative Easing: The Urgent Need to Pick Winners”**,

Graham identifies some of the challenges to effective investment that we’re currently facing, and suggests two potential remedies: the re-emergence of the direction-setting state and the growth of value-based currencies.

2017 was a good year for book reviews on the website which explore a wide variety of themes. Mark Garavan reviewed *Lean Logic* and *Surviving the Future* by David Fleming and Sean Chamberlin, and also *Journey to Earthland* by Paul Raskin. Caroline Whyte contributed a review of *Three Genera-*

tions Left by Dr Christine Parkinson, and Graham Barnes contributed one of *Democracy in Chains* by Nancy MacLean. There is also a review of Guy Standing’s *The Corruption of Capitalism*, by Brian Davey, and one of Feidhlim Harty’s *Permaculture Guide to Reed Beds*, by Seán O’Conláin.

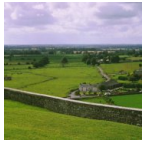
An introduction to the Beyond GDP group’s National Well-being Index feasibility study (see page 4) was published on the website in October, as was a press release from the Feasta climate group, warmly welcoming the news that Friends of the Irish Environment has launched a legal action campaign against the Irish government’s failure to take the required action to avert dangerous climate change.

The five submissions (see page 11) made by Feasta and CapGlobalCarbon to Irish governmental bodies in the course of the year are also available on the website.



Nestbuilder in Poulmagun, County Clare, by Laura Burke. This was the winning photo in the adult category of our Biodiversity Photo Competition (page 6).

Submissions



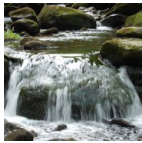
Submission to the Citizens' Assembly, Aug 11 2017

We believe Ireland could leapfrog other European countries on climate action and establish itself as a visionary leader by taking a global view of the climate challenge and incorporating action on climate with substantive action on inequality and poverty, significant improvements to the quality and freshness of food, and greater overall prosperity and stability in Ireland and elsewhere.



CapGlobalCarbon submission to the Citizens' Assembly, Aug 11 2017

CapGlobalCarbon (CGC)'s proposal to the Citizen's Assembly would enable Ireland to completely eliminate its fossil fuel production and imports within a fixed timeframe, while building solidarity with the Global South and providing valuable support to the climate justice movement (see page 2 for more details).



Submission to the River Basin Management Plan consultation process, Aug 31 2007

We propose that the Irish government incorporate tree-planting and soil-building measures into the next round of water framework directive works, in order to shift the focus from Irish agriculture as a net environmental problem to Irish agriculture as a world leader in ecologically sustainable methodologies and practices.



Submission on the Irish bioeconomy, Sept 10 2017

Our submission argues that far more emphasis needs to be placed on maintenance, stability and resilience while developing policy on the bioeconomy. It also describes some programmes and changes to the tax system that we believe could help bring about this change in emphasis.



Submission to the Irish National Planning Framework for 2040, Nov 13 2017

We welcome the Plan's emphasis on revitalising brownfield and other disused urban sites, on regional development, and on strengthening public transport and bicycle infrastructure. We would urge that more emphasis be placed on the economics of energy - specifically, the easing of pressure on the transport sector - and on the need to democratise infrastructure.



Harts' tongue fern unfolding, by Karin Funke: an entry in the Biodiversity Photo Competition

Networking and Partnership

Feasta has renewed its commitment to networking with other organisations who share like-minded aims. Feasta itself is a network and has always been concerned to participate in building resilient networks with others.

To that end Joe Murray from AFRI was invited to attend and address our AGM. Following this, a number of Feasta members resolved to hold an event in May 2018 to coincide with AFRI's Annual Famine Walk. The event will celebrate 20 years of Feasta, and particularly use the writing of Richard Douthwaite as a platform for discussion. It will focus on the parallels between events and policies leading up to, during and after the Great Famine. Examples of topics under review at the time of writing include Food Sovereignty, social justice, the impact on the Irish psyche and the demise of the Irish Language. It is hoped the event will include strong elements from the arts associated with the famine e.g., music, songs and poetry. Feasta are also engaged in partnership for this event with Teacht Aniar - see below.

2017 saw the development of a closer relationship with Teacht Aniar. This recently formed organisation recognises that the Irish language is in grave danger of dying, and the need for new approaches. The symptoms are already evident in the Gaeltacht where there are

ever diminishing numbers of native speakers. This parallels the fate of a growing number of minority languages throughout the world, with an irreversible impact on the cultural heritage of the planet. The parallels with loss in biodiversity are striking. Inspired in part by the relationship with Feasta, Teacht Aniar have instigated an 'Aeróg Éiceolaíoch' - an 'ecological antenna' with initial inputs coming from living Irish language poets and their thoughts on the ecology of the Irish language. The relationship with Teacht Aniar has revealed that many Feasta members have a sound knowledge of Irish but are 'silent'. In order to achieve its aims, it is a policy of Teacht Aniar to hold events in Irish and only if necessary to have simultaneous translation into other languages.

I measc na spriocanna a chuirimid romhainn mar ghluaiseacht tá: Sochaí na hÉireann ina hiomláine a athréimniú trí fhorbairt chomhtháite shóisialta, eacnamaíochta, éiceolaíoch, chultúrtha, agus teanga; Úinéireacht agus athshealbhú na Gaeilge a aistriú chuig pobal iomlán na Gaeilge.

EHHF - the European Health Futures Forum: Seán Ó Conláin representing Feasta, has led the fostering of collaboration and exploration. This has included developing relationships with the 'systems-thinking', cybernetics and net-

working community e.g. INCOSE (systems engineering). Seán has organised online meetings in the form of structured conversations with various actors in the domain of the transformation of society using these and other exploratory methods. A key insight has been how to address the 'contextual' rather than the 'transactional' in the search for transformation. An emerging topic is the elaboration of a methodology of networking relationships.

Anne B. Ryan, representing Feasta, delivered a workshop on basic income at the European Ideas Lab organised by the European Green Party, in Dublin on Oct 27th. Anne's presentation to begin the workshop put particular emphasis on the possibilities for funding basic income with dividends from common-pool resources such as land values, carbon quotas, 'big data' and the collectively generated knowledge that underpins developments in robotics and artificial intelligence.

Mike Sandler continues to represent Feasta at relevant events in the Washington, DC area. In 2017, he attended workshops and seminars related to climate change, energy policy, and social justice. He has received an invitation to present on CapGlobalCarbon at the North American Basic Income Guarantee Conference in Canada in May 2018.



European Health Futures Forum
A Living Architecture for Transformative Change in Healthcare





Environmental Pillar



The Environmental Pillar is a group of 28 national environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who work together to represent the views of the Irish environmental sector. Feasta continued to participate actively in the Environmental Pillar in 2016.

Last year, we participated in two working groups: Climate Action and Energy Transition; and Researching, Testing and Publishing a Good Practice Guide on Citizen Engagement.

The latter group coordinated a conference on Engaging Citizens in Community-Led Transitions at Cloughjordan Ecovillage in September. Researchers, NGOs, and community activists examined how best to encourage more public participation in climate action, sustainability and environmental protection, while also improving citizen engagement in local community initiatives.

In the opening session of this event Davie Philip gave a short presentation that was broadcast through video conferencing technology to a European event on similar topics being held in Brussels, launching the new European day for Sustainable Communities and co-hosted with the EESC and ECOLISE. A number of presentations were made before a facilitated conversation cafe to bring the ideas together. As planned, the event led to the publication of a good practice guide.

This year we are involved in proposals for working groups on Energy and Climate Action; Budget and Tax; and the National Planning Framework, which will be decided on in the next few weeks.

Feasta's representatives also provided specialist expertise for the Pillar in relation to the EU assessments of Ireland's climate progress under their Semester process, and citizen engagement and



"For change to occur in communities, then communities themselves must be the catalyst for that change." Birkeland, 2009



"My basic belief is that if we work together we can overcome challenges and find ways forward that none of us could reach alone. The era of the hero is over and age of collaboration is on." Tim Merry



public participation in decision-making.

Feasta member Sadhbh O'Neill is a nominee of the Pillar to the EPA advisory committee on GMOs.



Engaging Citizens workshop in Cloughjordan, September 2017. Photos are from the Good Practice Guide.

Stop Climate Chaos

Stop Climate Chaos (SCC) is a coalition of organisations campaigning to ensure Ireland plays its part in preventing runaway climate change. Feasta's representative in SCC, Deirdre Lane, was active in many of SCC's projects in 2017.

Deirdre helped to debate and review SCC's strategic objectives from 2017-22, assisted in the planning of SCC's Dinner

With Darwin event, described on page 6, and aided in the preparation of documents and information for public empowerment to supply appropriate facts on climate linked information.

She was also present at the the dance for Climate Action prior to the Citizens Assembly, and at the launch and photo shoot for the Prohibition of Fossil Fuels (Keep it in the Ground) Bill 2017.



Fundraising

As in the previous year, fundraising in 2017 was mainly focussed on trying to improve membership levels and encourage existing members to switch to making monthly or yearly recurring donations via standing orders or PayPal. A series of mail-outs to former members and subscribers to the Feasta mailing list asking for donations yielded some results.

As mentioned on page 15, Theresa O'Donohue attended an Environmental Pillar workshop on fundraising in November.

The legal action branch of Feasta's climate group (see page 4) applied for funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust in the UK for their legal campaign and got through to the interview round, but ultimately were unsuccessful. There are now plans to launch a crowdfunding campaign to help fund their initiative.

A proposal was made to the Environmental Pillar for funding under the Biodiversity Work Package 2017, 20 July 2017. The application was unsuccessful; however the description is included in the panel on the right as it could be of interest to members.

Funding proposal, July 2017: Multifaceted ecological benefits for Irish water quality and biodiversity through planting policy upgrades.

Current policy:

There are a number of clearly identifiable pressures on Irish waterway quality including, inter alia, agriculture (by a large margin) followed by sewage discharges, changes to hydromorphology and impacts from forestry.

Planting policy upgrades would help to reduce these pressures and provide protection for Irish rivers and lakes, while providing additional carbon sequestration and biodiversity benefits.

In some cases current planting policy simply overlooks potential opportunities for planted buffer zones or sewage treatment plantations; but sometimes policy actively interferes with ecological best practice.

Objectives:

The objective of this proposal is to outline how current policy may be upgraded to reduce the pressures on water quality and provide enhanced biodiversity value within these habitats.

The project will assess the benefits for our economy, environment and biodiversity in Ireland as follows:

1. Provide an overview of impacts from agriculture and forestry and outline how tree-planted buffer zones can help to protect water quality, hydromorphology and balance hydrology.
2. Describe how sewage discharges can be used as a valuable nutrient source for willow plantation projects rather than being wasted as a pollutant of rivers and lakes.
3. Outline the benefits of continuous cover forestry practice as a viable solution to pollution, siltation and hydrology deterioration from clear-cutting operations.

Outcomes:

The project outcomes will be clear identification of the current obstacles that exist in Irish government policy; overview of international best practice examples; and policy proposals to support best practice in Ireland.

Management and Staff

Feasta Trustees



Graham
Barnes



Michele
Brady



Mark
Garavan



Willi
Kiefel



Seán
Ó'Conláin



Anne
B. Ryan



Mike
Sandler



John
Sharry

The trustees met by Skype once a month during each month of 2017.

Members and trustees took part in a strategic review meeting in Dublin on May 4th and decided to focus on two aspects of the current strategic plan: 1. to continue to focus on public engagement by holding events in collaboration with other groups and 2. to increase the number of submissions made to public bodies.

We currently have a Trustee group that is diverse in its various skill-sets and experience and geographical location. The current trustees are in the process of

finding new member/s with relevant experience and skills.

The Feasta AGM took place on Sept 23rd and was followed by a meeting with Joe Murray, director of AfrI, which has led to a planned collaboration for May 2018, to coincide with the annual AfrI walk.

Trustees Michelle Murphy and Cólín Nunan did not seek re-election at the AGM.

Trustee Mike Sandler, who lives in the USA, visited Ireland in June and participated in the Feasta think-in in Kerry. Feasta also hosted a public meeting for

him in Dublin, where Mike addressed the participants on Cap and Share and basic income, in a talk entitled 'An American in Post-Paris'.

Caroline Whyte continued editing the Feasta website and helping to publicise Feasta's work via social media and mailing lists. She was also involved in the preparation of several Feasta submissions to Irish government bodies (see page 11).

Morag Friel continued in her role as office and finance administrator, reporting to the Trustees' monthly meeting.

Governance

A working group of three of the Trustees (Michele Brady, John Sharry and Seán Ó Conláin) was formed early in 2017 to review Feasta compliance with the Charities Code, to gather existing evidence of compliance and also to identify gaps and make recommendations for action. The initial

review has shown that Feasta largely complies with the Code, however many of the documents and policies which have been put in place over the years did not form a coherent set. Since then, an initial draft of a 'Handbook for Trustees' has been prepared. This document gathers or refers to the whole body of

documents relating to Governance in Feasta. As part of this comprehensive review and alignment, many of the documents have required minor changes. It is planned to present these proposed changes to the Trustees before the summer for ratification.

Training and Capacity Building

Theresa O'Donohue attended the IEN's "energising IEN" weekend in November 2017, whose focus was on fundraising. Theresa found the workshop very useful and circulated a report on it.

Michele Brady attended seminars on understanding financial crime, dealing with ethical issues and presenting data to inform decisions, organised by Accounting CPD.net. She also attended a workshop on anti money laundering given by Daren O'Neil, who qualifies for

CPD with the Central Bank of Ireland, and a risk workshop organised by the Capital Credit Union. Additionally, she attended some sessions on governance at the World Credit Union conference in Vienna.

