



The Foundation for the  
Economics of Sustainability



**Annual Report 2018**

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

Feasta Ltd., 1 Ard na gCapall, Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary, Ireland

Tel: +353 (0)86 364 2728

[www.feasta.org](http://www.feasta.org)

*Cover photo: Tree planting in honour of Feasta's late co-founder Richard Douthwaite at GMIT, Castlebar, County Mayo, during the Food for Thought event on May 18 which celebrated the 20th anniversary of Feasta's founding.*

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# Introduction

With the increase of extreme climate events in 2018, the environmental crisis we are facing is slowly dawning on the general public. This is despite the inaction of their politicians and the continued 'business as usual' of the commercial world. Over the last 20 years, Feasta's mission has been to identify the 'systemic' roots of the problems we face, and to explore whole system solutions that include our economic and money systems, our agriculture and food production and the equality of the society we live in. If we are to move forward as a species, never has there been more of a need for this joined up, whole systems thinking.

In 2018, the members of Feasta have been involved in an impressive array of international projects, including the CapGlobalCarbon initiatives - urging governments to limit fossil fuels and more equitably distribute proceeds - and the European Health Futures Forum, considering what a truly sustainable health system might look like. We have also been involved in a number of important events such as the 'Food for Thought' conference in Mayo in May and 'We need to talk

about Basic Income' in Cloughjordan in September. We have also made two submissions, namely to the Post-2020 Common Agricultural Policy consultation process in March and the European Commission's strategy for long-term greenhouse gas reductions in October.

In addition, our website has been the vehicle for the publication of many thoughtful articles and remains the focal point for the dissemination of our work - we are delighted to say that we are making the website more energy efficient which will reduce its carbon footprint going forward.

On a shoestring budget, Feasta tries to support its members to actively engage and network with each other on a range of projects, events, publications and submissions. I would like to thank all the members who got involved in 2018 and who give life and energy to the projects. I would also like to thank our two employees, Morag and Caroline, who despite working only one day a week achieve so much to keep the show on the road.

*John Sharry (chairperson)*

# Management

## *Feasta Trustees*



*Graham  
Barnes*



*Michele  
Brady*



*Mark  
Garavan*



*Willi  
Kiefel*



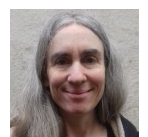
*Mike  
Sandler*



*John  
Sharry*



*Morag  
Friel*



*Caroline  
Whyte*

## *Feasta Staff*

Feasta's two core staff, Morag Friel and Caroline Whyte, each do the equivalent of a day's work per week. Morag continued in her role as office and finance administrator, reporting to the Trustees' monthly meeting.

Caroline continued to help with Feasta's research and communications. In 2018

she helped to devise a more comprehensive overall communications strategy, in connection with a newly-developed theory of change (see pages 2 and 3).

In September 2018, Seán Ó Conláin and Anne B. Ryan stepped down as Feasta trustees. Their contribution as trustees

over the years is very much appreciated.

The current Feasta trustees are Graham Barnes, Michele Brady, Mark Garavan, Willi Kiefel, Mike Sandler and John Sharry. In light of the new guidance from the Charities Regulator on their Governance Code, we will be reviewing and updating our Handbook for Trustees in 2019.

# Communication

Feasta's communication was the subject of much reflection in 2018, with a recognition of the need for Feasta to attract a more diverse range of contributors and supporters, particularly younger people.

Our communication strategy in 2018 took three main approaches: developing a theory of change; hosting events that were as open and inclusive as possible (see page 4); and modifying and expanding our use of online tools so as to make our work and ideas more accessible.

## Theory of Change

A theory of change is a type of general plan for an organisation in which long-term goals are defined and then mapped backward to identify necessary preconditions. It is useful as a way for the organisation to clarify exactly what is needed in order for it to achieve its mission. In the case of Feasta, with its multifaceted and interconnected goals, it can also be a helpful communications tool as it places the individual strands of Feasta's activity (currency, climate, commons, land value tax, basic income etc) within a broader context that may not be obvious otherwise.

Feasta's theory of change will be modified each year (or more often if necessary) as circumstances and goals change. It should be borne in mind that its current form does not fully communicate various nuances such as the interrelatedness of some of the actions Feasta is pursuing (e.g., monetary reform relieving the pressure on the economy to expand and thus also helping to mitigate climate change) and the vital

importance of acting in partnership with other organisations.

Our current theory of change is on page 3 of this report.

## Internet-based communication

In November 2018 it was decided to update Feasta's 8-year-old website template in order to shrink its energy footprint and make it more mobile-friendly.

The energy footprint of websites is rarely discussed at present, yet some websites are strikingly 'greedy' in terms of the bandwidth they require, and the overall trend is very much upwards. Given resource constraints and the stresses on the biosphere caused by overuse of energy, clearly this is well worth addressing.

In addition, our previous website was not very mobile-accessible, yet over fifty percent of website visits are now from devices other than computers. An even higher proportion of young people use their mobiles for browsing online.

Feasta considered taking a radical approach to the website rehaul, such as that taken by the innovative Low Tech Magazine, but as our website is quite sizeable (with over eleven hundred posts) that would be a huge task. So we decided it would be more practical in the short term to continue with our current ISP and Wordpress-based content management system, but to switch to a lower-energy (and 'responsive') template and make some other adjustments to reduce energy use. By doing this we estimate that we can cut our website's energy

use by approximately two-thirds.

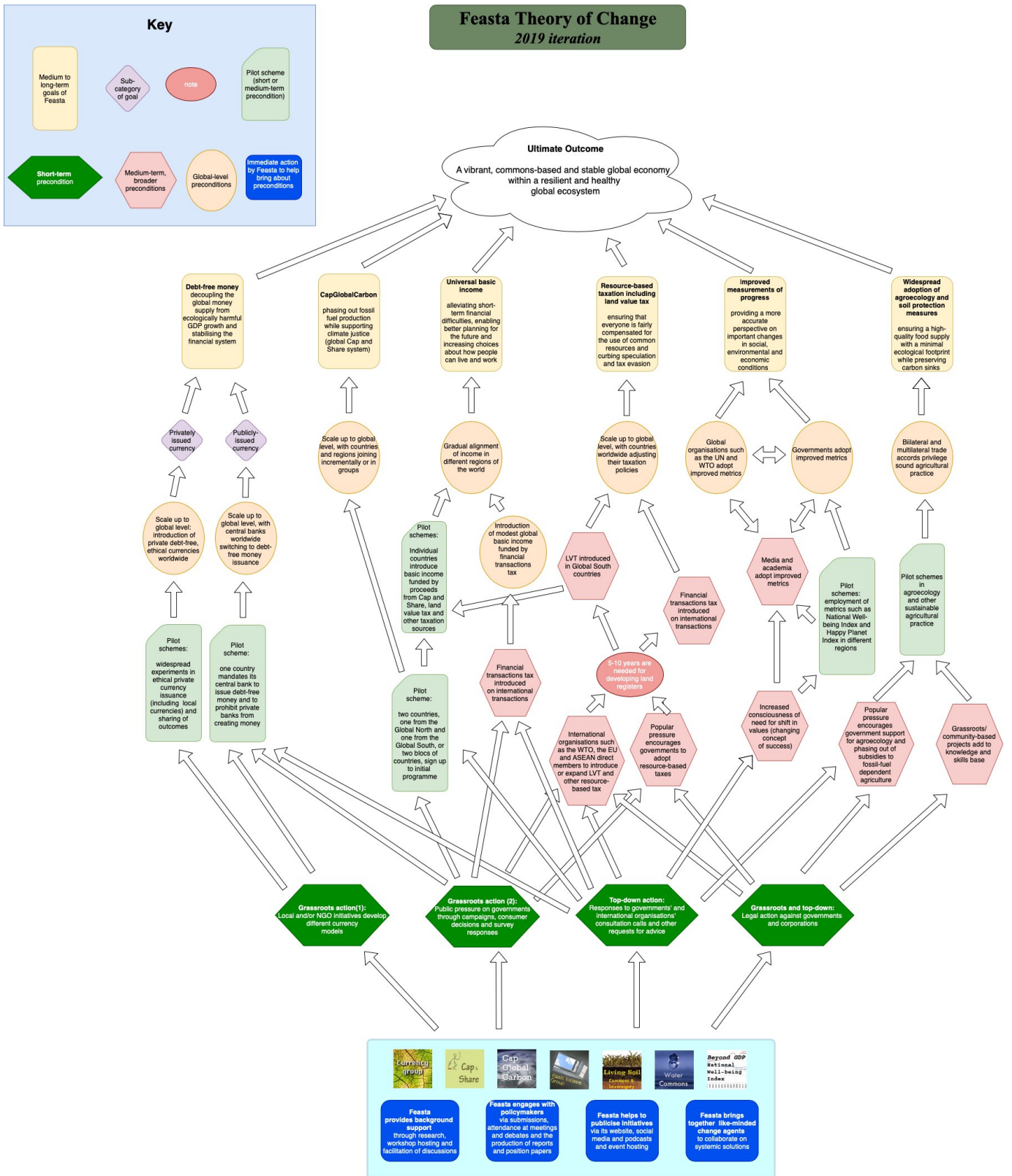
Work started on this project in late November and was on schedule to be completed by February 2019. We installed a Wordpress template, Page Speed, created by Mumbai-based developer Satish Gandham, which allows for good use of visuals yet requires considerably less energy than our former template, and made some other changes to the website's configuration so as to minimise its bandwidth. In the longer term we are still considering making a more radical shift to a stand-alone server.

As in previous years, the Feasta website was a platform for much new material from our members, which is summarised under Website Publications (see page 7).

## Planned podcast series

Podcasts have become a very popular means of communication, particularly among younger people. We decided in late 2018 to develop a monthly podcast series in 2019, taking place over a period of six months, to explore a range of themes of interest to Feasta members. Our podcasts will be produced in collaboration with the European Health Futures Forum.

We plan to invite interviewees from a wide variety of fields, including other environmental NGOs, to participate in the podcasts and expect to have the first podcast ready for streaming and download by late February 2019. If the series is a success we plan to develop a second one for 2020.



A theory of change is a type of general plan for an organisation in which long-term goals are defined and then mapped backward to identify necessary preconditions. In Feasta's case, it also provides a way to place the different, and extremely varied, strands of our activity in a broader context. See page 2 for some background information. Zoom in to read the text.

# Events

## Feasta-led/ Feasta-partnered

### May 18: Food for Thought / Lon In-tinne

This event was held in May to coincide with AFRI's Famine Walk held in Louisburg, Co. Mayo. It was hosted in GMTI in Castlebar and had approximately 70 participants. Partner organisers included Afri, the community resilience NGO Cultivate, a recently formed Irish language group, Teacht Aniar, and Food Sovereignty Ireland.



*Peadar Kirby speaking at Food for Thought, May 2018*

The event explored some of today's sustainability challenges in Ireland and globally. This was done in conversation and through culture, using the Great Famine as a backdrop, reflecting on the policies and politics of famines, and in solidarity with the global justice movement, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, climate action and food sovereignty.

The event also examined and celebrated the legacy of the radical economist Richard Douthwaite, who was known around the world for his creative, inclusive thinking and his belief in the power of discussion to achieve substantive progress. We were delighted to have members of Richard's family participating. A tree was planted in honour of Richard's memory.

The key-note speaker was Peadar Kirby. Peadar drew on indigenous Irish resources and culture to suggest a way of reconceptualising our engagement with nature in order to forestall our growing ecological crisis.

There was highly participative structure to the day facilitated by Davie Phillip.

The day concluded with an evening cel-

ebration of Cultural Resilience with further ceol agus caint in Westport from 8 to 11 pm .

### Sept 3-7: Kerry workshop

For virtually every year since it was founded an important event in the Feasta annual calendar has been a week long seminar of different discussions at John Jopling's house "Retreat Lodges" in Rossbeigh in County Kerry. 2018 was no exception with the event being held at the beginning of September. It was a bit of a struggle to organise this year because John Jopling has been increasingly handicapped by his advancing Parkinsonism. However with help from friends Miriam Kelly and Brian Davey - as well as, in Kerry, Paul and Elena, the event took place with a full agenda of discussions including the situation in international geo-politics and its relevance to sustainability; the history of energy use, industrialisation and economic history



*Retreat Lodges, Rossbeigh, Co Kerry*

and depletion and finance; options for Ireland in its climate policy; the use of the horizontal decision making systems like viable systems model and sociocracy; debt, the money system and the growth imperative...

### Sept 23: We need to talk about basic income



Feasta hosted Basic Income Ireland at Cloughjordan Co Tipperary on Sept 23 for a workshop entitled 'We need to talk about basic income'. Feasta members Morag Friel, Davie Philip and Anne Ryan led on this initiative. Over 40 people attended a presentation by Basic Income Ireland member Lui Smyth, followed by a lively discussion. A strong theme was how basic income could underpin the creativity of all members of society as we work towards a transition to more sustainable and just ways of life. There was also strong interest in land-value tax as a method of generating revenue to support basic income, and as a way to avoid any inflation on land values that a basic income might trigger.

**Oct 8: Michael Albert at Maynooth University**

Feasta, in partnership with CRALE (Centre for Research in Adult Learning and Education) and the Dept of Geo-

graphy at Maynooth University, hosted Michael Albert, the US activist on participatory economics and founder of PARECON.

Michael spoke to and engaged in discus-

sion with students, university staff and members of the public about the role of scholar-activist. Anne Ryan of Feasta chaired the event.



## Events with Feasta participation



Feasta members Bridget Kinsella, Marian Farrell and Tony Weekes were part of the organising group for this event in Derry on Oct 6, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act in Northern Ireland. Anne Ryan and Seán Ó Conláin participated on the day, in a diverse group of over fifty activists, mostly from Northern Ireland. They heard the US academic and activist Michael Albert speak on how to achieve collaboration among the variety of groups that share environmental and social justice agendas. His input emphasised the need for groups seeking transformation to not vie with each other for funding and publicity and to believe that they can succeed. His content was the stimulus for several exercises examining the activities of the people present and the groups with which they work. A register of interests was begun and a second event with a focus on collaboration is planned in Belfast for March 2019.

### **Nov 2-4 2018: Metaphorum**

Seán Ó Conláin attended the Metaphorum annual conference in Dusseldorf. Metaphorum's areas of interest include preserving and developing the work of Stafford Beer, and Feasta has a long-standing relationship with this thinking. Leading Metaphorum activists Jon Walk-

er and his partner Angela Espinosa were key to the introduction and application of Beer's VSM (Viable Systems Model) in Feasta. Seán's report on the conference will be published on the Feasta website in 2019.

### **Nov 22: Fórsa conference on shorter working hours**

Anne Ryan, representing Feasta, spoke at a day-long conference in Dublin organised by the Fórsa trade union. The conference title was The Future of Working Time, with a focus on job-hours reduction. Anne's presentation was entitled The environment and working time: sharing the work, sparing the planet. Anne focussed on what the effects might be on environment, resilience and sustainability, if a country were able to introduce a four-day working week without wage decreases. The presentation was positive about the potential of shorter job hours but emphasised that advancement is unlikely to arise from one policy alone without concurrent advancement in other policies and without systems interventions at higher leverage points. A basic income would be an intervention with greater leverage than reduced job-hours

***"A basic income would be an intervention with greater leverage than reduced job-hours for supporting the transitions needed to a sane, humane and ecological society and economy."***

for supporting the transitions needed to a sane, humane and ecological society and economy.

The presentation emphasised the need for a major cultural shift away from GDP as a sole measure of progress. There is also a need for a good social wage and good planning of neighbourhoods, along with a well informed citizenry, to maximise the potential of shorter job-hours. The presentation also emphasised that there is a great deal of work to be done to benefit society and environment, which does not attract pay and that there is a need to match the jobs available with work that meets real human and planetary needs.

### **Warwick Business School lectures**

Another place where Feasta's ideas have been put in circulation has been Warwick Business School where in the last year Brian Davey presented 3 lectures to students on the MBA course on two occasions - this was under the title of "Global Challenges to Global Businesses" - the challenges will be familiar to Feasta members - climate change and its consequences, developments in the oil and gas industry including fracking, and mushrooming debt.

One of the lectures was about responses for managers - organisational options in a time of difficulties - and perhaps most important of all the issues framed as ethical choices. Brian has also been guest lecturer on the Limits to Economic Growth for students of political economy at the University of Nottingham.



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Lón Intinne

County Mayo, Friday 18th May 2018

in association with the Afri Famine Walk



## Conversations on Cultural Resilience

**Famine, Food, Energy & Culture**

GMIT, Castlebar: 10.30-17.00



## Celebrating Cultural Resilience

**An evening celebration with conversation,  
music and the spoken word**

Upstairs at Blousers (Walshes), Westport: 20.00 - 23.00



Twenty years have passed since Richard Douthwaite and a small group of like-minded thinkers founded Feasta - the Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability. These two innovative events are intended to explore today's challenges both in Ireland and globally, in conversation and through culture using the Great Hunger and Richard's legacy as backdrops, including solidarity with the global social justice movement, the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals, climate action and food sovereignty.



A strand in Irish exploring ecological parallels in culture and language will be facilitated by Teacht Aniar - (Beidh failte ar leith roimh chainteoiri na teanga).



Please note:

Participation at the events is free of charge, however, participants must pay for their own catering.

Registration for Conversations on Cultural Resilience in GMIT is essential, at <https://foodforthoughtmayo.eventbrite.ie>.

The events take place on the eve of the annual Afri Famine Walk Sat. 19th May 2018.



 feasta

 Afri

 cultivate

food  
sovereignty  
ireland

 TEACHT  
ANIAR

# Website Publications



A key addition to the Feasta website in 2018 was Seán Ó Conláin's article "What does 'Feasta' mean?", written

to mark our organisation's twentieth anniversary. He described how the name 'Feasta', which translates from the Irish as 'henceforth' or 'from now on', is associated with an 18th-century poem that touches on many core themes within our organisation.



Brian Davey contributed a range of articles to the Feasta website in 2018. He used Germany's energy transition as an example in his article

**"The real lesson of the Energiewende is that the German economy uses too much energy to be sustainable and needs to degrow,"** He drew on new research to argue that, while industrialised countries will need degrowth if they are to achieve a zero-carbon economy, low-income countries are likely to achieve the transition more easily.



In **"Cursed to live in interesting times,"** Brian connected the fall in the GDP growth rate, with its roots in the rising

costs of energy extraction and generation, to declining resilience in the economic system. He argues that these are in turn related to a more conflict ridden geo-politics. There is an increased vulnerability to shocks which will be catastrophic unless and until there is a new conventional wisdom in society about what is wrong and what has to be done about it.

"Certain stories recur in the history of humanity – and one of the most dramati-



ic and traumatic is that of hybris," Brian wrote in his article

**"The Punishment of Nemesis"**. "Hybris is a

drama brought about by actions motivated by excessive pride – for example the overestimation by leaders - and the society or institutions in their charge - of their power."



**"Brexit, fracking and Einstein"** is a critique of the behaviour of politicians who, Brian argued, are failing to recognise

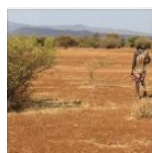
the need for degrowth - and a lot of sharing - rather than attempting to grow more powerful at the expense of others in a disintegrating world.

We also continued uploading chapters of Brian Davey's book *Credo*:



**"Ethical disconnection and reconnection"** describes the mechanisms that allow corporate actors to distance themselves from responsibility from their anti-social and anti-environmental choices, and the ways in which NGOs and the external organisations can often

be co-opted.



**"Indigenous economics"** explores the reasons why, on a global level, the most committed environmental campaigners tend

to be indigenous people such as tribal societies and the First Nations in Canada. Brian contrasted the mentalities of people that belong to places vs the mind-set of the population when places belong to people.



In **"Time and temporal inequality"**, Brian points out that temporal inequality is a little noticed feature of our society. Poor people wait for things – the well-off are waited on. Temporal inequality is crucial to understanding people's time choices.



**"On faiths, keeping them and losing them"** argues that if we are going to survive the turmoil of the years

ahead, we are going to need a deeper understanding of ourselves and what makes for our emotional well-being.



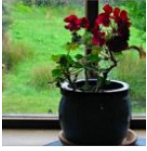
Economist William Nordhaus got a lot of attention in 2018 after winning a major economics prize. However,

Brian argues in **"The climate crisis as seen by the economics mainstream"** that Nordhaus's views reflect an "elite fantasy of growth combined with R&D and techno-innovation to resolve the climate crisis, [which] can do a lot of damage."



Another regular Feasta website contributor in 2018 was Patrick Noble. In a follow-on to his 2017 article **"In search of the good ordinary wine and the good ordinary household"**, Patrick wrote a second article, "More thoughts on the good life," in which he particularly criticised the roles played by aviation and the family car in our economy.

Patrick also contributed an article called **"The good life or the ballot? Both you say? I say the good life first, the**



**ballot second,”** whose theme is well-explained in the title.



In **“The great agricultural resettlement or the next chapter of the fall”** Patrick explained why he is unconvinced by the widespread idea that we can achieve negative emissions through clever agricultural practices. He argued instead that to eliminate emissions we “must end the burning”.



Patrick wrote in his article **“The ninety percent and the tithe”** that he thinks it probable that as GDP (spending) shrinks, things such as “bed time stories, knowledge, handshakes, gossip, sympathy, empathy, shared pleasures – raised glasses, a pub chorus, birdsong, a walk to the hilltop, a stroll on the shingle, good cooking and gardening” will expand and as they do so, happiness can expand.



In **“The tales of history are a dead-end road”**, Patrick explored the idea of culture, arguing that “culture is what people do. It decays when people stop culturing. Changing a culture means changing what we do. Often, that will need a step by step transition as we negotiate obstacles. Even though we follow some backward meanders, the river may flow on.”

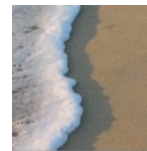


**“The music of time - or how we'll not change the music unless we change how we sing”** takes a look at limits: “It should be a natural relief to step back inside natural limits. Limits have forms, sounds and scents – we can touch them – taste them. They should

feel like home. We'll be prodigals shuffling homeward from a wild fossil-fuelled adventure to finally open the familiar garden gate.”



Another article by Patrick, **“On being conservative for the common against those who are conservative for enclosure”**, warned us to “warns us to “beware of grown-ups – the grown-up in ourselves as much as in others. Our true coming of age is into the spirit of the common; into the responsibilities of the rule of return and the maintenance of the joys of precious things.”



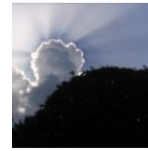
Patrick wrote in his article **“Culture and Climate”** - which is also the foreword to his new book - that “[he sees] the shadow of a proper economy everywhere....decayed towns and villages, drained by corporate retail park, entirely oil-powered suburbia and the falsely-egalitarian call of the internet, await the returning flow of ingenious, convivial humanity”.



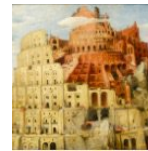
A final contribution from Patrick in 2018, **“Speed and Localism,”** made a further plea for reclaiming the common in order to mitigate catastrophic climate change and reverse the the chasm between rich and poor.



In 2018 we were delighted to welcome long-time Feasta member and trustee Mike Sandler as a regular contributor to our website. In January he provided an overview of his background in climate action in the US - initially in California and subsequently also in the Washington DC area - and links to some of his many articles published by the Huffington Post over the past decade.



In March 1, Mike contributed the article **“Cap and Dividend bill introduced in U.S. Senate – a ray of hope regardless of its “political feasibility”**, which points out some of the more unexpectedly positive aspects of the current debate on climate in the US.



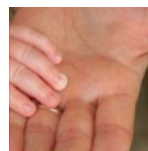
Mike's article **“From Ivory Tower to global problem solver - aligning academia to the Sustainable Development Goals”** focussed on the fact that a significant portion of the American electorate is seemingly alienated from academia, with conspiracy theorists and talk (hate) radio having apparently co-opted a portion of the rural working class. He also explores some possible ways forward.



In **“Feasta Turns 20: food policy, sustainability, and basic income - a U.S. perspective”** Mike described some of Feasta's goals with regard to food policy, and how these could be applied to the U.S.



**“Father's Day thoughts on Star Wars, religion, and basic income”** drew on the work of linguist George Lakoff to argue that “maybe it's time to rethink the conventional wisdom received from our fathers about religion, strict father politics, the idea that hard work at a job equals self-worth or that many of those jobs can even provide a reasonable livelihood without basic income.”



Mike argued in **“Stating our values and what we know”** that “people with political agendas are inundating us with in-

formation overload, and calling into question basic facts in an attempt to impose anti-democratic control over disoriented populations," writes Mike Sandler. "We must practice stating our values and defending them and advancing them in the public square."



In **"The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of the IPCC 1.5 degree report and the Nobel to Nordhaus"**, Mike stated

that "we should celebrate the positives from those news stories in raising general awareness. But for those who recognize the bad and ugly parts of those news stories, we must turn the resulting feeling of powerlessness into a political movement to form a Global Climate Trust and implement CapGlobalCarbon."



The unrest in France in late 2018 led Mike to contribute the article **"Climate dividends and the yellow vests"** in

which he made a case for climate dividends as a way to ease tensions relating to increased energy prices.



Several articles were also contributed by Caroline Whyte in 2018. In **"Money through the looking glass"** Caroline

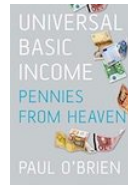
explored some of the odder paradoxes in the current financial system, arguing that at present "it would be advisable for central bankers to continue to publicly disagree with the Vollgeld and other debt-free-money campaigns' suggested financial reforms - and for the campaigners to continue their campaigns regardless, not letting themselves be discouraged by the officials' stance."

Caroline's article **"Outdated framing by the European Commission lessens our chances of keeping to 1.5 degrees"** was based on her reaction



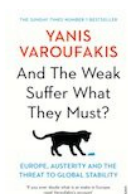
to filling in a European Commission questionnaire on climate change: "If we're to have any chance if keeping to the

1.5 maximum target, the European Commission will need to be much more realistic about its priorities."



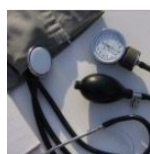
Caroline reviewed Paul O'Brien's book **"Universal Basic Income: Pennies from Heaven"**, finding it to be well worth reading if you're even mildly curious

to know more about basic income's potential.



She also reviewed Yanis Varoufakis' book **"And the Weak Suffer What They Must?: Europe, Austerity and the Threat to Global Stability"**. Her

verdict is that it is a good source of information if you are interested in how the Eurozone got into such a mess, although it ignores a very important source of financial instability - the relationship between money and energy - and it paints an overly rosy picture of the role that the US has played in the global economy over the past century.



Finally, Caroline contributed a report on the conference The Future of Money (see page 11) and an accompanying article,

**"Money: the silent killer,"** which argues that "the fact that most money is created on a basis of debt is putting hidden, but dangerous, pressure on the biosphere".



Graham Barnes continued to contribute articles on currency systems and monetary reform. In **"The environmental consequences of monetary dysfunction"** he argued that the misalloca-

tion of credit by banks exacerbated instability and inequality, and resulted in the neglect of projects that aren't profitable. He went on to propose two possible solutions.



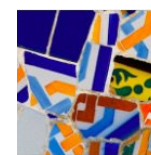
"Most of the progressive thinkers and writers I look to for insight deprecate rentiers (or so I believe). I am a rentier.

How should I feel?" asked Graham Barnes in his article **"Confessions of a Rentier"**, which includes brief explorations of the thoughts of Keynes and Marx on the subject.



In **"Ideologies of credit creation,"** Graham identified five sources of credit creation and suggested some ways

in which we could privilege the most desirable ones and discourage the others.



Ted Trainer contributed an article called **"The Catalan Integral Cooperative ... The Simpler Way revolution is**

**well underway!"** He described the rapidly growing cooperative movement in Catalonia: "In a world where capital, profit and market forces dump large numbers into "exclusion" and poverty, and governments will not deal properly with the resulting problems, these people have decided to do the job themselves."



Tim Clarke argued that Ireland is hugely vulnerable to a global financial crash triggered by net energy decline, coupled

with rapidly rising extreme global debts and many other factors, in his article **"End of the Oilocene: the roar of the oil-fizzle dragon king"**: "Ireland's policymakers exist in an insulated bubble; congratulating themselves on reducing the debt-GDP ratio and high employment due to the sleight of hand of

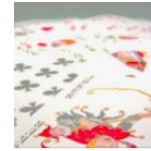
low corporate tax rates."



Intern Paul Faisant provided a short overview of his work on CapGlobalCarbon in the article "First steps to-

**wards CapGlobalCarbon: potential partner countries and useful programmes".**

Finally, in his Beamer presentation "Decarbonising the Irish energy system: cards on the table?" Barry



McMullin argued that decarbonising Ireland will require an enormous reduction in overall energy consumption, with bioenergy development playing only a cautious and secondary role.

## Feasta in the media

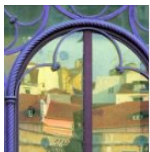
Feasta's Food for Thought/Lon In-tinne event (described on pages 4 and 6 ) was the focus of a May 18 article in the *Irish Times* and a May 22 article in the *Mayo News*, both by Aine Ryan. The articles highlighted Richard Douth-

waite's radical contribution to economic ideas and described the events of the day, including Anne Ryan's talk about Feasta.

On June 5, the *Irish Times* published a

letter by Caroline Whyte under the heading 'climate change, growth and money' which claimed that "strange though it may seem, the most effective climate action...could well be carried out by central bankers."

## Submissions



### March 23: submission to the Post-2020 Common Agricultural Policy consultation process

In this submission we argued that the CAP needs to not only reform its own practices along the lines of the proposals made in the Environmental Pillar's submission, but also to work 'upstream' in order to be able to achieve its (laudable) new objectives.



### October 3: Submission to the European Commission on a strategy for long-term greenhouse gas reductions

We argued that the EC's overall goals need to be re-examined if it is truly to eliminate greenhouse gases within the EU. The focus now needs to be on wellbeing, not on growth.

## Fundraising

Feasta's funding comes from the Irish Environmental Network and from individual donations and membership subscriptions. We appreciate the generosity of our funders and would welcome new members and donors. We have a policy of transparency for all of our funding, and you can access our accounts on the Feasta website.

While in the earlier part of 2019 Feasta's efforts in fundraising were mainly focussed on increasing membership and encouraging membership renewals (in addition to the annual IEN core funding application), later on our focus shifted to applying for funding from outside bodies. Funding applications were prepared for CapGlobalCarbon and the Feasta

Currency Group to the KR Foundation, to be submitted in early January 2019.

Feasta also applied for Capacity Building funding from the IEN early in the year and, later on in the year, for Capacity Fundraising support, but these bids were unsuccessful.

# National Well-being Index

During 2018 Feasta continued to work with our colleagues in FEST (Heidelberg), and to keep abreast of their proposed developments for the National Welfare Index, which goes from strength to strength in Germany.

***"Feasta looks forward to getting support nationally for the development of a national index which would highlight the profound weaknesses of GDP as the leading index for development policy in Ireland."***

A limited version of a report on the Index for Ireland (given the lack of data for some of the parameters) was published. We have also had discussions with the Central Statistics Office exploring the possibility of gathering additional data. However, in spite of increasing interest in the importance of such an index, and the growing awareness of the weaknesses of GDP, the absence of a suitable resource prevents us from making significant progress on creating an ongoing data-gathering, and reporting process.

In addition to our ongoing collaboration with FEST, we have also been exploring contacts with various bodies and

Government agencies in Germany including the German Sustainability Council.

This latter contact led us to submit comments to a draft report by the NaWiKo Advisory Board and Team entitled 'Research and Innovation for the Sustainable Economy'.

Contacts and collaboration with FEST and other German partners are ongoing, and Feasta looks forward to getting support nationally for the development of a national index which would highlight the profound weaknesses of GDP as the leading index for development policy in Ireland.

## Currency Group

Feasta currency group members believe that a move away from debt-based money is essential in order to eliminate the financial system's current dependency on economic growth - a dependency that is jeopardising the biosphere because it triggers the over-use of resources.

Caroline Whyte attended a major conference entitled 'The Future of Money' in Frankfurt on November 22-23 2018, whose aim was to critically examine the current debt-based financial system and explore alternatives. The conference was attended by members of the International Movement for Monetary Reform (IMMR) from many different countries including India and South Africa, campaigners for the recent 'Vollgeld' (debt-free money) referendum in Switzerland, central bankers and other policymakers, and developers of cryptocurrencies.

While at the conference Caroline raised the issue of the debt-based money system's connection to environmental de-



*An iron footbridge in Frankfurt with the European Central Bank (creator of the Euro) in the background.*

gradation, and got a considerable response. Much common ground was established with other attendees and it was agreed that the IMMR would invite Feasta to be a partner organisation. Plans for 2019 include collaboration on further research into the money-environment link and improved publicising of the issue.

Caroline wrote a detailed report on the conference which was widely circulated

and can be read on the Feasta website. Three related articles by Graham Barnes were published on the Feasta website in 2018:

- The environmental consequences of monetary dysfunction
- Confessions of a rentier
- Ideologies of credit creation

More information on these can be found on page 9.

# Climate Group



For the past thirteen years Feasta climate group members have been urging governments to impose a hard cap (quota) on fossil fuel production or imports, to charge fossil fuel companies for permits and to distribute the revenue from the permits on a per-capita basis.

***"The idea of distributing dividends (or 'carbon cheques' as they are sometimes called) has attracted considerable attention in recent years, with versions of the scheme being implemented in Switzerland and Canada."***

Feasta continued advocating this approach in the submissions it made on the CAP and to the European Commission in the course of 2018 (see page 10). In the Irish context, climate group member Caroline Whyte engaged in discussion with other Environmental Pillar members on the subject.

The idea of distributing dividends (or 'carbon cheques' as they are sometimes called) has attracted considerable attention in recent years, with versions of the scheme being implemented in Switzerland and Canada. By the latter part of 2018 carbon cheques were also being seriously considered by the Irish government and were the subject of much media coverage. Feasta's climate group prepared a submission on this proposal to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Change that was to be finalised

in January 2019. Meanwhile in Scotland, Feasta climate group member Justin Kenrick had some success in promoting Cap and Share among climate activists.



Paul Faisant work of intern Paul Faisant in 2018. Over the summer, Paul researched the possibility of a Cap and Share partnership being formed between a high-emissions and low-emissions country or bloc of countries, in order to eliminate their fossil fuel production and imports collectively over time while promoting climate justice. Such a partnership would ensure that the wealthier country subsidised the energy transition of the lower-income country.

As Paul is studying agro-engineering at Montpellier University and had just returned from six months' study in Thailand, he initially looked into the potential for France and Thailand to form a partnership. The two countries would fit the criteria as they have similar populations and their average per capita emissions approximate the global average.

Paul also explored the possibility of the EU as a whole forming a partnership with a group of South-East Asian countries. Many of the ASEAN members would be eligible for such a partnership, and obviously a broader-scaled approach would yield much more significant results.

A report based on Paul's work will be published in the first half of 2019, and

we also plan to make use of the contacts he sourced in the course of his research.

## Anti-fracking

In the UK Feasta member Brian Davey continued to be involved in the anti fracking movement in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Nottinghamshire is a former coal mining area so one theme that Brian has focused upon is the potential interaction between any future fracking and former coal mining activity. A retired Professor of Geology in Keele University wrote a report published in April that caused a great deal of concern and was taken up by Members of Parliament for constituencies in coal mining areas - with hearings held in Parliament. Earlier in his career Styles had researched seismic activity caused by coal mining - including examples in Nottinghamshire pits. His message was that the fracking near geological faults in former coal mining areas could trigger earthquakes and should not take place without careful assessment of all available geological data. "In many areas proposed shale gas activities lie beneath historic coal mine workings which have already experienced subsidence and sometimes fault rejuvenation." Brian helped activists connect with a geology professor at Nottingham University for



*A disused coal mine in Nottinghamshire: none too ideal as a fracking site. Image source: wikimedia commons.*

***"He has also sought to contextualise fracking as not just environmentally harmful but unsustainable in a narrow commercial sense to discourage investors from putting money into its development."***

advice and also wrote briefing notes for local groups in former mining areas.

Further to that Brian has taken part in campaigning against proposed changes to the regulatory regime that would take away from local authorities planning powers to decide on fracking and vest the decision at a national level. He has also sought to contextualise fracking as not just environmentally harmful but unsustainable in a narrow commercial sense to discourage investors putting money into its development.

### **Stop Climate Chaos**

Feasta member Deirdre Lane continued to represent Feasta in the Stop Climate Chaos coalition in Ireland. In this capacity she was present at the vote on Climate Emergency Measures on 8th

February, and collaborated on the preparation of a letter to the Chair of the Committee on Communications, Climate Action and Environment, asking them to bring this to the next stage of the legislative process



On July 12, Ireland became the first country in the world to divest from fossil fuels, thanks in part to the efforts of Stop Climate Chaos and to ongoing divestment education and fact sharing by Deirdre and other campaigners. The state's €8 billion national investment fund will be required to sell all investments in coal, oil, gas and peat "as soon as is practicable", which is expected to mean within five years.

Deirdre joined other Stop Climate Chaos members and the TCD Environmental Society for a day all about climate change as part of the global #RiseForClimate mobilisations. On October 16 she visited the Dáil to demand that the government take climate action now and listen to citizens following the Citizens' Assembly recommendations to dramatically help Ireland reach its climate targets.

On November 17th, in solidarity with



*Deirdre Lane, Feasta's representative in the Stop Climate Chaos coalition, at the Climate KIC hackathon in Dublin, October 2018*

Extinction Rebellion in the UK, she joined a large gathering to demand #ClimateActionNow.

On Wednesday 5th December, 250 people came from around Ireland to Dublin to talk to their TDs and urge them to back #ClimateActionNow. 250+ constituents lobbied 91 TDs and 5 senators to demand #ClimateActionNow on December 5th, 2018. This included a request by Deirdre to Minister Ross to expand the transport zone to include Newbridge and free up traffic congestion plus financial savings to commuters.

# Basic Income Group

Many Feasta members are advocates and activists for universal basic income and in 2018 a Feasta Basic Income group was formed.

This group is particularly focussed on the role that basic income can play in cultivating the characteristics of a sus-

tainable society and economy, both in Ireland and globally. The group hosted an event called 'We need to talk about basic income' at Cloughjordan on Sept 23 (details on page 4).

The group also met with members of Basic Income Ireland and the Green Party

on Oct 25 at Leinster House in Dublin. Some of the issues discussed were the connections between BI and the idea of degrowth, the tie-ins between BI and alternative tax bases, and the desirability or otherwise of pilot programmes.





*Lui Smyth giving a presentation at the "We need to talk about basic income" event held by Feasta in Cloughjordan on September 23*

# Water Commons

The primary work of the Water Commons group in 2018 was to contribute to a forthcoming Special Edition of the Community Development Group. This Special Edition is a follow-on from the Water Commons Thinkery held in UCC in 2017. The Special Edition comprises articles on the theme of the commons with particular application to water.

Feasta member Mark Garavan writes in the Special Edition an account of his dialogue with Chas Chewitt, an indigenous Water Protector activist. They explore the concept of water commons within a wider narrative of oppression which is both gendered and racist. The control of water is equated with the drive to control women, indigenous 'others', and material and cultural resources more generally. The specific cultural perspective Chas expresses centres on notions of water as a relative to which / whom we must relate in a mutual engagement of care and responsibility. We are within a living

web of beings dependent on each other and intimately connected to each other. Water cannot but be a communal phenomenon connecting the individual to all of life across space and to our ancestors and descendants across time. Water flows in and out of us. This sense of visceral connection with water is exemplified in the Standing Rock protests against the Dakota pipeline. The re-affirmation of indigenous perspectives received by this engagement is explored and the argument made that the recovery of these primary modes of relating to natural elements is crucial to healing current ecological and social stresses.

***"They explore the concept of water commons within a wider narrative of oppression which is both gendered and racist."***

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*"Water [is] a relative to which / whom we must relate in a mutual engagement of care and responsibility."*

*Image: freeimages.com/photo/waterfall-1502869*

# Networking and Partnership



Feasta is a member of the Irish Environmental Network, an umbrella group that works to support environmental NGOs through access to funding and services. Its thirty-three member NGOs represent a broad range of environmental interests.

In October 2018 Feasta was asked to nominate a director to the IEN (as some directorships are allocated on a rotation basis), and Caroline Whyte was appointed to the Board for the period 2019-2022.

## Environmental Pillar

In 2018 Feasta continued to participate actively in the Environmental Pillar, a group of 28 national environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who work together to represent the views of the Irish environmental sector.

## European Health Futures Forum

A Living Architecture for Transformative Change in Healthcare

The European Health Futures Forum was established in 2013 by individuals from a variety of EU countries coming largely from health backgrounds. They share a belief that the current model of delivery of health and healthcare in Europe is fundamentally flawed and needs to be re-thought and rebuilt to make it effective.

Feasta is collaborating with EHFF to

imagine and help institute practical solutions to solve these challenges. EHFF practices a dynamic networking approach - bringing together people with different expertise and backgrounds to analyse the issues and propose changes. The EHFF network is open (in the sense of open information), inclusive and intergenerational. It gives priority to the value of trust and respect in its personal interactions. This approach is totally aligned with Feasta.

As well as bringing a systems-thinking and holistic perspective to EHFF activities, Feasta also brings a range of special insights such as, the impact of climate change, new approaches to measuring the negative impacts of economic growth, measures of well-being etc. Feasta and EHFF are collaborating in the production of a podcast series (see page 2) covering some of these topics.



'Teacht Aniar'- which literally means 'resilience' - is a recently formed organisation, whose principal aim is to develop an innovative approach to the revival and strengthening of the Irish language. Teacht Aniar has identified language and culture as key components of resilient local communities. Traditionally in Ireland, approaches to revival of the language in the few remaining strongholds - na Gaeltachtaí - recognised the importance of employment opportunities, but lacked a comprehensive holistic ap-

proach to resilience. As a consequence, and similar to many communities in the west of Ireland, many of these communities are impoverished with the language and culture 'on life-support' through state-aided schemes of various types.

Feasta throughout its existence has developed a broadly based and inclusive approach to the ecology of community. This approach includes not just the natural environment, but also considerations of local monetary systems and the circular economy, food supply channels, the nature of work/employment and basic universal income, as well as the cultural and social aspects - all of which are interacting as a natural complex system.

Since 2017, Feasta has been collaborating with Teacht Aniar through the development of an 'Aeróg Éiceolaíoch' - an ecological antenna, which aims to gather latest thinking, research and developments in areas which relate to the above topics. One of the particular areas of interest is the parallel between collapsing biodiversity/accelerating species extinction in the natural world on the one hand, and the rapid collapse of minority languages and cultures throughout the world.

Specific collaborative actions in 2018 included 'Lón Intinne/Food for Thought', a bi-lingual seminar which explored the Irish Famine from various perspectives (see page 4); the development of 'Aeróg Éiceolaíoch' and the recording of interviews with Irish-speaking poets on their perspectives on the meaning of 'ecology'.

