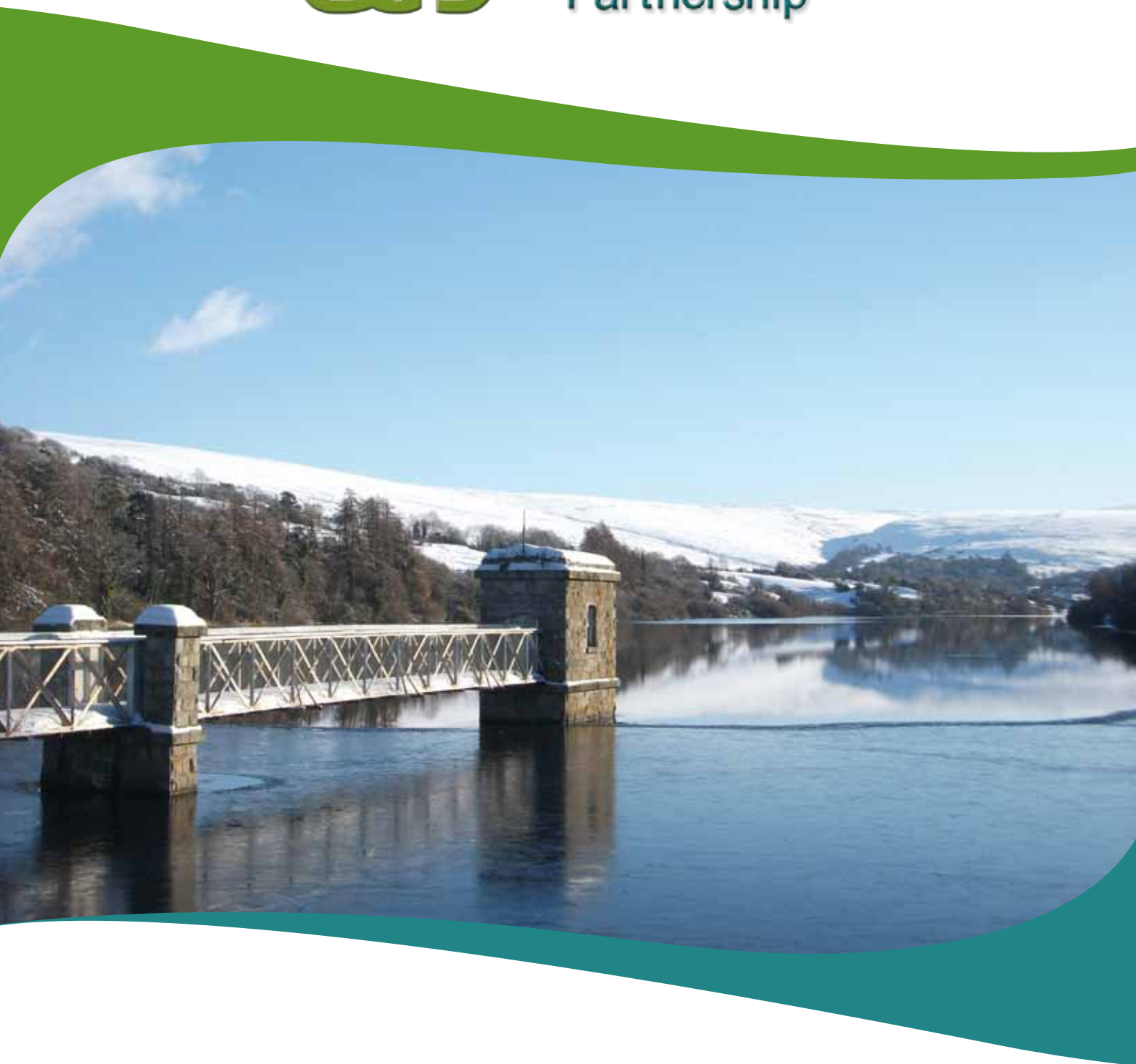
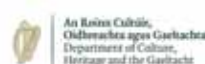




**Dublin Mountains
Partnership**



Annual Review 2018





Dublin Mountains Partnership Vision is:

The Dublin mountains is a well resourced and well managed area of significant scenic and high nature conservation value that provides a:

- High quality recreation and amenity experience
- Breathing space for residents and well-informed responsible visitors
- Sustainable economy for those who own or manage the land



Welcome Message from the Chair of the Dublin Mountains Partnership

2018 was an important year for the DMP with the initiation of a strategic review to set the future direction and vision for the Partnership. This was timely as 2018 marked ten years since the formation of the DMP and over that time it has developed and supported a range of sustainable recreation offerings in the Dublin Mountains, the primary achievement being the 42 kilometre (26 miles) long scenic walking route across the mountains from Tallaght to Shankill, called the Dublin Mountains Way.

Another key achievement has been the establishment of a Volunteer Ranger programme which facilitates walks and themed events informed by the expertise, knowledge and passion of the volunteers who inform walkers on the history, habitats and indeed the livelihoods that depend on the mountains, emphasising the importance of sustainable practice and 'Leave No Trace' principles.

In 2018, the DMP continued to work on the many challenges that face sustainable recreation in the Dublin Mountains including trail erosion, protection of archaeology, disturbance of wildlife, issues around dog control, littering and meeting the needs of different recreational users and adjoining landowners. The DMP will continue to work to address these issues with the partner organisations and other stakeholder groups.

The achievement of the DMP is down to the vision, effort and dedication of the representatives of the partner organisations, the DMP Recreation Manager Clodagh Duffy and the support of the volunteers and the groups that use and respect the mountains as a unique and special resource for Dublin.

Leslie Moore

Chair of the Dublin Mountains Partnership.

A Brief History of the Dublin Mountains Partnership

The Dublin Mountains Partnership (DMP) was established in 2008 to improve the recreation potential of the public lands in the Dublin Mountains. This needed to be balanced with other key objectives of the various landowning organisations including commercial forestry, conservation and water management (Bohernabreena Reservoir). The DMP Partners are Coillte, the National Parks & Wildlife Service, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, South

Dublin County Council, Dublin City Council and the Dublin Mountains Initiative. The latter group is an umbrella group representing the recreation users of the Dublin Mountains. Representatives of the partner organisations sit on the DMP Board, which meets quarterly. Since 2018, representatives from Fáilte Ireland have attended DMP Board meetings. The work of the DMP board is supported by working committees on which board members sit.

DMP Board



The Gap to Two Rock Hike
Photo credit: DMP

Organisation

Coillte

Dublin City Council

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

Dublin Mountains Initiative

National Parks & Wildlife Service

South Dublin County Council

2018 Representative/s on DMP Board

Daithi de Forge (DMP Vice-Chair) and Peter McGloin

Lesley Moore (DMP Chair) and Shane Casey

Richard Cremins, Ruairi O'Dulaing and Barry Dempsey

Mark d'Alton and Paul Schwartzman

Wesley Atkinson

Suzanne Furlong, Elaine Leech and Fiona Hendley

The board members bring together a range of experience from the fields of planning, recreation development and management, parks, tourism, community development, forest management, and biodiversity.

In 2018 the board met on three occasions: March 9th, May 25th and September 7th.

The DMP's working committees met throughout the year to progress the work of the DMP. The DMP Board is supported by the DMP Recreation Manager, the partnership's sole employee. Two vital elements of the DMP are the Volunteer Ranger Service which was initiated in 2009 (page 6) and the Consultative Forum (page 3) which had its inaugural meeting in 2011.

DMP Funding

DMP is funded by contributions from partner organisations, as agreed by the Memorandum of Understanding under which the partnership was established. The funding the DMP receives is used to enhance and maintain the recreation

facilities in the Dublin Mountains, cover the cost of the Recreation Manager, operate the Volunteer Ranger Service, and to promote the Dublin Mountains.

DMP Partner Profile



The Dublin Mountains Initiative (DMI) was established in 2006, originally in response to Coillte's clear-fell policy in the recreational areas of the Dublin Mountains. The founding organisations were the Irish Orienteering Association, Mountaineering Ireland, Scouting Ireland, Cycling Ireland and the Irish Mountain Running Association, representing the major recreational user groups in the mountains. The DMI agreed from the outset that it would also strive to represent the interests of casual and family recreational users, who were not represented within its umbrella group.

Initial representations to Coillte drew a positive response and the DMI was involved from the outset in the discussions with Coillte, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the County Councils that ultimately led to the formation of the Dublin Mountains Partnership. Since then it has had two seats on the Board of the DMP and has sought to provide ideas from, and a voice for, all those who visit the area for recreational purposes.

I have chaired the DMI, and represented it on the Board of the DMP, since it was set up - I am due

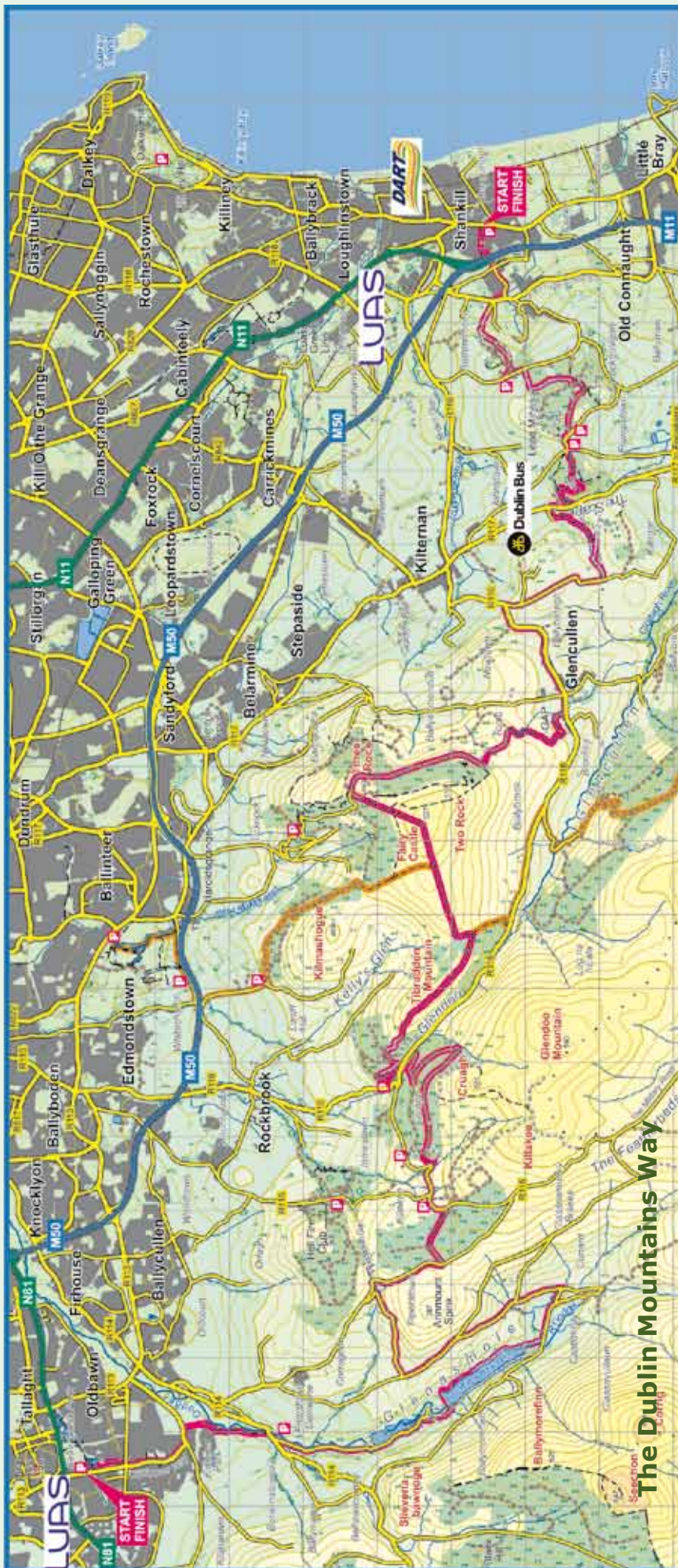
to step down from both roles shortly. It has been one of the pleasures of my life to be involved in both the DMI and the DMP. It was truly remarkable to see the evolution from initial DMP partner meetings, where there was considerable divergence of opinion and even a degree of mistrust, to the establishment of a cohesive group of people working together for the common goal of improving recreation in the Dublin Mountains. I think that all the new infrastructure and trails, the Volunteer Ranger programme and initiatives like the Consultative Forum indicate considerable progress that both the DMI and the DMP can be proud of. Organisations must change and evolve and, in truth, it is well past time that I was replaced. I feel that the possibility of the DMP moving to a different level as a result of its current strategy review and particularly Coillte's recent commitment to change forest management practices in high recreational areas make it a good time to go. The DMI will continue to represent its constituent organisations and the other recreational users of the Dublin Mountains to the best of its ability and I wish the new chair every success.

Mark d'Alton, DMI Chair 2006-2019

Dublin Mountains Consultative Forum

The DMP Consultative Forum initiated in 2011, brings together local community representatives from the Dublin Mountains from social, community, environmental and economic groups with representatives from the DMP to discuss issues of common interest. There are 10 members of the forum; two local residents from

the South Dublin County Council Area and two from the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council area, two representatives from the IFA, a representative from Dublin MACRA, a representative from Mountaineering Ireland who is also on the Wicklow Uplands Council and two representatives from local businesses. The forum met once in 2018.



View of the Scalp from the DMW at the former Sports Hotel, Kilternan. Photo credit: DMP



Junction of the Wicklow Way and Dublin Mountains Way. Photo credit: DMP



The Dublin Mountains Way

The Dublin Mountains Way (DMW) is a way-marked long distance walking route that traverses the Dublin Mountains from Tallaght in the west to Shankill in the east. The first section of the DMW opened in 2010.

In 2018, two new sections of the DMW were opened which saw parts of the DMW move off-road or onto quieter county Roads in Glencullen and Kilternan. The co-operation of the private landowners who made this possible is much appreciated by the DMP and by walkers on the route. Furthermore the new routes have the advantage of giving walkers an opportunity to stop for refreshments, either at the Glencullen Adventure Park (The Gap), famed for its burgers, or the Ski Centre of Ireland's café.

The Wicklow Way (WW) and Dublin Mountains Way (DMW) meet and travel together for 1.2km between Ticknock and Tibbradden. Following reports of walkers missing the trail junctions and adding extra distance to their journeys, newly designed signage was erected in 2018 to help guide walkers. This was done with the help of the Rural Recreation Officer for Co. Wicklow, as part of Wicklow Way Partnership group.

Mountain Meitheal Dublin Wicklow (MMDW) are a voluntary group, who undertake trail building and upgrading projects in Dublin and Wicklow with the aim of protecting and conserving mountain and forest areas (www.mountainmeitheal.ie). MMDW volunteers were in Ticknock from February to November 2018 working on the section of the DMW (and Fairy Castle Loop) which leads from the masts towards Fairy Castle. This section of the DMW had suffered from water erosion and from the trafficking impact of thousands of walkers. The volunteers from MMDW used the design techniques outlined in *'The Mountain Meitheal Handbook of Trail Design and Construction'* to carry out the upgrade works with materials supplied by the DMP. Grateful appreciation is extended to MMDW for all their good work.

Thanks are also due to SDCC, DCC and DLRCC staff, Coillte staff and Coillte contractors who installed signs, new posts, replaced missing posts and way-markers and carried out essential maintenance along the DMW route in 2018.



Volunteers from MMDW at work on the DMW 2018.
Photo credit: MMDW.



In 2018, the DMW brochure, which can be used as a guide to completing the 42.6km route was updated, the brochure is available from tourist offices and from the Recreation Manager by emailing info@dublinmountains.ie

Walkers who complete the 42.6 km DMW can request a Dublin Mountains Way badge from the Recreation Manager by emailing info@dublinmountains.ie

Volunteer Ranger Service



DMP Volunteer Rangers: Sam, Tom, Rich, Sheenagh and Paul

The DMP Volunteer Rangers are a real asset to the DMP. A volunteer ranger programme was initiated in 2009 and over the first 10 years of the programme up to 50 people have volunteered more than 20,000 hours of their own time as DMP Volunteer Rangers supporting the work of the DMP and helping in the management of outdoor recreation.

The Role of the Volunteer Ranger Service is to:

- Assist the public in appreciating the Dublin Mountains through education and communication;
- Increase community involvement in, and awareness of, the management of the forest and mountain lands;
- Promotion of the Leave No Trace Ireland principles;
- Assist in practical conservation tasks;

In 2018, 15 DMP Volunteer Rangers volunteered more than 1,600 hours of their time to the DMP. The DMP Volunteer Rangers led or supported 86 free events for the public, there were walks ranging in distance from 5km hikes (Fairy Castle Loop) to

42.6km hikes (Dublin Mountains Way) and many distances in-between. There were family friendly walks, a sunrise hike, a solstice walk, a photography walk, dog friendly walks, map reading walks, an orienteering taster, litter picks, Dun Laoghaire Summer of Heritage walks, Woodlands for Health walks, the annual Easter Egg Hunt, plus a night hike with an outdoor presentation on 'Goldilocks Planets'.

A high-light of 2018 was continued Volunteer Ranger support of Rock to the Top. Over the course of 12 months the artist Ciarán Taylor led hikes, supported by the DMP Volunteer Rangers, from Rua Red in Tallaght to Castlekelly via the Glenasmole Valley to the foot of Kippure Mountain recreating in various ways the legend of Oisín returning from Tír na n-Óg on his magical horse. Rock to the Top was funded by South Dublin County Council's Public Art Programme for 2016-2019 IN CONTEXT 4 - IN OUR TIME.

The Volunteer Rangers also have 'Meet & Greet' days where they walk routes in the Dublin Mountains collecting litter or checking signs but most importantly engaging with the public and sharing their love of the mountains.

Ongoing training is provided for the Volunteer Rangers. In 2018, 7 Volunteer Rangers attained certification in Wilderness 1st Aid Training (Level 3), 5 Volunteer Rangers received Manual Handling training and three Volunteer Rangers received SafeTalk training, relating to mental health well being and suicide alertness.

DMP Volunteer Ranger recruitment initiatives will be announced via the DMP website and Facebook page.



DMP Volunteer Rangers (in green t-shirts) Jesús, Rich, Gary, Tom and Sam, DMW hike September, 2018 Photo credit: DMP.



1st Aid Training March 2018, John, Ken, Jesús, Sam, Lori, Tom, Denis. Photo credit: DMP VR Sean O'Connell.



DMP VRs: Michael, Rich, Ken, Denis and Tom. Photo credit: DMP

A photo album of 2018 events led or supported by the DMP Volunteer Rangers



Dog Friendly walk in Cruagh, February 2018. Photo credit: DMP.



'Rock to the Top' by Ciarán Taylor, June 23 2018.
Photo credit: Felipe Jóia



DMP at Tallafest, June 2018.
Photo credit: DMP



Litter Pick, April 2018. Photo credit: DMP



Night Hike with presentation by Fergal Mullally on 'Goldilocks Planets'. Photo credit: Justin Garvey



DMW Hike, September 2018. Photo credit: DMP VR Rich Williams.



DMP Hike Tibbradden to Glencree, November 2018.
Photo credit: Imelda Colgan



DMP Hike Tibbradden to Glencree, November 2018.
Photo credit: Imelda Colgan



Meet & Greet Tom. Photo credit: DMP VR Sam Warbrick



Sunrise Hike, December 2018. Photo credit: DMP VR Rich Williams

Details of DMP led or supported events are posted monthly on the DMP Website (www.dublinmountains.ie) and on the DMP Facebook page (@dmpvr).

Woodlands for Health

The Woodlands for Health programme is a 10-12 week eco therapy programme which offers people who experience mental ill health an opportunity to participate in supported walks in green spaces. The programme begins with walks in parks and progresses to forest and mountain trails. The programme is designed to encourage mental well-being through physical activity and engagement with nature. The programme was initiated in Co. Wicklow in 2012 by Charlie Burke from Coillte in association with partner organisations, HSE, Mental Health Ireland, Wicklow Mental Health Association and Wicklow Sports Partnership. In 2016 the Woodlands for Health programme was introduced in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Area where it is delivered by Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Sports Partnership

with support from the HSE/Cluain Mhuire Adult Mental Health Services, HSE Health Promotion and Improvement, HSE Suicide Prevention, Coillte, Dublin Mountains Partnership, Get Ireland Walking, Mental Health Ireland, Southside Partnership and Sport Ireland.

In 2018, three of the DMP Volunteer Rangers and the Recreation Manager supported the Woodlands for Health programme through guiding walks in the Dublin Mountains. Two Woodlands for Health programmes were run in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown in 2018, the 1st programme was based on referrals from HSE/ Cluain Mhuire Adult Mental Health Service, the 2nd programme was promoted locally and was advertised widely.



The key features of the **Woodlands for Health** programme are:

- 10-12 weeks of activity
- All levels of fitness are welcome and the walks are adapted to the participant's abilities
- Walks are led by experienced volunteers and rangers
- Walk locations differ each week, starting in parks and progressing to mountain trails.
- Different locations are used to keep the walks interesting, familiarise the participants with multiple locations and opportunities for activity within their community, and advance to more challenging walks as the participant's progress.
- The programme aims to promote social inclusion and the development of networking skills.
- Participants are referred to the programme by the Mental Health Care Team from the HSE/ Cluain Mhuire Mental Health Service.
- There is a great social aspect to the walks and lunch is enjoyed on location each week

DMP Work on Recreational Facilities 2018



New section of mountain bike trail at Ticknock.
Photo credit: DMP



Upgraded section of walking trail at Ticknock.
Photo credit: DMP

Part of the DMP's annual funding is used to install new recreational infrastructure and to upgrade and maintain existing facilities in the Dublin Mountains. In 2018, in addition to funding materials for upgrade work carried out by MMDW on the Dublin Mountains Way, the DMP funded walking trail upgrade works in Ticknock on the trail between the lower and upper car parks.

A section of the mountain bike track in Ticknock, was upgraded by DMP. Coillte also funded significant upgrade works on sections of the mountain bike track in Ticknock including the construction of two new sections.

Car-park upgrade works were carried out in Ticknock, Tibbradden and Cruagh. An objective of the DMP, when it was established was to re-open car-parks which had been closed as a result of anti-social behaviour, this was achieved through the installation of electronic gates. DMP

funding is used to cover the operational costs of the electronic gates at Hell Fire Club, Cruagh, Tibbradden, Ticknock and Barnaslingan. There were several call-outs to deal with vandalism of electronic gates. Hell Fire Club and Ticknock had the highest instances of vandalism /damage to the electronic gates reported in 2018. The heavy snows in March 2018 (the so called 'Beast from the East') high-lighted an issue with the electronic gates which was resolved through the funding of an upgrade that now allows the gates to be closed remotely. This will be beneficial in any situation that requires a car-park to be closed, e.g. a status red wind warning. Unfortunately there were many reports of car break-ins at Hell Fire Club car-park over the summer of 2018. As well as contacting the Community Garda based in Tallaght Garda Station, DMP funds were used to install a new high definition CCTV camera and upgrade the CCTV cameras already in place.

Spotlight on two challenges faced in the Dublin Mountains in 2018

Dog Control

People with dogs are welcome on the DMP partners' lands. In some areas, Bohernabreena and the GAP, dogs are required to be on leads at all times. On Coillte land that adjoins farmland or the open hill Coillte requests that dogs be on a lead as wildlife, including ground nesting birds, are present and livestock may be present. On all of Coillte land dogs are required to be under effectual control.

Effectual control means that:

- The person walking the dog has control of the dog.
- The dog will respond to a command immediately.
- The dog is within sight at all times.
- The dog does not approach or bark at other people.

Signage was erected along trails that access the open hill or travel beside farmland in 2018. Furthermore, the DMP website and Facebook page were used to promote responsible dog owner/walker behaviour.

There were 5 reports of “sheep worrying”, attacks by dogs on sheep, in the Ticknock/ Kilmashogue/ Tibbradden area between January and July of 2018. Sheep worrying by dogs is an animal welfare issue and has the potential to negatively impact on farmers livelihoods. It is something that the DMP takes very seriously. DMP and Coillte staff met with the farmer involved in 4 of the 5 sheep worrying incidents and with the IFA to hear first hand the impact on the farmers of the dog attacks. In addition Coillte and DMP representatives met with the Chairs of the IFA Livestock and National Sheep committees along with representatives of Dublin and Bohernabreena IFA to discuss ways to encourage dog owners to act responsibly around livestock. It was acknowledged that this is a national issue, progress on this issue is ongoing.



Red Grouse.
Photo credit: John Griffin



Photo credit: DMP

Litter

DMP and Coillte have signed up to **Leave No Trace Ireland's** seven principles. Principle six deals with waste:



"If You Bring It In, Take It Out" - take home all litter and leftover food (including tea bags, fruit peels and other biodegradable foods)."

There are deliberately no bins in Coillte's forests but there is litter, this is the challenge! The DMP Volunteer Rangers have been trained in the Leave No Trace principles and on their "Meet & Greet" volunteering days they do litter picks and talk to the public about responsible behaviour. Three public litter picks were organised during the year, these litter picks incorporated walks, a Leave No Trace game about the life span of different types of waste and were, based on feedback received, very enjoyable.

In the summer of 2018 Leave No Trace Ireland organised a series of corporate volunteering

events, supported by DMP, these events were based in Hell Fire Club Forest. The corporate volunteers received training in Leave No Trace Ireland principles and carried out a litter pick that led them to the Hell Fire Club. A wide range of rubbish is collected during litter picks in recreation sites, as you walk from the car-park along trails, including plastic soft drink/water bottles, sweet and crisp wrappers, fruit peel, alcohol cans and bottles (many broken), cigarette butts, chewing gum, used tissues and multi coloured filled dog poo bags. On adjacent county roads domestic waste, garden waste, construction waste and bits of cars can be found dumped.

The PURE Project (Protecting Upland Rural Environments) is an environmental project which was established to combat the problem of illegal dumping/fly tipping in Wicklow and Dublin Uplands, the PURE Project team supported all of the DMP litter picks in 2018 (www.pureproject.ie). DMP will continue to work on the litter problem in forests through DMP Volunteer Ranger 'Meet & Greet' days, community litter picks, signage and social media campaigns.

The Future

DMP Strategic Review

The DMP initiated a strategic review in 2018 to create a new strategy to guide the future direction of the partnership. Thank you to all the people who gave their time to give their opinions to the consultants undertaking the review. There will be an update on the new Strategy in 2019.

Forest Transformation Plans

Following representations from the DMI, Coillte have reviewed how forests in the Dublin Mountains will be managed in the future to balance forest operations with enhancing recreation, biodiversity and the visitors' experience. The review looked at a number of different options for managing the forests and increasing biodiversity including the feasibility of converting some areas of the forests to native woodland and continuous cover forest management. In consultation with the DMI a management plan has been developed to change the focus from commercial forestry to recreation in the coming years.

The Dublin Mountains Visitor Centre Update

South Dublin County Council (SDCC) submitted 'the Dublin Mountains Visitor Centre Project' to an Bord Pleanála for planning approval, this plan proposes to develop additional recreational facilities including an interpretive centre at Hell Fire Club Forest and a tree top walk to access Massy's Estate. The full details of the 'Dublin Mountains Visitor Centre Project' proposal are available on both the South Dublin County Council and An Bord Pleanála websites. As of February 2019 an Bord Pleanála requested SDCC to supply additional information on the planning application. SDCC are progressing the collection of this additional information which includes a Natura Impact Statement.

Mountain Bike Trail Development

Coillte with Fáilte Ireland applied for funding in 2018 to build a National Mountain Bike Trail centre network, the proposal included further development of the mountain bike trail facilities in Ticknock. In early 2019 word was received that funding has been granted, no further details are available at this time.



The Scalp Viewpoint, Barnaslingan. Photo credit: DMP



Deer in the Dublin Mountains
Photo credit: Ireland's Content Pool



Ticknock Viewpoint with mountain biker.
Photo credit: DMP VR R. Williams





Dublin Mountains Partnership

Information and Contacts

DMP Recreation Manager: info@dublinmountains.ie

Website: www.dublinmountains.ie

Facebook: @dmpvr

Twitter: @DubMountains

Front Cover

Glenasmole Reservoir

Photo credit: DMP VR Rich Williams

Back Cover

Enthusiastic litter pickers in Hell Fire Club car park November 2018

Photo Credit: DMP VR Rich Williams