



Presentation Justice Desk
Ireland & England

Presentation Convent Lixnaw 2018



The Raised Bog of Lixnaw

Raised Bog - Raised Hopes





Lixnaw Bog

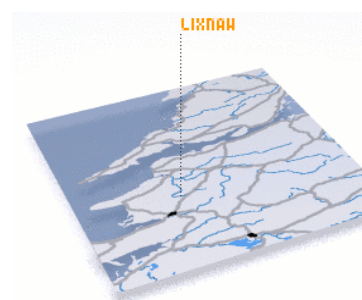
In 1875 the Presentation Sisters of the South West Province of Ireland were invited into the Parish of Lixnaw, north Co. Kerry by a local wealthy land owner “Muraugh Bernard” who was hoping that the accepted invitation would be the start of the formal education of the children of the tenant farmers who worked the surrounding land. In a sincere effort to attract the Sisters an offer was made that could really have been refused. Muraugh Bernard explained that he couldn’t pay the Sisters for the work they were about to undertake and so he offered them just over 20 acres of “bog”. In this way he explained that the neither the Sisters in the convent nor the children in the school would be cold. To their credit the Sisters took up this invitation and never to shy away from a challenge they began their work of education in Lixnaw.

The Sisters began a long association with the Lixnaw community that persists to this day. This article is concerned primarily with the Lixnaw Bog owned by the Sisters and bordered by the convent and Primary School. In 2012, the ‘Sisters’ Bog’ in Lixnaw was returned as a gift to Mother Earth as an example to all of the importance of the Living Bog as a significant contributor to the regulation of climate, wellbeing of our planet and to all who live in the vicinity.

In order to understand a little more about the rationale for this bog conservation project and the steps taken to ensure that bog would remain healthy it was important to make contact with the local Sisters in Lixnaw with the South West Province Leadership Team. Sr. Mary (Kelliher) explains that in the last 15—20 years in particular there has been a growing awareness of our delicate relationship with the earth “and how central creation is for us all”. Mary explains that we are all interconnected and that “creation is not just for the human species, the connections are close. When one piece of creation is destroyed it affects us all”, and it was this very idea that sparked the interest in and motivation behind conserving this unique bog.

So where is Lixnaw?

Lixnaw is a village in North Co. Kerry, Ireland. It is located near the River Brick 11 km (6.8 miles) SW of Listowel and 17 km (11 mi) NE of Tralee. In Irish it has the name Leic Snámha, the floating flag, and indeed this is exactly what the Bog looks like, floating flag stones.





Leic Snámha (Floating Flag).

When the Sisters first began to investigate how exactly one would go about returning the bog to nature and allowing it to go fallow they called upon some expertise to be sure that the bog when rested would indeed become once more a healthy bog, a wet bog.

The bog in Lixnaw, owned by the Sisters, is a [raised bog](#) and it is important to know a little about what exactly is a raised bog and what are its origins. In

this way any subsequent work must be in keeping with the natural ways of a raised bog.

So what do we need to know with respect to raised bogs?

- The word Bog is derived from the Irish word Bogach – meaning soft.
- 17% of the land surface in Ireland is covered in peat.
- Ireland has proportionally more peatlands than any other country in the world except Canada and Finland.
- There are 2 main types of bogs – Raised Bogs, and [Blanket Bogs](#).
- Raised Bogs originate in former lake basins and are mainly concentrated in the central lowlands of Ireland.
- Whereas Blanket Bogs are generally located in high rainfall and low temperature areas of mountain regions and the West of Ireland.

The Bog in Lixnaw is a raised bog

About 10,000 years ago the ice melted as a result of the climate becoming warmer. The water from the melted ice formed lakes in low-lying areas. Plants and trees grew around the edges of the lakes and when they died, they sank and accumulated at the bottom of the lake. After hundreds of years the dead plants (peat) had filled the whole lake and this is known as a fen. Types of plants, such as Sphagnum mosses which like these wet and nutrient poor conditions, colonised the surface of the fen and as they died and accumulated, they transformed the fen into a raised bog.

The bog in Lixnaw is important in that it acts as a [carbon sink](#) extracting the damaging carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the surrounding air. It also has a strategic importance in holding water and the [prevention of flooding](#). In this way the bog in Lixnaw is a healthy bog i.e. “a wet bog and getting wetter”.



Once the Presentation Community in Lixnaw (those who hold the bog in Trust for the Congregation) decided to undertake this project, one of the first difficulties was the fact that there were still a number of local farmers to whom “banks of the Bog” were leased annually. A leased bank meant that the lessee could extract up to four sods deep for that rental period. The monitoring of this was essentially on an “honesty” based system and this worked perfectly well with all who worked the Sisters’ bog in Lixnaw. The core matter for the Sisters was the need to explain that that their bog was being gifted back to nature and that all peat harvesting must therefore cease. In order to do this the farmers concerned were met to explain this rationale. There were many questions and indeed it would be honest to say that not all understood fully what the Sisters were thinking. In fact it was difficult to comprehend that the Sisters would no longer harvest turf from the Bog but would now purchase their fuel from now on. This was to be expected as many of those who worked the Sisters bog were tenants going back several generations and this new departure was foreign to how things were done up to this point. However the meeting finished on a positive note which meant that the Sisters could begin the work of conserving their bog and returning it back to nature.

Their first steps were to engage those who had some more knowledge of the land and in particular of the bog and the need to conserve / preserve it for future generations. A forester, Tim O’Donoghue, was engaged to survey the land to assess the needs of the bog and plan any requisite repair work to guarantee a healthy bog into the future. Using the original deed maps that the Sisters had kept safe with their annals, the outline of what was owned by them was indisputable and this was important as it was necessary to fence off the Sisters’ Bog. The purpose of the boundary fence was two-fold, firstly to indicate that part of the bog that was to be



left fallow but also to deter the larger beasts from trespassing / grazing on a recovering bog but with enough room so that the smaller native wildlife would be encouraged to visit and perhaps even nest once again. You can see the simple but effective fencing in the accompanying picture (Oct 2018).



The farmers were not the only people who harvested from the bog. The Sisters too out of necessity harvested turf from this bog. In fact the turf harvested by the farmers was hand-won, and indeed only the amount that was needed was taken. Ostensibly hand won turf is a sustainable means of harvesting. In later years the Sisters engaged “the meitheal” to harvest the turf for them and in more modern times the turf was machine harvested. The flat “flags” of the bog at “Leic Snámha” (Lixnaw) lent themselves ideally for the use of machines. [Machine cut turf](#) always resulted in more being harvested than was needed. In this way increased damage to the bog was done. Those who worked the bog knew their trade. Banks were identified and worked, rested and then a new bank was “set” in such a way as to ensure that the bog retained as much water as possible for the subsequent year’s harvest. Peat harvesting and bog maintenance go hand in hand, similar to farming and those who worked the “Sisters Bog” did so responsibly. The Sister’s Bog in Lixnaw was only one 20 acre patch of a the larger bog that was divided into similar parcels and owned by other local farmers. Some were worked hard, others drained for farmland and others were fallow and remain unworked. In this way the entire Raised Bog in Lixnaw can be seen at various stages of use and what is apparent is that such differing stages expose the weaknesses that mitigate against the successful recovery of a bog left to rest and that has been returned to Mother Earth.



The Sisters biggest challenge was to explain, again and again, why such conservation was necessary and this would involve the explanation of such important terms as “[carbon soak](#)”, “[carbon sink](#)” and that this particular bog was not covered by the “conservation areas” outlined by the government. Such status would have allowed for some contribution to the funding of this conservation work. The very fact that there was no money to be made by allowing the bog to go fallow by way of grant or otherwise meant that those watching on from the side lines realised that the Sisters were indeed acting with integrity when they insisted that their bog would be their contribution to a better Lixnaw, a better Ireland and indeed a better planet. The reality was that the Sisters were indeed about to incur costs not just through the lack of rent from those who worked the bog but also in the work and expertise that would have to be brought into guaranteeing the recovered future of this worked



bog. The very idea of connectedness with nature and creation is by no means new. But it is only in more recent times, encouraged by the publication of [Laudato Si](#) by Pope Francis and many other like-minded groups, that others can see and understand the delicate and true thread of connection of all of creation. Among the religious also there has been a learning curve and for some this has been steep. There was no resistance among the Sisters relative to the proposed new “conserved” status of their bog but there did need to be some careful, complete and repeated explanation as to why such an important project needed to be undertaken. The Sisters in Lixnaw have a powerful reputation and the town is undoubtedly delighted with the fact that they have been a part of the fabric of the town since 1875. That said, there were those in the town who had their concerns about why the Sisters were moving in this new direction of not just allowing the bog go fallow but working to ensure that the bog would recover as quickly as possible. This recovery could be measured in the increased biodiversity that would follow in a “managed” recovery.

When the first queries were made in an effort to find out more about the “Lixnaw Bog” it was made very clear that a visit to the bog was a must, that to stand on the bog and breathe in its clear air is a part of the full understanding of why the work was necessary and to experience the wet, the biodiversity, to witness the returning species of plant and animal life, to see what borders this bog, to learn of its’ weaknesses and strengths. It was important that to see the bog 6 years after the “bog” was allowed to rest.

Working the Bog

So what work exactly is done on a bog when it comes to those who spend their time on the bog to “hand cut” turf? The first day is spent cutting the turf by hand using a two sided spade or [“sleán”](#). Saving the turf involved repeatedly coming back to the cut sod to turn them so that they could dry out as the sods faced the sun. The entire process was indeed very weather dependent, like so much else of the farmers lot. When the sods were relatively dry they were stacked stood up against each other and this was called “footing the turf”. This was and is a hard day’s backbreaking work that tested all. Once dried then turf was then taken out to the adjacent road by donkey (on the rougher ground) and eventually by truck to the family farm. Importantly the amount of turf harvested was to last the entire winter until such time as the whole process would begin again. For hundreds of years turf was cut and saved in this manner and all who worked the bog extracted “no more” than what



they needed. This was a sustainable way of harvesting the turf. The use of machines to cut turf and the misuse of turf as an effective way of generating electricity denuded the bogs and rendered the harvesting of bogs as unsustainable.

During the turf cutting season family members would be sent to the bog to work as labourers for other farmers who were working to save their own turf. This was done because each family would have benefitted from the labour of other farmers in their locality. All the farmers and their families cooperated with each other by sharing the labour and resources to maximise the dividend to each working farmer for their days in the bog - this was the "[Meitheal](#)" system.

FOOTED TURF



So what was necessary to ensure that the Lixnaw bog could be honoured in a sensible, sustainable and workable plan to conserve?

The initial work on the bog was to allow the bog to settle before there would be any intervention. The one real and obvious concern in that to the North West of the bog and bordering the Sisters Bog there is farmland. This was at one stage also part/margin of the raised bog but somewhere along the way the peat had been harvested, the land was then drained and cleared to make way for farmland. The problem with this was that the level at which the farmland was at was about 10 feet below the level of the bog that the Sisters own that borders this farmland. This means that the edge of the Sisters Bog was a point of weakness. It is a point where water may leach away and thereby endanger the viability of this raised bog. All around the Sisters Bog are other bogs (indeed the bog owned by the Sisters is only a 20 acre site (or thereabouts). The other bogs surrounding this bog are all at different stages in their lives directly as a result of the amount of harvesting that has occurred on a tract of bog. It is apparent that other bog plots have also gone fallow. It is noticeable that another plot was significantly deeper than all others and have obviously been machined to clear off much of the peat. It looked as though there is little left to harvest here, but the real question with such a low piece of bog (field at this stage, almost useful as a pitch!) is the fact it is another weak point in what is a large bog and could indeed work counter to the healing that would naturally occur when a bog is rested indefinitely.

The bog was being left to heal but in order to be sure that every precaution was taken and every opportunity was afforded to this bog the expertise of others was sought and thankfully given willingly. Geraldine Stein Thawmley, of the Institute of Technology, Tralee was invited to cast an expert eye over the bog and to advise on what might be the next resuscitative steps in conserving the Sisters Bog.

Geraldine was very conscious of the need for the bog to hold water and stressed that the health of the bog is indeed directly proportional to the amount of water that it can hold and this in turn can be assisted by the presence of Sphagnum Moss, which holds water like a sponge. When a bog is harvested, the growth of Sphagnum Moss is interfered with and by extension the ability of the bog to retain water is reduced. Sphagnum moss is growing aplenty at this present time (October 2018). It is a welcome indicator that the recovery of the Sisters Bog is well underway. It is everywhere, swollen with water, (see below)



Further work is required to maintain the bog and enable a more natural and speedy recovery. Building up the edges of the bog ensuring that there is nowhere for the water to runoff is an essential part of the water management that will guarantee the present and future health and integrity of the bog in Lixnaw. By adhering to the best of advice and practice the Lixnaw Bog will return more quickly to its original state and will once again live up to its well-chosen name, Leic Snámha.

In Oct 2018 it was apparent that the autumn colour of the grasses and sedges that surround the sphagnum moss were dying back. There is no protection from the wind and elements on a bog. This lack of coverage and protection meant that the ferns had all browned (earlier than they have in gardens) because of their exposure. They were dying back and sinking into the soil and in doing so were healing the bog as had been intended.



The following set of photographs is from the summer of 2013. What is noticeable is the healthy green of the bog in summer health when left to rest. In the same summer, (about a year after the bog was allowed to go fallow) there were a number of important other species of plants that could be seen as a sign of a happy healthy bog. One was the yellow bog asphodel that can be seen below:



Bog Cotton, Lichen and Algae can all be seen as part of the healthy bog in Lixnaw quite soon after the bog was allow to go fallow and “green over”



Bog Cotton



Lichen



Further evidence of the improving health of the bog could be seen in the presence of the Sun Dew plant typical of a healthy raised bog.



These plants that are present in the Sisters Bog are important in that we know that they depend for their health and growth on an external source of nutrients for their survival, air, sun and water.

As the health of the bog improved and as others became aware of this innovative restoration and conservation, it gave many the opportunity to consider creation and to consider this work as a thanks for the gift of the bog to all up to this point. It gave pause to all to consider their connectedness with nature, to examine our link to our environment more closely and with a greater understanding than might have been the case previous to this work on the bog. The rejuvenation of the bog enhanced our understanding of our connection and place in our environment. It also gives us an insight into our ability to make a difference, to improve a situation, to create an example. This bog deepens our connection with our environment, it deepens our connection between the cosmos and with God and in this greater understanding we have a duty to take action and we do this out of love. This work is an example of mission and ministry of the Presentation Sisters.

The restored bog is now not just a home to the plants of a healthy bog but also to the wildlife and insect life that now thrives undisturbed on this fenced off 20 acres of bog.





When walking the Sisters Bog in October 2018, it was wonderful to feel the amount of water underfoot given the parched summer that Ireland has just endured. The talk all summer and indeed, the previous winter, was of a change in the patterns of the weather that is now more noticeable in Ireland than at any time up to this point. One of the first functions and worries of the Sisters in this work of conservation was to ensure that the recovering banks of turf were allowed to regenerate naturally in ways to shore up any seepage that might dry out this bog. They sought the advice from [Bord Na Móna](#) and from a forest ranger, Tim O'Donoghue, of the [Irish Forestry](#) and he keeps an eye on all changes that are occurring in the bog. However, what is little understood is the ability of the bog to heal itself given the chance and the odd little bit of help.

We in Ireland were not too aware in the past of the importance of the raised bog in Ireland, Europe and beyond. We have all but destroyed all of our raised bogs and the unique ecosystems that they host. Sr. Mary Kelliher was at pains to point out how a Dutch professor in 1986 embarrassed the Irish Government into taking greater account of its Irish Bogs. In searching for some detail on this news an important article in the Irish Times offered so much more than an explanation. [This article](#) was published in April 16th 2011 but should be printed again. Consider the following extract:

It took a Dutchman to make us realise that our bogs were precious wildlife habitats and not merely places for harvesting cheap fuel. As long ago as 1986, Dr Matthijs Schouten was so appalled by the destruction of peatlands here that he set up the Dutch Foundation for Conservation of Irish Bogs. Professor of restoration ecology at Wageningen University and also an adjunct professor at UCC, he became known as "the father of bog conservation in Ireland" and was knighted in 2004 by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands for the prominent role he played in bringing the fate of Irish bogs to international attention.

The foundation raised sufficient funds in the late 1980s to purchase three endangered sites – Scragh Bog, in Co Westmeath; Cumberagh River bog, in Co Kerry, and Clochar na gCon bog, in Co Galway – and gifted them to the Irish nation. As a result, the government was shamed into taking the issue seriously. Dr Schouten pointed out to all and sundry that the Dutch came to regret the destruction of their own peatlands and were investing millions of guilders in conserving the last remaining examples in the southeast of the country. They also built a bog museum in Veen that attracts 1.5 million visitors per year.

But it was not just the tireless efforts of a Dutch ecologist that we needed to take note of. Under the EU habitats directive, adopted in 1992, Ireland was required to designate special areas of conservation (SACs) for protection – and one of the mandatory



categories included raised bogs of European importance. Located mainly in the midlands, raised bogs once covered an area of more than 300,000 hectares (720,000 acres). But due to decades of “harvesting” for electricity production, household fuel and compost, only 18,000 hectares (43,200 acres) still remain – amounting to half of all the surviving raised bogs in Europe.

And further along in the article:

Spending a day hiking on squishy bogs is the nearest thing to walking on water, enthusiasts say. “It is like being on a giant water bed,” as Dr Peter Foss, co-founder of the Irish Peatland Conservation Council, once said. Or to quote Seamus Heaney: “The ground itself is kind, black butter/Melting and opening underfoot”. Like sponges, raised bogs soak up water in times of flooding and slowly release it during dry periods, thereby helping to regulate water systems. Conversely, cutting them up causes erosion of organic matter and this results in silting lakes and river beds, as has happened with Lough Derg on the Shannon system. The habitat value of raised bogs arises from their rich diversity of flora such as bog-rosemary, cranberry, lichens and sundews, all of which thrive in the sphagnum mosses.

Frank McDonald (Irish Times) Former environmental correspondent

What is striking about this extract is that the award offered to the Dutch Professor for his work in highlighting the plight of the Irish Bogs was presented by the Dutch Royalty when undoubtedly any award in respect of such work should have been generously offered by the government of the day in Ireland.



This literal description of the bog is as close a description as can be found to explain what it feels like to walk on a bog. When a marker is planted on one side of the Sisters' Bog then it can be seen when standing on the far side of the 20 acre bog in summer. However, in winter, this straight line view is blocked by the swollen bog holding the winter's water preventing flooding by slowly releasing the water in due course. This has been described as the "Breathing Bog" and to stand on the Sisters' Bog breathing in the pure air is to experience our oneness with creation and understand more clearly what is meant by "connectedness". The Sisters' Bog is indeed becoming a healthier bog (and a wetter bog) by the season and this can be measured in the ability of the bog to retain and conserve water. Indeed as Ireland faces the fact that we are nowhere nearly likely to achieve our 2020 or 2030 greenhouse [gas emissions targets](#) (as per the [Paris Climate Accord](#)), the least that we can do is to follow the example of the Presentation Sisters to save the carbon sinks that are still available to us, just like the Sisters Bog in Lixnaw.

Upon enquiry of the local comment on this new venture of returning the bog to nature there were questions, there was an uncertainty about the venture, the question "why?" was hanging in the air. There was some head-scratching given the price of fuel and the fact that now the Sisters have to pay for what they have had for free up to this point. The Sisters were at pains to point out that their decision to gift the bog back to nature was very much respected and that there was no negative feedback. Further, over time there is a greater understanding (that is growing) of the need to do this and more. In fact there is a quiet respect for this bold decision and a pride in their work to gift their bog back to Mother Earth. While the Sisters of Lixnaw are modest in this venture they are always happy to explain, to answer, to advise, to invite and to talk about all of this in as much detail as they might be appropriate.

The Sisters have had a guiding hand in all matters educational in Lixnaw since their arrival in 1875 and they would encourage the primary school children not just to learn of their locality but to experience the natural habitats of the raised bog that defines their very home. "What we do now is for future generations and is but a simple act, an example", explains Sr. Mary Kelliher. "It behoves us all to leave the planet in as good a shape as possible for the children and the most appropriate way is to begin by showing them how a small difference can be made on their doorstep." In this way the Sisters continue their commitment to the children of the Parish of



Lixnaw. This is the very living of the Sustainable Development Goals in that a local act can have a global impact.

The Presentation Sisters, have been aware of the damage of burning Peat for a long time. It gives off greater carbon emissions per ton than coal does. It has much less the energy giving value than coal when burnt. But still that does not stop the Irish Government from offering a subsidy to the ESB who burn peat for electricity generation, perhaps the most damaging of subsidies that run contra to any perceived mitigation plan for Climate Change. This is an obvious example of policy incoherence that the Presentation Sisters seek to address through their work at the Presentation Justice Desk. When [Fr. Seán McDonagh](#), a Columban Eco – Theologian was consulted as part of the preparation to restore this bog he offered perhaps the most insightful advice, when he explained that the best thing that the Sisters could do with their bog was to “protect it from humans”. It was a simple piece of advice that has been followed to the letter.

The work on the Sisters’ Bog began well before the publication of Laudato Si: Pope Francis’ encyclical entitled “On Care of our Common Home”. This important encyclical was a first in many ways. It is addressed to all people of all faiths and none. It is hard-hitting, it is extremely well informed and went far and away further than so many had hoped for. This encyclical connected the whole world and spoke of one crisis. Many felt that the economic and environmental crises were individual and distinct. Pope Francis explains that they are indivisible and speaks of the wealth and lifestyle of the western world and its’ impacts and outcomes for the smaller nations on the margins who are already experiencing the destruction that is caused by Climate Change.

In September of 2015 we were given the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), a set of 17 goals that if achieved would and could save the planet for future generations to come whilst preserving our valuable ecosystems and habitats. If the Sustainable Development Goals needed an underlying rationale or philosophy they need look no further than Laudato Si. 2015 was an important year.

The Sisters Bog was a project undertaken in 2012, 3 years prior to the SDGs and Laudato Si. It shows, courage, leadership and vision that we have come to expect of Presentation Sisters given the courage, leadership and vision of their foundress Nano Nagle. Further, I would imagine that if the original owner of the bog “Muraugh



Bernard, could see how his original investment in the Sisters and their work continues to pay dividends today (and will do well into the future) that he might have offered far more than the original 20 or so acres of bog, as it sounds as though he too was a far-sighted man with a plan and a vision.

So what of the Future?

Recently Mary Robinson (Chair of the Elders) asked us all to make a change, a small change for climate. She explained that a small change is a just transition and this is possible because we still have time to head off the impending Climate disaster. In July of 2018 the [Irish government announced that they would divest of all fossil fuel investment](#) just before Ireland presented its first [National Voluntary Review](#) on the SDGs at the UN in New York. In October of 2018 we saw how [Bord Na Mona, took the courageous but necessary step to close many of their bogs](#), allowing them to go fallow. This they said was because they are facing up to their climate change responsibilities. In November of 2018 [Wales announced their plans to leave all coal as yet unmined in the ground](#). All of these are promising examples of what we need to do. None of these decisions were taken easily and indeed there are consequences for staff that can be managed in a just transition to renewable energy production.

But all of these big decisions come on the back of braver decision of the Dutch Professor who purchased three bogs to present them to the government on the basis that they would never be worked. The Presentation Sisters in Lixnaw followed on from that example and their small bog is yet another flickering flame, a guiding lantern, that shows us all the way in the darkness that is Climate Change.

In asking, what was the hope for the Sisters' Bog into the future? The Presentation Sisters explain that while the bog is for the time being under their custody, they would love to generate a positive local interest in this bog, that all who live in the locality would know all about the bog, it's history, it's gift as a carbon sink, its clean unpolluted air and how it had been worked, the wealth of its biodiversity and the reason behind resting the bog. They would dearly love to ensure that the children of Lixnaw and beyond could come and observe the bog and habitat and see the life beneath their feet during the changing seasons. As the bog recovers the Sisters would be very keen that more formal links with a local university (University College Cork or Tralee Institute of Technology) could be created to lead further research into its natural treasures of flora and fauna and basic structure and in this way the bog would inspire.



More than anything the Sisters would like all to stand in awe and wonder at creation and to realise the link with the environment so that moving forward there would be a just transition to a cleaner, healthier planet for all. The dream for the bog is that in its own small way it would raise awareness of the unique gift that has been given freely by our Creator God and we will wish with Gerald Manley Hopkins:

**“What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.”**

Excerpt from *Inversnaid* (1881)
By Gerard Manley Hopkins



CONCLUSION

The commitment to the reconstitution of this wet bog is an ongoing work and commitment. The bog has provided the natural energy source for heating for the locality for over a century and a half. This need is still there. Nowadays thanks to advances in technology, natural sources of energy as distinct from the burning of fossil fuels are capable of being harnessed. These are both more environmentally and climate friendly. In the case of the bioregion in question, it is worth noting that Lixnaw is in close proximity to the Atlantic seashore of the South West of Ireland. The energy created by the ocean waves off Kerry Head, the changing tides along the miles of this coastal region and the opportunity of the dominant South Westerly winds, all if harnessed appropriately, could provide clean local energy for both domestic and commercial needs.

To this end the Presentation Sisters, South West Province, taking example from the Lixnaw Sisters of the 1800's and the more recent expression of generosity on the part of the present community, by designating Preservation Status for their bog at Lixnaw will include in their ongoing ministry a plan for care of the earth/environment as follows:

- (i) encouragement of the availability of school and local interest groups to engage respectfully and learn from and with this unique ecosystem;
- (ii) to explore a financial commitment or investment in research at a third level institution (at University College Cork or Tralee Institute of Technology) of alternative and natural sources of energy as already outlined above; in particular wind and tidal energy as a just transition from the use of turf to the use of the renewables to generate the electricity required to power local homes, schools and businesses.
- (iii) A future hope would be that the Sisters Bog would become an inspiration to others (both locally and further afield) to follow the example set to allow their bogs to go fallow. It would be a further hope that with some negotiation that perhaps as an incentive State Bodies like [SEAI \(Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland\)](#) might be persuaded to install solar panels in farms and homes where participating owners might allow their bogs to go fallow. This would be attractive to all in that the farmer would have a renewable form of power, he would not have to work the bog, and he would become an example of how best the local action can have a global impact and act to achieve the [2030 Agenda](#).
- (iv) The Presentation Sisters will commit to investigation of alternative sources of energy and the immediate installation of solar powered energy (as



appropriate) for domestic use in its local communities;

- (v) as part of the Presentation Congregation it has committed to [withdrawing investment of funds in fossil-fuel related corporations;](#)
- (vi) It is hoped that in time funding could be sourced to manage the long term water management and continuing health of this bog.

Addendum:

Having taken some time to find out about this work of the Presentation Sisters whilst doing a little research I was watching and rewatching a looped video in the [Heritage Centre, Nano Nagle Place, Cork city](#) to try to capture as much as I could. This offered a picture of the bog (2012) prior to it being returned to nature and it resembled a field, the fact that it was being worked was on full view. But having set foot on the bog I noticed the heathers, sedges and grasses. I noticed the fern turned brown and the briar folding into the space between the old banks. I could barely notice the orderliness and clean lines that would have been obvious if the bog was worked. The bog was healing. I noticed a large pampas in the middle of the bog. It was being given permission to grow freely even though the pampas grass is not a native of a bog or indeed Lixnaw. It was apparent that the pampas seed was carried by birds, which are now nesting in the bog. The most elusive of these is the snipe which right on cue could be heard as we left the bog on a wet October evening. The presence of the snipe is a testament to a living and healthy bog.



“Iontas agus Uamhan i láthair Dé”

(Wonder and awe in the presence of God, a gift of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation).

Presentation Sisters South West Province (2019)

Presentation Justice Desk

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