



The Foundation for the
Economics of Sustainability



Annual Report 2019

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

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Cover photo: Emer Mayoock and John Hoban providing some much-appreciated music at our Food for Thought / Lón Intinne event in Castlebar, Co. Mayo on May 17th 2019. The event was part of the National Biodiversity Week.

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Introduction

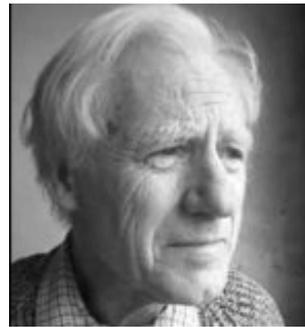
This Report is being written at a time when the coronavirus pandemic is claiming thousands of lives, the global economy is effectively shut down, and the taken for granted certainties and stability of the world order seem particularly fragile. Since its foundation, Feasta has argued that our current economic system is unsustainable. A model which centralises perpetual economic growth is one simply not compatible with our shared Earth. Over the years, contributors to Feasta thinking such as Richard Douthwaite and David Korowicz have shown that the current system is not equipped to deal with shocks or disruptions.

The virus however is both threat and opportunity. The threat lies in the terrible human suffering it is causing, the reaction to which can lead to increased intolerance and authoritarianism. Resources critical for ecological transformation may be diverted to propping up the status quo. Yet the opportunity is that this forced stoppage in economic activity may permit enough people and policy-makers and advocates to realise that we need to assess and evaluate where we are and where we really want to go in building a new, human-ecological civilisation.

Feasta has tried to contribute to this evaluation over many years. In this Annual Report you will see evidence of our continued efforts to do so. Through our various groups and shared networks, Feasta members seek to develop new thinking, new analyses, and new solutions to our many challenges. One example is our advocacy for a Universal Basic Income, whose time has now surely come. Our website continues to offer an accessible range of responses to the complex and inter-related problems confronting us. We seek to be a welcoming home for thinkers and activ-

ists to share ideas, develop proposals, and disseminate viable suggestions for forging a new world. In print, on-line, and in podcast media we continue to engage as fully as possible in our work.

I want to thank all the Feasta members for their endeavours. I want to pay particular tribute to the two outstanding Feasta staff members – Morag Friel and Caroline Whyte – who epitomise a spirit of service and passion which keeps our organisation vibrant. I am also delighted that we have forged new international links in the USA and Canada. Three of our Feasta trustees are now based in North America.



John Jopling, 1935-2019 was a gentleman, and a committed thinker who inspired many of us in our work. His book with John Madron on Gaian Democracy remains one legacy of John as does his wonderful cottage in Rossbeigh in County Kerry within which much thinking, laughter and good eating took place over many years. We express again our condolences to his family and to all those wonderful people who looked after him in his final years.

We will carry on the work that John and others began. Feasta will be very much part of our shared project of building a better, more human, and more ecological world for all.

*Mark Garavan
(chairperson)*

Management

Feasta Trustees



Graham Barnes Michele Brady Mark Garavan Willi Kiefel Brent Ranalli Mike Sandler John Sharry

Feasta Staff



Morag Friel Caroline Whyte

In 2019 Feasta continued to benefit from the considerable support and expertise of its trustees: Graham Barnes, Michele Brady, Mark Garavan, Willi Kiefel, Mike Sandler and John Sharry. With the exception of Mike Sandler, who lives in the Washington D.C. area, they are all based in Ireland.

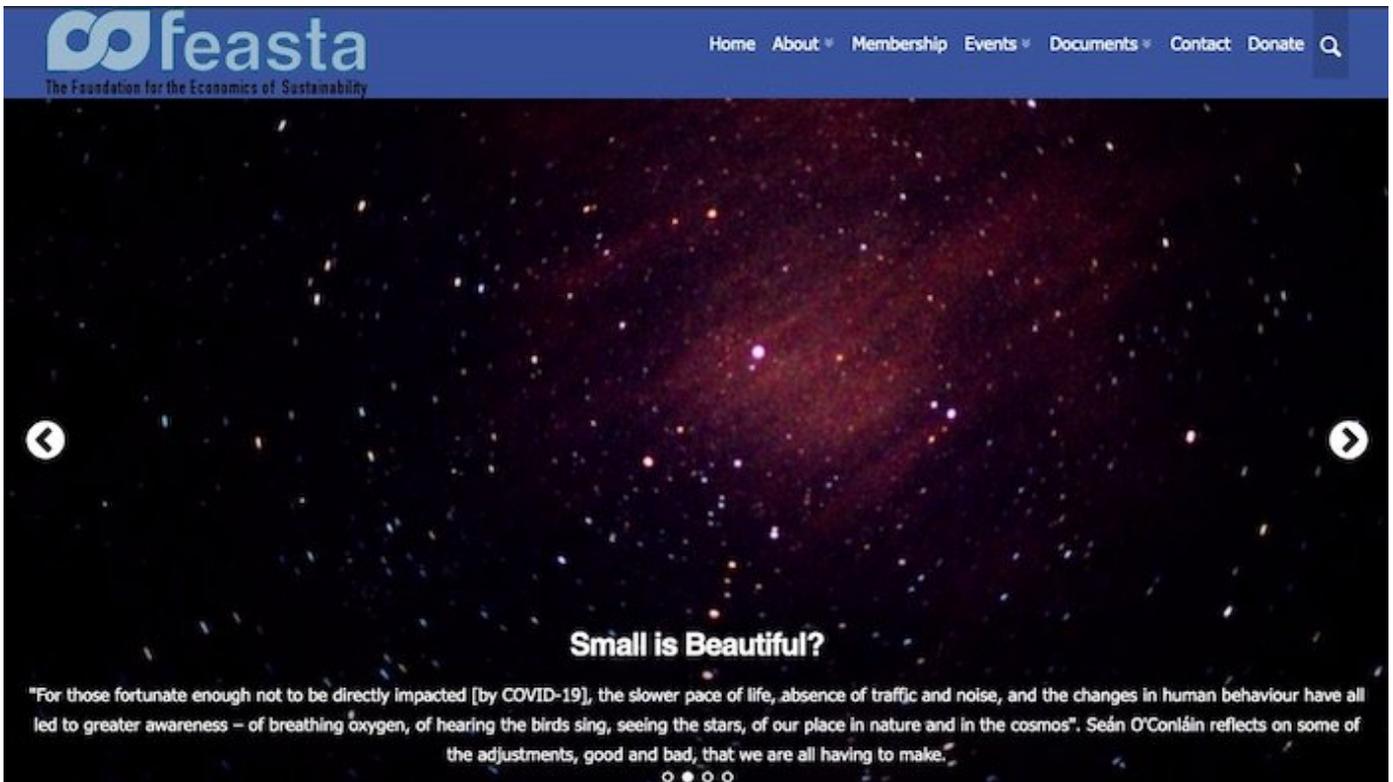
We were delighted to welcome Brent Ranalli as a new Feasta trustee in late 2019. Brent is based in the Boston, Massachusetts area. He is a former instructor in environmental studies at Boston College and a Research Scholar with the Ronin Institute with interests in basic income, commons management, and monetary

reform. In addition to his work as a scholar, performer and expert on the life and work of Henry David Thoreau, Brent is a policy professional who provides project management and communications support to public sector clients.

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, while Caroline continued to help with Feasta's research and communications.

Communication

2019 was a strong year for Feasta's communication, with three successful Feasta-hosted events, significant improvements in our website and media outreach, and a new podcast series. These are all described in more detail on pages 5-19.



Above: Feasta's new lightweight website template. See pgs 10-15 for an overview of the Feasta website's activity in 2019.

Left: Feasta on Twitter.

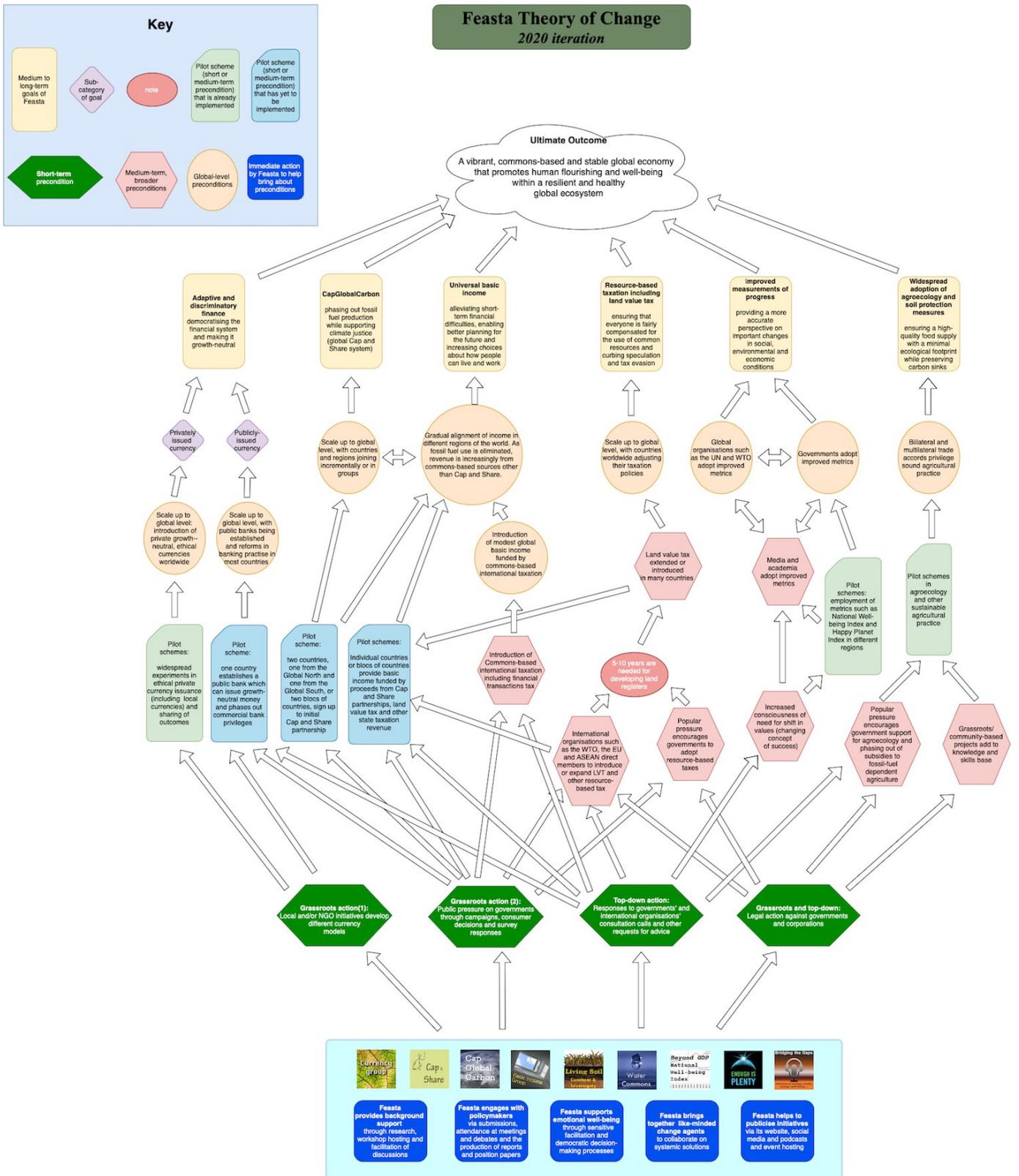
Theory of Change

To help with our overall planning and, in particular, with our communication, we produced our first Theory of Change (TOC) in late 2018 with the intention of revising it at least once a year.

In a TOC, an organisation's long-term goals are defined and then mapped backward to identify necessary preconditions. In our case the TOC is not only a useful strategising tool but is also helpful in explaining our actions to

others, since it places the individual strands of Feasta's activity (currency, climate, commons, land value tax, well-being indicators, basic income etc) within a broader context that may not be obvious otherwise.

The experiences of 2019 led us to make some adjustments to the original TOC, adding sections on mental health and emotional well-being and rephrasing parts of the sections on money, emissions reduction and basic income.



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 3 for some background information. Zoom in to read the text.

Events

Feasta-led or partnered events

May 17: Food for Thought / Lón Intinne

Over 40 people attended our second Lón Intinne / Food for Thought at GMIT Castlebar on Friday May 17, on the eve of the Afri Famine Walk. As in 2018, the event was a unique collaboration between Afri and Feasta, with input from Teacht Aniar who have a special perspective on the Irish language.

John Hoban and Emer Mayock provided music to ground, enliven, entertain and provoke reflection throughout the day, and at lunchtime John sang a newly composed song he had especially written.

Anne Ryan of Feasta welcomed all who were in attendance, and Joe Murray of Afri then introduced Hannie Van Geel of Via Campesina, who emphasised that 70% of the world's food is produced by small producers, the majority of them women. However, the EU's Common Agricultural Policy and the FAO are directed towards large-scale farming and public funds for research are directed at technologies such as



Hannie Van Geel of the Via Campesina, speaking at Food for Thought / Lón Intinne, May 17

drones, digitalisation, and new breeding technologies. The food sovereignty movement needs maximum participation from members of society: growing, cooking, writing, educat-



Michael McCaughan speaking at Food for Thought / Lón Intinne, May 17

ing and advocating for small producers.

After a discussion with Hannie in which all took part, Joss and Ború Douthwaite facilitated a session in which all participants reflected on instances of transformation in which they had taken part or witnessed.

Participants brought delicious food to share at lunchtime, which highlighted the value of sharing as a way of being in the world.



After lunch, Anne Ryan picked out some themes from the morning's work, emphasising those which created institutional and cultural barriers to transformation. She described how, despite these barriers, thousands of people are already engaged in enterprises that are the seeds of a new socially just and ecologically sound economy. Anne suggested that one of the ways that the state could demonstrate support for these people in the avant garde is to give everyone a universal basic income. This would put a floor of basic financial security under everyone and allow creativity and diversity in the ways people approach solutions to our crises. The State also needs to put legislation, grants and other institutional supports in place to help the pioneers get their enterprises off the ground.

Anne pointed out that the dominant modern conception of time is that of a straight line, or a narrow channel with an inevitable flow in one direction only, which allows for no restoration of what has been lost. Yet there are many other ways of looking at time that help us to understand its circular or counterflow aspects. It is possible to break out of the strong flow of the dominant ideology about what constitutes progress, especially if we work together to support each other in doing so.

Seán Ó Conláin introduced the second guest speaker, Michael McCaughan. Michael emphasised the value of multilingualism as a help to seeing the world and acting in it in diverse ways. Speaking in Irish, Spanish and English he emphasised the importance of minority languages and cultures in today's mono-cultural world, and particularly the link with local resilience.

Baineadh cuid mhaith úsáid den Ghaeilge – i ngach slí – le linn an lae – mar ar deineadh anuraidh.

After a discussion with Michael, the group took part in a final open space session.

A more detailed report on the event, including the topics discussed in the final session and the feedback gathered, is available on the Feasta website.

August 18-22: Kerry workshop

The theme of this year's five-day workshop in Rossbeigh, County Kerry was "Nowtopia: Designing a better future for our children". Discussion topics included complementary and local currencies; the quality of money; community renewable energy and its potential for backing a local currency; an update on Brexit; the mental health of young people and of those engaged in environmental activism; mental health and the limits to growth; the

cultural shift required in affluent countries towards the idea of de-growth/contraction, sharing, sufficiency, and new forms of wealth; how to expand the Overton window; basic income and the role it can play in the transformations needed; the financialisation of Nature; and “The Art of Dissensus”: inoculating our communities and ourselves against co-optation by authoritarianism”.

Two practically-oriented discussions about Feasta’s communication were also held, one on Feasta submissions and the other on podcasts.



The beach at Rossbeigh, where our annual 5-day workshop took place.

As in previous years, attendees were a mixture of Feasta members and non-members from several countries. John Jopling, who had organised the event in previous years, was sadly too ill to do so in 2019 but he was able to attend some of the discussions. We appreciated the hard work of Brian Davey who took over most of the organisation of the event. The attendees had a stimulating and productive week, which generated plenty of ideas to reflect on over the following months.

Dec 7: Living well in the face of climate and ecological crises: workshop

Through a combination of interview-style conversation, presentation and small-group discussion, this event held in Tailor’s Hall in Dublin explored the mental and emotional toll of our increasing awareness of climate change and environmental destruction with a view to building up resilience, both personal and community.

There were 34 attendees. We were delighted to have the presence and valuable input of a number of young people from Extinction Rebellion and a school striker, as well as Feasta members and others who had not been to any of our events before.

John Sharry introduced the event with a short talk on positive mental health. He then inter-

viewed mother and daughter Morag Friel (Feasta administrator) and Leontien Friel Darrell (Extinction Rebellion activist). They talked about family-life in this time of eco-activism and anxiety.

After a break, Anne Ryan gave a short talk on how a philosophy and practice of ‘enough’ can help us cope, critique, resist and create.

Her talk was followed by a second interview session. Mark Garavan interviewed Theresa O’Donohoe (social and environmental activist) and John Gibbons (climate activist and journalist) about practical approaches to building personal and community resilience.

Plenty of time was provided for questions and answers after each session, and a break-out discussion period followed.

The event was recorded by Eoin Campbell and the audio recordings formed the basis for the initial podcast of Feasta and the EHFF’s 2020 podcast series, Bridging the Gaps.



John Sharry interviewing Morag Friel and Leontien Friel Darrell during our December 7 event "Living well in the face of climate and ecological crises".

(ii) Events with active participation from Feasta members

March 20-22: Willi Kiefel participated and presented at a two-day workshop entitled "Violated Earth – Violent Earth : Causes and Effects of Human’s Misbehavior and Nature’s Power” that was organised by the Institute for Earth System Preservation (IESP) in Munich. The IESP, which Willi is a member of, is a network of scientists, politicians, administrators, and entrepreneurs who share a deep concern about the crises that challenge humanity today. The position paper that Willi prepared for the workshop is available on the Feasta website.



March 22-24: Graham Barnes and Caroline Whyte represented Feasta’s currency group at the annual gathering of the International Movement for Monetary Reform in Madrid, during which they participated in a variety of workshops and discussions with a focus on re-

forms that could potentially democratise and stabilise the financial system, and would also help it to become more environmentally-oriented. Caroline gave a short presentation about Feasta during the event’s introductory session, and a second presentation on the environmental aspects of the financial system during a break-out session on March 23.

May 19-23: Caroline Whyte represented Feasta at a 4-day skills-sharing workshop in Surrey and London, organised by the Lush Spring Prize initiative and Ethical Consumer magazine. Feasta had been shortlisted for the Influencer category of the Spring Prize and, while it did not win in its category, we were nonetheless invited to participate and be hosted at the event. The event's rich and varied programme featured presentations from several indigenous groups from South America and permaculture-oriented groups from sub-Saharan Africa, all of whose work is being undermined by the actions of multinationals and, in some cases, their own governments. During an open space session on the final day, Caroline suggested that there be a discussion about the kinds of systemic, upstream changes that are



needed to support these community-focused groups' work. About half of the event's hundred or so invitees from many countries opted to attend this session and there was a very stimulating exchange.

May 28: Graham Barnes represented Feasta's currency group at a National Stakeholder Forum on Community Banking and Local Provision of Banking and Financial Services in Ireland. The invitation to the Forum came about because of a submission which the Currency Group made in mid-April 2019 (see page 16).

June 15: Mark Garavan of Feasta's Water Commons group spoke in Cork at the launch of the Oxford University Press Community Development Journal's special issue on "Water, Anti-Privatisation Struggles & the Commons", as part of the Global Water Dances event.



August 7: Anne Ryan led a workshop entitled "We Need to Talk About Steady-State Economics" in Belfast in August, hosted by Tools for Solidarity. 38 people attended.

Anne started with a twenty-minute presentation which outlined how many problems are interrelated: global overheating and associated climate breakdown; biodiversity destruction and ecosystem collapse; the extinction of animal populations; pollution and associated health problems; enormous waste; extremist politics; severe inequality, and human and animal suffering.

She asserted that one essential change if we are to avert and alleviate these problems, is to cap global economic production so as to fit within the planet's ecology in order to reach a steady state. Steady state is about a planned contraction, or degrowth, reducing economic demands to sustainable levels in a slower, more careful journey of no return. A steady state economy values longevity along with sufficiency, and seeks qualitative improvement rather than quantitative increase.

The poster is for an event titled "WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT STEADY STATE ECONOMICS". It features a dark background with the title in large, white, sans-serif font. Below the title, it lists the "Guest Speaker Anne Ryan from Feasta: The Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability". The event is scheduled for "THURSDAY 8TH AUGUST" from "7:00 - 9:00 PM". The location is given as "* Ballynafeigh Community Development Association, 283 Ormeau Rd, BT7 3GG".

The presentation also introduced practical policies supported and developed by Feasta, which could help us get to a steady state. It focussed on basic income, fossil-fuel cap and share, money as a public resource and land-value taxes.

The second part of the workshop was highly participative and elicited the knowledge of the participants along with lively discussion.

December 2-13: 16-year-old Theo Cullen-Mouze attended the COP 25 with Feasta accreditation. Theo participated actively in a number of sessions and youth climate strike activities, including speaking at one side event at which he received a standing ovation. He also opened a meeting of civil society delegates with Minister Bruton.



Website

2019 was a bumper year for the Feasta site, with 48 new articles and reports, 13 contributing authors, and a 39 percent increase in website visitors. The latter achievement was likely due in part to a website revamp which was completed in February 2019. The revamp reduced the site's page-loading speed by two-thirds and triggered a huge increase in visits from mobile phone users in particular.

Our new website template was designed by Mumbai-based website developer Satish Gandham. You can read more about the results of the revamp in a July 2019 website article by Caroline Whyte called "Our lighter website".



XR and other new movements: avoiding traps

As one might expect from an organisation that seeks to influence public opinion, there was considerable focus by Feasta bloggers in 2019 on the Extinction Rebellion movement, the Green New Deal and the Fridays for Future climate strikes movement (which Feasta supports).

"The Green New Deal, if presented as a way of investing in energy technofixes, could be a misleading magic formula. If seen as a start of a dialogue about a wide ranging transformation of society including communities setting up arrangements to help each other, it could be helpful."

Brian Davey expressed concern both about some of Extinction Rebellion's goals and about the assumptions being made by some advocates for a Green New Deal in his article "Extinction Rebellion, Green New Deal, Labour and sustainability...and Cap and Share", arguing that "what we must try to promise is not rising incomes but security".

In a similar vein, Brian argued in his article "Green New Deals...yes...but what does that mean?" that "the Green New Deal, if presented as a way of investing in energy technofixes, could be a misleading magic formula. If seen as a start of a dialogue about a wide ranging transformation of society including communities setting up arrangements to help each other, it could be helpful".

In a widely-read article entitled "Greta Thunberg, PR and the "Climate Emergency", Brian argued that Thunberg's campaign is being manipulated without her consent by big businesses and large environmental NGOs to try and engineer a massive policy coup for a section of the élite that is promoting 'green growth', and that their efforts are not only doomed to failure, but risk exacerbating the climate crisis.



Caroline Whyte responded to Brian's thoughts in another widely-read article, entitled "Greta Thunberg, motives and being strategic", in which she argued that it is strategically unwise to assume that those who believe green growth is possible have dubious motives, and that we should instead prioritise forging alliances with groups who have similar values and goals to ourselves.

What if the tired old political divides are masking the potential for such alliances? In his article "A horticultural society by way of the Ferny Brae", Patrick Noble wrote "I like to think that the old Socialist, Conservative and Green movements are all closer to a true median ground which stands on (and in) soil, biodiversity and physics, than the currently and powerfully marketed idea of a centre".



Challenges to the energy transition

While agreeing with the environmental NGO Oil Change International's arguments concerning the unfeasibility of natural gas as a 'bridge' in the energy transition, Brian Davey drew attention to their apparent ignorance of the scarcity of resources required for generating and storing renewable energy, and their (related) failure to mention any need for degrowth in the transition to renewables. He laid out his arguments in the article "Propaganda for renewables: a critique of a report by Oil Change International".

In "Notes on the Financialisation of Nature and Carbon Markets", Brian questioned the wisdom of commodifying nature in order to try and address environmental damage, and argued for a more democratic, commons-based approach.

Lifeboats and islands?

In "Anticipating the coming of troubles – envisaging a lifeboat economy", Brian advocated developing permacultural designs of local cultivation space and residential areas, and creating soils and growing trees that absorb carbon, so that new forms of living and organising may become possible.

A similar argument was made by Patrick Noble in his article "Islands in the Flood". Patrick believes we should make the best of the remaining time

we have before collapse occurs "to build islands of a real economy which can emerge more or less intact from beneath the smoke and embers."

"We don't argue for electric vehicles to re-power our massive oil infrastructures. We change and diminish the structures to a demand [level] which renewables can supply."

In "A Short Walk through Commons, Enclosures and the EU", Patrick made an argument for abandoning enclosures and living on the common: "We don't negotiate with the enclosures, we drain them of our footsteps and our blood. We don't lobby for an aviation tax, we stop flying...We don't argue for electric vehicles to re-power our massive oil infrastructures. We change and diminish the structures to a demand [level] which renewables can supply."



Upstream interventions

Other articles focussed more on top-down approaches to bringing about profound change. Elizabeth Cullen urged us to place stronger restrictions on advertising and to take other steps to reduce our overall consumption in her article "Where are our motorways headed?".

Mike Sandler argued in his article "California's new Governor's chance to become a climate dividends hero" that Governor Newsom can "use climate dividends to make good on California's desire for climate leadership, while making the expenditures simpler, less politicized, and more transparent" and also addressing the concerns of disadvantaged communities.

Another article by Mike, "Economics for the 99 Percent in the News", discussed four economic policies that have been getting attention lately: basic income, public banking, negative interest, and QE for the People.



Willi Kiefel contributed a position statement, "Violated Earth – Violent Earth: Revisiting causes and effects of humans' misdemeanor and nature's power", in which he identified some of the main causes of the ecological "downward spiral" we are currently trapped in, and made six propositions for a transformation process: reducing material growth; decarbonisation; replacing GDP with well-being measurements; using eco-villages for education; reformulating national constitutions; and developing alternative models of democracy and governance.

In "Imagining alternative letters to creditors in a basic income world", Mike asked what impact a basic income might have had on the 800,000 workers who were furloughed without pay due in early 2019 in the US, owing to a conflict between Congress and the President.

"what impact [might] a basic income have had on the 800,000 workers who were furloughed without pay due in early 2019 in the US?"

Anne Ryan also contributed a paper entitled "Basic income now: a high-leverage system intervention for sanity, humanity and ecology" in which she made the case for basic income as a key policy instrument for addressing our problems. The paper set the scene for her series of blog posts 'Enough is Plenty', described further on page 14.

Finance and debt

Graham Barnes argued for a better strategic framework for the first use of money, and a clearer explanatory narrative to facilitate consent, in his article "Towards more strategically differentiated money /credit creation and reuse".

Anne Ryan described in her article "Rumpelstiltskin, debt and economic liberty" how modern historians have for the most part removed the ancient Near East's handling of debt from the mainstream of history: "modern economic systems have sanctified the payment of debt, but this is not some natural or God-given rule, rather a situation designed by financial elites".

Brian Davey provided concrete suggestions for achieving widespread debt forgiveness without crashing the economy in his article "a no-deal Brexit and debt forgiveness in Ireland (and elsewhere)", which refers to his earlier Credo article "The Reform of the Financial System and Techniques for Debt Cancellation".

Mike Sandler's article "Dreaming of an ECB President who can save the planet" expressed his hope that Christine Lagarde would use her new power as ECB head to "lead the transformation of the world's economic system to one that supports the 99% and keeps the world below the 1.5 degree climate threshold".



Deirdre de Burca made some suggestions about how a Green New Deal could be financed in her detailed paper "the role of innovative monetary policies in supporting a Green New Deal and a more sustainable future for Europe and the world".

Economics as a belief system



In September 2019, Brian Davey emailed an article called "The school of economics as a suicide academy?" to ten academics and guest lecturers at the University of Nottingham, including the head of the school.

This triggered a lively - and at times heated - email exchange between Brian and the Financial Times' chief economics commentator Martin Wolf, during which they made conflicting suggestions about how an economy could be both sustainable and just. The exchange is published on the Feasta site with both authors' permission, under the heading "Avoiding tyranny".

Brian also questioned the widespread assumption that new development is always necessary in his article "Land planning policy at the limits to growth".

"The global economy is too big" is a transcript of a short talk given by Brian at the Nottingham Green Festival on September 15 2019, which explains why the future economy will need to be based on sharing rather than increased consumption.

In "Brexit as a surrealist movie - a comparison with Luis Bunuel's film "Exterminating Angel"", Brian found striking parallels between the behaviour of dinner party guests in Bunuel's classic film and the British upper class.

As in previous years, Brian also contributed some chapters from his book 'Credo: Economic Beliefs in a World in Crisis'. In "Happiness or authenticity?" he discussed the need to emphasise being over having, and to replace the "banal tautology of 19th century utilitarianism" with a deeper study of the relationship

between economic activity and mental health.

In "Colonialist economics - the contrast with indigenous land care principles", Brian described how many 'great thinkers' have been unable to see efficiency when it was right in front of them because they were convinced of their cultural superiority.

Intelligent agriculture

"there is already vast understanding and insight into nature-friendly farming"

Patrick Noble argued against artificial methods for drawing down carbon in his article "The wealth of fields and nations", writing that importing biomass (mulch) from elsewhere is "either narcissism, or simple anti-social behaviour - it diminishes a common good".

In an article called, simply, 'Energy', Patrick wrote that "minerals and gases are either a part of a tendency for life, or of a tendency for lifelessness. My husbandry can swing the balance one way or the other. Humanity as a whole is choosing to swing the balance towards a lifeless planet".

In "Diary of a baby-boomer nobody", Patrick described the "world of unspoken commons" he experienced in 1970s Wales when he was establishing himself as a farmer there, and observes that "cultures are not what we have, or have achieved. They are what we do."



In his article "Understanding where our bread is really buttered", fellow farmer Martin Peck asserted that "there is already vast understanding and insight into nature-friendly farming" and argued that carbon capture is best done through photosynthesis.

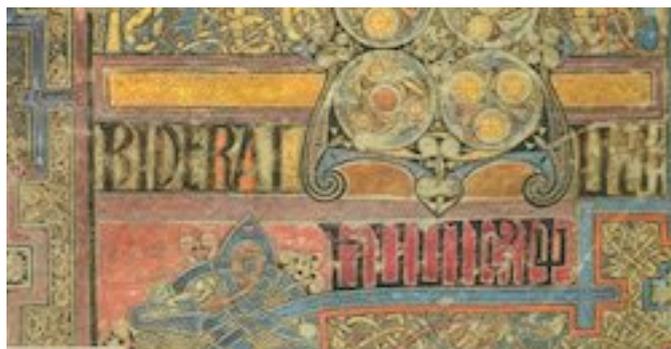
Enough is Plenty: new blog series



This series by Anne Ryan, launched in September 2019 and continuing into 2020, explores the concept of enough: "A sense of enough...can nourish a culture of adapted human behaviour, which will give at least some of the earth's ecosystems a chance to renew themselves and at the same time allow social justice to emerge". It contextualises many of the themes explored by other Feasta blog authors in 2019.

In the first instalment Anne conceptualised some high-leverage economic interventions as 'keystones' or keystone policies. She examined carbon caps with sharing built in, such as Cap and Share ; structural support for Intelligent Agriculture; basic income; and land-value taxes.

The second instalment, "We need to talk about ... Green New Deal and other necessary vocabulary for our times" included reflections on the different terminology that is being used to discuss the potential future economy, and warned about the ambiguity of the term 'Green New Deal'.



The third instalment, "Keystone attitudes and policies of enough", described key principles and attitudes which could help to relieve structural problems. Such attitudes include deep stability, rather than control; equity and sharing; a focus on whole-system performance; and simplicity wherever possible.

In the fourth instalment, "Cultivating the

middle ground: enough in action", Anne argued for the "great middle ground...[this] refers to the masses of people all over the world whose way of living is between over-consumption and poverty; they live without making excessive demands on the earth".



The fifth instalment was a review of the book 'The Economics of Arrival: Ideas for a Grown-Up Economy', by Katherine Trebeck and Jeremy Williams. Anne suggested that the "clarity and verve" of this book's writing could give it an audience "beyond the marginalised community of those who currently promote sufficiency and related systems".

"The 'great middle ground' refers to the masses of people all over the world whose way of living is between over-consumption and poverty; they live without making excessive demands on the earth."

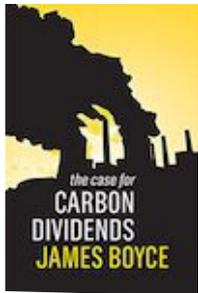
How could Feasta's Theory of Change help all these ideas along?

Mike Sandler contributed two articles which discussed Feasta's Theory of Change (see pages 3-4), the first version of which had been circulated in late 2018. In Mike's first article, he described the challenge of getting beyond the Overton Window of acceptable discourse in politics, and the difficulty of discussing science-based concerns such as climate disruption with those whose worldview rejects the scientific method.

In the second article, Mike posed some more questions regarding the Theory of Change - such as who Feasta's likely allies and adversaries are - and suggested a few answers, referring along the way to the work of George Lakoff on framing, and to the moral assumptions that tend to be made by people of differing political slants.

Book reviews

In addition to Anne Ryan's review of 'The Economics of Arrival' that is described above, three other book reviews were published on the website in 2019.



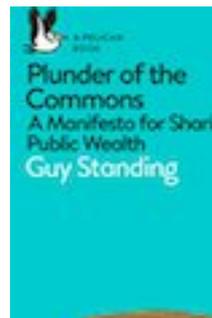
Mike Sandler reviewed 'The Case for Carbon Dividends' by Professor James K. Boyce, writing that the book explains why capping total global carbon emissions would put us on a path to fixing our enormous emissions problem, rather than just providing a tiny bandaid as offsets do.

"capping total global carbon emissions would put us on a path to fixing our enormous emissions problem, rather than just providing a tiny bandaid as offsets do."

Reports

Justin Kenrick provided a report on the discussion by Extinction Rebellion activists of Cap and Share during their occupation of the Scottish Parliament on January 25th.

Seán Ó Conláin provided a report of a conference he attended in Dusseldorf on behalf of Feasta in November 2018 on 'redesigning freedom'. The event, organised by Metaphorum and drawing from the work of



Brian Davey reviewed "Plunder of the Commons: A Manifesto for Sharing Public Wealth" by Guy Standing. He commented that "anyone looking for an excellent description of the damaging effects of austerity will find it in this book. Anyone looking for an analysis of the ecological crisis and what to do about may be disappointed."



Finally, Caroline Whyte reviewed "Towards Zero Waste" by Feidhlim Harty, which she found to be very accessible and full of useful information. She also appreciated its recognition of the need for upstream interventions such as Cap and Share.

Stafford Beer, sought to find examples of radical and innovative organisational and societal transformation based on non-hierarchical, adaptive, self-organising structures.

A report on the 2019 Food for Thought / Lón Intinne workshop held in May (see page 5) is also available on the Feasta site .

Submissions

January 17: Submission on carbon pricing to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action

The Feasta Climate Group recommended implementing an upstream cap on production and imports to phase out fossil fuel use in Ireland, along with the per-capita redistribution of carbon revenue.



April 17: Submission on Evaluation of Community Banking and Local Provision of Banking and Financial Services in Ireland

We argued that community (or public) banking could form a central and vital component of a healthy future Irish economy. helping to protect it from debt-related financial risk, stimulate community development and bring about the transition to a growth-neutral financial sector.



June 25: Submission on strategic risks facing Ireland

In this submission, we urged the Irish government to recognise the existential aspect of environmental risk in its analyses, as well as the complex challenges posed by the global financial system's high dependency on GDP growth.



June 29: Submission on the options for the use of revenues raised from increases in carbon tax in Ireland

This submission is adapted from the January 17 one and also emphasises the need for international climate justice.



October 28: Submission on the Irish Agri-Food 2030 Strategy

We called for an urgent diversification of Irish agriculture and a move away from its current export-led approach.



November 28: Submittal to the United States House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis

This submittal makes a series of recommendations with regard to carbon pricing and international climate justice, in line with those of January 17 and June 19. It was Feasta's first submission to the U.S. government.

Podcasts



In 2019 Feasta organised a 6-episode pilot podcast series in collaboration with the European Health Futures Forum (EHFF), called 'Beyond the Obvious'. The presenters were Seán O'Conláin and Caroline Whyte, with guest presenter David Somekh hosting one of the podcasts. Each podcast was 25-30 minutes in length.

16 people were invited to be speakers or guest hosts on the podcasts. The six episodes are summarised on the following page. We were delighted to have harpist Laoise Kelly's permission to use her recording of "Lon Dubh" ('Blackbird') as our theme tune.

Why podcasts?

Part of our rationale for producing the series is that podcasts are easily accessible from all over the world, unlike brick-and-mortar Feasta events, and since they are a different medium from our regular blog and our video archive, they might attract a different audience. We were particularly influenced by research indicating that podcasts are an important platform for communicating with younger people.

We hoped also that the podcasts would help Feasta to raise its profile and further develop its partnerships, and would spark some stimulating discussion on the Feasta website.

Outcomes

The response to the series was generally very positive. We felt we had greatly enhanced our relationship with our EHFF partners and our guest speakers, and as we had hoped, the series expanded our audience. The podcasts

have been mentioned in a variety of contexts by people not directly associated with Feasta.

The podcasts had a total of 489 listens and 55 downloads in the course of 2019. The most popular podcast, with 103 listens, was 'Climate obligations - our children are wakening', followed by 'Revitalising Irish farming' with 100 listens.

A little over half of the listeners were in Ireland, with the others mainly spread between the UK, the US, France, Germany, The Netherlands and Spain. A sprinkling of listeners were located as far away as Nigeria and Singapore.

Feedback

We collected comments and suggestions about the podcasts from a dedicated discussion session during Feasta's Rossbeigh workshop in August 2019, a discussion with the Feasta Trustees in October, and an online survey of Feasta members in December 2019. There were many suggestions concerning themes, guests and the series title. In late 2019 we also carried out an internal review of the series.

Future plans

As a result of the feedback we received and our review, we decided to produce a second series in 2020, also in collaboration with the EHFF. The new series will be called "Bridging the Gaps: podcasts on energy, health, ecology, well-being..."

The plan is to produce ten podcasts in the course of 2020. The first episode, a bumper edition of 45 minutes, will draw from recordings made at Feasta's December 7 event 'Living well in the face of ecological and climate crises'. We are also confident that our listener numbers will grow through our collaboration on communications with EHFF.

Podcast Episodes



Podcast 1 *March 2019*

"Climate obligations - our children are wakening"

Eve O'Connor and Beth Malone, both 11 years old, spoke about their involvement in the Fridays for Future school strikes movement, and Barry Mc Mullin described the challenges of decarbonising Ireland.



Podcast 2 *April 2019*

"Measuring the Immeasurable?"

Zheng Xiaoqiong, Benjamin Held and Clive Spash spoke about Chinese assembly lines, an alternative measurement of progress to GDP, and the problems with trying to decouple GDP growth from environmental degradation.



Podcast 3 *May 2019*

"Identity, ownership and the commons"

Paddy Bushe interpreted the Song of Amergin in his Migrant Poet's Ecological Manifesto, and commons expert Órla O'Donovan talked about the Manifesto, the cult of the individual, the Nowtopia movement and the politics of water.



Podcast 4 *June 2019*

"Reinterpreting Money"

Mary Mellor and Graham Barnes discussed the role that debt-free money has played historically, money as a commons, sufficiency provisioning to ensure everyone's needs are met within ecological constraints, and participatory budgeting, among other topics.



Podcast 5 *July 2019*

"The Future of Healthcare"

Guest host David Somekh spoke with Zuzanna Cichon, who provides an overview of the state of global health; Matthijs Zwier of the Health Pact project in Utrecht; and Mike Bewick, a former national deputy medical director for the NHS in the UK.



Podcast 6 *September 2019*

"Revitalising Irish farming"

Farmers Nathan Jackson and Fergal Anderson talked about Community Supported Agriculture, the challenges of agroecology in Ireland and the new farming organisation Talamh Beo, part of the Via Campesina network.

Feasta in the Media in 2019

On January 14, Caroline Whyte contributed an article to the *Green News* on carbon cheques and climate justice in which she referred to Feasta Climate Group research:

<https://greennews.ie/carbon-cheques-emissions-caps-climate-justice/>

On May 9 and 16, Mark Garavan was interviewed about Feasta's Food for Thought event by Galway-based radio station Flirt FM, and by Castlebar Radio.

Feasta's Food for Thought event was also described, and Mark was quoted, in a *Green News* article on May 13: https://greennews.ie/food-security-climate-change/?fbclid=IwAR35z4TTiPlgW5dl_OmrnaD2IC2IyDY-ieV_mf7nDUecCl8v-wOFRIq_8Ub0

Caroline was quoted in a June 19 *Green News* article, on capping carbon (again drawing from Feasta Climate Group research): <https://greennews.ie/climateplan-carbon-tax-rise/>

On July 30, Anne Ryan had a letter published in the *Irish Times* in which she discussed not-for-profit childcare and basic income, with a reference to Feasta: <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/letters/not-for-profit-childcare->

Fundraising

In 2019 the bulk of Feasta's funding continued to come from the Irish Environmental Network, with a secondary stream of funding from membership and donations. We were pleased to note a 35% increase in revenue from membership and individual donations in the course of the year, bringing their contribution to total funding up to 28%.

We have a policy of transparency for all of our funding, and you can access our accounts on the Feasta website.

We made two unsuccessful applications in early 2019 to the KR Foundation for funding of specific projects; one was for the CapGlobalCarbon initiative and the other was for re-

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Another *Green News* article by Caroline Whyte, from August 21, discussed degrowth and the work of Feasta's Measuring Well-being group, in response to an *Irish Times* article by Mark Paul that claimed that degrowth will always cause suffering: <https://greennews.ie/de-growth-unpacking-myths/>

On September 2, the *Irish Times* published a letter by Anne Ryan under the heading 'degrowth and the climate crisis', which drew on Feasta's and other groups' research into managed degrowth: 'https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/letters/degrowth-and-the-climate-crisis-1.4002782

Caroline Whyte, on behalf of Feasta, was one of eight signatories to a letter published on October 14th in the *Irish Times* that called for a UN treaty on business and human rights.

In October and November 2019, the *Irish Times* published a series of five articles by Feasta trustee John Sharry entitled "Changing World, Changing Minds". The series explored our emotional response to the climate emergency and biodiversity collapse that surrounds us.

search on monetary system reform.

Sourcing additional funding from larger funding bodies is challenging for Feasta at present. Much environmental funding appears to be targeted either at community or local group actions, or at specific 'single-ecosystem' or indeed 'single-species' projects. Our systems-based approach does not easily fit into these categories and so can easily fall between the cracks. Some funders also disagree with our focus on economics. However, despite these challenges, we are continuing to actively explore funding possibilities and would welcome any suggestions or insights with regard to them.

Working Groups

Currency/ Money Group



In 2019 the Currency Group continued developing its links with the International Movement for Monetary Reform, with two members, Graham Barnes and Caroline Whyte, attending a 3-day workshop organised by the IMMR in Madrid in late March. The Group also made a submission in June 2019 to the financial consultancy firm INDECON (see p16), which had put out a consultation call on public banking on behalf of the Irish Department of Finance. As a result of this submission, Graham Barnes was invited to attend a stakeholder workshop on public banking on behalf of the Group. Members of the Group also published several new articles on the Feasta site. Plans for 2020 include a joint Feasta/Cork Environmental Forum seminar on financial system reform and degrowth.

Climate Group



The main focus of the Climate Group in 2019 was on the CapGlobalCarbon/ Cap and Share initiatives. Three submissions focussing on carbon tax were prepared and circulated (see page 16), all of them making the argument that in order for a price on carbon to be truly effective in reducing emissions, it will need to be accompanied by a binding cap on fossil fuel imports and production. Emphasis was also placed on the vital need to ensure that a carbon tax would not have a regressive effect, hurting the most vulnerable in society, and that international climate justice always needs to be factored in.

Cap and Share was also discussed by Extinction Rebellion activists during a peaceful occupation of the Scottish Parliament in January 2019. Their perspectives on it are described in more detail on the Feasta site in a report by Justin Kenrick.

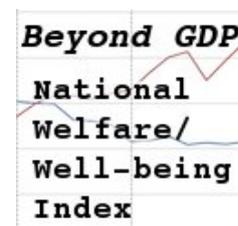
In Ireland, Feasta's Deirdre Lane continued to be an active participant in the Stop Climate Chaos network.

Water Commons



An article was published in the Community Development Journal (Volume 54; Number 1; 2019) featuring a dialogue between Feasta Commoning Group member Mark Garavan and Chas Jewett, who is an indigenous water Protector from North Dakota. The article, entitled 'Water is life - an indigenous perspective from a Standing Rock Water Protector', grew from the Water Commons event in UCC in 2018 which was co-sponsored by Feasta's water commons group.

National Well-being Index



Collaboration between Feasta and FEST (Die Forschungsstätte der Evangelischen Studiengemeinschaft e.V. in Heidelberg Germany) continued during 2019 with regular online meetings, discussions and review of options. Various contacts and initiatives took place with a view to getting support for the development of a National Well-being Index in Ireland. However, nothing concrete emerged apart from a solid foundation of personal links with FEST and various other German organisations who are actively pursuing alternative approaches to measuring 'success'. Some of these organisations have a global reach, and we believe that 2019 was a watershed for thinking on well-being. There are indications of a global awakening and perhaps in Ireland our State agencies will start to look at real alternative measures to GDP in the not too distant future. This will involve putting the necessary resources in place to capture the data and to use it as a basis for policy.

Networking and Partnership

Environmental Pillar



The Environmental Pillar is a group of 31 national environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who work together to represent the views of the Irish environmental sector.

In January 2019 Caroline Whyte was involved in discussions within the Pillar's climate and energy action group concerning the Pillar's submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Change.

In July 2019, Theresa O'Donohue and Caroline Whyte were appointed as Feasta's rep and alternate rep to the Environmental Pillar. Caroline was part of a group of Pillar reps who travelled to Brussels in October and spent two days attending presentations and discussions at the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Irish Embassy.

Irish Environmental Network



The Irish Environmental Network is an umbrella group that works to support environmental NGOs through access to funding and services. It is a major source of funding for Feasta. The IEN's thirty-three member NGOs represent a broad range of environmental interests. Feasta's Caroline Whyte is currently a member of the IEN's Board of Directors.

The 2019 IEN Member's Gathering was held in Cloughjordan in November 2019. Feasta's Morag Friel was among the participants, as were several other Feasta members, and Morag gave a short presentation about Feasta during the Gathering.

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European Health Futures Forum



Our collaboration with EHFF has intensified during 2019 particularly with our common platform for podcasts. This entailed agreeing on a partnership basis the topics, speakers and overall approach to communication and publicity. Feasta has also influenced the EHFF approach to future healthcare in Europe by our perspective on a holistic systems approach to health and well-being, which give a richness to the focussed approach of EHFF on the topic. Feasta have also benefited from the EHFF collaboration with Metaphorum - a cybernetics focussed organisation. Members of Metaphorum have in the past actively supported Feasta with their unique VSM (Viability Systems Model) approach to governance.

Teacht Aniar



The main focus of our work with Teacht Aniar (a novel Irish language organisation) has been through the parallel of global catastrophic collapse in minority languages/cultures and biodiversity collapse. Teacht Aniar and Feasta have developed mutual contacts with interests in the ecology of language and culture with a particular emphasis on Irish. We also collaborated in the organisation of Food for Thought with Afri, and the use of the Irish language is now a feature of this annual event. Ní neart go cur le chéile.



Feasta is a supporter of the School Strikes movement.

Image sources

Cover: Emer Mayock and John Hoban providing some much-appreciated music at our Food for Thought / Lón Intinne event in Castlebar, Co.Mayo on May 17th 2019. The event was part of the National Biodiversity Week. Photo by Larysa Karankovich (courtesy of Afri)

p5: Photos by Larysa Karankovich (courtesy of Afri)

p6: Photo by Seán Ó'Conláin

p7: Photo by Morag Friel

P10: Feather photo by Penny Matthews. Source: <https://www.freeimages.com/photo/feather-1188151>

P11: "Thomas the Rhymer" by Katherine Cameron, 1908

P11: Flooding river photo by tumunathan. Source: <https://www.freeimages.com/photo/flooding-river-1556419>

p12: "Tanz um das Goldene Kalb" by Emil Nolde, 1909

"Dissemination of Education on New Mexico", New Deal mural by Lloyd Moylan, Las Vegas, 1937

p13: Detail of mosaic panel depicting the madness of Heracles (Hercules furens), from the Villa Torre de Palma near Monforte, 3rd-4th century AD, National Archaeology Museum of Lisbon, Portugal.

Sheep photo by Martin Peck (taken on his farm)

p14: Extract from the page 'In principio erat verbum' ('in the beginning was the Word'), from the Book of Kells

p16: Roller coaster photo by James Williams. Source: <https://www.freeimages.com/photo/roller-coaster-1509610>

Carrick—a-Reid rope bridge photo by Sean Kearney. Source: <https://www.freeimages.com/photo/rope-bridge-1232850>

Field photo by Martin Peck (taken on his farm)

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p18: Sunburst photo by Matthew Bowden. Source <https://www.freeimages.com/photo/sun-burst-1478549>

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