

Annual Report Kerry IDSR 2016

Because the KerryIDSR receives no funding our volunteer numbers has dwindled. Julie Ormonde is still our main workhorse, but since she has started her own business the hours she had been committing to the KerryIDSR has been cutback. Things are more-or-less the same as it was last year. Due to a general election and the shaky ground on which the current government now stands the main body for funding and grant aid has now put forward a new date for applications to 2017 ...it was originally supposed to be 2014, 2015, 2016.

Private retrofitting of lights

The retro-fitting of lights in private dwellings has increased only slightly, but we are not concerned with this, as overall, the outdoor lighting in the Core and Buffer Zone is really good. Only a handful of people leave an outdoor light on all or most of the night. Some are due to oversight while others (*we know*) belong to elderly people living alone who see light as a means to security. We have sent out emails to various companies seeing if they will provide us with motion sensor lights in return for public acknowledgement but so far have not received anything positive.

Public retrofitting of lights

The lighting engineer of Kerry County Council we had a relationship with has been replaced we are currently seeking an appointment to meet with this new person. Up till then for we received the same story 'we are in negotiations with the ESB' the government agency that will actually be erecting the street lights.

Business retrofitting of lights

This is where the biggest improvement is. B&B's are especially excellent on retrofitting their outdoor lights, they are now using these lovely dark-sky friendly lights it in their advertising. The biggest supermarket in the Reserve (who already turn off their outdoor lights at 9pm in winter and 10pm in summer) have completed retrofitting all their outdoor lights.

Outdoor Star Party.

The Skellig Star Party took place in on August, but due to dreadful weather conditions the numbers were down. The planned Star Party had to be downgraded to a pale reflection of what it was supposed to be.

Dark-Sky Reserve Group

The KerryIDSR Group were a group of voluntary people, but we got feedback and emails saying that the group should become an official limited guarantee company....we think this may be the reason that the funds we were granted have not been released. The new company was set up in August called 'National Dark-Sky Company, Ireland Ltd' trading as 'Kerry International Dark-Sky Reserve'.

After several meetings with local council and national tourism civil servants we have still received no funding. Due to bad publicity about the KerryIDSR receiving no grant aid those at the meeting were not amenable requests for funding. The company was then dissolved in December 2015 only to be revived in June 2016 by business people who were not part of the KerryIDSR group.

Conservation day

Once again our Conservation Day had to be cancelled due to bad weather. The Summer of 2016 proved to be as disastrous as 2015. In forward planning events, this was true throughout Ireland and the UK.

Outreach

Outreach is still ongoing through the local schools where light pollution and its effects on animals etc are discussed and shown with videos. Children are especially enthusiastic in learning the facts about light pollution. We bring color-in pictures and provide them with a take-home information pack. We also asked the children to go outside and count the lights they see when it is dark outside, and have provided them with an information chart to tick off the various questions; type of lights etc that they see. The children then hand back the sheets to the teacher who uses the information to get a class survey going on how better to control the use of un-necessary lights.

Kerry Dark-Sky Office

The office is now closed due to lack of funding.

KerryIDSR biggest need

The biggest need in the KerryIDSR is funds and also to have a full time manager. The work load is simply too big for volunteer work ...so far this job has been undertaken by Julie Ormonde who finds the commitment on her time and personal life overwhelming. She receives no expenses what-so-ever and has been doing this for 5 years now.

Summary

The KerryIDSR has no money for publicity or to pursue any projects...we have not even got our own time-lapse yet. More organisation is certainly needed, hence the need for a manager to get the work done. Retrofitting of lights is going well and we hope that the Council will begin the public street light retrofitting soon; this was supposed to begin earlier on in the year. Volunteer work can only achieve so much, real work can only be done with paid staff and this is our biggest drawback. The areas of Kells, Cahersiveen, Valentia Island,

Portmagee, Ballinskelligs, The Glen, Waterville and Caherdaniel are fractured and not working in close harmony to promote the KerryIDSR as envisioned

I hope this report is satisfactory to what the IDA requires.

Signed,

Julie Ormonde
