

## Seeking Representation on the Burren Ecotourism Working Group

The Burren Connect Project has recently organized a number of meetings/workshops on the topic of Ecotourism in the Burren. The aim of the meetings was to discuss the potential of ecotourism in the region and to look at an existing Irish model, the Greenbox model, which applies standards, criteria, labeling and training to develop and distinguish its ecotourism product.

It was agreed at the last meeting in Lisdoonvarna on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June (minutes of this meeting are available on request)

- That a working group should be set up to explore and define an appropriate ecotourism model for the Burren.
- That the group should be composed of 50% representatives from relevant agencies and statutory bodies and 50% from tourism related businesses in the Burren.
- That the Burren Connect project would facilitate the group until it becomes a self-sustaining entity
- That the agencies/statutory bodies already represented in the Burren Connect management structure would be co-opted to working group; these are **Failte Ireland, Leader, Shannon Development, NPWS, National Monuments Service, Burrenbeo** and **Clare County Council**. These agencies agreed to have representation on the working group at a meeting on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> of July.

In addition to the proposals put forward at the meeting, the following representations from tourism related businesses are suggested

- **Farming** (particularly farmers/farming families involved in farm related tourism enterprises)
- **Accommodation** (hotels, B&B's, hostels, self catering, etc)
- **Food** (Farmers Markets/Slow Food/local produce)
- **Arts/Crafts** (Galleries, craft shops, local produce)
- **Health/Wellbeing** (Holistic centres, treatment, health products)
- **Education/Learning Activities** (Education & Activity centres and programmes)
- **Visitor and Information Centres**
- **Transport** (Local and alternative transport)
- **Outdoor Activities** (Walking/cycling/diving/caving etc).

To support the recommendation of 50% representation from tourism related businesses, it is suggested that a criteria for nominated representatives would be that they be in established business in these areas. In the interest of balance and containable numbers it is also recommended that some nominees could cover more than one business. Interested individuals can nominate themselves once they fulfill the criteria.

Nominations for representatives of the above businesses should be sent to [cgleeson@burren.ie](mailto:cgleeson@burren.ie) or [ehayes@burren.ie](mailto:ehayes@burren.ie) before **Friday July 25<sup>th</sup>**.

All nominees and agency representatives will then be invited to attend a working group meeting where representation will be agreed (a vote will be held if there is more than nomination for any one business), along with terms of reference, a work programme, rotation of representation and public information and meetings.

For further details, please contact the Burren Connect project through the emails above.