



Dear KIO Members and Friends

KIO Annual General Meeting – March 9th

Please note that the Keep Ireland Open Annual General Meeting takes place on Saturday, March 9th at 11am in Tailors' Hall, Back Lane, Dublin 8, Eircode: D08 X2A3. Lucy McFarlane, former Rights of Way Officer in Shropshire, England is our special guest speaker. Lucy has worked in most aspects of countryside access. She has developed, promoted routes, enforced legislation, and investigated claims for routes to be recorded as public. In retirement she continues to use the rights of way network on foot and horseback with great enthusiasm and will talk at Keep Ireland Open's AGM about how the system works in England. A number of local politicians have accepted our invitation to attend. You can see more details and book your free ticket on EventBrite [HERE](#).

While everyone is welcome to attend the AGM only paid-up members or their proxies are eligible to vote. If you are not already a member or if your membership has elapsed please join or renew [HERE](#).

Enniskerry Old Coach Rd Case Fundraising Appeal

Those of us who enjoy walking the traditional routes of our beautiful land can easily take our freedom to do so for granted. But occasionally we must take a stand to preserve that freedom, even if it comes at a cost.

Niall Lenoach and Noel Barry, two deeply committed walking enthusiasts from Enniskerry, took such a stand on behalf of all of us in a dispute with a local landowner who blocked off an ancient route. It was a long, hard fight. As a result, they now face a crippling cost.

In 2003, a landowner blocked off a route on the Old Coach Road near Enniskerry that local people and hikers had used for centuries. The route was recorded on maps going back to 1760. But walkers were prevented from accessing it following the landowner's decision.

Niall and Noel stepped up to challenge this situation. In 2004, the Enniskerry Walking Association (EWA) was set up to promote walking in the local area and to lobby officials to keep traditional routes open. The association also held a public gathering to walk to Old Coach Road to raise awareness about the route's closure.

In 2008, the landowner filed a High Court case against Niall and Noel over their peaceful campaign, alleging trespass and slander of title. Despite Niall and Noel's best efforts and all the evidence they compiled, the judgment didn't go in their favour. The judge found that it was not a public right of way for them.

The Supreme Court refused to intervene further and last July these two members of our community were hit with a massive bill of €90,000. It has since been reduced to €38,452.96, but even this burden is practically unbearable for these two men who bravely fought this case for the common good.

11th february 2024

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A GoFundMe appeal has been set up to assist addressing these costs. The EWA will be hosting the official launch for the appeal on Friday the 16th of February, in the Village Hall, Enniskerry beside Crimmin's Garage at 19:30 pm, Eircode: A98 V993. Members of the KIO community will be warmly welcomed. The Fund is already active [HERE](#).

Alternatively donations can be lodged directly to the Enniskerry Walking Association via
Account name: **Enniskerry Walking Association (EWA)** IBAN: **IE49AIBK93340608771042 (BIC AIBKIE2D)**

Restore open access to Grianan of Aileach



An online petition started by local historian, Bettina Linke, calling on the Office of the Public Works to restore open access to the Grianan of Aileach in Inishowen, Co. Donegal has garnered over 1,300 signatures in less than a fortnight, reflecting the community's desire to protect and cherish this cultural heritage. The monument, beloved for its cultural and historical significance, now faces restricted access due to recent OPW-imposed changes, including locked gates and limited opening hours, a move which I believe is damaging to tourism, mental health and the atmosphere of the area.

The community and global visitors are drawn to the Grianan's unique solar alignment and beauty, and the monument has been a key tourism driver for Inishowen. The imposed restrictions are causing disappointment among its admirers, and to the entire local community.

The signatories are therefore calling on the Office of the Public Works to reinstate open access to the Grianan, as it was before, and to reverse the newly introduced opening hours to the monument itself.

Petition is here: [Sign the Petition](#)

You can read all the details in Catherine McGinty's article in Derry Now newspaper [HERE](#)

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