



## HOW WE TRY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Our journey in tourism started with a sustainable tourism action research project which has meant that 'Sustainability' is the only lens through which we have ever viewed our work in tourism. Much of our work involves us in supporting businesses and destinations to integrate sustainable and regenerative approaches. What about our own business though? What do we do the walk the talk and make a real difference?

### Our Principles

Let's start with the principles that guide our decisions and actions:

- **Collaboration:** *None of us is as smart as all of us.*
- **Community:** *We thrive together.*
- **Simplicity:** *The more complicated it gets, the less important it gets.*
- **Profitability:** *Profit brings freedom and continuity.*
- **Place:** *It's all about the place, the people of the place and the stories of the place.*
- **Contribution:** *Tourism is part of a greater ecosystem and must contribute net positive benefit.*

### Our Beliefs

We believe in 'better tourism' and 'high performance tourism' and here's how we define that: Tourism that benefits communities, champions places, empowers visitors and celebrates profits, all at the same time!

We believe strongly in widespread collaboration, professional development and transformational leadership as cornerstones of tourism's future. We seek to use our skills to support those three areas.

For us, 'Better Tourism' means becoming carbon efficient, certainly. That's just one part of it though. It's not just about doing less harm, it's hugely about doing more good and ensuring our places are better as a result of tourism. It means not just satisfying visitors, but empowering them to have transformational experiences. It means celebrating profitable, local businesses that provide continuity and structure in their communities.

A lot to ask?? It certainly is!

We don't pretend to have all the answers, or even any of them. We're not sure anybody has just yet! However, what we believe most of all is that, through working together, we can explore the big questions and together navigate a new way forward.





## HOW WE TRY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE (cont.)

### Our Inspiration

The Celtic Tree of Life is the emblem of our Celtic heritage and provides us with endless inspiration. It represents a balance of harmony within nature. While the branches reach for the sky, the roots permeate the earth. It clearly shows the link between every root below the ground and every branch above, brought together within the circle of the whole.

For the Celts, the tree symbolized the web of life. It represented rebirth. It also stood for inner strength, wisdom and knowing.

Oak trees grow tall and mighty. Eventually, they stop growing upwards but keep growing wider, richer and deeper. They become an ecosystem of their own, in which other living things can flourish. Interestingly, some oak trees have even been shown to become smaller for the good of the overall ecosystem!

We seek to be inspired by this example from nature in our business, in our work with clients and in our advocacy for sustainable and regenerative approaches in tourism.



### Our Actions

We aim to walk the talk as much as we can. We want to epitomize transformational leadership in tourism. We are far from perfect and consider ourselves (and others) to always be on a journey of continuous improvement. There are 4 ways that we believe we can make the most difference in the industry and in the world:

- Advocating and Raising Awareness
- Supporting Leadership & Professional Development in Tourism
- Supporting Regenerative Projects
- Being responsible Business Operations

#### PART 1: Advocating and Raising Awareness

Given that our work often sees us hosting or speaking to groups within the tourism industry, we believe that the most significant way that we can make a difference is through raising general awareness of sustainability in tourism. We advocate practical and palatable actions that can make a real difference, contribute to a change in mindset and lead to a better tourism future for all.





## HOW WE TRY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE (cont.)

### Making Regenerative Tourism more accessible

We are committed to using everyday language that is accessible to all in our awareness-raising work. We are interested in encouraging people to embrace the journey, no matter where their starting point might be. We created the Super Six of Better Tourism© as a paradigm for helping destinations and businesses shape and mould their approach to regenerative and sustainable tourism in a rapidly changing world. The paradigm suggests new standards of success for tourism that can lead to greater benefit to a greater number of people.

Using the Super Six of Better Tourism paradigm, we ask two simple yet powerful questions:

- 'What if we set these six as our desired outcomes for tourism?'
- 'What if we don't?'



### Hosting the Better Tourism Business Facebook Group



We have established a free private Facebook Group called '[Better Tourism Business](#)'. Our intention is to hold a conversation space for people who work in tourism. We host the group in such a way as to encourage conversations around The Super Six of Better Tourism and, indeed, all aspects of the sustainable tourism and regenerative tourism discussions. This includes our 'Flipchart Friday' series where we post a video every week about a particular topic that encourages people to think and discuss with each other. We believe it's a shared journey, after all!

### Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into our training

Not all of our training is related directly to advancing the sustainability agenda. Nonetheless, we believe all of our training supports businesses in playing their part in the overall 2030 Agenda. We include a statement on the SDGs in all of our training courses and highlight to learners which of the 17 SDGs each training course supports. This helps to raise awareness and familiarity with the SDGs.





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### Supporting the Leave No Trace Code of Ethics



A number of our team have undertaken Leave No Trace Awareness training or higher. We are advocates of this landscape code and highlight how it can be applied by all tourism businesses in relevant training courses and through our social media activity.

### Advocating for the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Pledge

We are Business Supporters of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and have made a Pollinator Plan Pledge to Biodiversity Ireland. Our initial pledge is to use our position as trainers, mentors and coaches to raise awareness of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan amongst our client base. Our work opens the possibility for us to raise awareness amongst a large number of groups and individual businesses in the tourism industry. At our home office, we plant and maintain pollinator friendly trees and shrubs.



### Advocating through Social Media Activity



Our social media strategy includes highlighting good practice and thought leadership in sustainable and regenerative approaches to tourism. This involves us in national and international online conversations that further awareness and understanding of how we believe tourism can evolve in the future.

## PART 2: Support for Leadership & Professional Development in Tourism

Tina is a member of the Advisory Board for the GMIT School of Hotel Management and is a member of the Responsible Tourism Steering Group of AVEA (The Association of Visitor Experiences and Attractions in Ireland). She is a mentor at Munster Technological University for undergraduate action-research projects.

We have partnered with Galway Mayo Institute of Technology as part of our flagship national conference, offering an opportunity to 3rd Year Undergraduate students to gain event management experience. We expect this partnership to continue in future years.

Jarlath and Tina frequently deliver guest lectures at third level institutions around Ireland. Over the past year, this has included contributing to learners at the Shannon College of Hotel Management, Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, Waterford Institute of Technology, Athlone Institute of Technology, Limerick Institute of Technology, Munster Technological University – sharing good and best practice on the evolving tourism sector in Ireland and internationally.

We believe that this is an area where The Tourism Space can make a greater contribution in future and are currently reviewing how we can expand our activity in this area.





## HOW WE TRY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE (cont.)

### PART 3: Contribution to Regenerative Projects

We contribute to two particular projects that are near to our home and that contribute to biodiversity, regeneration and a richer place overall. These are the Hometree Project and the Burren Pine Restoration Project.

#### Hometree Project

We support the planting of 1 native tree for every ticket sold for any of our events. We do this by supporting the [Hometree Project](#) in Co. Clare. We also make a lump sum contribution to this project to offset carbon emissions through our own work travel. In 2020, this meant that 500 native trees were planted by Hometree on our behalf.



#### Burren Pine Project

We contribute 1% of our profits each year to the [Burren Pine Project](#) to sponsor the ecological restoration of native pine to the Burren Region. We are members of the [Burrenbeo Trust](#), a landscape charity that supports communities and conservation in The Burren.



#### Burren Ecotourism Network

The Tourism Space is a Business Friend of the [Burren Ecotourism Network](#), a group with whom we have shared an interesting and fruitful journey in tourism. We continue to support this work through contracts and also through commitment of personal time and effort to projects as and when they arise.



### PART 4: Responsible Business Operations

- We use local suppliers and contractors wherever there is a local option.
- We invest in training and professional development for all team members, and aim to be a high quality employer in a rural setting.
- We work in a newly-renovated managed office space that has provision for energy efficient energy supply, light fittings, light sensors, waste segregation and water efficiency.
- It is our ambition to become a paperless office and have opted not to have a printer in our shared office.

