



Irish Forest School Association

News December 2019

Dear members,

I hope this email finds you well and looking forward to a break over the holiday period. Since our Autumn Gathering in late October, it has been a busy time for the ACORN on a personal level! Congratulations to Marc and his family on the birth of their baby daughter and to Orla and her family on the birth of her baby daughter. Shane and his partner await the arrival of their firstborn in the next few weeks! We also extend our sympathy to our treasurer, Caroline on the passing of her father – may he rest peacefully.

Thanks so much to everyone who came to the IFSA Autumn Gathering. We are still in the process of compiling the evaluation but we will publish them on the website (www.irishforestschoollassociation.ie) early in the New Year. Members will also be in touch re the regional networks and the IFSA Quality Framework for Forest School in Ireland over the coming months.

Membership

We are delighted to report that membership of IFSA and interest in Forest School continues to grow apace. A special welcome to all our new members - please join the IFSA facebook members forum (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/290332834769421/>) and follow us on [twitter](#) and [instagram](#) if you use social media - it's a great way to share ideas and events and seek advice. Membership will renew each year for all at the Annual Conference. Any queries on membership please contact Mirjam at membership@irishforestschoollassociation.ie.

A note from Joan Whelan:

As you know I am working on my PhD, looking at what Forest School can offer in the Irish context. Thanks to everyone who has completed my survey so far - I cannot thank you individually as responses are anonymous. Your help is very much appreciated and you are contributing to shaping the development of Forest School in Ireland. If you have not yet had a chance to complete it, please do so now at this link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeHseGSuIzz8PNw00EG1kgjbj96HLLDv9udGj2W-SE7bmp5xg/viewform?usp=sf_link

Just click on the link and it will take no more than 15 minutes.

Date for your diary

Save the date for our 4th Annual Gathering , **A FESTIVAL of FOREST SCHOOL**, in Tanagh Outdoor Adventure Centre, on the Cavan /Monaghan border(<http://www.tanaghoutdooreducation.com/>) on **9/10 May 2020**, with Lily Horseman (<https://kindlingplayandtraining.co.uk>) as our keynote speaker. We will be putting out a call for workshop leaders, campfire lighters, players of music and song early in the New Year, so watch this space and do get in touch if you would like to lead a session or help organise the gathering.

Garda Vetting and Safeguarding Children

A reminder that we can offer Garda Vetting for individual members who cannot access Garda Vetting through other organisations (through Volunteer Ireland. Contact us at info@irishforestschoollassociation.ie to find out more. Further information can be found on <https://vetting.garda.ie/>. Child protection information can be found at <https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/children-first/>.

Where to Find a Forest School

Our map of active Forest Schools practitioners in Ireland is on the IFSA website – this information is a resource for anyone who is searching for a forest school. Click on <https://t.co/e8v22DAxLP> to complete the form. Completing this form implies consent for your details to be considered for inclusion in this listing. Only current Irish Forest School Association Members who have completed their training will be included. If you have any queries on this matter please contact info@irishforestschoollassociation.ie.

Training

Contact Ciara Hinksman (<http://www.earthforceeducation.com>) who provides training in Wicklow through Circle of Life (www.circleofliferediscovery.com), and Carol Barrett and Kerry Walker of Down to Earth (www.downtoearthforestschool.com) working with Huathe (www.huathe.org) for details of upcoming training and CPD events.

And finally...

As many of us hang up our waterproofs and spend time on reflection and renewal at this time of the year, your ACORN sends you season's greetings. In the year when the American poet Mary Oliver passed away, a poem from her to enjoy:



WHEN I AM AMONG TREES by Mary Oliver

*When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks, and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.*

*I would almost say that they save me, and daily.
I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.
Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."*

*The light flows from their branches.
And they call again, "It's simple,"
they say, "and you, too, have come
into the world to do this, to go easy,
to be filled with light, and to shine."*

Keep safe and well over the festive season and we shall be in touch in early 2020.