

# THE BURREN QUARTERLY

ISSUE NO. 2

SHAREHOLDERS MAGAZINE - THE BURREN VISITOR CENTRE



# HAPPY NEW YEAR



As we enter another year, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your continued support and dedication.

2025 will mark an extraordinary milestone for us – the 50th anniversary of the Burren Visitor Centre!

This remarkable achievement reflects the hard work, vision, and commitment of all those who have been part of our journey.

As we celebrate this golden anniversary, we are filled with pride and optimism for the future.

The Centre's history has not always been easy, but together, we've achieved so much, and with your ongoing partnership, we are excited for the new opportunities that lie ahead.

May the year ahead bring you good health, happiness, and prosperity.

We look forward to celebrating this special year with you and to the many more successes we will share together.



# OPERATIONS

## **Operational Overview**

The Burren Visitor Centre continues to run as a not-for-profit social enterprise managed by the community cooperative. Its mission focuses on promoting the unique heritage of the Burren region and supporting local economic development.

## **Financial Position**

After a difficult period for tourism during the pandemic years, and debts remaining following extensive refurbishments to enhance visitor experience from 2023, the Centre ends 2024 with a healthy surplus after a year of shrewd financial management and a stringent focus on waste, stock control and time management.

The revenue generated in 2024 leaves the Centre in a positive position to reinvest into its operations, maintenance, and community initiatives in 2025 to ensure sustainability and continued service to both visitors and the local community.

This surplus now provides us with grant match-funding which will be needed for vital roof repairs, allows us to change the layout of the Tea Room counter space for better work efficiency, and drives us forward on a number of enhanced Visitor Experience projects as part of the Burren Visitor Centre Strategic Plan for 2024 and beyond.

## **Visitor Numbers**

In 2024, the Centre welcomed 72,207 visitors with 7,259 paying to enter the Burren Exhibition. An important target for 2025 will be to increase Exhibition entrance numbers and the percentage of visitors engaging with our primary paid attraction.

# CRAFT SHOP

As we reflect on 2024, the Burren Centre Craft Shop has once again proven itself as a beloved destination for unique and high-quality handmade goods, reflecting the spirit of the Burren region.

This year, the shop has continued to impress visitors with its carefully curated selection of locally crafted products, celebrating the area's rich heritage and natural beauty.

The shop offers a stunning variety of items, including pottery, textiles, jewellery, and art, each piece thoughtfully created by local artisans.

Visitors this year have praised the shop's warm and inviting atmosphere, as well as our friendly and knowledgeable staff who are always eager to share the stories behind the creations.

One of the standout features of the shop this year has been its commitment to sustainability, with the removal of mass-produced foreign-made souvenir style products from our range. Many of our products are now made using eco-friendly materials and traditional methods, supporting the Burren's commitment to preserving its environment and culture.

As part of the Burren Centre's 50th-anniversary celebrations, the shop plans to expand its offerings, featuring exclusive anniversary-themed items that highlight the Centre's role in the community over the past five decades.

In addition, in 2025, the Centre will be merchandising for the Burren & Cliffs of Moher Global Geopark with a new range of sustainable products in line with their Code of Practice.

Overall, the Burren Centre Craft Shop has had an exceptional year, continuing to draw both locals and tourists alike, offering something truly unique for all who visit.





# TEA ROOMS

The Burren Centre Tea Rooms continued to be a welcoming haven for visitors and locals alike in 2024.

This year, our growing selection of homemade cakes, pastries, and scones remained a firm favourite, with many guests returning for our homemade scones, something we are looking to expand upon with a new in-house baker on the team, and some enhanced branding in 2025.

In addition, the seasonal menu has been a hit, featuring fresh, locally sourced and often homegrown ingredients that highlight the flavours of the Burren region. Whether it's a hearty soup, a delicious sandwich, or a light afternoon snack, the variety and quality of offerings have kept patrons coming back for more.

The service at the Tea Rooms has also been a credit this year, with the staff's friendly and attentive approach, adaptability and courage to learn new skills and methods of working ensuring that every visit is a pleasant one.

A standout feature this year has been the special events that have been introduced, offering something unique and exciting for guests. These events, such as traditional Irish tea afternoons, and our ongoing Musical Mondays, have added an extra touch of charm to the Burren Tea Room experience. Watch this space for more to come in 2025.

Ultimately, despite a turbulent year for the hospitality industry, the Burren Centre Tea Rooms have been able to adapt and thrive in 2024, offering good food, service, and atmosphere. We look forward to another year of memorable experiences here.

There has been so much unseen work going on behind the scenes here at The Burren Visitor Centre in 2024.

This work means we have so much more to offer next year. There isn't enough space in this newsletter to cover it all, but some of the highlights of what will newly be on offer in 2025 include:

### **Discounted Online Booking**

Book online from March 2025 and get a discounted rate to the prices at the desk.

### **Booking via OTA**

For 2025, we have partnered with a number of Online Travel Agents, meaning we will be advertised more widely and tickets will be bookable via more channels.

### **NEW Digital Story Trails**

Shareholders are welcome to join us in January 2025 for a FREE trial of our Burren Exhibition Digital Story Trail. Voucher below.

By March 2025, this will include audio tours for the Kilfenora Céilí Band Exhibition and Kilfenora Cathedral & the High Crosses.

### **NEW Guided Village Walking Tour**

From May 2025, we will be offering a Guided Village Walking Tour every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday at 11.30am. This ticket will include entry to The Burren Exhibition.

### **NEW Signature Pilgrim's Tour**

Privately bookable, we will also be offering a Signature Package Guided Tour with a focus on Kilfenora as an important site of Pilgrimage; this tour will include exclusive access to the Kilfenora Cathedral interior.

### **Online Shopping**

Early in 2025, we will be opening our online shop via our website which will feature our exclusively branded range and other Burren based product lines.

# **NEW FOR 2025**





With regards the premises of The Burren Visitor Centre, 2024 has been another year of constant upkeep and repair.

The underfloor heating was fixed early in the year, but the aging boiler and complicated heating system of many parts added on over the years has meant it has been a battle of ongoing maintenance. With a renewed focus on energy efficiency, this will be something we look to upgrade via grants in 2025.

This Autumn we also upgraded the unreliable CCTV system to provide us with a service that works even when the electricity goes down (something we've all had to contend with too much in recent weeks).

In the kitchens of the Tea Rooms we've had ongoing repairs, with fridges, freezers and the dishwasher all failing at points through this season, along with the microwave, the contact grill, the coffee grinder and the water boiler all having been replaced as they came to the end of their lives.

With 12% of our annual turnover coming from hot drinks this last year, we have applied for grant funding to buy our own coffee machine for 2025, rather than continuing renting, which if successful will save us a few thousand a year.

## PREMISES

Much still remains to be done.

Roof repairs remain our priority for funding in 2025, but we have projects and applications written and ready for Tea Room toilet improvements for accessibility, Kitchen upgrades, and Glass Fire doors for the Exhibition all in the pipeline too.



**Volunteer Meeting - Wednesday January 8th - 2pm - Tea Rooms**

**“50 YEARS: A Year-Long Celebration of Culture and Community”**

To mark our significant anniversary, the Centre will be hosting a series of events throughout 2025, including special exhibitions, expert talks, family days, and a commemorative gathering honoring the visionaries who founded the Centre in 1975. These events will reflect on the Centre’s journey and highlight the role it continues to play in the community, in conservation and education.

The 50th-anniversary celebrations will include partnerships with local businesses, artists, historians, and environmentalists, amongst others.

**We still need people to help us bring this year of celebration to life.**

To volunteer to help us with even one small part of this, please get in touch with Georgie at the Centre, or join us at our **volunteer meeting on 8th January** when we will be starting to put together memorabilia and the programme of events.





## *Astrolatry*

*By the trickery of Lugh,  
freckles  
of gilded light  
burnish the boreen;  
beyond,  
the peatland,  
a conjuring  
of bronze,  
dawn ambering the roots  
and reeds  
and earth.*

*Here and there,  
wintering  
on the stone plateau,  
golden calves  
will raise their heads  
to watch you, passerby,  
while wild rams  
with horns of brass  
cooly graze  
on Anu's Winter hay.*

## *arts* **FEATURE** *boireann*



Poem by Georgie Barnes, published in Cabshair  
Magazine of Irish and Scottish Writing 2024  
Volume 13 Issue 2

Burren Art Photography by Sean Tomkins  
available in The Burren Centre Craft Shop

Burren Cow Digital Collage by Christy Storer  
Artwork available in The Burren Centre Craft Shop

# Musical Mondays



**THE BURREN**  
VISITOR CENTRE  
TEA ROOMS

**BRING YOUR  
INSTRUMENT  
OF CHOICE**

*Kilfenora*

11.30AM



# OFFERS

VOUCHER  
MUST BE  
PRESENTED  
FOR  
DISCOUNT

## SHAREHOLDER VOUCHER

**FREE**

Access to The Burren  
Exhibition & Digital  
Story Trails  
(Smartphone and  
headphones needed)  
February 2025

## SHAREHOLDER VOUCHER

**FREE**

Pot of Tea  
with any Scone  
purchased  
in Jan or Feb

## SHAREHOLDER VOUCHER

**10% OFF**

Burren Centre  
T shirts &  
Hoodies  
(January)

## SHAREHOLDER VOUCHER

**FREE SALAD**

Buy a Pastry and  
get a Free Salad  
(Jan & Feb)

## SHAREHOLDER VOUCHER

**BUY ONE GET  
ONE HALF PRICE**

Soup & Toastie  
or Soup & Bread  
(Jan & Feb)

## SHAREHOLDER VOUCHER

**20% OFF**

Airmid  
(January &  
February)



# OPENING HOURS

JANUARY 13TH 2025 - MARCH 9TH 2025

**EXHIBIT, SHOP & TEA ROOMS OPEN**

**WEEKDAYS 9.30AM-4PM**

(CLOSED WEEKENDS)

FROM MARCH 10TH 2025 - OPEN DAILY



Thank you for your  
continued support

**The Burren Visitor Centre**

[THEBURRENCENTRE.IE](http://THEBURRENCENTRE.IE)



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