Carroll Joinery Sponsorship Impact

Wildacres creates Wicklow's first Sand Martin Nesting Bank with help from Carroll Joinery

Sand Martins (*Riparia Riparia*) are migratory birds and the smallest member of the European hirundine family, which also includes Swallows and House Martins. They come to Ireland all the way from sub-Saharan Africa, to breed from mid-March to September.

They feed on flying insects, mostly over wetlands. They are colonial nesters and normally breed in burrows dug into coastal cliff faces, riverbanks, peat banks or quarries.

Sand Martins are on the amber-list of birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland. Providing secure nest sites in purpose-built Sand Martin nesting walls has proven to help with the conservation of this important bird species and as an effective educational tool to inspire the protection of these beautiful birds.

Caroll Joinery kindly donated funds to Wildacres which have been used to purchase materials for the creation of the Sand Martin nesting bank.

With your invaluable monetary assistance, construction began in the very wet and windy period over late January to early March 2026.





Using the plans from the Cork Birdwatch Ireland version as a rough template, which we adjusted to suit Wildacres, the overall construction includes 48 nesting boxes, connected via pipes and filled with sand.

Many volunteer hours went into the project, and as we neared the final stages the sun finally appeared.





There was a final flurry to install cameras – just in the nick of time before the migrating sand martins arrived back. After a good few inspections by the birds, we are delighted to report that more than 10 boxes appear to have nesting birds this year! Now that the nesting bank is established, we expect this to increase in the coming years.





So, a big thank you to Carroll Joinery for your generous sponsorship – as you can see it has already had a positive impact for biodiversity!

About Wildacres

Wildacres is a multi-award-winning Nature Reserve and Biodiversity Education Centre set on 34 acres, bordered by the beautiful Redcross river, close to Brittas Bay in Southeast Wicklow.

We are an Environmental Social Enterprise, dedicated to biodiversity restoration, protection, monitoring, and education. Our mission is to inspire and help others to make a positive difference for the environment and their well-being.

We host a range of engaging and entertaining nature-based tours and interactive workshops for Universities & Colleges, Community Groups & Clubs, NGO's & State bodies, and Corporates.



Founders/CEOs Gilly Taylor & Brian O'Toole

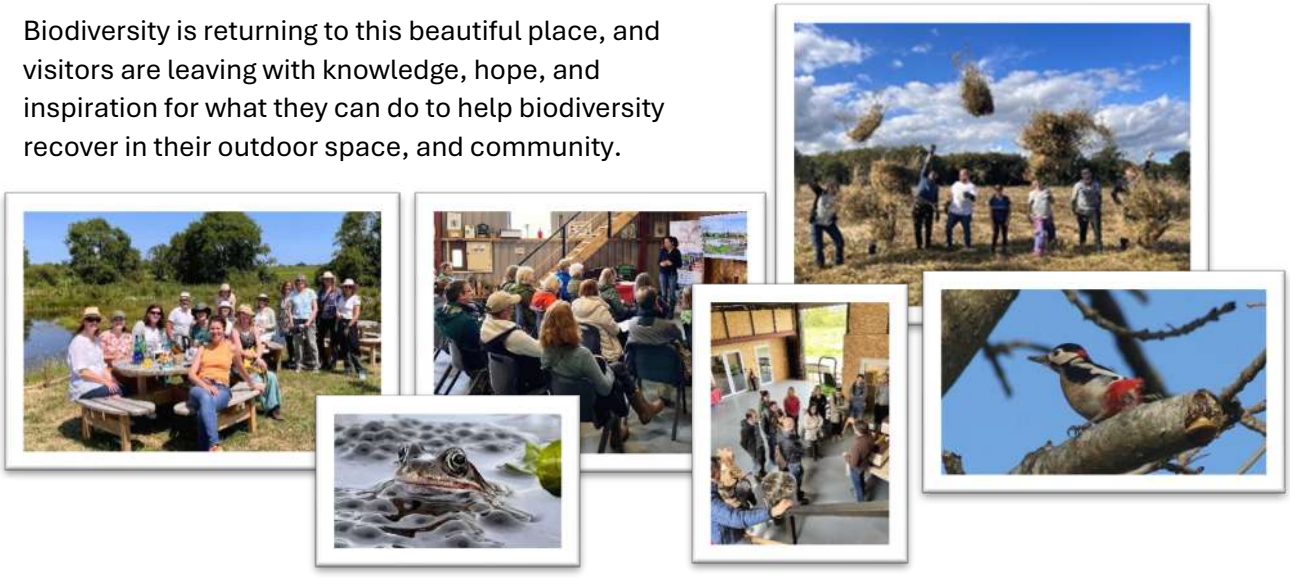
While working in the corporate space for many decades, we became increasingly aware of the global biodiversity emergency and began discussing what we could do to make a positive difference.

In Autumn 2017, we bought 17.5 acres of undulating agricultural land in Southeast Wicklow, on the beautiful Redcross river, with a plan to transform it into a Nature Reserve and Biodiversity Education Centre. We expanded it by a further 16.5 acres in 2025.

Gifting the land back to nature, restoring its natural habitats, and establishing Wildacres as an accessible, sustainable, and unique wildlife sanctuary, education centre and visitor experience, has been the focus of our attention since then.

Wildacres is now enriched with acres of native woodland (over 16,000 trees planted); multi species hedgerow; wildlife ponds (over 60 so far!), 14 acres of naturally regenerating wildflower meadow; semi-natural grassland; traditional orchard; native tree nursery in collaboration with ReWild Wicklow, restored riverbanks, barn owl nest boxes, bat maternity roost boxes, sand martin nesting bank… plus many other features including Ireland's first Wildlife Tower.

Biodiversity is returning to this beautiful place, and visitors are leaving with knowledge, hope, and inspiration for what they can do to help biodiversity recover in their outdoor space, and community.



www.wildacres.ie