

Secretary's Report for Save Our Sperrins AGM held on 3rd January 2025

During the year 1st Oct 2023 - 30th Sept 2024, Save Our Sperrins held 8 committee meetings, 6 meetings with experts, participated in many fundraising events and delivered several talks to interested groups.

October 2023: Save Our Sperrins held a very successful fundraising event on 15th October 2023 in Millennium Forum, Derry, "Not a nugget, not an ounce," starring Kevin McAleer, Dani Larkin and Emer Maguire as well as a host of other artists, who all contributed to a wonderful evening's entertainment as well as raising over £5,000.

Emma, on behalf of Save Our Sperrins, organised a booked out free Halloween event on 28th Oct 2023 at An Creagán centre for children and their families - "Spooky Sperrins - a day of traditions and playful protest."

November 2023: Emma and friends organised the Art of Resistance exhibition in the centre of Belfast from 2nd - 16th November 2023, where 55 artists from all over Ireland donated art pieces to Save Our Sperrins. The venue in 2 Royal Avenue said it had attracted more visitors than any other event they had held, with over 8,000 people visiting the Art of Resistance exhibition.

Lynda Sullivan organised a music night fundraiser in the Sunflower Pub, Belfast on 12th November.

On 18th November Cormac did a talk for a youth group from Derry at the Butterlope Farm.

December 2023: Fergus organised a very enjoyable fundraising comedy night in Maghera on 7th December 2023.

January 2024: Save Our Sperrins had a stall at the Radical Bookfair in Derry on 27th Jan 2024 and participated in the Bloody Sunday March on 28th January 2024.

February 2024: Save Our Sperrins held a very well attended Public Meeting in Greencastle on 25th February 2024 to provide information about the Public Inquiry.

Taking advice from our ecologist, Fidelma bought wildlife cameras to record activity at the local burns & rivers. The survey started on 25th February 2023 and Sheila and her son, Brendan, downloaded the information weekly till July.

March 2024: Slieve Gallion group donated £2,500 to Save Our Sperrins. Save Our Sperrins attended and participated in the Pre-Inquiry meeting in Omagh on 20th March 2024.

Emmet represented Save Our Sperrins at a conference “ N-S Perspectives : The Global Impact of Gold & Copper mining in Colombia and Ireland” organised by European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Catapa & Amnesty International, in Brussels on 19th -20th March 2024. He met with protectors from Colombia, Peru, Democratic Republic of Congo, Portugal, Spain & Belgium, as well as EU policy makers.

Our dear friend, Sr Majella died on 30th March 2024. May she rest in peace.

April 2024: Four of us from Save Our Sperrins attended Sr Majella’s funeral in Cork on 2nd April 2024.

On 6th April we held an Advice Clinic in Greencastle to help people write Statements of Case. We had 3 solicitors, 3 planners and an environmental engineer present to help people discuss and write their Statements of Case. Despite Storm Kathleen being very severe on the day, around 50 people attended to receive advice.

Niall Glynn, a reporter from BBC, came to the GPO on 22nd April and interviewed some of us about the campaign.

May 2024: Shane & his sister Brenda organised a very successful Table Quiz as a fundraiser for Save Our Sperrins, in the Market Inn, Draperstown, on 1st May 2024.

A group of people from the Amazon rain forest in Brazil visited us from 10th -13th May. This visit was organised through Brian Garvey from Strathclyde University. We shared our respective experiences about goldmining and learned of the pollution which has already occurred in

their river and forest within 4 years of a goldmining company being given the go-ahead and the impacts on children's health in particular.

We participated in a consultation about the Sperrins AONB Management Plan on 31st May.

June 2024: We had a visit from 2 lecturers and students from Minnesota University who want to include a visit to the Sperrins as part of their students' course. Discussions are ongoing about this matter and arrangements are being made for such a visit in 2025.

July 2024: Fidelma met with Cherry Smyth, poet in residence at Greenwich University, London, on 2nd July. She has written a performance piece "One Mountain: Sold!" about the goldmining and will perform it in An Creagan on 29th March 2025 as a fundraiser for Save Our Sperrins.

On 9th July Jim O'Neill, Derry, launched a CD in memory of his late wife, Carmel Mulrine, & donated all proceeds to Save Our Sperrins. Fidelma did a talk at the event.

She also did a talk on a Climate Camp webinar on 11th July.

On 12th July we attended a fundraising walk in the Gortin Glens, organised by Poilin Quinn.

On 18th July Fidelma & her brother, Tom, met in Claudy with the Minister for Finance, Caoimhe Archibald & Cllr Sean Fleming from Waterside, Derry.

Niall and Cathal took over the weekly monitoring & downloading from the wildlife cameras in July and have continued doing so on a weekly basis.

The cameras have recorded a wide variety of wildlife, including otters, red squirrels, owls, foxes, herons, etc.

The Park Art group and their tutor, Sheila Byrne, held an Art exhibition from 26th - 28th July and gave half the proceeds to Save Our Sperrins.

Monica O'Kane & her sisters held a coffee morning in Plumbridge on Saturday 27th July as a fundraiser for Save Our Sperrins.

August 2024: Save Our Sperrins participated in the Climate Camp in Ardboe, organised by Slí Eile, from 8th -11th August. A group from the

Climate Camp visited the GPO on 9th August and Fidelma did a talk about the campaign, before proceeding to Dalradian's compound at Curraghinalt where an impromptu dance was held outside the gates with music provided by a fiddler from Cork!

Fidelma was invited by Trócaire to do a talk as part of Derry Féile on 13th August.

Save Our Sperrins prepared & distributed sample objections to Dalradian's Water Abstraction and Impoundment Applications for the third time in August 2024. Dalradian's previous two sets of Applications had been deemed null and void!

September 2024: A group of UCD staff, led by Megan Kuster, lecturer, visited the GPO & Park on 6th September where Sheila did a presentation about the campaign and the use of art.

On 10th September 2024, 5 of us attended at Queen's (QUB) the launch of the CAJ (Committee on the Administration of Justice) Report titled: "Policing the Protectors: a Narrative Report of PSNI Policing of Environmental Protest in the Sperrins."

Four of us attended a meeting in Fermanagh on 11th September to give advice and help to people who wanted to start a campaign against mining in Fermanagh and south Tyrone. Prospecting licences have already been granted to Karelian Diamond Resources Ltd for exploration for diamonds and other metals, potentially nickel, copper and platinum.

On 12th September 6 of us attended a fundraiser in Culmore Community Centre, Derry, organised by Lorcan McBride and Marella and Fidelma spoke at it.

Fidelma O'Kane

Hon. Secretary

Save Our Sperrins (SOS)