



Dark Sky Champion Workshops For Tourism and Hospitality Trade in Mayo

Supported by Fáilte Ireland in partnership with Mayo Dark Sky Park and Blackrock Castle Observatory

Mayo is home to Ireland's only Gold Tier International Dark Sky Park. With easy access sites from the Clew Bay and the Wild Atlantic Way, this visitor attraction has caught the imagination of an international audience and since its accreditation in 2016 has developed a growing interest from the dark sky tourism (astrotourism) market. The future is "bright" as plans are underway for the development of a world class planetarium and observatory within Mayo Dark Sky Park (covering the expanse of Wild Nephin National Park).

One of the existing attractions for visitors is the chance to stargaze and experience naturally dark skies and night sky phenomena such as the milky way, meteor showers and other celestial objects that are only accessible in dark sky locations, free from light pollution.

Most of the visitors to our region are coming during the peak tourist season of March to September but the best time for visitors to experience Mayo Dark Sky Park is generally during the off-season. This offers an extension to the tourism season for local businesses and new opportunities in sustainable tourism. Year on year we are getting more and more visitors enquiring about the best time to see our wonderfully dark skies.

Astronomers from MTU's Blackrock Castle Observatory will be in Westport and Ballycroy to provide two half day workshops on 1st and 2nd March to tourism and hospitality businesses in the area.

The workshops will include a basic introduction to stargazing and resources for tourism partners so those in the trade know what the Dark Sky Park is and what visitors can expect to see. The workshop is designed to build confidence amongst participants who have to deal with the general public, but who themselves are not experts in the night sky. The workshops will also discuss innovations in dark sky tourism and foster new ideas for businesses to get involved in the dark sky initiative.

The workshop aims to produce Dark Sky Champions who can encourage visitors to come back in the evening (or in winter months) and therefore to stay longer in the area (returning to the area during off peak to experience the best of the dark skies).

A Dark Sky Champion certificate will be provided to all participants and all businesses will be required to sign up to the Mayo Dark Sky Charter in order to qualify for places on this free training workshop.

Training comprises of ONE Half Day – either:

Tuesday 1st March from 2pm – Ballycroy Community Centre, Ballycroy Village,
Wednesday 2nd March from 10am – Westport Cinema, Westport

To apply please complete the form and declaration attached.

For more information contact:

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Mayo Dark Sky Charter & Application Form

Thank you for your application to take part in our Dark Sky Champion training courses for 2022. By applying for this course, you are also supporting the Mayo Dark Sky Charter detailed below:

Our Charter: Mayo Dark Sky Park, supported by the Friends of Mayo Dark Skies Community group, works to protect the night sky from light pollution, for present and future generations.

Our vision is to inspire present and future generations to enjoy, cherish and learn about our natural world and celestial night skies, whilst providing a sustainable tourism resource fostering cultural, educational, scientific, and recreational values.

We aim to do this by:

- Providing educational tools and resources on dark sky themes such as stargazing, nature at night and cultural astronomy
- Promoting responsible, best practice lighting that addresses energy efficiency whilst also being kind to the environment, biodiversity and our wellbeing
- Supporting communities and businesses to develop dark sky tourism experiences
- Providing guidelines on reducing light pollution, underpinned by research, monitoring and education

At the end of the course you will be asked to provide **one action** to undertake within 12 months to promote and protect the dark skies of county Mayo.

Contact Details

Name of Business:	
Name of attendee(s)	
Phone:	
Email:	

Venue and date choice:	Please tick your selection
Tuesday 1st March 2pm – Ballycroy Community Centre, Ballycroy Village,	
Wednesday 2nd March 10am – Westport Cinema, Westport	

Workshops will last approximately 3 hours.

Your Declaration:

_____ I/ we agree to adhere to the Mayo Dark Sky Charter and to support best practice to reduce light pollution, as detailed in the five principles for responsible outdoor lighting (see attached).



Mayo Dark Skies



Five Principles for Dark Sky Lighting:

PRINCIPLES	LIGHTING TO PROTECT THE NIGHT
USEFUL	ALL LIGHT SHOULD HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE Before installing or replacing a light, determine if light is needed. Consider how the use of light will impact the area, including wildlife and the environment Consider using reflective paints or self-luminous markers for signs, curbs, and steps to reduce the need for permanently install led outdoor lighting
TARGETED	LIGHT SHOULD BE DIRECTED ONLY TO WHERE NEEDED Use shielding and careful aiming to target the direction of the light beam so that it points downward and does not spill beyond where it is needed.
LOW LEVEL LIGHTING	LIGHT SHOULD BE NO BRIGHTER THAN NECESSARY Use the lowest light level required. Be mindful of surface conditions as some surfaces may reflect more light into the night sky than intended.
CONTROLLED	LIGHT SHOULD BE USED ONLY WHEN IT IS USEFUL Use controls such as timers or motion detectors to ensure that light is available when it is needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed.
COLOUR	USE WARMER COLOUR LIGHTS WHERE POSSIBLE Limit the amount of shorter wave length (blue-violet) light to the least amount needed.

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www.MayoDarkSkyPark.ie