



Who Speaks for the Lough?


How can we make conversations
about the future of Lough Neagh
more democratic?

Event details

 **Date:** 21 March 2025







 **Time:** 1:30-5PM

 **Location:** Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island
National Nature Reserve, Craigavon BT66 6NJ

 **Driving?** If you're driving, or looking to carpool, we've set up a [Caroster](#) for you to share a lift or join someone else going.

 **Read** a blog about Lough Neagh and the event [here](#).

Agenda

1:30 - 2.00	 Welcome, light refreshments, introductions, overview of the event
2.00-2:30	 Outdoor activity - re/connecting with the Lough (<i>Please note: make sure you're dressed appropriately for the weather!</i>)
2:30-3.00	 Democracy game - activating curiosity
3.00-4.00	 Panel discussion with audience participation
4.00-4:30	 Participatory path-finding
4:30-5.00	 Slow finish, invitation to linger and chat

About the Panel

We have brought together a panel of democracy elders—individuals who have walked the path before us of integrating deliberative democracy into decision-making.

Their experiences offer valuable guidance on how we can establish inclusive, deliberative, and transparent spaces to collectively shape the future of our waterways, landscapes, and broader ecology

**CLODAGH
HARRIS**



**RORY
CRAWFORD**



**SUSIE
TOWNEND**



Clodagh Harris

Clodagh Harris, (PhD), is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Government and Politics, University College Cork and affiliate of the Environmental Research Institute (ERI). Her research on democratic innovations, intergenerational deliberation, and deliberative democracy and climate change has informed climate policy in Ireland.

She has served on the advisory boards of Citizens' Assemblies nationally and internationally. Most recently, she was the deliberative democracy expert on the expert advisory group of Ireland's Citizen Assembly on biodiversity loss (2022-23). She was also part of a wider consortium that co-designed and implemented a young persons and children's assembly on biodiversity loss (2022-23).

Rory Crawford

Rory has worked in the nature conservation sector for 18 years, and is an urban nature and community enthusiast, campaigner and lapsed marine biologist.

He worked on one of the world's first citizen's assemblies on nature – the People's Assembly for Nature – and loves participation. He is now working for the National Trust on a follow-on partnership between big nature NGOs and 18 community sector organisations that seeks to support and build the capacity of local initiatives to create happier, healthier and greener communities.

Susie Townend

Susie led the Secretariat for Scotland's Climate Assembly, which was established to ensure the efficient organisation and running of the Assembly.

It was staffed by a mixed team of seconded civil servants and experts and was independent of the Scottish Government. Susie has returned to working as a civil servant for the Scottish Government.

Chaired by Rebekah McCabe,

Founder of the [All-Island Better Democracy Network](#) and Head of Northern Ireland for [Involve](#).

About the Organisers

Involve

[Involve](#) is the UK's leading public participation charity. We want to build a more vibrant democracy, where everyone can shape a society that works for all of us.

We need to make important choices as a society. But politics often doesn't work as it should.

Most people don't have enough say in the decisions that affect their lives. Existing power structures mean that some groups of people have less influence than others. Decision-makers struggle to get things done. And many people's trust in politics is low.

But we believe things can be different. We believe our current politics and democracy must evolve to meet the new challenges of the 21st century.

We have a vision of a vibrant democracy, with people at the heart of decision making.

All-Island Better Democracy Network

[The All-Island Better Democracy Network](#) is an initiative to bring together people interested in ways to enable high quality, impactful participation and deliberative democracy on the island of Ireland.

It has been developed to create opportunities for learning, networking and informal connection with others interested in improving democracy.

It is a project of [Involve](#) and has been made possible by a grant from [St Stephens' Green Trust](#).

This event is supported by [Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland](#) and [iCommunity](#).