

All in a Day's Work

Barry O'Connell – Walking Development Officer, Cork Sports Partnership

Hi, my name is Barry O'Connell and I work as the Walking Development Officer with Cork Sports Partnership (CSP). My love of the outdoors began when I was young kayaking on rivers and the sea. Travelling in a kayak is a great way to experience the outdoors and get close to nature—be that on the mountains, along the rivers that flow down them, or on the ocean. One time a seal even climbed up on the back of my kayak! Even in the city there is great activity of birds and other animals along the river. I also love discovering new places on foot and taking time to notice the environment around me.



Images courtesy of Barry O'Connell

Barry O'Connell

and interacting with many different people. The worst is spending so much time inside at a desk.

Where does your work take you?

All over the county of Cork from Youghal to Cape Clear and sometimes we meet in other parts of Ireland.

Do you work alone or as part of a team?

I work as part of a great team who support each other and are available to bounce ideas off.

What advice would you give someone wanting to do your job?

Whatever you want to be, stick with it and you will find people like you who want to make it happen.

What would you do if you weren't doing what you do now?

Working with wood as a carpenter and some kayak guiding too.

What is best piece of advice you have ever had?

"A person who asks a question may be a fool for five minutes. A person who doesn't is a fool forever."

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Have you always been interested in what you do?

Yes, I enjoy being active and getting others involved too. Before I worked in CSP, I was a carpenter and a kayak guide—both physical outdoor jobs.

What training did you do to get where you are today?

I went to Wales for three years to study sport and exercise psychology, with

further study in Limerick. I am fascinated why people do what they do and how that can be influenced.

What is your day like?

At the moment it is different with working from home and many of our activities for people on hold. I have to have breakfast because I am hungry when I get up. I check for any new messages on my phone or

computer and add these to my notepad of things to do. Mostly I am phoning people or emailing them to arrange activities for people.

Normally I go out to meet different groups such as those on the *Woodlands for Health* programme and get to enjoy a walk in the outdoors. Time in nature really helps me feel better and I aim to do it as often as I can.

What is your main aim?

To help people be more active, healthy, and enjoy the outdoors.

#GetCorkWalking

Name the best and worst things about your job.

The best are the variety of tasks, coming up with ideas, putting them into action



Walking on Dursey Island, Co. Cork, on 2018.



Kayaking in Voss, Norway.

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