



LIFE11 ENV/IE/922
Burren Tourism for Conservation
Minutes of Meeting

Project	Steering Group Meeting	
Date	14/2/2013	
Location	Clare County Council Offices, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare	

Attendance	Person	Organisation	Abbr.
Yes	Phil Deegan	Shannon Development	PD
Yes	Flan Quilligan	Shannon Development & Failte Ireland	FQ
Yes	Sarah Gatley	Geological Survey of Ireland	SG
Apologies	Michael Fitzsimons	Failte Ireland	MF
No	Carleton Jones	NUIG	CJ
Apologies	Gabriel Cooney	UCD	GC
Apologies	Beatrice Kelly	Heritage Council	BK
Yes	Margaret Keane	National Monuments Service	MK
Yes	Christine Grant	National Monuments Service	CHG
Yes	Hugh Carey	National Monuments Service	HC
Apologies	Paul McMahan	Office of Public Works	PMcM
Apologies	Ken Curley	Office of Public Works	KC
Yes	Enda Mooney	National Parks & Wildlife Service	EM
Yes	Emma Glanville	National Parks & Wildlife Service	EG
Apologies	Congella McGuire	Clare County Council	CMcG
Yes	Shane Casey	Clare County Council	SC
Yes	Mary Burke	Clare County Council	MB
Yes	Tracey Duffy	Clare County Council	TD
Yes	Joan Tarmey	Clare County Council	JT
Apologies	Sean Lenihan	Clare County Council	SL
Yes	Tina O'Dwyer	Consultant to Geopark	TO'D
Yes	Brian Callinan	Consultant	BC
Yes	Carol Gleeson	Burren Geopark/Clare County Council	CG
Yes	Eamon Doyle	Burren Geopark	
			NOTE

<p>1.0</p>	<p>Welcome and apologies. Minutes of previous meeting were reviewed and there were no proposals for amendment. Minutes proposed by BC and seconded by FQ.</p> <p>The aim of this meeting was to progress work on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action B1 Tourism Enterprises Code of Practice - Action B2 Criteria for selection of monuments and habitats - Action B3 Approach to achieving key outcomes for 'Conservation Management'. 	
<p>2</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p>	<p>Action B1 Tourism Enterprises</p> <p>Standards There was a relatively top-line discussion on standards. JT highlighted that credibility is a key aspect of any standards that are developed or adopted. TO'D also highlighted the importance of ensuring that any standards developed by the Geopark would be sustainable into the long-term i.e. after-LIFE. Work is underway at the moment on examining the feasibility of a set of 10 baseline sustainability standards that could be managed and administered by the Geopark office. TO'D highlighted that in order to ensure credibility, they are quite comprehensive and will require resources to manage and businesses will find it relatively demanding to meet them. The questions of a) whether Geopark standards could work as an alternative to external certification and b) whether the standards can be sustainable in their own right are currently under review. JT queried whether an offshoot of the Green Hospitality Award supported by the EPA could work for the Geopark and suggested this could be explored. TO'D outlined the pilot of ecotourism principles currently underway by GHA and indicated this would be investigated further with GHA. CG highlighted that measurement was very important and that the Geopark was now negotiating with the businesses to secure agreement and methodology for data collection.</p> <p>Draft Geopark Code of Practice: There was substantial discussion on the draft Code of Practice that was circulated in advance of the meeting. The Code of Practice would precede the standards and businesses would be asked to sign-up to this upon joining the Network and prior to engaging in any standards-oriented training. There were a number of suggestions for amendment and discussion around specific items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On a general note, EM highlighted that the draft document was inconsistent in its title and language. Some elements read like objectives whereas others read like principles. EM highlighted that a 'Code of Practice' meant a commitment to actions but discussion was focusing on commitment to principles. It should be one or the other. EM suggested a revision of the document to make it a document of 'principles' which would be backed up by specific 	

<p>2.3</p>	<p>objectives. PD suggested a supporting document to the Code which would explain more what each point was about and what kind of business practices would support these principles.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Group saw value in the current format of a brief, signed document that a business could display on its premises or website. There was agreement that businesses would have to sign-up annually and re-commit to the principles. The danger of the Geopark being exposed if businesses were promoting the Code and were then found not to be compliant with it or with legislation was discussed. 3. The principle/objective relating to protecting the geological values of the Geopark was considered weak and it was agreed to strengthen the wording and also move this point closer up the list of points. SG suggested that businesses should be asked to 'promote and protect' the area, not just protect. 4. The addition of sustainable travel and CPD-type training as principles were discussed and it was agreed to include them as principles. It was decided against including specific events that should be promoted but to include a principle about supporting events that take place. 5. It was felt that the training that businesses would engage in would give an opportunity to further explain and expand the Code and relate it to practical activities in the businesses. MB shared experiences on running training for licenses and the effectiveness of sitting with businesses and making it practical and management for them e.g. putting together a folder. This approach would work well for the Code and standards. TO'D noted a number of wording additions and amendments throughout the document. <p>Principle of Compliance with Legislation: This item generated the most discussion and a robust and rounded debate on the pros and cons of including a principle of compliance with relevant environmental legislation. While the full detail of this discussion is not recorded here, the key points of agreement were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the format in the draft was too strong to be acceptable to businesses and was not necessarily realistic in any event. - The Geopark could not enter into the grounds of policing or enforcement, nor could it be perceived to do so. - There is a need to separate the objectives of the County Council from the objectives of the Geopark in its relationship with the Burren Ecotourism Network, whilst still ensuring consistency of message on legislative compliance. - The crux of the issue lies in the potential scenario where a business is a member of the Network, has use of the Geopark logo and is then found to be flouting statutory obligations. BC pointed out that legislation is not the business of EU Life or the Geopark and that it is reasonable to assume that businesses are generally compliant 	
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	<p>with legislation. JT reminded that businesses will be asked to sign up to principles only but that it might be wise for the Network itself to highlight to its members that it will protect the Network and its credibility and will act when members are found not to be compliant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CHG – as feature of criteria, make it clear that it’s a personal obligation (highlight that you’re not going to implement this but that they are responsible for this). - MB, PD and CHG offered points highlighting that this level of detail could be dealt with in the standards or the supporting documents to the Code. CHG highlighted that the use of the logo is the real carrot and so the best way to deal with this is through the standards that get you the logo. - FQ suggested that there could be an body tasked to oversee the Code and compliance e.g. EU Life Steering Committee or Geopark Steering Committee. Wording: - For non-compliant businesses, the difference between businesses who blatantly disregard legal obligations and those that genuinely seek to comply but might still fall short was discussed. MB state the Council does its best to work with all business and that protecting the receiving environment is always the guiding principle. JT stated that the level of ‘will’ of the business is important in such cases. <p>-</p> <p>The conclusion was that this area would be adequately covered in the Code under a slightly reworded first principle along the lines of “<i>to minimize the impact of business operations on the environment, by continuously improving performance in the areas of waste, water and energy management.</i>” The supporting explanatory document that would be provided to businesses would highlight the importance of seeking to comply with all environmental legislation and the training programme would also cover this aspect in detail. .</p> <p>EM – Confusion about the overall concept.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more than just place. Also people, business, community. Also a process. A standards. An experience of the space. 	
<p>3</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>Action B2 Habitats and Monuments</p> <p>Longlist of Sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was agreement with the initial list of 12 and the following were also suggested: An Cabhal Mór in Kilinaboy, Caherbanna, Loughanuisce and Carron Turlough, quarry near Ruan, Dromore Nature Reserve. , - SC suggested two additional sites at Fanore (which two???) - ED recommended that final shortlist includes a baseline site that hasn’t been impacted (or very little) – looking only at previously 	

	<p>impacted sites might skew analysis. Lough Bunny might be one such site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SC queried whether group should consider/prioritise sites that attract businesses to the tourism enterprises – would be a way to integrate Actions B1 and B2. Overall agreement that project couldn't favour those businesses and PD highlighted that this would be covered under the criteria 'benefit for community' in any event. - SC suggested splitting Black Head into layby (Murroughtouhy) and further over near fishing points as they were essentially different sites with different issues. CHG saw opportunity for larger site and looking at the integrated issues and also warned against managing the criteria. - CHG proposed that the sites that would eventually be selected would be exemplars for similar sites and act as case studies that could include a number of other monuments. Doing this would be cost-neutral but would allow a prioritisation process for any budget that might become available separately. For example, a series of cairns could be considered if the Black Head Cairn was selected from the process. CG expressed concern at spreading scarce resources too wide. It may depend on the actual sites that get selected and the level of expenditure that would be required at each. - ED's work as Geopark Geologist includes monitoring climate change and finding evidence for same, especially in coastal regions. Fanore site would be particularly relevant from this perspective. <p>BC outlined a process whereby group arrives at an agreed longlist, then reviews this specifically from the tourism angle, then arrives at a short list and a small subgroup drills down into that shortlist to agree the final selection. Group accepted BC's proposal that CG comes to next meeting with a proposal for the long list, together with a commentary from tourism potential/perspective of each site on the long list and a 3rd column of 'what you could do' with the site? All partners to feed any further suggestions to Carol before the next meeting. BC</p> <p>3.2 Selection Criteria</p> <p>CG highlighted BC's work on developing a matrix of criteria to select sites. The document that was circulated in advance of the meeting was the subject of discussion on finalising the criteria. Following suggestions were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Point 3: Split into 3 categories: archaeology, biodiversity and geology. - Point 7: change 'disabled' to 'universal'. - Include 'traffic' and 'transport' under Point 7. (Decision needs to be made on use of roads – large and small ones). 	
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	<p>A sub-committee will get together to work further on this. Volunteers were: PD, CHG, ED, SG, SC, EG.</p>	
4.0	<p>Action B3 Conservation Management</p> <p>Key outcome: Transferrable tool kit and integrated policies for visitor management and promotion of natural & heritage sites</p> <p>CG highlighted that a clear approach on this area is not evident as present. GC unable to attend this meeting due to teaching commitments which he had previously highlighted. GC particularly wants to be involved on policy end of things and also the training/programme development side of things. There is a need to integrate the training for tourism enterprises as well. Also needs to integrate with training for tourism enterprises. Stakeholder involvement also important to ensure monitoring and measuring and conservation goes on after the LIFE project.</p> <p>CHG: best practice in community archaeology. (noted this but can't recall exact point?)</p> <p>CG invited volunteers for a small subgroup to liaise directly with GC on this before the next meeting. Volunteers: NMS Representative, CA small group of people to liaise directly with GC on this on an initial meeting before the next one. Volunteers: (NMS Representative), CJ, GC, MB (training part), SC, TOD, SG.</p>	
5.0	<p>Stakeholder Participation</p> <p>Current management of EU Life is: Steering Group (meets 4 times per year) Advisory Committee (meets 2 times per year)</p> <p>There is also a Geopark Steering Group, with considerable overlap between the two. CG proposed the merging of the Geopark Steering Group with the EU Life Steering Group, and to continue with a meeting schedule of 4 times per year. From an EU Life perspective, this would mean about 4 extra people around the table: Cliffs of Moher, Burrenbeo, Burren IFA and B.E.N.. It was proposed that the Geopark Advisory Committee would then act as the advisory committee for the merged steering groups and meet 4 times a year.</p> <p>Interaction of the two bodies: continue with present arrangement where a representative of the Advisory Committee attends the Steering Group meeting and CG reports back to the Advisory Committee on behalf of the Steering Group. The two groups would also be brought together at seminars and conferences.</p>	

<p>6.0</p>	<p>Partnership Agreements</p> <p>Text of Agreements: BC asked all partners to read the agreements that have gone out and to confirm if the text is correct and acceptable to the organisation. It would be desirable to sign off on text at the next meeting and partners are asked to review it before then. CG will resend to all partners.</p> <p>Budgets All partners reminded to ensure they have timesheets and are filling them in and that they have a budget code in their system for travel and expenses and allocate any claims against this in their internal systems. Keep all receipts keep track of time. Reporting requirement is every quarter. CG will send a reminder email to partners every quarter.</p>	
<p>7.0</p>	<p>EU Life Launch CG has had initial discussion with Maureen Cleary of Clare Tourism Forum about a launch for the EU Life project and outlined a suggested event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Friday 26th April. Evening event - The Pavilion, Lisdoonvarna - Invite all stakeholders and 100 others. Aim for 200 attendees. - Event co-ordinated around the Geopark status and the EU Life project, highlighting that community involvement was the key reason that they were achieved for the region. - Use the event to acknowledge the participation of various people or groups in this. - Free Event. Local food and local profile - Habitats and Monuments sites should be finalised by then. - Suggestion of organising a walk the next day. 	
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Next Meeting Monday 11th March. 10-4 17th April. 1st joint meeting of merged Steering Groups. Sub committees will get a separate email on dates of events.</p>	