



LIFE11 ENV/IE/922

Minutes of Meeting

Project	Geopark LIFE Partners Meetings	
Date	25/11/2013	
Location	Clare County Council Offices, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare	

Attendance	Person	Organisation	Abbr.
Apologies	Flan Quilligan	Fáilte Ireland	RD
Apologies	Sarah Gatley	Geological Survey of Ireland	SG
Yes	Michael Fitzsimons	Fáilte Ireland	MF
Yes	Carleton Jones	NUIG	CJ
Apologies	Gabriel Cooney	UCD	GC
Yes	Beatrice Kelly	Heritage Council	BK
Apologies	Margaret Keane	National Monuments Service	MK
Yes	Christine Grant	National Monuments Service	CHG
Apologies	Hugh Carey	National Monuments Service	HC
Apologies	Paul McMahan	Office of Public Works	PMcM
Yes	Ken Curley	Office of Public Works	KC
Yes	Enda Mooney	National Parks & Wildlife Service	EM
Yes	Emma Glanville	National Parks & Wildlife Service	EG
Yes	Congella McGuire	Clare County Council	CMcG
Apologies	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	ED
Represented by Bridget Barry	Richard Morrison	Burrenbeo Trust	RM
Yes	Siobain O'Brien	Burren Geopark	SOB
Apologies	Pat O'Connor	Ex-Geological Survey of Ireland	POC

Yes	Katherine Webster	Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience	KW
Apologies	Christy Sinclair	Burren Ecotourism Network	CS
Apologies	Michael McGrath	Farmer Representative	MMcG
Yes (Chair)	Monica Meehan	Clare County Council	MM
Apologies	Helen Quinn	Clare County Council	HQ
Apologies	Caroline Balfe	Clare County Council	CB
Apologies	Ger Dollard	Clare County Council	GD
Yes	Ristead Ua Cronin	Clare County Council	RC
1.0	<p>Review of Minutes Minutes Accepted. Proposed by RC and seconded by CHG</p> <p>GeoparkLIFE Conference CG gave a brief overview of the October Geopark LIFE project. IT was well attended with a strong student participation. Received positive feedback on the speakers and varied feedback on the effectiveness of the discussion groups. All presentations and proceedings are available on the website www.burren.ie.</p> <p>CG advised group that Flan Quilligan will be replacing Ruairi Deane as Fáilte Ireland representative. Michael Fitzsimons will also be representing FI on the committee.</p>		
2.0	<p>Geopark Progress Report Geopark Progress Report was circulated – (attached).</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED to circulate the article ‘Growing Education Partnerships in the Burren & Cliffs of Moher Geopark’ that has been accepted for publication. - ED advised that Caherconnell Geology Field School is being promoted overseas currently. Potential link with the Metropolitan University of Denver – representatives visiting in the near future. - The work ED is undertaking with the secondary and primary schools as outlined in progress report was welcomed and expertise and support from County Council and GSI could be made available to students. - CG circulated a recently-published children’s book by Sonja O’Brien that was supported by the Geopark. This publication will be used in a litter awareness campaign by the transition year students. A launch is being planned for 10th December which would include the book and the schools litter project. - ED/CG circulated samples of the 6 new heritage trail information leaflets, which were funded by Fáilte Ireland. A launch will take place early next year. MM commended this project which is a great addition to the tourist offering in the area. - CG listed other local initiatives that Geopark was able to support and fund over recent months: Burren in Bloom, Burren Slow Food Festival, Burren Tolkien Society Festival. - Some discussion took place around the future plans for sustainable 		ED

	<p>transport in the Burren, which has been identified as a significant issue in all efforts towards a sustainable destination. CG outlined current work on the analysis of the economic and environmental impact of coach tourism, which will be used to inform an integrated transport and signage strategy arising out of the LIFE project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion around Burren Signage Plan which is still awaiting confirmation to proceed from Fáilte Ireland, and is also now connected with the Wild Atlantic Way signage project. MF to raise the question at next meeting of WAW development group and revert to CG. - Discussion around whether appropriate environmental assessments had been carried out with some concern expressed regarding the naming and development of WAW Discovery Points possibly without appropriate assessment having been completed. MF not involved enough in that project to comment but did highlight that Paddy Mathews, WAW Project Manager in Fáilte Ireland, had engaged with local authorities since the outset of the project and that it must be the case that local authorities had raised potential issues through this process. MB to follow this up with Paddy Mathews - Black Head Pull-in Areas. NPWS advised CCC to bring the application to An Bord Pleanála. Committee agreed the need to take this as a case study under GeoparkLIFE with a view to creating guidelines and procedures that would inform future projects. NPWS have had some internal conversations on process. Heritage Council would also advise on process. EM suggested that we should begin again with the application and take into consideration the 'in-combination affects' of the development. <p>Agreed Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speak to FI And establish possibility of extending funding into 2014 - See how this project can be incorporated into Geopark LIFE under Action B2 	<p>MF</p> <p>MB</p> <p>CG</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Geopark LIFE Administrative Matters</p> <p>Inception Report</p> <p>LIFE team in Brussels reacted very positively to Inception Report. Only issue related to timesheets. Also would like more tightly defined budgets. Agreed title change to GeoparkLIFE. Were particularly impressed with the integration of the ETIS framework within the programme.</p> <p>Time Sheets</p> <p>All participants reminded about the time sheets: "no time sheets, no money". First ones received were not correctly completed and so the revised ones (using Greg Davidson's guidelines from the last meeting) are required as soon as possible. SOB will be providing administrative support for this from now on and Greg Davidson will act as advisor on this.</p> <p>Agreed Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Siobain O'Brien should circulate contact details to the group. 	<p>SOB</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The time sheets first submitted by individuals should be returned to them. - Any queries should be directed to Siobain who will liaise with Greg/Carol where necessary. <p>The position of Communications Officer for Geopark Life will be advertised shortly, initially on a one year contract with the option to extend. The position of Sustainable Tourism Co-ordinator remains under discussion with Fáilte Ireland and it is expected that this will be concluded in a few weeks. Siobain O'Brien's current contract under Transtourism is being carried forward for 6 months under LIFE to assess the administrative requirements of the LIFE programme.</p>	<p>SOB</p> <p>All partners</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>GeoparkLIFE</p> <p>CG provided an outline of the progress made in the various actions, arising from research and individual meetings with partners, which were conducted last week. The results of the discussions have been collated as outline work programmes, and are summarised in handouts (attached). The B1 programme has been approved at earlier steering committee meetings and is progressing well under the co-ordination of TO'D, with input from CCC and FI. TO'D has prepared an update on Action B1 (attached).</p> <p>B2 and B3 programmes are outlines at this stage (attached), as they now require input from local stakeholders such as BEN, Burrenbeo, Burren Outdoor Education Centre, XPO, etc. They will also require partner support for some movement of budgets from one action to another, which is allowed within a certain limit. BC will advise on this.</p> <p>CG clarified that the work programmes must be tightly scheduled to allow time for, not only development and delivery, but also monitoring and evaluation. CG proposes to have the completed work programme for B2 and B3 for the next meeting.</p> <p>CG also advised that Dr. Doug Comber, one of the keynote speakers at the recent GeoparkLIFE Sustainable Tourism Conference, will be available to participate in a webinar discussion on the subject of the care and management of tangible and intangible heritage. His experience is a valuable asset to the programme.</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Action B1 Tourism Enterprises Update Report Circulated (attached) Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability Training Programme: JT outlined some of the challenges related to the Sustainability Training that has commenced: diversity of group, challenges in getting businesses to 	

	<p>measure, different ways in which businesses pay for and use resources, transferability of templates and information that is fed into them, desirability of site visits but lack of resources to complete same. JT also highlighted the benefit of cross-learning. TO'D emphasised the active research element of the programme development and delivery this time round and JT highlighted the need to note changes and ways of refining the approach and templates. MB noted that the County Council already have developed templates for some licensed premises and that these may be of use for some enterprises in the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT expressed concern about ensuring the credibility of the businesses being supported through the programme. KW informed the group that the Network now has a mechanism for removing businesses from the Network for 'qualitative' reasons e.g. poor sustainability standards. - Interpreting the Geopark Module. Discussion around involving partners in the development of a ½ day module on Interpreting the Geopark. Previous meetings had highlighted the desirability of harnessing the expertise of the partners for this project. CG highlighted the Burren CD already developed as well as the knowledge of the Geopark team and felt this was sufficient for the level this workshop was aimed at. Group agreed that this programme should be developed by Geopark team and that the more indepth programme planned as part of Action B3 should involve the wider partner group. KC highlighted that OPW may have input on this as they train seasonal staff each year. MB suggested a simple laminate business-card type tool with a list of websites and places for further information. - European Tourism Indicator System: TOD: highlighted indicators that will be used to measure Socio Economic Indicators: resident satisfaction, equality & accessibility, cultural heritage, local identity and assets. The details of this system will be presented at the next Partners Meeting. 	
6.0	<p>Geopark LIFE Action B2 Habitats & Monuments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CG distributed a Proposed Work Programme (attached). The purpose of this Action is to develop and evaluate best practice visitor management techniques at a range of sites throughout the Burren - In response to queries around partners input into the work programmes, CG clarified that expertise and time are the desired inputs. - CMcG highlighted the importance of addressing Sustainable Transport - A discussion ensued relating to Policies and Procedures which all 	

	<p>agreed are important outputs of the programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MB introduced a template/matrix which she has developed and could be used by businesses and others in the project-planning stages. It is a tool for assessing the potential impacts on Natural Sites and would be beneficial in highlighting the feasibility of a project prior to money/time being spent. - It was suggest that the Blackhead Pull-In areas project might be a useful project re-evaluate. It was generally agreed to start again, develop a plan and test against the matrix. - BK highlighted that the AA requirement of the Habitats Directive related only to Natura 2000 sites – scope for the matrix to ‘fill the gap’ that exists for other non designated sites. - MB to link with CMcG, BK & EM to progress the matrix and its application. 	<p>MB with NPWS & Heritage Council</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Geopark LIFE Action B3 Conservation Management CG circulated proposed work programme for Action B3 – attached. The purpose of Action B3 is to involve/engage all relevant stakeholders in adopting long term conservation ethos and activity. This will ensure sustainable tourism remains high on the agenda after the life of the Geopark LIFE programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CHG suggested that discreet topics be incorporated as CPD workshops for partners e.g. ETIS and Douglas Comer webinar plus site visits. BK and CG to progress. - CHG: took up point of accessibility to include intellectual accessibility. Idea of pop-up exhibitions to disseminate information. - Partners agreed to progress this Action by engaging with local stakeholders to flesh out the work programme. The project seeks delivery in 2014 and 2015 and must ensure there is sufficient time for evaluation 	<p>BK/CG</p>
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Burren LIFE – Farming for Conservation Dr. Sharon Parr of the Burren LIFE/Farming for Conservation programme gave an excellent and informative presentation on her team’s experience of the LIFE programme, their achievements in it, and the After LIFE Government supported programme which it initiated. There were interesting learnings for the Geopark LIFE programme to take on board.</p> <p>Dr. Parr’s recommendations are summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you have very efficient, accountable administrative and financial systems in place from the start • If there are partners involved ensure that they capture their contribution from the start & throughout • Use your Monitor - a good monitor is a great asset • Make sure you write up anything you can as you go along – people may leave! 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure sufficient time to analyse the data you gather • Continually look to the future and keep an eye on events <p>We will utilise the Burren LIFE programme's experience to guide the Geopark LIFE programme, particularly in relation to stakeholder engagement, developing guidelines, criteria, benchmarks, monitoring and reporting.</p>	
9.0	<p>AOB</p> <p>Next Meeting on 26th February 2014 in Ennis, time to be agreed as we may have to hold the webinar with Dr. Comber in the afternoon to accommodate time difference.</p>	