



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

<b>Project</b>	Steering Group Meeting	
<b>Date</b>	22/1/2013	
<b>Location</b>	Clare County Council Offices, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare	

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Abbr.</b>
Apologies	Phil Deegan	Shannon Development	PD
Yes	Flan Quilligan	Shannon Development & Failte Ireland	FQ
Yes	Sarah Gatley	Geological Survey of Ireland	SG
Apologies	Kevin Kidney	Failte Ireland	KK
Yes	Carleton Jones	NUIG	CJ
Apologies	Gabriel Cooney	UCD	GC
Yes	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
Yes	Paul McMahon	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
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
Yes	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
			<b>NOTE</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome</b> and introduction of new participants on the Steering Committee; representatives of CCC Heritage, Environment and Water sections and representatives of NPWS, who have joined the project as partners.		

<p><b>2.0</b></p>	<p>The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed, one minor change was recommended by FQ.CG reminded the partners of the agreed action on a resource audit of relevant material to assist the development of the project. Please send relevant research etc onto CG.</p> <p>CG distributed copies of the presentation outlining the overall project and introduced the 3 main topics for discussion:  Action B1 Tourism Enterprises  Action B2 Habitats and Monuments  Action B3 Conservation Management</p> <p>The aim of this meeting was to begin the development of a work programme for each action that will be the basis of the Inception Report to be submitted to the EU LIFE team by June 30<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>As this was the first meeting focusing on the actions, it generated a lot of discussion which is not documented; the following is a summary of the main points and recorded the decisions made in relation to the main actions.</p>	
<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b>Action B1 Tourism Enterprises</b>  <b>Key Outcome: 100</b> tourism enterprises with capacity to conserve and promote Nature &amp; Heritage  The actions are:  Improved Environmental Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Training on energy, waste &amp; water management</li> <li>•Certification</li> </ul> Improved Economic Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing overheads</li> <li>• Networking, packaging, marketing</li> </ul> Increased Visitor Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality training on interpretation and knowledge of the Burren</li> </ul> Resource Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Business planning/Sourcing funding</li> <li>•Environmental Policy &amp; Conservation Plans</li> </ul> <p>CG distributed the Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN) magazine which provides a concise profile of the network and its ethos.</p> <p>TO'D provided an overview of work undertaken to date on the development of the Burren Ecotourism Network's certification programme and provided a brief update of her on-going research into the development of benchmarking, performance indicators and strategic marketing for the network. A copy of the</p> </p>	

<p>completed report will be circulated to the Steering Committee.</p> <p>The UN, EU and Global Sustainable Tourism Council are working together to develop criteria for sustainable tourism destinations and it is recommended that we work with these criteria, as the project benchmarks, when they are launched in late February 2013.</p> <p>Baseline information is missing in most areas. This is a critical gap that needs to be addresses immediately and should include levels of awareness of conservation issues and the programmes/agency supports that already exist. Do we have information days/evenings before we assess levels of awareness?</p> <p>A discussion ensued on how we recruit more businesses and what criteria should be used for accepting new businesses onto the programme. It was agreed that BEN was the best model to work with, as it incorporated a geographic boundary, ethos and criteria that covered more than environmental impacts and suited the broader aspirations of the LIFE programme. It was agreed that LIFE project deal with businesses that sign up to the principles guiding membership of BEN.</p> <p>FQ proposed that Failte Ireland training programmes have the flexibility to be tailored to suit the needs of this programme.</p> <p>It was agreed that Action B1 should be a vehicle for encouraging (as opposed to enforcement of) knowledge and compliance with environmental legislation.</p> <p>It was agreed that Action B1 accommodates local circumstances when recommending solutions to waste and water management; that one system will not suit all, that we take into account cost effective systems, group schemes and take advantage of existing grants and supports.</p> <p>It was agreed that Action B1 should take a holistic landscape and heritage approach and develop a few core demonstration models of good practice. Utilise the experience of other EU LIFE projects, especially Burren Farming for Conservation. Look at impacts of interaction with, and interpretation of landscape practices as well as waste, water and energy management.</p> <p>Buy in from the broader community is necessary; all potential stakeholders need to be consulted as soon as possible and given opportunities for involvement. CG has already initiated a series of presentations and discussions with local stakeholders and is using the broad network of community contacts built up since 2007 to communicate the aspirations of the LIFE project and invite participation in its development.</p>	
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4.0	<p>Action B2 Habitats and Monuments</p> <p><b>Key Outcome:</b> Visitor access, interpretation &amp; management improved at 7 natural &amp; heritage sites</p> <p>Site selection &amp; assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitats &amp; monuments selected based on agreed criteria</li> </ul> <p>Work programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan interventions based on agreed guidelines</li> <li>• Implementing conservation measures with public &amp; private stakeholders. Establish Policy</li> </ul> <p>Maintenance &amp; monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed programme involving public and private stakeholders.</li> <li>• Establish Policy.</li> </ul> <p>Report &amp; evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each site evaluated on the basis of both conservation and tourism objectives.</li> </ul> <p>CG presented a list of potential sites, with the caveat that these sites were proposals only and do not preclude the inclusion of others for consideration.</p> <p>After much discussion on the objectives of Action B2, it was proposed that the main priority should be to develop a conservation model of best practice that can be adapted to <u>not just</u> sites impacted by tourism, but also to areas that are vulnerable and sensitive (distinction between both terms needs to be highlighted) to environmental and human impacts. This model can therefore be applied to landscape management issues in general.</p> <p>It is important that the objective is very clear as it will influence the development of criteria for the selection of sites.</p> <p>BC reminded the committee that the inclusion of sites with an international dimension, interest, and transferable learning outcome is a priority for EU LIFE programmes.</p> <p>Many examples of criteria were discussed. It was agreed that prior to the next meeting CG would circulate a matrix including revised list of sites (based on recommendations of the partners) and proposed criteria, including a space for comments/pro's and con's.</p>	
5.0	<p><b>Action B3 Conservation Management</b></p> <p><b>Key outcome:</b> Transferrable tool kit and integrated policies for visitor management and promotion of natural &amp; heritage sites</p>	

	<p>Training Modules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop &amp; deliver training modules relating to overall objectives of the project with input from public and private stakeholders</li> </ul> <p>Case studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select and utilise monuments &amp; habitats as case studies for practical application of training modules with input from public and private stakeholders</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Tool kit &amp; Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce transferrable guidelines and policies on international best practice in sustainable tourism &amp; conservation</li> <li>• Has conservation management been integrated with stakeholders objectives?</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that modules need to be practical and tailored to the target audiences and ensure policies and processes are clear and relevant</p> <p>Look at the Burren Farming for Life model of Farm Plans as examples of checklists for the case studies</p> <p>Link in with, and utilise, local learning initiatives such as Burrenbeo's training programmes, Leave no Trace, CCC training, etc.</p> <p>Create linkages with other national programmes, such as the Longford St. Mary's Cathedral skills training project</p> <p>Create a level of standardised Conservation practice.</p> <p>Through the training reinforce the ethos of the project; developing supports, encouragement to participate ... NOT enforcement.</p> <p>Investigate the potential of a 3<sup>rd</sup> Level partners to deliver the programme</p>	
6.0	<p>It was proposed that to progress the development of the 3 actions, sub groups of the partners can meet to discuss in more depth the subject that they can contribute most expertise on. These sub groups would report back and make recommendations to the Steering Committee at the main meetings.</p>	
7.0	<p>BC gave a brief overview of the requirements of the Inception Report that is due at the end of June; it requires a clear work programme, signed partnership agreements and updated budgets that fit the work programme and reflect changes generated by the strict implementation of staff embargo in CCC which has implications for the administration of the programme. The inclusion of the NPWS has the potential to alter the distribution of budgets,</p>	

	but this has to be discussed in more detail with NPWS. EM indicated that NPWS will probably not require a budget and is happy to provide expertise to progress the project.	
<b>5.0</b>	<p><b>Date of Next Meetings</b></p> <p>The partners agreed to hold a series of planning meetings to progress the work programme and Inception Report. They also agreed that the most appropriate location for the next meetings is Ennis. We will save a visit to the Burren for later in the Spring.</p> <p><b>14<sup>th</sup> February, CCC Training Room, New Road, Ennis.</b>  <b>14<sup>th</sup> March, CCC Training Room, New Road, Ennis.</b></p>	