



**B2 WORKING GROUP  
MEETING  
MINUTES**

**4-5-16**

**DATE AND VENUE**

The GeoparkLIFE B2 Working Group Meeting was held in the Old Ground Hotel, Ennis on Wednesday May 4, 2016 from 10am to 1pm.

**ATTENDANCE**

In attendance: Enda Mooney (EM), Christine Grant (CGr), Ken Curley (KW), Emma Glanville (EG), Carol Gleeson (CG) and Zena Hoctor (ZH).

Apologies: Beatrice Kelly (BK), Joanne Gaffrey (JG), Gabriel Cooney (GC), Sharon Parr (SP)

**ITEMS AND DISCUSSION**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Item 1: Agreement of minutes	Minutes of last meeting held 13-1-16 were agreed.		
Item 2: Progress update on demonstration site	<p><b><u>Slieve Carran:</u></b> There has been no information received to date re progression of interdepartmental talks with regard to the future management of MacDuagh's oratory site.</p> <p>All votive offerings were removed from the site on April 27<sup>th</sup> by the Burren National Park general operatives (GOs) as agreed at the last B2 working group meeting. Monitoring of the site will now be undertaken and any votive offerings which are left on the site will be recorded and subsequently removed.</p> <p>An awareness day will be organised during October to highlight the issues of Leave No Trace in conjunction with the presentation of projects from the recently completed GeoparkLIFE interpretation course. It was agreed that this day should also include information on guidelines and licences required when bringing visitors out onto the Burren landscape.</p> <p>Progress on the proposed LNT/GeoparkLIFE skills and ethics book is currently at a standstill as issues such as who the booklet is aimed at, what format it should take and who meets the costs are being discussed.</p>	<p>Update required</p> <p>Monitoring through recording and removal of votive offerings deposition</p> <p>Tony Kirby's report on the votive offerings to be finalised</p> <p>Organisation of conservation awareness day</p> <p>Progress LNT/GeoparkLIFE skills and ethics book</p>	<p>CGr to request update from the Department.</p> <p>National Parks staff</p> <p>ZH &amp; CG</p> <p>GeoparkLIFE staff and Various partners</p> <p>ZH &amp; CG with Maura Lyons (LNT)</p>

	<p><b><u>Burren National Park</u></b> EM and ZH met to determine a way forward with regard to the parking issue at Gortlecka and the Crag Road in the BNP. It is agreed that GeoparkLIFE will organise a road traffic count during the month of August (to be co-financed by NPWS) and a parking survey in conjunction with the staff of the National Park. This baseline data, in conjunction with data from the footfall counters, the visitor survey and National Park visitor centre numbers will inform a proposed traffic management and visitor plan which will be arranged and financed by the NPWS.</p> <p><b><u>Blackhead</u></b> <b><u>Lay-bys:</u></b> Screening for scrub removal was carried out by ZH and Congella McGuire and the scrub removed by CCC workers. PJ Carmody (CCC Engineer) and ZH carried out a technical survey of each of the lay-bys on April 21st. Initial results show that there are likely to be approximately 5 car parking spaces available in terms of sightlines and habitat out of the proposed original 40 spaces. The final results are being prepared at present and may result on a lower number of spaces available. It was agreed by the B2 working group that this is a good case study in terms of policy with regard to the Habitats Directive and how it affects Health and Safety issues at local level and needs to be highlighted within the research work being carried out by GC for GeoparkLIFE.</p> <p><b><u>Monuments:</u></b> Following the last B2 working group meeting ZH approached Burrenbeo Trust to discuss the possibility of a joint submission under the Heritage Council's Adopt-A-Monument Scheme for the conservation of Murrooghkilly cairn. Burrenbeo Trust were already in the process of preparing an application with Killinaboy heritage group with regard to the conservation of An Cabhail Mhor. GeoparkLIFE offered their support to this application. The bid was unsuccessful. In order to progress the conservation of Murrooghkilly cairn, CGr and ZH are currently drawing up a methodology for the conservation work as part of a community training project. This will form the basis for a RFT which will be circulated to three archaeologists, if approved by CCC. It is hoped that this project will be in place by September 2016.</p> <p><b><u>Fanore</u></b> The first draft report for the Fanore Dunes Management Plan was received from Prof. Robert Devoy MaREI at the end of March. Comments were returned and a re-drafting was requested as it was written as an academic paper and a more user-friendly commercial report was required. The second draft is currently being prepared.</p>	<p>Traffic count and parking survey to be organised for the month of August.</p> <p>Traffic and visitor management plan to be organised</p> <p>Blackhead lay-bys report to be finalised</p> <p>Methodology for conservation of Murrooghkilly cairn to be drawn up and RFT circulated</p> <p>Finalise the Fanore Beach and Dune Management Report</p>	<p>ZH with National Park staff</p> <p>Enda Mooney</p> <p>ZH &amp; PJ Carmody (CCC)</p> <p>ZH &amp; CGr</p> <p>ZH &amp; Prof. Robert Devoy MaREI</p>
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<p>Extra Item to agenda: Data presentation</p>	<p><b><u>Heritage Map Viewer</u></b> Pat Reid of the Heritage Council has commenced compiling the datasets for the Burren landscape layers to be presented on the map viewer. These will be reviewed when completed and added to with relevant information from GeoparkLIFE.</p> <p><b><u>Monitoring APP</u></b> ZH has pursued discussions with MAC Ltd, Limerick with regard to the development of a monitoring app for the GeoparkLIFE demonstration sites with potential for wider transfer. It is proposed that the app would include visitor observation, site condition and walking trail monitoring. ZH is currently compiling templates for each of these aspects and will be working with ED Keane of MAC Limerick to explore the potential. If successful, a digital toolkit for the holistic monitoring of heritage sites will be developed</p>	<p>Complete datasets input.</p> <p>Supply relevant Burren &amp; Geopark information</p> <p>Development of heritage site monitoring app prototype</p>	<p>Pat Reid</p> <p>ZH &amp; CG</p> <p>ZH &amp; MAC Limerick</p>

Item 3: Signage and Interpretation	<p>Following a review of the signage and interpretation at each of the demonstration sites ZH presented her findings to the Steering group meeting on April 27, 2016. This highlighted the level of duplication, damaged and excess signage at these sites. It was agreed by the Steering group that ZH would concentrate initially on the Fanore site and work with the stakeholders involved to determine a way forward. Following discussion at this B2 working group meeting it was agreed that we need to develop a uniform style of signage which incorporates a universal design approach. The focus should be on site interpretation and Fáilte Ireland need to be part of this process.</p>	<p>Prepare signage review plan for Fanore. Develop uniform signage template under Universal Design guidelines.</p>	ZH & project partners
Item 4: Carrying Capacity and Indicators	<p>Following the recommendations of the B2 meeting of January 2016 ZH prepared a draft framework for a carrying capacity matrix based on the seven demonstration sites and presented same to this meeting. Following discussion, it was agreed that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it is easier to measure the physical components of a site as opposed to the aesthetic;</li> <li>• there are difficulties in assigning values (grades) to the components of the site;</li> <li>• the ecological damage to a site needs to be looked at in terms of the whole site – not just the access path or walking trail;</li> <li>• the challenge is to identify indicators for sites and methods of measurement.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions offered included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure the value for the site in terms of the visitor interest e.g. how many visitors go there?</li> <li>• The damage at the site is the indicator; the visitor numbers are a cause, of which there are likely others such as animal and natural</li> <li>• Use fixed point photography to monitor the condition and state how often monitoring should be undertaken – if necessary suggest ecological quadrat monitoring with a low number of quadrats for example every five years</li> <li>• Regular monitoring along with visitor numbers may lead to a process of elimination of the cause of damage e.g. damage may be occurring although there are very few visitors – therefore have to test for other causes</li> </ul> <p>Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentrate on the site condition and trail erosion as indicators with visitor observations and footfall counters providing possible causes</li> <li>• There will be a level of damage that the GeoparkLIFE programme cannot measure - our focus must be the visitor.</li> </ul>		
<b>Next meeting: September 7, 2016</b>			