



LIFE11 ENV/IE/922

Minutes of Meeting

Project	Geopark LIFE B3 Working Group Meeting	
Date	22/02/2016	
Location	Old Ground Hotel, Ennis.	

Attendance	Person	Organisation	Abbr.
Apologies	Ristead Ua Croinin	Clare County Council	RUC
Apologies	Zena Hctor	Consultant/B2 Coordinator	ZH
Apologies	Tiernan Henry	NUIG	TH
Apologies	Gesche Kindermann	NUIG	GK
Yes	Christine Grant	National Monuments Service	CHG
Yes	Ken Curley	Office of Public Works	KC
Yes	Carol Gleeson	Manager GeoparkLIFE	CG
Yes	Gabriel Cooney	UCD	GC
Yes	Joanne Gaffrey	UCD/B3 Coordinator	JG

1.0	- Review and agreement of minutes from meeting on 16 th September 2015	
2.0	- Update on each of the case studies under B3:	
2.1	<p>Meitheal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A successful event on 7th November last with 35 participants in total - 31 from BEN businesses and 4 Burren Conservation Volunteers during the course of the day on Robert Cassidy's land in Carron, just beyond the Burren Perfumery. The event was organised by Martin Waldron from burrenescape.com on behalf of B.E.N. (Burren EcoTourism Network) / The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark , with the help of Burrenbeo Trust and the Burren Conservation Volunteers, Richard Morrison and Paul McHale(Regional Butterfly Coordinator for the National Biodiversity Data Centre). - The event included training in butterfly habitat management from BCV and then the group spent 4 hours clearing mainly hazel (and some brush) and creating a suitable habitat for butterfly breeding for 2016. The event also fed into the wider remit of a tourism related initiative by also clearing a defined walking route/path for tourists that runs through Robert Cassidy's land. - The day finished ahead of schedule and the group retired to Burren Perfumery for hot soup, tea and scones, again highlighting the importance of the social aspect of Meitheal and how it improves relationships and networking. There was a great work ethic in place and the notion of payback to the local community through organised events continues to be an important aspect of B3. 	<p>ACTION: Evaluation of this event to be carried out with a suggestion of speaking to Cari Ryan (BEN) about how this project will proceed.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the time Meitheal was taking place, the GeoparkLIFE project happened to be hosting Costas Christ from the National Geographic World Legacy awards. The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark has been shortlisted in the 'Destination Leadership' category, which recognises destination stewardship, including cities, provinces, states, countries, and regions that are demonstrating environmental best practices, protection for cultural and natural heritage, benefits to local people, and educating travellers on the principles of sustainable tourism. The winner of the award will be announced in Berlin March 2016. Being shortlisted is a very positive thing for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark, with Costas prompting us to look at how sustainable the area is and perhaps the need to look at the sustainability potential of the Cliffs of Moher Centre to support the Geopark. - The working group began to discuss the policy implications of Meitheal, asking if it could be broadened out. However, from BEN's point of view, an annual event of this type is all that its members can commit to. A suggestion of involving others such as the project partners was decided against as the current dynamic and motivation of tourism business pay back to landowners is working well and the introduction of other agencies may upset the dynamic so it was decided to leave it as it is. Having gone through 2 successful events it is felt the structure of Meitheal is working well. The only issue to be resolved is funding it into the future (i.e insurance costs and expert advice) - The policy lessons from this are that 'organic works best'. The Meitheal event has been organised locally, around local needs and this is probably the best approach. - The GeoparkLIFE project outcome will be to provide a resources document or checklist that groups can use when organising such events so they can give due consideration and be compliant with legislation etc. - A suggestion was made to look at the community group called Scatterry Island Heritage and Development set up in 2012 as a local action group for the area to promote the Islands rich cultural and historical significance in order to increase visitor numbers to the island. Their model could be looked at to provide comparison for how projects are being run in the Burren (BCVs), particularly when a group wants to carry out work in a National Monument. 	
2.2	<p><u>Adopt a Hedgerow</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update from Janet Cavangh, member of BEN, who is once again coordinating Adopt a Hedgerow 2016. There was the second clean up at the end of last year's peak season (Autumn/Winter 2015 event), however, bad weather led to difficulties and a poor turn out. However, the areas that were cleaned were notably less littered than last Spring. This was particularly noticeable, for example, just 	<p>ACTION: Future management for the collection/dispensing of litter to</p>

	<p>outside Kilfenora which was a litter black spot. Whether this is because the first clean-up removed the accumulation of years of litter and the actual amount being deposited on an annual basis is not as bad as perceived or whether it's because people are less likely to litter in a place that is actively maintained and kept litter-free has yet to be established. Ongoing monitoring will help with this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A training day has been scheduled with Burren Beo on invasive species in early March. This is similar to a workshop that Burren Beo provide but it will be tailored for the BEN group and run for one full day. The project will need to find out how BEN propose to report on invasive species. - Spring clean-up is due to take place week beginning 18th April, in conjunction with the National Spring clean and the Tidy Towns clean up. - Last year BEN partnered with local school children for a few hours litter picking and the children also received education talks on litter and caring for the environment. BEN would like to continue with this programme - BEN is considering approaching the Council in the coming weeks to seek permission to erect temporary signs for Adopt a Hedgerow, similar to the signage on the Golden Mile in Co. Galway. - An alternative to road signage suggested is to place a sign at their own place of business to inform customers that they sponsor Adopt a Hedgerow through active participation. 	<p>be established by BEN.</p> <p>ACTION: BEN to approach CCC about temporary signage for Adopt a Hedgerow.</p>
2.3	<p><u>Ballyvaughan Tidy Towns Biodiversity Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The BCDP are continuing work related to Tidy Towns and have actively worked with local school children to plant wild flower seeds along the base of walls. They continue to follow the suggestions made in the Wildlife Survey from last year. - The task for the project is how it will assist the Tidy Towns on an on-going basis. There is a desire by the project to have a tangible outcome such as a guidance document which supplements the Tidy Towns Handbook - The working group suggest contacting the Tidy Towns Committee to get information about past scores in relation to biodiversity on a national level and discuss ways in which the project might be able to supplement the Handbook and provide assistance to competitors. - It is acknowledged that the Ballyvaughan group may be unique in their approach to the competition and their vision for biodiversity in the town. It is advisable to make contact with another Tidy Towns group with a more 'traditional' approach, perhaps Corofin, to compare the team's structure and approach. - Further discussion is needed with the BCDP group to maximise the return from the biodiversity plan 	<p>ACTION: Arrange a formal meeting with the Ballyvaughan Tidy Towns group to discuss ways to maximise return on the biodiversity plan</p> <p>Contact Tidy Towns national body to access national results for biodiversity</p>

2.4	<p><u>Lisdoonvarna Failte</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of Lisdoonvarna Failte as a Case Study for the Geopark is now in question as the project is no longer contributing funding to the feasibility study. Funding is being made available under the CCC tourism and community grant schemes - A suggestion was made that the project retains linkages with the case study by providing information to Lisdoonvarna Failte on the heritage and hydrology of the area for use in future exhibitions and trails. - A suggestion came from the group that Lisdoonvarna Failte could apply for the Heritage Management Grant under the Heritage Council grants scheme 	<p>ACTION: GeoparkLIFE to investigate other contributions to Lisdoonvarna Failte as a Case Study and seek formal clarification from CCC on funding for Feasibility Study</p>
2.5	<p><u>Lisdoonvarna TY Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new pilot programme to run with Lisdoonvarna Secondary School is currently being put together by NUIG and will replace the previous programme. Details of this new initiative below in 3.0 	
2.6	<p><u>An Cabhail Mór</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenges arose with this project as it became apparent the regulations surrounding appointment of PSDP (Project Supervisor Design Process) and the responsibility of the 'Client' to fulfil these requirements (KHHG and the landowner). It is now obvious that the proposed training programme in the building is beyond the capabilities of the local community group at present. - The Conservation Engineers report was not commissioned by the GeoparkLIFE as the programme could not contract this – it needed to be done by the landowner and community group, as the client. - The KHHG applied for Adopt a Monument in partnership with the Burren Conservation Volunteers, with support from GeoparkLIFE. However the Adopt a Monument application was unsuccessful. As it stands, KHHG are still pursuing a partnership with BCVs. The GeoparkLIFE will continue to work with KHHG as a Case Study. - The GeoparkLIFE will take a detailed look at how this process over the past year has informed policy and look at what recommendations can be made for the future. - GeoparkLIFE partners will work on developing a way in which to help provide information and training for community groups, developing a 'checklist' type resource for community groups to help guide their proposals and manage their expectations. The issue around PSDP will be a reality going forward, especially with LEADER funding. - Clear guidance on when conservation tasks cross the threshold into construction phase works needs to be easily identifiable for 	<p>ACTION: Assess the policy implications of this process</p> <p>ACTION: Develop training and information on the requirements of community conservation programmes</p>

	community groups	
3.0	<p><u>A New Hydrology Programme with NUIG</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussions began in early December 2015 with Tiernan Henry of NUIG about a new partnership and the prospect of running an Hydrology Programme for schools. This came at the same time that it became apparent that NUIG were not in a position to develop a partnership for the purpose of providing archaeological services to the project. - Dr. Tiernan Henry had already been involved with the Lisdoonvarna TY programme and provided expertise last year. Now Dr. Henry has teamed up with Dr. Gesche Kindermann (also of NUIG) and together they have put together a proposal for a participatory educational programme for TY students which will centre on the idea of integrated catchment management, educating young people on their local water resources and encouraging community participation in knowledge building and a better understanding and management of the water resource in the Burren. The project will include teaching the students basic GIS skills and will encourage them to build maps in layers, adding detail all the time and creating a resource for the community while the Geopark LIFE will work towards an educational toolkit for Integrated Catchment Management with second level students. - This project will be overseen by Dr. Henry and Dr. Kindermann through the employment of a research Masters student who will deliver outputs for the Geopark LIFE in tandem with the MSc. This pilot scheme will run for one academic year from Sept 2016 to June 2017. 	<p>ACTION: A detailed project proposal and schedule of works to be prepared.</p> <p>Contact to be made with Mary Immaculate Secondary School through John Simms to allow this project to be included in the 2016/17 academic timetable for TY students.</p>
4.0	<p><u>Policy Review</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A number of partner interviews were carried out through 2015 to get a perspective on how policy is played out on the ground, i.e. with the policy implementers. It may be useful now to look at gaps in these interviews and consider speaking to higher management in some departments, i.e. the policy makers in order to gauge how we might proceed with recommendations on future policy. - A meeting with Naomi Deegan, who is preparing the World Heritage Technical Evaluation, was very interesting in raising questions about management in the Burren. Resolutions need to be found around management issues before going forward. The example of the current management issues surrounding parking at Poul nabrone was cited. - The Draft Clare County Development Plan is currently open to public submissions. The UNESCO designation for the Geopark is significant and there should be commitment from the Council to take on the responsibility that goes with that commitment. To that effect, the group will make a submission statement to the planning and enterprise section to propose integration of the projects 	<p>ACTION: Organise interviews with key partners at management level to gain the perspective of policy makers.</p> <p>ACTION: Public submission to be made by the Project on the Draft Clare</p>

	<p>objectives and initiatives into the next Development Plan to work towards sustainability. What is the best way for the partners to work together to manage the Burren? There are great ideas and desires to achieve something but this needs to be met with a managing commitment from CCC.</p>	<p>County Development Plan</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Next Meetings/AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Len Middleton and associated MAP team from the Ross Business School, University of Michigan will visit the Burren at the end of March. The purpose of their visit is to assist with the AfterLIFE plan. This group have the advantage of being from outside the project, have a good track record (e.g. BEN marketing plan) and will approach this from a business perspective, thus ensuring economic sustainability. It is important that the project is prepared for their visit to make the most of this opportunity to develop a strategic plan. Key partners will meet with this group during their stay. - Next B3 working group meeting May 18th 2016 	