



LIFE11 ENV/IE/922

Minutes of Meeting

Project	Geopark LIFE B3 Working Group Meeting	
Date	25/05/2016	
Location	Old Ground Hotel, Ennis.	

Attendance	Person	Organisation	Abbr.
Yes	Risteard Ua Croinin	Clare County Council	RUC
Yes	Zena Hctor	Consultant/B2 Coordinator	ZH
Yes	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
Apologies	Gabriel Cooney	UCD	GC
Yes	Joanne Gaffrey	UCD/B3 Coordinator	JG
1.0	- Review and agreement of minutes from meeting on 22 nd February 2016		
2.0	- Update on each of the case studies under B3:		
2.1	<p><u>Adopt a Hedgerow</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The BEN members participating have continued to maintain the hedgerows on an on-going basis, many of them extending participation beyond the scheduled bi-annual clean up. There has been a noted decrease in the quantity of litter being collected and this is considered to be because of the extraordinary initial effort on their behalf to carry out a thorough clean-up during the pilot stage in 2015. Items collected now tend to be regular litter such as paper cups/package and much of it is recyclable. This has also led to many businesses taking care of the material collected themselves and less reliance on a co-ordinated collection and transport to the centre in Inagh via permit. - Another consequence of the success of this scheme has allowed those businesses who are capable, to extend the area they are maintaining as the quantity of litter and the subsequent effort needed decreases; this is considered to be the trend, i.e. businesses can commit to greater stretches of hedgerow for the same commitment. - The BEN members undertook training on invasive species and are now equipped with the knowledge and skills to identify and report on 3 particular invasive species. As familiarity grows the hope would be that this will be extended to more species. Reporting can be 		<p>ACTIONS: JG to work with BEN Conservation Advocacy to produce maps for the Adopt a Hedgerow Scheme. JG to gather as much details about the signage proposal from BEN including quantity, size and design details. On production</p>

	<p>done directly to the National Biodiversity Data Centre or via Burren Beo using GPS Co-ordinates. This in turn will allow that information to be presented through the proposed Map Viewer App (see B2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This led on to a discussion about the importance of mapping this activity to show impact and progress. It is believed that BEN may have hard versions of maps and these need to be transferred to digital maps to be useful. - The issue was raised about BEN's desire to have signage for the scheme as a way of deterring litter offenders through raising awareness, while at the same time acknowledging the businesses input in this conservation activity. JG has had discussions with Karen Foley in Clare County Council Environment section and has been advised to go through the planning process for temporary signs to the Planning and Development section of the council. The group have asked the GeoparkLIFE for assistance with these applications as there is a large effort required to prepare a group application with very little certainty as to the outcome. The B3 working group have advised caution around erecting signs in SACs as there may be no exemption allowed. Once again the importance of maps came up with a need for this information in order to begin advisory discussions with the relevant people within the Planning section of the Council. 	<p>of maps, CG will begin internal discussion with Planning Section to get advice on how to best proceed with an application for temporary signs.</p>
2.2	<p><u>Meitheal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is an annual event so there has not been any active participation in Meitheal since the last working group meeting. - JG met with Cari Ryan from BEN Conservation Advocacy to discuss the future of Meitheal, with a view to beyond the LIFE programme. The issue around the notion of partnership with Burren Beo was the topic of conversation. It was the desire of BEN that this would be a partnership venture with the local conservation group, i.e. Burren Beo, but the model at the moment sees BEN/GeoparkLIFE paying a fee to Burren Beo for their participation. Burren Beo Trust relies on these types of payments for funding. BEN needs to consider their model of partnership with Burren Beo going forward. 	<p>ACTION: BEN to discuss the nature of their relationship with Burren Beo for future Meitheal events beyond LIFE</p>
2.3	<p><u>Ballyvaughan Tidy Towns Biodiversity Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The BCDP are continuing to follow the suggestions made in the Wildlife Survey commissioned by the GeoparkLIFE and have not sought any further support from the programme. - JG contacted Tidy Towns to access national scores on Biodiversity to try to look at how the competition is influencing biodiversity. The Tidy Towns organisation does not have this information in digital format and these results can only be accessed via the scoring sheets which can be accessed through the Tidy Towns website. JG asked the B3 working group if it would be a valuable exercise to 	<p>ACTION: JG to produce a project design/spec for NUIG Environmental Science student to analyse the</p>

	<p>analyse these scores? It was agreed that it may be a way of beginning to look at how Tidy Town competitions are influencing biodiversity policy and local groups. JG noted that the Tidy Towns Handbook was published in 2010 and the National Biodiversity Plan has been produced since that so it may be interesting to see how these are aligned in respect to policy on biodiversity and to compare the scores for those towns that have local biodiversity plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TH suggested that if a spec was written for analysing the Tidy Towns Biodiversity results then there are often environmental science students in NUIG that are seeking projects and this could be carried out by a student over the coming months. - Following on from this there may be scope to make recommendations to Tidy Towns for the future of the competition and its role in improving biodiversity. 	Biodiversity Results from the National Tidy Town Score sheets
2.4	<p><u>Lisdoonvarna Failte</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of Lisdoonvarna Failte (LF) as a Case Study for the GeoparkLIFE was to look at what it is that local groups need to support them to develop a tourism resource. As the initial proposal to provide financial support to fund a feasibility study for the development of the historic Spa Wells is not possible, the working group discussed alternative means of support. - A suggestion was made that the GeoparkLIFE could help LF with Guide Training, not just at the SpaWells facility but in the town as a whole. Training could help them with recruitment, structuring and pricing. This could equip the group with skills for the future as they develop their resource. The best method would be to look to Failte Ireland as a project partner for this. The training would probably be carried out through the Roscommon Galway Education and Training Board. We would need to see if it was possible to customise the training course and the GeoparkLIFE Heritage Interpretation course run by ZH to suit the needs of Lisdoonvarna Failte. A proposal will be developed and discussed with the Board of Lisdoonvarna Failte. - Lisdoonvarna Failte were unsuccessful in their recent application for the Heritage Management Grant under the Heritage Council grants scheme 	ACTION: GeoparkLIFE to investigate the possibility of working with Lisdoonvarna Failte to provide Guide Training
2.5	<p><u>An Cabhail Mór</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since the failure of the Adopt a Monument application the KHHG do not appear to have made any decisions on how to move on from here. - The B3 Working group explored what possibilities are open to them to provide training to the KHHG through the project partners. It was hoped that Lime Mortar Workshops through the OPW might be an 	ACTIONS: JG to Email RUC re SAFEPASS training through

	<p>option, however this is uncertain at the moment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was decided among the working group that the best and most practical option was to offer SAFEPASS training to KHHG and to investigate which partner could offer this as a contribution to the LIFE programme. - The Safe Pass training will provide a knowledge building exercise with KHHG on the processes behind certain conservation work and how these have to be carried out. - The outcome from this case study from a policy perspective needs to consider how the agencies and community groups fit in to each other's plans for the ongoing care and conservation of monuments. - The working group also enquired as to the status of the new guidelines from National Monuments for local groups undertaking heritage projects. 	<p>Clare Co. Council</p> <p>Enquire with KHHG if SAFEPASS training would be of interest to the group</p> <p>CHG to enquire about status of new operational guidelines for heritage projects aimed at Local Action Groups</p>
2.6	<p><u>Leave No Trace</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - So far the scope of the project was to amalgamate the Burren Code with the international Leave No Trace code to create a destination specific code. Zena Hootor (B2 Coordinator) has done a lot of work with Maura Lyons, the programme manager for Leave No Trace, on a skills and ethics booklet. It has been decided that the approach taken by Sonja O'Brien in her children's book 'What to do and What not to do when visiting the Burren' is exciting, bright and attractive. It is proposed that Sonja will design and produce the new Leave No Trace booklet for the Burren. The design of this publication has been costed and is awaiting approval. - It will be the task of B3 to disseminate this project and coordinate an awareness day which is scheduled for October 2016. 	<p>ACTION: Publication cost awaiting approval. Awareness Day October 2016.</p>
3.0	<p><u>A New Hydrology Programme with NUIG</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TH updated the group on the proposed new program that will run with Lisdoonvarna TY students in the coming academic year looking at Integrated Catchment Management (see Project Deliverables in Appendix 1). The class will involve 7 or 8 students under the supervision of John Simms and the program will be run by a research Master's student in NUIG under the supervision of TH and GK. - The project proposes teaching the students basic GIS skills using free and available software called QGIS which will allow them to build maps in layers as they identify and compile the information contributing to their shared water resource based on the decisions they make as a class, community and individuals. The project fits neatly into the policies contained within the Water Framework 	<p>ACTION: Meetings to be arranged between MSc Student, Grainne Barron, and John Simms of Lisdoonvarna Secondary School for June and August 2016 so that</p>

	<p>Directive which recognises that the success of the WFD relies on public participation with an integrated approach being considered the best way of managing the water resource. This project will demonstrate the contribution made by the regions young citizen scientists to integrated catchment management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This project will allow Geopark LIFE to produce an educational toolkit for Integrated Catchment Management with second level students and will be a project which will continue and build in subsequent years at Lisdoonvarna Secondary School. - The project will contain elements which will evaluate community based research, publicity through social media and local press with the working group adding that there needs to be an emphasis on stakeholder engagement at a local level and a need to see how it will influence stakeholders. There needs to be targeted meetings with associated groups such as IFA or BEN and that the support of GeoparkLIFE needs to be emphasised throughout. 	work is ready to commence in September 2016.
4.0	<p><u>Developing Toolkits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A brief introduction was given to the idea of the outcomes of the project and the toolkits that need to be produced as part of each action. These toolkits will be mainly online with occasional paper publications. The most important aspect is that the toolkits must be easily transferrable and interactive. - Discussion among the working group also introduced the topic of each partner agency considering its role and commitment in supporting AfterLIFE and the Geopark as a destination which actively manages and informs others. There may be a desire to use the LIFE results to offer fee paying training to other destinations in the future. - The working group had an informal discussion about what 'training' could mean, how accreditation works and the potential of the Geopark to have an active role in 'knowledge applied courses'. It was agreed among the group that there is a vast wealth of knowledge within the GeoparkLIFE programme and this has a value. - When considering AfterLIFE there needs to be buy-in from the Council and all partner agencies. 	
.0	<p><u>Policy Review</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A meeting was held with Brian McCarthy, CCC Planning, in relation to the Draft Development Plan. There have been two public submissions in relation to the Geopark and the council acknowledged that the role of the Geopark has been under-represented in the Draft plan. Following the meeting and the review of the submissions the Development Plan may be adjusted to give greater recognition to the Geopark. 	ACTION: Begin compiling all the relevant data gathered to date which will form the appendix for

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is deemed an appropriate time now to conclude on the findings from the desktop study of policy and the partner/stakeholder interviews, identifying gaps/conflicts and communicating those. The final stage of this process should see very clear and concise recommendations on policy for the future in relation to the Geopark. 	the Policy Review and inform a comprehensive executive summary on the findings to date.
5.0	Next Meetings/AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Next B3 working group meeting Sept 28th 2016 	

Appendix 1

Integrated Catchment Management Toolkits for Secondary Schools (Dr. Tiernan Henry)

The proposed project, the toolkits for secondary schools, catchment maps, the final thesis and documents will be completed in the agreed timeframe. This proposal is for a two-year study and the work will be broken down as follows:

June – Aug 2016:

- Draft literature review of best practice in integrated catchment management (Ireland, EU, non-EU)
- Plan of work for TY students for 2016/2017 will be developed with John Simms.
- Compile lists of online resources for use by students (websites etc: EPA, GSI, Teagasc, OPW, etc)
- Access online resources and toolkits for use by TY students.
- Social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter) will be set up for the project
- Progress report

Sept – Dec 2016:

- Workshop plans and ideas will be implemented with TY class/John Simms
- Produce draft maps of local catchment
- Stakeholder engagement with project through social media
- Plan for competitions/presentations (BT Young Scientist Jan 2017 etc)
- Progress report
- Draft of Journal Paper 1 (focus on ICM, citizen science and engagement)

Jan – May 2017:

- BT Young Scientist (January)
- Complete first maps with TY class/John Simms
- Stakeholder engagement with project through social media
- Produce draft toolkit resource with TY class
- Present maps at IAH conference in Tullamore, April (possible)
- Revise and submit Journal Paper 1 and draft Journal Paper 2 (focus on Community Based Research).

June – Aug 2017

- Revise toolkit and maps for completion
- Present results and map at CELT conference in NUIG (June)
- Article in local newspaper
- Infographic poster to provide accessible information to stakeholders and students
- Plan for TY students 2017/2018 and handover
- Write draft report for LIFE Project

Sept – Dec 2017

- Update maps and toolkit with TY students/John Simms
- Complete revisions of maps and toolkit for November
- Review project report
- Review and submit final maps, toolkit etc in Dec 2017
- Journal Paper 2 submitted.
- Complete final project report

Jan – May 2018

- Complete MSc thesis
- Present finding at conference (IAH, Environ)
- Disseminate findings to schools and TY years