



LIFE11 ENV/IE/922

Minutes of Meeting

Project	Geopark LIFE B3 Working Group Meeting	
Date	26/11/2014	
Location	Temple Gate Hotel, Ennis.	

Attendance	Person	Organisation	Abbr.
Yes	Ristead Ua Croinin	Clare County Council	RUC
Yes	Gabriel Cooney	UCD	GC
Yes	Joanne Gaffrey	UCD	BK
Yes	Christine Grant	National Monuments Service	CHG
Yes	Ken Curley	Office of Public Works	KC
Yes	Richard Morrison	Burrenbeo Trust	RM
Yes	Eamon Doyle	Geopark Geologist	ED
Yes	Carol Gleeson	Manager GeoparkLIFE	CG
Apologies	Beatrice Kelly	Heritage Council	BK
Apologies	Sarah Gatley	Geological Survey of Ireland	SG

1.0	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of literature distributed via email prior to meeting - CG informs group of draft report on progress submitted to Commission 30th Oct 2014, awaiting reply but general consensus from Lynne Barratt, LIFE Monitor, is that there is satisfaction with the recent progress of B2 and B3 aspects - GC invited to chair meeting 	
2.0	<p>B1 relevant Case Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CG reported on case studies relevant to B1. Under the Code of Practice, tourism businesses will receive training in <i>Conservation Awareness</i> and in <i>Interpretation and Visitor Management</i>. The <i>Conservation Awareness</i> will introduce them to the various conservation programmes in the Burren operated by Burrenbeo, Burren Farming for Conservation, NPWS, County Council, etc. The <i>Interpretation and Visitor Management</i> element will take an 8 week project based course that has been run in Co. Galway and in Loop Head that focuses on encouraging community groups to interpret and guide visitors in their own place. The focus of the project will be the B2 demonstration sites. - The B1 programme will also identify trainees that have come through the Code training that would make suitable trainers and will fund their training under a FETAC accredited course in 2016. - <i>Adopt a Road</i> is a proposal that has come from the Conservation 	

	<p>and Advocacy group of BEN. It is an initiative for BEN businesses to maintain stretch of roadside; identifying and managing invasive species, collecting litter and reporting dumping and vandalism. In return, the businesses responsible will be identified through appropriate signage, which will have the dual function of providing advertising, pride of place and encouragement to upkeep the commitment. 17 businesses from BEN have expressed interest in <i>Adopt a Road</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCV have access to mapping data of invasive species; this can be made available and added to/updated. CHG asks if links can be made with Tidy Towns throughout the county, as is the case with Ballyvaughan; however it is noted that the Tidy Towns is confined to 50km speed zone within towns and villages. <p>The following advice was given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to train people to identify invasive species and how to contain them. RM pointed out that dealing with the invasive species is not a volunteer capability without training and needs input from NPWS. - A system for the collection and disposal of rubbish has to be agreed with the County Council. Insurance cover also needs to be addressed. - KC and RUC suggested that 'Adopt A Road' may be a misleading term as it implies responsibility for the maintenance of a road which is usually a County Council function; perhaps 'Adopt a Hedgerow', or 'Adopt a Verge' may be more appropriate terms. - GC suggests a 'pilot' scheme/ roll out in phases as dealing with 17 businesses at once may be too many. Perhaps start with 5? CG will discuss this with BEN group. - All agree that there needs to be monitoring to assess its success and identify the issues as they arise. CG proposes use methodology recording report to record the activity. - Signage and collection of rubbish proposal to be put to the Council as a GeoparkLIFE initiative. 	<p>ACTION CG signage proposal to Council</p>
	<p>Training of Monitoring Supervisors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CG updated on current surveys and monitoring: Failte Ireland funding work by CASS on environmental surveys of B2 sites, and by Millward Brown for visitor surveys at B2 sites. Heritage Council are funding Zena Hector's work on observational studies and condition reports at B2 sites. Joe Saunders is collecting data on the environmental and economic impacts of coach tourism in the overall Burren region. Meeting on Monday 8th December 2014 between these consultants, the Geopark and Failte Ireland to present and collate the results of all surveys and devise a methodology for ongoing monitoring. - RM points out that the proposed methodology will be assessed by the Burren Conservation Volunteers and a proposal on their 	<p>ACTION Meeting Monday 8/12/14</p>

	<p>involvement in future monitoring will be developed. RM stresses the need for a practical and sustainable approach to monitoring and suggests that fixed point photography as evidence should be a strong aspect.</p>	
	<p>Meitheal, Adopt a Monument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM reported on the event which took place on Saturday 22nd Nov 2014 where BEN members undertook to repair walls on the Casey and Burke family lands in Fanore/Blackhead, supervised by the Burren Conservation Volunteers (BCV). Originally planned for Bank Holiday weekend but not good timing. 30 people participated; 18 engaged in wall repairs while remaining 12 organised a general clean-up of the area (e.g. collecting litter). Farmers were very helpful and co-operative. A social afternoon tea, hosted by BEM members, Ita and Noel Walshe, followed where both BCV and BEN members got to chat and get to know each other. - Wall repair included constructing a stile which is hoped will influence visitors routes across the wall. Location of stile picked up on sight-lines/high visibility. Priority for design was that the wall and stile have to be stock-proof. - KC asks how such an event is developed? RM explains that BCV co-ordinate the activity, with additional costs covered by Geopark, and word is spread via BEN. This encourages contribution of both formal and informal networks. Mostly advertised through word of mouth. KC notes the need to ensure no breaches of H&S occur. RM reassures that BCV do risk assessment and circulate to volunteers and get signed disclaimers for any event. - The documentation for the event, for purposes of recording for Commission, will be achieved by using the template proposed by CG, video clips, interviews and photographs. - GC also suggests mapping location of these events as part of documentation. - KC asks if location of stile/paths needs to be rotated to allow for recovery of any erosion caused around the 'pinch point' of the stile and paths leading to it. CG explains that monitoring will be part of the process and appropriate decisions can be made down the line. - This event was developed for BEN members as a gesture of support from tourism business to local landowners. Another spring Meitheal is proposed for March, possibly involving a beach clean on the Casey family lands at Murrooghtoohy. GC asks if this should be a BEN only event or should it be for the wider community? CG sees the benefit of restricting it to BEN to encourage identity/ownership and the duty to contribute. RM proposes one formal annual event aimed at BEN. Other informal events can include the wider community. BEN will also be invited to participate in all BCV scheduled events. Project partners are encouraged to attend to put faces to the project. 	<p>ACTION RM to complete methodology report on Meitheal activity. CG to begin to map locations Next event proposed for March 21st 2015</p>

	<p>Adopt a Monument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM explains that Ian Doyle will be in touch regarding this subject when he knows his Heritage Council commitments. This subject overlaps with BEN, farmers and volunteers. - Focus here will be on B2 demonstration sites and aims to recruit volunteers for this (link back to Meitheal, as above). 	
	<p>Kilnaboy; Monument Conservation Teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RUC proposes a training program confined to repairing and repointing (late) medieval structures. This will involve H&S training, lime preparation and training in use of lime. During RUC work in Clare Co Council he has seen the repair of 5 medieval churches and 1 tower house. The huge cost involved in the preparation for this repair work is inhibiting progress and buildings are deteriorating in the meantime. Is there a way to reduce cost by reducing bureaucracy? - The site of the 17th century plantation castle at Kilnaboy (An Cabhail Mor) is perfect for training as it is accessible, with a strong local historical society, and most of the preparation work is done. RUC proposes training could be set up by GeoparkLIFE as a 3 month program, supervised by archaeologists and employing expert trainers. - The ensuing discussion raised the following issues; - Intensity of processes and paperwork; causes most time, costs and resources in comparison to the actual conservation work. - 'blanket legislation' with all sites when Ministerial consent is required, however there are 'borderline' sites that should be dealt with more easily. - Can this be a case study that provides a template for other locations? - how legislation is implemented on the ground is key here. NMS/OPW need to negotiate and interpret the legislation but the question still stands as to whether there can be a template devised for such projects. Each case needs to be site specific and expert advice must always be sought. - Conclusion from the group that training in this area should include the whole process i.e. from application stage, so that community groups know what is involved. - OPW lime workshop as an example for 'training the trainers', which is in turn an aspect of RUC's proposal. - Concerns over using a monument for training purposes; can there be an element of off-site training? RUC suggests that if there is sufficient supervision and expertise then it shouldn't be a problem. - Obvious linkages to 'Adopt a Monument'; Consider models from Scotland before next meeting 	<p>ACTION OPW currently doing 'stock-take' of monuments that need attention. Can some of this be done within provisions of the project? Overlap with B2.</p> <p>Need for a more focused discussion on the application process for conservation work. Field trip to Kilnaboy and discussion afterwards to look towards resolution. See meetings below for details.</p> <p>Research similar case studies in Scotland.</p>

	<p>Tidy Towns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM reported on report due on Ballyvaughan. Will be circulated when draft is available - See Case studies above re invasive species and Adopt a Road 	
	<p>Lisdoonvarna Failte/ Lisdoonvarna Secondary School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED recaps on Transition Year Hydrology project looking at the heritage of water, and stresses the value of teacher John Simms as a contributor, given his extensive experience with Young Scientist. - GSI, CCC and local caving club are collaborating on dye tracing (due to take place in Spring 2015), GSI have developed a 3D hydrology model for schools and a drilling project in collaboration with TCD. NUIG are conducting post doctorate research in hydrology in the Burren. Great opportunity to collate scientific research and make this available to local communities. This research will have a tangible outcome and will involve the local community... and the process will be recorded. - Outcome will be an exhibition on hydrology and water in the Spa Wells Lisdoonvarna; Work with B1 <i>Interpretation and Visitor Management</i> to develop local knowledge and engage the community in interpreting their landscape. - CG to engage with Lisdoonvarna Failte on this. - The background information for the hydrology awareness campaign works across all three aspects of the LIFE project (B1 through B3). It feeds into overall Global Geopark agenda, engaging with people and dealing with hazards (i.e. flooding/water). - It is anticipated that if results are seen then it will be adopted by other schools and communities, making it important scientific research which is appealing to the broader community. - Lisdoonvarna TY students will be conducting a resident survey on attitudes to tourism which will feed into the B1 and Monitoring programmes. 	
3.0	<p>Enhancing Project Partner's Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing the legacy of the partnership aspect of the project after LIFE and continuing to work together at a regional level. - Contact has been made with the Irish Management Institute, plan to have a facilitation workshop in early 2015 to come up with a way to develop, strengthen and continue the quality of communication, understanding, awareness and collaboration within the partnership, for example, more integration of the tourism and conservation perspectives. - GC advises that there should be a sense of confidentiality around the meeting so that the best outcomes are achieved on the day. 	<p>ACTION Proposed date of 20th March 2015</p>
4.0	<p>Policy Implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GC The discussion surrounding Kilnaboy highlights the need for a changing train of thought about policy. There is a need to push the 	<p>ACTION Seek input from B1/tourism</p>

	<p>legal frameworks to the fore and inform people. In addition to the 3 phases outlined for B3 policy work, a proposed 4th phase will see the working of policy through the remainder of the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KC draws groups attention to the UNESCO operational guidelines for World Heritage - CG notes the need to communicate with Patrick McKeever about operational guidelines for the upcoming UNESCO Global Geoparks programme. 	<p>when it comes to policy to balance out the strong conservation agenda of the B3 group. CG to communicate with PMcK and GC on Global Geopark and UNESCO operational guidelines</p>
5.0	<p>Administrative Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CG requests timesheets: Matter of urgency that these are submitted from all partners by the end of the year - Recording template for B3 case studies to be modified and circulated by CG - Working Group agreed to invite Advisory Panel members to meetings and to also seek their advice informally via phone/email. Documents and minutes will be circulated to Panel members for comment. These Advisors represent sectors, businesses and communities in the Burren. 	<p>ACTION Is has been accepted that 2-3 advisors will be invited to working group meetings</p>
6.0	<p>Next Meetings/AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12th Jan 2015: Site visit to Cabhail Mór and meeting to discuss conservation management plans. 11am. - 20th March 2015: Proposed facilitation day - 21st March 2015: Proposed Spring Meitheal - 22nd April 2015: Steering group meeting - 26th May 2015: B3 Working group meeting - 16th September 2015: B3 Working group meeting - 12st October 2015: Steering group meeting - 25th November 2015: B3 Working group meeting 	