



B1 Working Group Meeting, 4th February 2016,

10am-12.30pm

Attendees: Carol Gleeson, Christy Sinclair, Karen Foley, Laura Cotter, Martin Waldron, Michael Fitzsimons, Tina O'Dwyer

Apologies: Birgitta Curtin, Tracey Duffy

	TOPIC	ACTION	DEADLINE
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of Actions Arising 21.09.2015 2. Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice for Tourism – Review of development plans 3. Strategic Plan Update <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. BEN Strategic Plan b. BEN & Geopark Joint Plan? 4. Update on Training Supports for Tourism Enterprises Spring 2016 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Geopark Heritage Interpretation b. Train the Trainer (Training Delivery & Evaluation) c. Fáilte Ireland Marketing Support Training d. Code of Practice Refresher Workshop 5. FAM Trips Spring Summer 2016 6. AOB 		
1	Review of Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send guidelines for claiming expenses. - MF to send the BIM template to CG - MW proposed. MF seconded. 	CG MF	
2.	Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice for Tourism Brief for this project was outlined and current position re working with members of BEN and potential procurement implications. Difficult to work out costs of this project until we get working on scoping it out. Group suggested going ahead with first meeting with the		

	<p>identified members on an unpaid basis. This meeting could identify time and associated costs and so would give the framework for the Invitation to Tender document.</p> <p>TOD preferred to wait until clearance was received to work with BEN members, rather than going to the market. They could then be paid for this meeting.</p> <p>CS and MF felt it was reasonable to come to initial meeting on an unpaid basis in order to secure the work.</p> <p>TOD expressed reservations about this on the basis that those coming to the first meeting have particular expertise that GeoparkLIFE needs to progress the project; they are not professional consultants or familiar with public procurement tendering; there is a chance that they would do the work of scoping the project without pay and then not win subsequent Invitation to Tender as they would be up against many highly qualified environmental and sustainable tourism consultants. There is an ethical consideration.</p> <p>Overall feeling from group was that this meeting should proceed with the first meeting on unpaid basis and then work from there.</p> <p>The project would split into 3 sections: review, content and Design/Print. Treat each one separately and procure services separately for each one.</p> <p>This item led to discussion on how the project overall must be 'audit-ready' and that observation of all procedures is very important.</p> <p>CG highlighted that the project's Mid Term Report will be submitted in the very near future. It takes about 1 month before there is a formal response from European Commission. After that, there is a window during which budgetary modifications can be requested. CG wants to ensure that any budgetary modification requested is accurate and allows sufficient money for the proper execution of a project but also does not allocate excess money to a project that then ends up not being spent. Examples are the Code of Practice Project, the Geoparks Meeting in 2017.</p>	<p>TOD</p> <p>TOD</p> <p>CG</p>	
3	<p>Strategic Plan Update</p> <p>Tina will be completing the documented plan with action plans will be completed over the next few weeks. Completed plan was presented in November to Network members and can now be documented with action plans as well.</p> <p>TOD highlighted that although the strategic plan quantified the resources required to keep BEN going, it did not identify</p>		

	<p>how to find or source funds and resources. This is now a critical issue.</p> <p>CG : With regard to the AFTER LIFE plan, GeoparkLIFE now has 5 MBA students coming here at the end of March to help produce an AFTER Life plan a.k.a. a business plan. They are being tasked to do a value proposition around what they are doing. An accounting proposition. They may identify sources of future funding for BEN as well, although their main focus is Geopark itself.</p> <p>TOD felt that waiting until April and outcomes of these recommendations keeps BEN dependent on Geopark for solutions. Feels its important that BEN is facilitated in working on this independently. TOD felt that that question of commercialisation of the model requires attention – in terms of transferability, should we really recommend a model that starts as funding-dependent. Would be better to recommend a model that from the outset is financially viable i.e. trading and independently identifying funding and partners.</p> <p>CS: highlighted that we handled it not so well in hindsight as the necessity of self-sustainability was not driven home. Value for membership fee is a no brainer but mindset is firmly embedded in a Geopark-funded model.</p> <p>MF: concurred similar mindset can be observed with regard to Failte Ireland supports – people do not connect the value received with tangible outcomes for them. He added if message hasn't been strong enough in the past, it now needs to come through in very communication with the Network – give example of Gaelforce – staged funding from Failte Ireland to enable them become financially viable over a set period.</p> <p>MW: Suggested that only a small number of members have gained to date in terms of bookings but that there has been significant other value.</p> <p>Group discussed how what Geopark is doing (Like Failte Ireland) is providing tools and opportunities. Value cannot be measured in bookings.</p> <p>LC: highlighted that value has been communicated repeatedly but people don't listen. Hard to make the message stick.</p> <p>Overall concensus after much discussion on this point was that the value should be quantified again and communicated again and then reinforced at all opportunities. Need to work on effecting a mindset change – members say ' i went on training, this allows me to do this, this will let me get x more bookings'</p> <p>TOD expressed reservations about LC and TOD doing this</p>		
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	<p>work as again it's the Geopark doing work that BEN needs to do for itself. Who will do it next year?</p> <p>CS communicated that some measures are being put in place to address this; also need to work on the social media strategy.</p> <p>CG: GeoparkLIFE needs to quantify and communicate value and meet to highlight the positives.</p> <p>TOD: suggested that need to have some road maps for financial certainly before meeting. Perhaps use GaelForce model and Geopark could map out exactly what's available on a reducing basis over the next two years.</p> <p>TOD: contributed that strategic plan process highlighted unanimously that best future was for BEN to emerge independent of Geopark. BEN's benefits should therefore be communicated separately to GeoparkLIFE's benefits or Geopark benefits. BEN needs to enlarge its vision and see itself as a partner organisation, with potential to work with several different agencies.</p> <p>CG: highlighted that Geopark relationship would remain strong as their is a mutual agreement of joint promotion of destination and Geopark will provide the Code of Practice.</p> <p>MF: offered that there could potentially be money through FI Festival funding to run a festival that could generate funds for BEN.</p> <p>Booking System: Discussion around where a future potential booking system would be housed. Overall agreement that it would not work within Geopark structure, but would have to be owned by BEN.</p> <p>Outcomes: Work on quantifying benefits over the course of this year. Create infographic or series of infographics that give out bite-sized information. Track evolution of Geopark, Value of UNESCO label.</p> <p>Meeting with Exec in late February about financial strategy. Exec needs to do its bit on strategic plan.</p>	<p>LC/TOD/CS CS</p> <p>Geopark Management & Exec</p>	
4.	<p>Updates on Training Supports for Burren Ecotourism Network:</p> <p>Marketing & Business Development Supports Two workshops in recent weeks from Failte Ireland with very positive feedback.</p>		

	<p>Overall cost of 2 workshops to FI as contribution to GeoparkLIFE was approx €3000. Need to follow up on what they do as a result of training and highlight the tools they have been equipped with.</p> <p>Code of Practice Supports Code of Practice Refresher Workshop on 9th March. Supply KF with copy of all Code of Practice materials in advance. KF confirmed she can attend course but highlighted she does not have experience of it to date. TOD confirmed that she was not expect KF to deliver the workshop but to come and meet the businesses and understand what is involved. TOD to send information to KF in advance – within couple of weeks.</p>	TOD KF	
5.	<p>FAM Trips 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send dates of FAM trips to B1 Working Group - Not enough space on these trips to invite the entire steering group. 	TOD	
6.	<p>Burren Food Trail & Boyne Valley Proposal TOD gave update to group on proposal from Boyne Value on Food Destination Twinning and on participation in Burren Winterage.</p> <p>Group advised that position on this should be put in writing and to exercise caution with regard to infringing on Burrenbeo's ownership of the Winterage and the cattle drive.</p>		
7	<p>AOB CG: posed question for group to consider: is the Code of Practice a tool for raising awareness or for raising standards? Various options and implications discussed around this and certification. No actions or decisions arising from this discussion.</p>		
8	<p>Next Meetings Thursday 23rd June 2016 (Old Ground Hotel), 10am-12.30pm Thursday 22nd September 2016 (Old Ground Hotel), 10am-12.30pm</p>		