

**REPORT FROM THE CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY ACTION
STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE of Sept. 9th, 2021 BY
MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT:

Cllr. Lourda Scott,
Chair in the absence of Cllr Rory
O'Connor
Cllr. Peir Leonard
Cllr. Dermot O'Brien
Cllr. Jodie Neary
Ms. Franny Raven
Ms. Sharon Jackson
Mr. Justin Ivory

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Breege Kilkenny, Director of Services
Ms. Jackie Carroll, Senior Executive
Officer
Ms. Mary Cahill, Senior Executive
Engineer , Climate Action officer
Ms. Deirdre Burns, Heritage Officer
Mr. Marc Devereux, Senior Engineer

APOLOGIES: Cllr Rory O'Connor, Chair, Mr Gary McKenzie, Glen Fuels

Minutes agreed and seconded.

Some updates including from Ms. Jackie Carroll, new SEO, Planning and Environment:

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 has been signed into law. Ireland is now on a legally binding path to net-Zero emissions no later than 2050, and to a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030. Net-zero emissions means any C being emitted into the atmosphere must be compensated by measures that take an equal quantity of C out of atmosphere Ireland's National Carbon Plan will be published before Halloween This will set out the measures to be taken in each sector of the economy. and then the 31 local authorities will have 18 months to draw up their own first 5-year Climate Action, Carbon reduction Plan, probably to a standardised format. It is likely that a new role as Community officers will be funded by the Dept., presumably of the Environment. "The Act provides for a national climate objective, which commits to pursue and achieve no later than 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally-sustainable and climate-neutral economy-, [*Press release*](#), Aug 9, 2021 on [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie)

Other News, See gov.ie for details:

- First meeting of the National Bioeconomy Forum has taken place
- New measures for community-led renewable energy projects: Good Practice Principles to ensure communities benefit from funds generated by other renewable energy projects in their locality and a new Steering Board
- National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF), Ireland's first national framework for managing marine activities up to 2040 and the publication of the Maritime Area Planning Bill 2021, legislation to manage marine development

- The Government is soon to draft new legislation to implement a circular economy limiting single use products and clamping down on littering and dumping, among other measures.
- [Public Consultation on the Draft Policy Statement on Mineral Exploration and Mining](#). Submissions closed 15 October 2021. This Draft Policy Statement includes the ban on new prospecting licences, mining licenses or leases for coal, lignite and oil shale, in accordance with the Circular Economy Bill 2021.

Presentation on incorporating Just Transition measures into local Climate Action Plans:

Presentation by Sinéad Mercier, who lectured on Environmental law in Maynooth University and is now starting a doctorate on *Just Transition* in UCD.

Just Transition, Lessons for Ireland, See powerpoint presentations on You Tube

- A theme at COP21, Relevant in Ireland where there are people already suffering energy, transport and rural-urban poverty
- Some groups working hard on *Just Transition* measures: St Vincent de Paul, Irish Rural Link and the National Travellers Money and Budgeting service/MABS
- Their work aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 13

The EU Green Deal had an unintended consequence, in that the changeover to low carbon was financially out of the reach of many and could lose them their job or change how and where they earn their livelihood

There is funding available at the moment for peat workers in the Midlands, and similar funding will probably be offered elsewhere, so keep an eye out for this funding. The Trade Unions did present to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Change, 2019. And the Climate (Amendment) Bill, 2021 refers to the need for *Just Transition* measures. Some flood victims from 2014 are still living in hotels

Each Climate Action Plan must incorporate *Just Transition* measures, show how it will assess needs, check that measures are working, obtain data on vulnerable groups whose needs are under-reported. Ms Mercier will send on the Points Framework from Strathclyde University. Cork City Council has already developed some procedures. There will be a need to build trust among the many sectors being asked to implement changes. A discussion followed. *Just Transition* is commonsense *and of course communities need support to survive and thrive when climate action measures force changes*. What two things could WCC start doing now, eg to have young people conduct surveys? Ms Mercier suggests *Just Transition* measures will require extra people to be hired accompany communities and 'to see the process through'. New technologies may offer solutions, eg: AGS technology purifies water cheaply for livestock to drink in times of drought, Data centres generate heat which could be captured and used to heat homes and public buildings more cheaply, etc. See book *The Entrepreneurial State*, by Mariana Mazzucato

Electric Vehicle Chargers:

Breege Kilkenny, Director of Services with Wicklow CoCo, recently chaired the CCMA group who have just published the Guidance doc. for the Electrification of the local authority Fleet. Local authorities are intending to kick start the installation of EV charging points/EVCPs but do not intend to finance their installation. They are aware that 20% of EV owners, living in apartment blocks, for example, will not be able to install EV chargers in their own front drive. An 80% charge can take 6, 7 hours and costs €1. 60. Local authorities will graduate to providing support to private companies who will install, run and maintain the charging points. Govt. policy remains that EVs charge at home and only top-up outside the home. High-speed chargers can cost 10 times as much as the slower charger €50,000 Vs €5,000 and are suitable for only some batteries. Some Apple Green garages have started to install EVCPs. Planning and building regulations will have to be put in place, with a preference for installing EVCPs on the outskirts of towns and having public transport bring the drivers into town. LPG or hydrogen might eventually power heavy vehicles, meanwhile local authorities want to show leadership and will be transferring to EVs for their vans and lighter vehicles. There is a growing market in electric bikes and in maintaining them.

Website for Environmental Section, Wicklow County Council:

The Environment Section of the Wicklow CoCo website has had a complete overhaul and is now packed with information as always, but the information is easier to find. Go onto wicklow.ie/living/services/environment to check it out!

Wicklow's Tree Management Policy:

Mary Cahill, Climate Action Officer, presented a series of slides outlining the new Wicklow County Council Policy for trees, woodlands and hedgerows on its lands. Blue Skies have completed a drone mapping of Co Wicklow trees, there is to be a mobile app on tree management, listing the species, condition and location of all trees and hedgerows. The County Council will develop a Protocol for the Care of Trees and review its pre-planning, planning and post-planning procedures. The draft Tree Management Policy booklet runs to 44 pages and incorporates some of the policies and recommendations listed in Chapters 9 and 10 of the Strategy Report commissioned from the consultant. After some discussion, it was decided to give more time at a later meeting. Members were asked to write a paragraph outlining their comments and to submit these by September 30th. The PPN Reps wish to strengthen the draft Tree Management Policy document in the various ways they have outlined in their submissions.

Tree Grants:

Wicklow County Council is again offering a grant for tree planting as part of our Climate Action programme. Up to 75% of the cost of planting trees will be awarded to successful applicants for trees to a maximum grant value of €500. Tree should be native Irish trees or a small number of pollinator friendly species which are listed in the application. Fruit trees may also be planted. In order to apply please complete the attached form providing a list of trees with price quotations along with a sketch map of the proposed site for planting. Sites for planting must be public and the municipal district offices will be consulted to assess whether proposed sites are suitable for planting and that trees appropriate to the site have been selected.

Further information is available in the grant application but if you have any questions please do get in touch.

Closing date for receipt of applications is the 8th of October.

Signed: Jim Callery
Wicklow County Council
Tel. 0404 20100

Open Event, September 18th, 2021, Brittas Bay

The Brittas Bay programme continues with an Open Event next Saturday starting 10 am

The Provision of Allotments:

Cllr Peir Leonard asked that there would be a presentation given to all 5 municipal districts about the provision of allotments. Blessington continues to campaign for communal allotments and made a powerful submission to the draft County Development Plan 2021-2027 which can be read on wicklow.ie. It has been suggested that each new housing development could allocate some land for allotments.

Mary Cahill agreed Allotments will be an item on the agenda of the next meeting, either October 14th or November 11th

.....The next meeting of CABA SPC was planned for October 14th, but may be delayed.....