

# Meeting CABA SPC

Dec 9<sup>th</sup> 2021

**Formal and repeated thanks and compliments to outgoing Chairperson**, Cllr Rory O'Connor, whose term as shared Chair finishes Dec 31<sup>st</sup>, when Cllr Lourda Scott is due to take up the position as Chair for the second half of CABA SPC's mandate into 2024.

**Welcome to the press release of Minister Malcolm Noonan** and parliamentary questions confirmation that there is to be 600,000€ allocated to employing new Biodiversity Officers in the New Year and the national budget for biodiversity actions in 2022 is tripled to 1.5 million €. There are already 5 full-time Biodiversity Officers, one in Wexford, one in Kerry and 3 assigned to three of the 5 Dublin local authorities.

Breege Kilkenny, Director of Services, assured us that she has already responded to express Wicklow's case for a full-time Biodiversity Officer.

(Notes: Currently, the Heritage Officer is looking after all heritage - both built and natural – in Co. Wicklow. Natural heritage/Biodiversity/Nature-based solutions/Conservation and Restoration of nature could be part of the work of a Biodiversity officer. To note also that Ireland is one of 100 countries which signed into law the Kunming Declaration's 17 resolutions for Biodiversity Protection on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at COP15 for Biodiversity.)

**Minutes of the Meeting, October 22, 2021 agreed, no matters arising.**

## **Coastal Protection, Engineer Marc Devereux, Cllr Peir Leonard**

Good news for areas subjected to coastal erosion: Irish Rail/ Iarnród Éireann has been granted funding from the €200 million allocated to coastal protection works to carry out improvements to the rail lines endangered by soft-rock foundations, notably between Ringsend, Dun Laoghaire, Bray and Wicklow town. The Steering Committee is due to be appointed. Nature-based methods of reinforcing the coastline are up for consideration, such as in the SAC/Special Area of Conservation that is the Council-owned Brittas Bay where planting grasses to reinforce the sand dunes might be as effective as rock armour. North of Arklow and a small area South of Arklow are looking to carry out a detailed study in the New Year to consider what oyster and seaweed farming (dillisk/nori and kelp) would offer in building habitat, reef and refuges for fish and marine life. A Professor Anne Marie Frankel, with international experience in similar biomimicry projects in Rimini and Eckelsee, has offered her assistance and LEADER funding is available. Careful planning, well before the design stage when the project is sent out to tender, leads to the best results. Cllr Leonard pointed out that it would be good to find ways to share the story of this innovative project as it happens and to get knowledge out among the public before the works commence.

## **Tree Management Policy for trees on lands owned or managed by Wicklow County Council**

After two rounds of submissions from members of CABA SPC addressed to Wicklow's Climate Team at their request, the Environmental Officer remarked that the document itself is very little changed. Replies were typed and emailed back to the five submission papers sent in the second round. The PPN rep for the East remarked that the replies did not reflect the urgency or the emphasis on biodiversity he had hoped for. The PPN rep for the West remarked on the need for more work on the survey and maintenance of

hedgerows. The Tree Policy provides for the use of top international standards of planting and maintenance, funding for a full drone survey of Wicklow's trees and an emergency number for the public to call listed on the new Tree section of the Wicklow County Council website in the Environmental section. All four Councillors present and both PPN reps agreed the adoption of the Tree Policy. It was agreed that a Review of the Tree Policy would take place anything from 12 to 24 months hence.

The Tree Management Policy was adopted on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and has now been published to the Council's website, Wicklow.ie. The Policy is open to review. The link for ease of access is:

<https://www.wicklow.ie/Portals/0/adam/Content/fWjhglXj2keBnvFiH7zcag/Link/Tree%20Management%20Policy.pdf>

### **Wicklow's Progress, Climate Action Officer, Mary Cahill**

The National Climate Adaptation Strategy signs up to 85 Climate Adaptation actions to be undertaken by each local authority. Wicklow postponed some Actions and adopted some new Actions, but overall is well on target with 58% of all the original Actions ongoing or already complete and just 17% not yet started.

### **Update on Biodiversity Actions, Co Wicklow, 2021, Heritage & Biodiversity Officer, Deirdre Burns**

- **Reminders** that the Community Monument Fund is open for applications until 15 February 2022
- The Built Heritage/BHIS and HSF Schemes are open for applications until 28 January 2022

With thanks to funds and supports provided by the National Biodiversity Action Plan Fund, the NPWS and the Heritage Forum:

- The Swift Project, 72 boxes were in use this year
- Kilbride Mausoleum and Graveyard Conservation Plan
- Arklow Marsh Conservation Plan to seek Biodiversity Action Plan funding
- Brittas Bay Project in its third year, a Special Area of Conservation for habitats, such as the sand dunes, a blue Flag beach, removal of sea buckthorn, botanical surveys identifying rare native plants, Community Day in September.
- Kilmacanogue Marsh Bio Enhancement Plan in Bray MD
- The Killruddery Valley Chapel Wall and Graveyard
- Botanical and ecological surveys of Historic Graveyards identified rare species of plants, since these grounds were not tilled or sprayed with chemicals. Historic Graveyards are generally in County Council ownership
- For news on Wicklow within the National Pollinator Plan, go to [pollinators.ie](http://pollinators.ie)

.....**This concluded the meeting**.....