

HOWTH SPECIAL AMENITY AREA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Members/alternates of the Howth SAAO:

*Cllrs. David Healy, Joan Hopkins, Brian McDonagh, Aoibhinn Tormey;
Dublin Naturalist Field Club: Declan Doogue/Con Breen; Fingal Tourism: Neil Kennedy/Elaine O'Sullivan
Howth Hillwatch: Jacqueline Feeley, Ciara Ní Laoi Howth land owners: Ray Gilmore, Fiona Bellingham Howth Pathways: Conn Redmond/Dougal Cousins Howth Peninsula Heritage Society: Edgar McLoughlin*

Howth-Sutton Community Council: Nessa O'Brien

Irish Uplands Forum: Mary Tubridy

National Parks and Wildlife Service: Vacant

Howth Peninsula: Mary O'Connor/Sean Doran

Fingal Co. Co. officers supporting Howth SAAO:

*Gemma Carr (SEO, Parks), Mary Godwin (SEO, Planning)
Fearghal McSweeney, (AO, Planning), Kevin Halpenny (Snr. Parks Superintendent), Theresa Casey (EO, Parks), Carol Hurley (Exec. Planner), Hans Visser/Deirdre O'Farrell (Biodiversity Officers), Mary O'Reilly (Snr. Staff Officer), David Daly (Admin.)*

Minutes of Meeting held Wednesday 15th March 2023 in Baldoyle Public Library

Present: Philip O'Connor, Dougal Cousins, Conn Redmond, Edgar McLoughlin, Jacqueline Feeley, Ray Gilmore, David Healy, Hans Visser, Gemma Carr, Fearghal McSweeney, David Daly

Apol.: Mary O'Connor, Mary Tubridy, Nessa O'Brien, Joan Hopkins, Mary Godwin, Deirdre O'Farrell

SAAO/2 Minutes of previous meeting: Minutes of meeting of 14/12/22 proposed (by Conn Redmond), seconded (by David Healy) and adopted. No matters arising.

SAAO/3 Update on SAAO works being implemented by Fingal Co. Co.: Hans reported: Tenders have issued for further Rhododendron control; Pathway relocation at Bellingham's agreed and tenders to issue; cattle grazing continues but as dogs off lead still a problem, hidden camera (no facial recognition) to be installed temporarily; goat grazing going well, entering kidding season, with Council hosting a naming competition and a sponsorship/adoption programme; lease needed for goats to graze other locations; limited Oxford sandy/black pig grazing project for bracken and gorse to be trialled at Red Rock for 3 months, inc. temporary fencing; Deirdre to check and report re signage needed on loop paths; Hans to circulate Failte Ireland report; Howth Head SAC covers heathland and sea cliffs, but no survey ever done of latter, so to proceed this year; heathland reseeded at Nose of Howth underway (nursery stage), with planting and rope fence in summer.

SAAO/4 Report from Conservation and Recreation Sub-Committee: Dougal reported. Re Op. Plan: request again presentation on Fire Brigade report - Hans to follow up. Council's commissioning of a biodiversity study on woodlands welcomed, and Tetrarch if it could do similar on its lands - Ray agrees to bring this up and also suggests a Tetrarch rep meet Hans on the Biodiversity plan; There was concern at use of Red Rock Woodlands by 'Forest School' - Cttee. saw no problem with this, agreed that Therese Casey be asked for opinion re impact; on data from pedestrian counter at Balcadden Beach, Therese also to be asked. Other issues of the Sub-Cttee re signage, grazing projects and dog walkers already answered in Hans' report.

Edgar asked if any update re NPWS participation on Cttee. Philip had received no reply from letter to Minister O'Brien. Is meeting Mairead Stack soon, the new NPWS ranger for this area. On Ireland's Eye jetty, Hans/Ray reported progress, with mtg. soon between engineer and Harbour Master re design of seasonal pontoon solution. Planning to be lodged in May.

SAAO/5 Report from Planning and Communications Sub Committee: Jacqueline reported. **Re new**

logo: this finalised by Des Mullen and Sub-Cttee recommends acceptance. Council then say can't be used by them because of Irish Language Act. Cttee agreed the design on condition Irish language aspect remedied (Irish script above logo). Sub-Cttee is organising a facilitated **Communications Workshop** to clarify strategy (message, target audiences etc.), develop publicity materials, create online SAAO identity and prepare presence at upcoming Howth Festivals.

Walking groups: Gemma to contact Sea Scouts to arrange. Planning Design Guidelines for SAAO boundary treatment – Sub-Cttee proposed amendments to be incorporated and FCC to advise re good practice on walls and boundaries. FCC Comms Dept. to assist re video or other appropriate.

Heritage Trail: Philp met Christine Baker, FCC Heritage Officer, for advice, who recommended new favoured approaches and suggested applying for funding for a Heritage Audit.

Fearghal updated on enforcement matters in three cases of concern to the Cttee. Will circulate the grounds given for Council closing one of the cases.

SAAO/6 Howth Pathways: Conn reported. Group now has presence on *I-Vol* seeking volunteers. Reported all steps over Red Rock now cut and cleared. Group's sponsorship money is used up, but seeking support for new equipment (advised to contact Community Dept. re specific sum). Group will participate in the *Irish Spring Clean* on 22/04.

SAAO/7 Expenditure: No expenditure to report.

SAAO/8 A.O.B:

- On Dougal's proposal, Committee offered condolences to Mary O'Connor on the passing of her brother Tommy, commending his years of work for the community. Chair to post a note to this effect on condolences page on rip.ie.
- Philip reported issues Joan wished to have raised, re Tree Felling on Howth Rd. and issues at Sutton Woods. Gemma answered that planning conditions allowed their removal, but also replacement by lime trees. Sutton Woods issue to be returned to.
- Dougal raised management of saplings at Red Rock and strimming of weeds: esp. inclusion of hazel, not native to Howth. Gemma to discuss with Operations what works can be done in Sept. Also, clearing of sycamore and infill planting to take place Autumn/Winter.
- David Healy raised access to Deerpark following removal of one adventure tour operator's licence. Ray said *no restrictions* on public access and issue with operator purely contractual.
- Dougal asked re Tetrarch flags behind Howth Celtic grounds and asked if hedgerow threatened. Ray confirmed fencing being installed for security.
- Gemma proposed an assessment of the varied impact of tourism from pedestrian counter data. It was agreed this would be useful, and Cttee to return to it.
- Edgar commended Philip and others involved on success of Eire 6 restoration.

Meeting closed at 16:50.

Minutes: David Daly

Signed:

Philip O'Connor, Chair, Howth SAAO