



HOWTH SPECIAL AMENITY AREA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council



Members/alternates of the Hawth SAO:

*Howth-Sutton Community Council: Nessa O'Brien
Cllrs. D. Healy, J. Hopkins, B. McDonagh, J. Guerin Dublin Naturalist Field Club: D. Doogue/C. Breen; Fingal
Tourism: Neil Kennedy/Elaine O'Sullivan Hillwatch: Jacqueline Feeley
Howth land owners: Ray Gilmore, Fiona Bellingham Howth Pathways: Conn Redmond/Dougal Cousins Howth
Peninsula Heritage Society: Edgar McLoughlin Irish Uplands Forum: Mary Tubridy National Parks and Wildlife
Service: Mairéad Stack Howth Peninsula: Mary O'Connor/Sean Doran*

Fingal Co. Co. officers supporting Hawth SAO:

*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.)*

Draft Minutes of Meeting held Wednesday 13th December 2023, in Baldoyle Public Library

Present: Philip O'Connor Chair, Jacqueline Feeley, Nessa O'Brien, Edgar McLoughlin, Dougal Cousins, Mary Tubridy, Cllr David Healy, Hans Visser, Deirdre O'Farrell, Carol Hurley, Cormac Downey, Solomon Aroboto, Elisa Pelletier, Aoife Cannon, Alexis Fitzgerald

Apologies: Conn Redmond, Gemma Carr, Cllr Joan Hopkins, Mairéad Stack

SAAO/2 Minutes of previous meeting: Minutes of meeting of 20/09/23 proposed (by Jacqueline), seconded (by Edgar) and adopted. Matters arising dealt with elsewhere in agenda.

SAAO/3 Presentation by Aoife Cannon, Elisa Pelletier, Growing Roots Forest School.

- The school runs for 2 hours a day after school 2 days a week and is made up of 2 separate groups of children. When in the forest the groups operate a leave no trace policy

- The school runs year-round, Elisa asked if there was any way that the group could apply for permission once a year instead of having to apply each quarter. It was confirmed that Lourda would be asked to follow up on whether permission could be on a yearly basis.
- Elisa requested advise on best principles to manage the forest and offered to work with Fingal Co. Co. in any way they could assist.
- The children are predominantly local, with a few travelling from surrounding areas, and there is a fee to attend.
- Edgar asked if the group was in charge of paying their own insurance, which they were

SAAO/4 Update on SAAO works being implemented by Fingal Co. Co

- Deirdre discussed works being implemented and gave a recap of a busy year including the Communications strategy and mentioned that the tender process for hiring a Communication officer is underway and will be progressed in the new year.
- Photos were shown of rewetting works being carried out, At Green Hallows cottage a drain has been blocked with the aim of helping lands rewet there
- Photos were also show of rhododendron control east of the Bog of Frogs, diggers have been brought in and 3-4 acres have been cleared via pulling instead of cutting methods
- Deirdre explained how they were approached to see if they could assist in release of 2 peregrine falcons which took place successfully, not clear if the birds stayed in the local area
- Pedestrian footfall figures were shown for the Baily and Balscadden beach, these figures are only an approximation and not an accurate account of numbers, Deirdre will circulate the full report
- Pigs in Howth discussed – a great success this year with new pigs coming in the new year
- Hans took a moment to acknowledge the sad passing of John Bellingham and was grateful of his help and support with the SAA. Agreed that Philip send condolences on behalf of the Committee.

SAAO/5 Presentation Habitat Assessment of Seacliffs on Howth

- Alexis Fitzgerald presented on the seacliff survey on Howth Head, its aim was to survey the special annex. This was the first survey of its kind done in this area.
- The assessment was based on NPWS guidance and was done for the entire cliff side.
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- Total length of the survey was 9.31 km including the cliffs and islets.

- Most areas were deemed to be of good quality, the small areas that fell below this were based closer to developments and this was due mainly to poor hydrology.
- Scrublands was another area of concern, 15% of land was covered in scrub, this should be less than 5%, a trial of removal of the scrub here was suggested.
- The local community and landowners should be engaged in relation to invasive species, the majority of which are thought to be escapees from private gardens. Hans says this is the first job and an information sheet on invasive species could be done up and circulated.
- A full hydrological report was also recommended, investigation into draining of pipes straight into sea to be included in this

SAAO/6 Report from the Conservation & Recreation Sub-Committee

- the sad passing of John Bellingham was noted. He will be missed and was a remarkable character, the SAAO committee will be represented at the funeral by Philip.
- It was suggested that members of the SAAO be brought on visit to the goat grazing project, this was agreed.
- The Heritage Council will be doing a review of community involvement in landscape management, The SAAO will be included in this. Mary will keep members updated on this.
- A meeting between Fingal County Council Operational staff and Howth pathways should be held once a year at least, Therese will make contact with Conn to arrange this

SAAO/7 Report from the Planning & Communications Sub-Committee

- A very positive information meeting was held in Howth Yacht Club. Over 100 people were in attendance, the information was received well by those in attendance
- The final text for the new information leaflet is being drafted, this will be sent to Deirdre to get translated, the text with no images will be circulated.
- A tender will be raised for a digital media officer, Council will put this out in the new year.
- It was agreed that Philip discuss with Solomon concerns over the slow progress of the planning enforcement process. On issue of PP applications by people with outstanding enforcement orders, Carol Hurley stressed that people are so entitled.. Matter to be discussed further on possible solutions.
- New Operations staff will be starting in the New Year. Philip to contact Therese Casey in January in relation to Cowbooter Lane. The Lane is in a disorderly and overgrown state and the culverted stream compromised in wet weather. A local volunteer group are willing is

prepared to undertake replanting if Operation Department supplies plants.

- David Daly to post 100 x enforcement forms to Jacqueline as requested.

SAAO/8 Expenditure Report

- Hans informed the Committee that there is a surplus of €89,000 in the SAAO code. In 2023 €22,338.34 was spent on 2 SAAO promotional videos, SAAO promotional material for the Howth Marine Festival, the Communications Strategy and signage improvements. The Committee approved this expenditure.
- €10,000 will be added in January to the SAAO code. as the annual FCC contribution to the SAAO.
- Its estimated that €40,000 will be used for communications work, leaving €20,000. Most of the SAAO budget will be spent

SAAO/9 Howth Pathways

- Continuous problem of pathway being blocked by garden debris and asked if anything could be done through litter enforcement. Hans will investigate with NPWS and the litter warden, ..
- Dougal asked if the arrow at the car park pointing the wrong way can be rectified and if signage can be updated at the quarry due to confusion with “private property” signs. Dougal to liaise with Deirdre to address this issue.

SAAO/10 AOB

- NPWS had appointed a rep. to SAAO, It was decided to organize Teams access for next meeting.
- Mary noted men's toilets at Howth Pier are in an awful condition, the Committee was advised that new works are beginning on them in the Spring.
- Philip thanked the Committee for all the great work done during the year and wished everyone a happy Christmas
- The Committee thanked Philip for his work as Chairperson.

Next meeting: Wednesday, 13 March 2024.

Minutes signed:

Philip O'Connor, Chair, SAAO

The Meeting concluded at Time Not Specified

AREA CHAIRPERSON

DATED