

**Comhairle Contae Fingal
Fingal County Council**

Minutes of Howth SAAO Management Committee

Wednesday, 18th September, 2024

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18/09/2024

Minutes of Meeting held Wednesday 18th September 2024, in County Hall, Swords

Present: Philip O'Connor Chair, Jacqueline Feeley, Edgar McLoughlin, Dougal Cousins, Cllr David Healy, Cllr Cathal Haughey, Hans Visser, Sorcha King, Fearghal McSweeney, Eoin Quinlan, Zer Barokas, Mary O'Connor, Therese Casey, Caroline Core-Grimes,

Apologies: Conn Redmond, Mary Tubridy, Mairead Stack, Lisa Doyle

SAAO/2 Minutes of previous meeting: Minutes of meeting of 19/06/24 proposed (by Cllr. Cathal Haughey), seconded (by Mary O'Connor) and adopted.

SAAO/3 Update on SAAO works being implemented by Fingal Co. Co.

- Hans took members through a presentation (David will circulate this presentation separately)
- Goat Grazing has been extended for 3 years, with new goatherd Katherine Abel. Rhododendron control ongoing at Green Hollows. Pedestrian counter implemented at Balscadden. Coastal Path at Bellingham's completed. Closure of Right of Way at Redrock now on Public Consultation. It was agreed to send a submission to support this. A diversion has been implemented to avoid people walking on rare plants at Redrock.
- The new SAAO brochure was finalised and 500 copies printed. Committee members approved the design. 201 people have attended the 8 events run to date with 2 further events to take place. The Maritime event was well attended. An Irish language version of the information board and panel to be printed. This will cost €500. This was approved by the members at the meeting.
- 2 tenders received for PR person with Fuzion providing the most competitive tender at €29,000. This was agreed. An initial meeting with Fuzion with the chair, FCC and sub-cttee to be arranged.
- 2 tenders also received for the Schools Programme, with OWLS providing the most competitive tender at €15,260 for 2 years (no VAT). This was agreed.
- Expenditure Report displayed. Hans said the highland cattle were being sold by the farmer so FCC proposed SAAO purchase them as part of the grazing programme with all external costs i.e. vet bills being covered externally by Newbridge Farm. Philip moved that this be agreed, and it was approved by the Cttee. on the proposal of Edgar, seconded by Dougal.

- Landings at Irelands Eye was discussed. One boat is authorised to land visitors, and these generally keep to the pathways. The biggest issue is unauthorised landings causing damage to sensitive nesting areas. Eoin Quinlan and Hans to meet on this with Birdwatch Ireland to find a solution.

SAAO/4 Report from the Conservation and Recreation Sub-Committee

- The Sub-Committee were unable to meet prior to the SAAO meeting.
- Mary Tubridy read out her report (which is included below after the minutes).

SAAO/5 Report from the Tourism and Communications Subcommittee

- Jacqueline read out the report, much of which concerned the communications strategy, as already described by Hans. (The report is included below after the minutes).
- Fearghal McSweeney discussed enforcement matters. Details to be circulated.

SAAO/6 Howth Pathways

- Dougal read out the report (which is included below after the minutes).
- It was noted that FCC Heritage Officer Christine Baker is not joining the Cttee but is happy to attend when requested (this to be done for December mtg.). The report was corrected accordingly. The group needs new cutting equipment and Cttee agreed that this be funded by the SAAO.

SAAO/7 AOB

- There was no other business.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 11th December (Same Time/Location TBC)

Meeting Concluded at 16.08.

Minutes signed.

Reports of Sub-Cttees., SAAO Mtg. 18/09/2024

Conservation and Recreation Subcommittee:

Report: Mary Tubridy (Sub-Cttee. chair)

A Sub-Cttee meeting could not be organised this month. Mary has submitted the following:

1. On Maritime Festival, compliments to Deirdre for excellent display
2. Hans will contribute lecture on management of Howth's heathland as part of Irish Uplands webinar series in October
3. Looking for home for Anita Cannon's Hillwatch and Save Redrock records.

Tourism and Communications Subcommittee:

Report: Jacqueline Feeley (Sub-Committee chair)

We met twice since the last SAAO meeting. Developments have all been in relation to the communications strategy.

In front of you is the new SAAO leaflet. 500 copies have been printed. They were available at the recent Maritime festival where the SAAO had a well-equipped and much visited stand. This was staffed over the weekend by Jacqui, Dougal, Barry Lacy, Maray O'Connor and Philip. Deirdre and Hans provided well-designed info panels on the SAAO, hard-board large map of the SAAO and explanatory banners. Des Mullan's SAAO video was shown on a loop on a TV. The leaflet includes two QR codes, one linking to the FCC SAAO page, and the other to view Des Mullan's short SAAO video. The leaflet is bilingual. Irish versions of the banner/poster will be produced, at cost of €500

Hans received 2 tenders for the Digital Communications Contractor, with the successful tender to be announced today. The spec is to set up an SAAO social media profile (FB, TikTok, X, Instagram), compile databases for info circulation, issue monthly updates on a series of topics (as guided by the Committee), attend 4 x SAAO mtgs per year and promote the 10 selected events. The contractor will also hold a PR workshop with the SAAO and provide an annual progress report. The contract is initially for 1 year, prob. cost €29,000 incl. VAT.

Schools Programme: Tenders received from 3 contractors. Selection to be announced today. 2-year contract @ ca. €7,500-€10,000 p.y. incl. VAT. Involves 4 x visits annually to 3 schools, circulating the themes and involving visits to 1.

Heathland, 2. Ireland's Eye, 3. Marine life.

Hans will provide a full Expenditure Report at the main SAAO mtg. today.

We have arranged the annual SAAO Public Meeting for 8th October at 7.30pm in Howth Yacht Club with 3 speakers. The video will be shown and presentations provided by Philip (opening), Hans (works in progress), Declan Dooge (new Howth flora study) and Katie (Goat project). A public consultation on the SAC Management Plan will also be held in late November.

Howth Pathways Report

Howth SAAO Management Committee Meeting

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Congratulations on construction of new paths:

HP would like to congratulate Fingal County Council on the completion of the long-awaited Bellingham's Harbour Bypass and the surfacing of the new path around the Bird's-foot hotspot at Red Rock.

HP welcomes Heritage Officer's commitment to SAAO:

Given the importance of vernacular features in the cultural landscape, we welcome Christine Baker's commitment to provide support to the Howth SAAO. HP are keen to assist her in the recording of these features.

Teams Meetings between FCC and HP:

HP's monthly Teams meetings with Fingal Operations and Biodiversity have resumed. These sessions are brief and highly productive.

We have recently begun to complement these online meetings with on-site recces, where we review particular sections of the Loop Path network.

This task-orientated approach is proving to be an efficient way to share information and co-ordinate works between all parties, avoiding duplication and omissions.

Pedestrian totals chart to show trends over long term:

While the quarterly pedestrian counts are very useful, could we also have charts that show the long-term change in numbers, since the installation of the counters?

Replacement of equipment:

Can anyone advise HP on funding to replace old cutting equipment that is wearing out?

The Meeting concluded at Time Not Specified

AREA CHAIRPERSON

DATED