



HOWTH SPECIAL AMENITY AREA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council



Members/alternates of the Howth SAAO:

Cllrs D. Healy, J. Hopkins, B McDonagh, C Haughey
Chairperson: Philip O'Connor
Dublin Naturalist Field Club: D. Doogue/Renee Malone
Fingal Tourism: Neil Kennedy/Elaine O'Sullivan
Hillwatch: Jacqueline Feeley
Howth Land Owners: Fiona Bellingham, Caroline Core Grimes
Howth Pathways: Conn Redmond/Dougal Cousins
Peninsula Heritage Society: Edgar McLoughlin
Irish Uplands Forum: Mary Tubridy
Howth Castle: Eoin Quinlan
Howth Sutton Community Council: Nessa O'Brien
National Parks and Wildlife Service: Mairéad Stack
Howth Peninsula: Mary O'Connor/Sean Doran
Old Irish Goats: Sean Carolan

Fingal County Council officers supporting Howth SAAO:
Brian Murray (SEO, Planning) Kevin Halpenny (Snr. Parks Superintendent) Gemma Carr (Senior Exec. Parks and Landscape Officer) Fearghal McSweeney (AO, Planning) Hans Visser (Senior Exec. Parks and Landscape Officer) (Carol Hurley (Exec Planner) Therese Casey (Exec. Parks and Landscape Officer) Lisa Doyle (Assistant Biodiversity Officer) Killian O'Sullivan (Assistant Planner) Sorchá King (Graduate Parks and Landscape Officer) Zer Barokas (Graduate Parks and Landscape Officer) David Daly (Admin)

Present: Dougal Cousins, Jacqueline Feeley, Seán Carolan, Sorchá King, Edgar McLoughlin, Lisa Doyle, Fearghal McSweeney, Cllr. David Healy, Mary O'Connor, Caroline Gore-Grimes, Hans Visser, Killian O'Sullivan, Mairead Stack, Ciara McGowan, Fuzion Representatives Michelle and Helena.

Apologies: Cllr. Brian McDonagh, Nessa O'Brien, Philip O'Connor, Therese Casey, Conn Redmond, Mary Tubridy

In the absence of the Chair Philip O'Connor, Dougal Cousins deputised as Chair for this meeting.

Item 1: Minutes of the meeting held on 18th September were Proposed (by Caroline Gore-Grimes) and Seconded (by Edgar McLoughlin) and approved.

Item 2: There were no matters arising from the last meeting.

Item 3: Seán Carolan gave a presentation on the partnership between the Old Irish Goat Society and the SAAO Committee and also gave a brief history of the Old Irish Goat Society itself. A partnership between the two organisations was discussed and a Partnership Declaration was displayed. The partnership was **proposed** by Jacqueline Feeley and **seconded** by Councillor David Healy and agreed. Seán thanked the Committee for their time and opened the floor to questions. Councillor David Healy asked if the goats manage archaeological sites elsewhere? The goats

manage some old graveyards and other small-scale projects in Mayo. The make up of the working group was also discussed and this is to be followed up at a later date.

Item 4: Sorchia King discussed the works being implemented by the Operations Department. The pathway repair works between the Baily and Red Rock path are almost completed. The remaining works will be carried out once the ground conditions improve. The works were done due to health and safety reasons and to address water logging. Sorchia thanked Howth Pathways for rerouting suggestions for walkers during the works as some sections were closed off during maintenance works. Dougal stated that meetings between Howth Pathways and the Operations Department will continue.

Item 5: Hans Visser provided an update on biodiversity. The coastal pathway diversion at Bellinghams Farm is completed, including the closure of the old route. The Management Plan for Howth SAC is being prepared and there are rhododendron control works ongoing at Shielmartin and Dunhill.

Item 6: Caroline Gore-Grimes went through the report from the Conservation and Recreation Subcommittee. (This report attached to bottom of minutes). Caroline commended the work done by OIG over the last 4 years. Lisa Doyle will follow up on seeking academic inputs/interest to assist with monitoring the results of the grazing projects with the goats, pigs and cattle. Mairead Stack asked if she could be informed of the Conservation and Recreation Subcommittee meetings and going forward this will be done. Mairead also commented on heather placed at the Nose of Howthand noted that some sacks of heather may be placed on top of sea cliff vegetation. A site meeting will be organised with FCC and Mairead to assess this in more detail.

Item 7: Jacqueline went through the report from the Communications, Tourism & Planning Subcommittee (Attached to bottom of minutes). She introduced Michelle and Helena from Fuzion who will be maintaining the online presence for the SAAO. It was decided that the Committee was to agree on 5 key events to be promoted by the Fuzion team before the next SAAO meeting, Lisa went through a comprehensive list of options and a decision is to be made on this next week by the subcommittee. It was then proposed that a representative from Friends of Balcadden Bay be invited to join the Committee. This was proposed by Jacqueline and seconded by Edgar and agreed. Finally, the schools educational programme is currently underway and a brief presentation on the schools programme will be given at the next meeting.

Item 8: Dougal read the report (Attached to bottom of minutes). Sorchia confirmed that the code for accessing the gate at Cooke's Quarry/Green Hollows hasn't changed but she will follow up and ensure that emergency services have the required permissions for access. Hans confirmed that the concrete foundations and posts will be in place for the foreseeable future.

Item 9: Fearghal McSweeney gave an update on the planning enforcement matters. It was confirmed to the Committee that Fingal County Council has 4 Planning Inspectors. Edgar asked a question on the percentage of planning retention applications that are approved and that answer has since been circulated.

Item 10: There was nothing to report on the Expenditure

Item 11: Jacqueline brought a question on behalf of Nessa about installing a hedgerow along the boundary fence of the Sutton Castle apartments at Redrock. Hans advised that this could block the views onto the bay from the apartments. It would also lead to an increase in future maintenance requirements of the Redrock lands, which the Council is keen to avoid. Cllr David Healy mentioned the Outdoor Recreation Plan and that there will be consultations with the Committee. Hans noted that an annual pathway condition assessment and repairs of looped pathway network on Howth and visitor management measures in Special Amenity Areas are included in the outdoor recreation plan. Finally it was brought up that there is anecdotal evidence that people leaving the cliff path trail are causing disturbance to the breeding seabird colonies on the cliffs, resulting in lower breeding success. The NPWS will check what breeding bird data is available to confirm that disturbance is having a detrimental impact on the bird colonies on Howth. o Mairead Stack also confirmed that the NPWS had an upland specialist in place, but a heathland specialist is still to be recruited.

The meeting concluded at 16:10pm

Next meeting to be held at 3pm on Wednesday 18th June

Location: Baldoyle Library if renovations completed or The Old Courthouse, Harbour Road, Howth, Co. Dublin, D13 AE22.