

Howth SAAO Minutes of Meeting held Wednesday 18th June 2025.

Present: Philip O'Connor, Dougal Cousins, Jacqueline Feeley, Edgar McLoughlin, Lisa Doyle, Cllr. David Healy, Cllr. Brian McDonagh, Mary O'Connor, Caroline Gore-Grimes, Hans Visser, Therese Casey, Helen Gilmore, Guy Molyneux, Eoin Quinlan, Jack O'Grady.

Apologies: Cllr. Joan Hopkins, Cllr. Cathal Haughey, Mary Tubridy, Fearghal McSweeney, Renee Malone, Mairéad Stack, Nessa O'Brien, Sean Carolan, Conn Redmond.

Item 1: Minutes of mtg. held on 19th March, Proposed (by Dougal Cousins), Seconded (by Caroline Gore-Grimes) and approved.

Item 2: There were no matters arising.

Item 3: Report on Operations works in the SAAO (Therese Casey):

Whole focus over summer on managing verges, beginning on Monday 16th June. Operations will liaise with Howth Pathways on this.

Decisions: Issues with the tramway were discussed - Therese to investigate. Philip mentioned a house at Gray's Lane whose garden extended past its boundary onto the Tramway, Therese to bring this to the attention of Planning Enforcement.

Item 4: Report on Biodiversity work (Lisa Doyle):

Irelands Eye, pathway upgrading, invasive species control and the events program.

Decisions: PDF of presentation to be circulated with the minutes. Helen congratulated the events programme, especially big involvement of families.

Item 5: Report of the Conservation and Recreation Sub-Committee (Dougal):

Zoom meeting, June 16th 2024:

1. Very successful seminar organised by Dougal, "Conserving Howth's Flora & Habitats" held in the Old Courthouse, Howth, 30/04. Dr Declan Doogue's proposal for study of sites of biodiversity value endorsed. Hans confirmed Council's GIS specialist available from Sept. to map these.
2. Interference with nesting birds by visitors at cliffs near Bailly: Action needed, e.g. warden, fencing etc. SAAO mtg. to advise.
3. Protection for nesting birds: SAAO to explore NPWS/FCC
4. NPWS criteria re Appropriate Assessment Screening makes actions prohibitively expensive. SAAO to explore what can be done.
5. Howth Golf Club Biodiversity Plan: SAAO to follow up with HGC on actions.

Discussion: Re visitors leaving pathways/disturbing nesting birds near Bailey, it was noted that installing fencing to block access currently deemed the most effective, but cost of the Appropriate Assessment Screening far more than for actual fencing. Other possible measures incl. signage stating clearly why people should stay on paths i.e. nesting birds.

Decisions: Hans to draft letters for Philip to send on behalf of Committee to NPWS, HGC.

Item 6: Report from the Planning and Communications sub-committee

(Jacqueline):

Sub-Cttee met 3x since the last SAAO, all on the Communication/PR strategy. There had been successful press releases and Social Media posts, an article by Hans for thejournal.ie (not published!) and 2x radio interviews with Philip (Near FM, Phoenix Radio). Email database has nearly 400 addresses.

Sub-Cttee agreed that:

1. **target audiences** in order of priority: 1. Local Community, 2. Policy-makers, media, and 3. General Visitors. Bi-monthly email updates to local database therefore priority, highlighting **Programme of Events** but also ongoing SAAO work. Also separate circulation local and other relevant media.
2. Physical poster of **Programme of Events** A4 format for shops, libraries, churches etc (ca. 20 copies), inc. "Contact us"/"Follow us" info.

Decisions: Lisa advised events poster will be ready in one/two weeks. Jacqui to display at suitable venues. Jacqui/Philip/Hans to meet (Zoom) re messaging next 3-months.

Item 7: Report from Howth Pathways (Dougal). No additional issues.

Decisions: Pathways issues in future to be integrated into Report of C&R Sub-Cttee.

Item 8: No new Expenditure.

Item 9: Eoin updated on extensive Irelands Eye work by FCC/Tetrarch, esp fencing to protect nesting areas. Numbers visiting actually very low as most prefer continuing coastal tour. Insurance liability for embarking/disembarking is with the ferry operation and on the island with Tetrarch. Fusion to do a post on bird nesting.

The meeting concluded at 16:01pm.

Next meeting: 3pm, Wednesday 17th Sept., Baldoyle Library

The Meeting concluded at Time Not Specified

AREA CHAIRPERSON

DATED