



Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall

Fingal County Council

HOWTH SPECIAL AMENITY AREA ORDER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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/C.Breen
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 Services: Mairéad Stack
Howth Peninsula: Mary O'Connor/Sean Doran
Friends of Balscadden Bay: Guy Molyneux

Fingal County Council Officers supporting Howth SAAO:

Brian Murray (SEO, Planning) Kevin Halpenny (Snr. Parks Superintendent) Gemma Carr (Snr Exec. Parks and Landscape Officer) Fearghal McSweeney (AO, Planning) Hans Visser (Senior Exec. Parks and Landscape Officer) Therese Casey (Exec. Parks and Landscape Officer) Lisa Doyle (Assistant Biodiversity Officer) Killian O'Sullivan (Executive Planner) Sorchá King (Graduate Parks and Landscape Officer) Zor Barokas (Graduate Parks and Landscape Officer) David Daly (Admin)

Draft Minutes of meeting held on 10th December 2025

SAAO/1 Present: Philip O'Connor (Chair), Dougal Cousins, Jacqueline Feeley, Lorraine Bull, Cllr. David Healy, Nitya Cyriac, Michelle Harrison, Mary Tubridy, Edgar McLoughlin, Mairead Stack, Mary O'Connor, Sorchá King, Lisa Doyle, James Burke

Apologies: Nessa O'Brien, Fearghal McSweeney, Cllr. Cathal Haughey, Caroline Core-Grimes, Conn Redmond, Declan Doogue, Guy Molyneux, Renee Malone, Therese Casey, Hans Visser

SAAO/2 Minutes: Agreed to amend Septembers minutes: Proposed by Dougal Cousins and Seconded by Jackie.

SAAO/3: Sorchá King updated the Committee, there was nothing new to report and Operations will continue monitoring. Sorchá thanked the volunteers for their work.

SAAO/4: Lisa Doyle gave the Committee an update on Biodiversity matters. Additional signage and marker posts and a new map board will be installed in the new year. Rhododendron control continuing at Woodland Demesne. For the heather restoration project, more heather will be planted along the route. Mary Tubridy requested a physical map to future meetings and this will be arranged.

SAAO/5: Dougal gave a report on the meeting of the Conservation and Recreation Subcommittee (**Copy of same will be circulated with minutes**). It was a

constructive meeting to discuss the Draft Howth SAC and SPA Management Plan. The original brief outlined that the consultants were to meet the working group prior to works commencing, this to be confirmed with Hans. The reply on Balscadden steps has been sent to Dougal. Hans confirmed Greenhallows quarry will be looked at to be possibly included in the plan.

SAAO/6: Lorraine Bull gave the members a report on Visitor Management on Ireland's eye. Fencing has been installed on Ireland's eye, which is expensive but can be looked at again. This was all installed by hand with minimal concrete used. More defined routes and way markers, bilingual lectures and additional signage to be installed. The was funding from the NPWS for a pilot warden scheme and seabird census. Full information of seabird census included in presentation (**Copy of same will be circulated with minutes**). Invasive species were detailed in the presentation. The question of EU funding was asked in regards to the dealing of the rat problem, this will be looked into. Mairead stated that the NPWS has plans to tackle the rat problem but does not approve of the rabbit removal aspect to the plan as there is no scientific evidence to link back to it. Lorraine stated that an AA and environmental screening would need to take place. Dougal asked could the warden scheme be extended to the mainland, this would all come down to funding, a conversation with Birdwatch Ireland can be had on this. A webinar held by Birdwatch Ireland was hosted on the 10th Wednesday and a recording of this will be made available. The pedestrian counter was not replaced on Ireland's eye as it was vandalised, wardens did timed counts to track numbers of visitors.

SAAO/7: Jackie gave the report for the Planning and Communications Subcommittee (**Copy of same will be circulated with minutes**). The information night held on the 17th September was well attended as usual, Howth Yacht club seems to be the ideal place to host this meeting. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. There was only one issue with the communication of the SAAO itself and this has been addressed in Fuzions communication strategy. A report on enforcement matters had been presented to the committee, (**Copy of same will be circulated with minutes**). Full agreement was given to continue with the Fuzion programme, a separate meeting will be held to review budget to be discussed at next SAAO meeting. Jackie had on comment on if the Judges order can be shared with the members. Lorraine said she will follow up on this request with the Planning Enforcement section.

SAAO/8: Nitya and Michelle from Fuzion gave a presentation on the digital marketing for the SAAO. (**Copy of same will be circulated with minutes**). The key metrics and what works well were discussed. The demographics were shown of the social media platforms and the content that works best was highlighted. There was 7 newsletters sent to the email distribution list. Building a photo bank was highlighted as a key learning and something that should be addressed. Dougal asked about using Whatsapp, there were some issues to be worked through on that but Fuzion will explore this with email being the preferred method to reach groups. A push on the socials/local media for new volunteers and members will be made. A push to National media will be explored, the sea bird colonies could be an angle. Extra spokespeople for the committee were sought, Cllr. David Healy willing to be on the list.

SAAO/9: Dougal took the Committee through the report. (**Copy of same will be circulated with minutes**). With a potential closing of paths to facilitate habitat

recovery, Howth Pathways wish to be consulted, in case they were part of historic routes. Dougal will be available to help identify/research these routes.

SAAO/10: James Burke presented a plan for cattle grazing on East Mountain. He has spoken to the land owners and they are supportive of his idea. The plan entails of 4-6 cattle on approximately 12 acres of land, which will be fenced in but will incorporate rights of way. Highland cattle were selected as they are very suitable for the land. A paddock and infrastructure plan was presented and a brief operational guide was also shown. Measures around calving season were also discussed. Key ecological benefits were highlighted. FCC staff advised that a full AA screening and a full investigation and a meeting with land owners would need to be held, James has a good relationship with the land owners so could help facilitate this. The Committee supported putting this into the SAC plan and to discuss this with the consultants at subcommittee.

The dates for the 2026 meetings were discussed and agreed to be held on: March 18th, 17th June, 16th September and 9th December. The meetings will also be held at 2pm.

Philip thanked the members and wished all a happy Christmas.
Meeting concluded at 17:06