



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: Mairead 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) Zer Barokas (Graduate Parks and Landscape Officer) David Daly (Admin)

Minutes of meeting held 17th June 2026

Special Meeting on new Implementation Plan 2026-31

Present: Philip O'Connor, Dougal Cousins, Jacqueline Feeley, Renee Malone, Edgar McLoughlin, Mary O'Connor, Siobhan Clifford, Guy Molyneux, Nessa O'Brien, Cllr David Healy, Sean Carolan and FCC officers Hans Vissar, Sorchá King, Lisa Doyle

Apologies: Therese Casey, D. Doogue, M. Tubridy, C. Redmond, Mairead Stack

Philip welcomed the committee and gave an overview as to how the workshop will run.

Began with a brief list of new actions not in the Existing Plan which the sub-committees be added to the new Plan. These would be discussed after the main plan document was agreed. The new actions to be added for 2026-31 were:

- Continuation of conservation grazing programme
- Field studies (carried out by Declan Doogue)
- Visitor Management Plan
- Vernacular architecture and landscape features
- Tree Planting (included in this a commemorative event) at Red Rock
- Volunteering strategies
- Improving access to Balscadden Beach

Audit of current plan

Hans took the committee through a powerpoint presentation of the current status of prioritised actions under the last plan. Most of these had been delivered or were currently in progress. There is no money available for the proposed Heathland study. Wildfire management will continue with a focus on fire breaks. Actions, including budgets and sources of funding, were agreed for the next plan.

Finances

Current annual income for the Committee for the year from FCC is just €10,000. It was mentioned that it was previously €20,000 and initially even €30,000. Most actions need to be covered from other FCC budgets and outside funding lines. Options were discussed on possible savings to retain as many actions in the plan, e.g. LAWPRO funding for water quality screening, options for funding the wardening scheme on Ireland's Eye including its partial funding by tour operators, the land owner and NPWS etc. Insurance costs for Pathways were high due to the nature of the volunteers' work (machinery etc.). No reply had been received from senior management regarding the status of the original stipulation that the SAAO be funded by a levy on developments on the peninsula. It was agreed to seek a formal meeting with the CEO and senior officers of FCC to discuss future SAAO budgets, with the aim to secure some increase in the FCC grant.

New actions

There was consensus that as many actions as possible should remain in the plan and imaginative ways be found to overcome budget restraints. Declan Doogue is to be asked to monitor rare plants as part of his pro bono field studies; the Botanic Gardens liaised with on funding actions to control invasive species and on an evaluation. report on the goat grazing project, Sean Carolan thanked the Committee and FCC for their exceptional work rolling it out and offered the assistance of the Old Irish Goats Society in compiling the report. On the communication plan, it was agreed that FCC's newly enhanced IT/social media admin staff be asked to support rolling this over given that its basic set-up had been put in place under the Fuzion contract.. A volunteer strategy is also to be included, linked with the Fingal Volunteering Centre, a sub-group to focus on preserving vernacular architectural and landscape features, a steering group formed with the Community Forum and Howth Tidy Towns to work on a Visitor Management strategy, including on litter control, and Friends of Boscadden Bay to liaise with the SAAO and user groups on improving access to the beach.

Agreed outcome

Hans will update the Implementation Plan spreadsheet with these additional actions, budget revisions etc. and have this circulated to Committee members with these minutes.

Meeting Concluded at 16:02

Next meeting to be held on Wednesday 16th September at 2pm