



**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING**  
**Glenmalure Lodge, Wednesday 16 July 2008**

**Present:** Dermot Hand – Chair, Joe Walker, Philip Maguire, Sean Malone, Peter Galvin, Pearse Connolly, Pearse Foley, Michael Cogan, John Byrne, Pat Dunne, Saive Coffey, Donie Anderson, John Flynn, Brian Kehoe, Sean Byrne, Eileen Kennedy.

**In attendance:** Colin Murphy, Helen Lawless, Lenka Mulligan.

**Apologies:** Claire Chambers, Pat Ewen, Edmond Kenny, Murtagh O’Keeffe, Eoin Browne, Stephen Bray, Philip Geoghegan, Tim Kyne.

Best wishes were extended to Pat Ewen, who is recovering from knee surgery.

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June were approved subject to amending section 4a as follows: “Treasurer Joe Walker confirmed receipt of draft accounts. Joe to discuss with auditor, finalise accounts and circulate to all board members for review at July board meeting.” The minutes were approved on proposal of Sean Malone and seconded by Philip Maguire.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

**a County Wicklow Partnership**

Brian Kehoe reported that the new company is in the process of being established.

**b. Vegetation Management**

Sean Malone requested follow up on the discovery of no scientific evidence supporting the amendment of Section 40 in Wildlife Act 1976 in 2000. Lenka to write to Minister John Gormley TD again.

**3. CASHFLOW AND FUNDING**

**a. Year-end accounts**

A copy of finalised Director’s Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31/12/07 was circulated to board members at the meeting. Treasurer Joe Walker reported on a surplus of €12k at the end of the term. Comparing to previous year there was noted rise in wages; however this was in line with increased level of activities and transfer from contracts to PRSI. Overall, all costs were kept to a reasonable level. The accounts were formally approved by Sean Byrne and seconded by Michael Cogan.

**b. Management accounts**

Transactions up to March have been input, showing €5k below budget and project income €5k over expectation. Treasurer reported that while company’s balance sheet is favourable at present, he is predicting pressure for funding for the rest of the year.

**4. PROJECTS**

**a. Monthly Project Update**

In addition to the written Monthly Project Update, the following reports were provided:

**i. Three year plan 2008/2011**

Preparation process to start in September and finish in October/November.

**ii. PURE Project**

Colin reported that PURE project phase 1 is finishing and evaluation is about to start. A successful stakeholders' review took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 08 and a general feeling to go forward with phase 2 of the project was evident.

### **iii. Forestry Project**

Inaugural meeting of Private Woodland Owners' Association took place June 25<sup>th</sup> when 54 people attended and an Interim Committee of 12 members was elected. The initial project is due to finish in October 08, when, hopefully, the new Group will be ready to take over.

### **iv. Wicklow Sustainable Trails Network**

Helen Lawless reported on work to secure €28.0k balance of Failte Ireland funding and reported that Coillte intends to improve sub-standard sections of St. Kevin's Way. Good work carried out on the trail by Wicklow Mountains National Park was noted.

Brian Kehoe reported that Pat Mellon has started to work on rollout of the new Walks Scheme in Wicklow and has been meeting local landowners about possible routes. Wicklow is one of the pilot areas for this scheme. Brian referred to the help being given by Helen.

### **v. Access Project**

Helen Lawless reported on successful inspection of the Glenmalure Access Route carried by John Monaghan, the National Trails Office inspector, who approved the route and recommended it to Wicklow County Council for insurance.

An unexpected delay was reported on Shinna Lane access route, where clear felling is scheduled in the area over the next 12 months.

The Bray Head access route is also on hold due to the owner's plans to join the Neighbourhood Scheme.

Michael Cogan offered to talk to Helen about a possible route near Baltinglass.

### **vi. Wicklow Countryside Recreation Strategy**

Brian Kehoe reported on progress of the project. A large amount of work has been put into the project and it has been realised that the project is bigger than anticipated. Helen was thanked for her contribution.

### **vii. Village Interpretive Panels**

Lenka Mulligan reported a delay in completing of the Rathdrum panel due to technical problems with artwork. A letter of support was received from Dunlavin District Forum. Dunlavin is the first of two villages to take part in the continued phase of the project this year. Another site will be confirmed later, possible candidates are Roundwood and Baltinglass. Deirdre Burns, the Heritage Officer of Wicklow County Council is exploring match funding possibilities for the new phase.

### **viii. Membership**

Members were reminded to pay up their membership prior to the upcoming AGM next week. Membership renewal letters were sent to defaulters.

### **ix. Renewable Energy Project**

John Byrne recommended that the Renewable Energy Project be kept on the list. It was suggested that a meeting be arranged to decide the next actions on this project. John Flynn suggested a visit to see a heat pump in Moneystown.

## **b. ECOAM INTERREG PROJECT**

A brief outline of the current ECOAM project budget was circulated to the board. Colin Murphy updated the board on the current situation with WUC making a commitment to raise match funding of €105k for the initial bid which was submitted on 26 June. The total budget is in the area of €6.5m, with WUC having a share of €778k. An additional 80k is to be used for operating cost, management fees, travel expenses and communication with other partner countries. Colin will now focus on developing detailed work plans and budget plans for each of the seven actions. Marie-Claude Esculier will assist with the plans during scheduled visit in August. The EU decision on the project is due in September and the proposed start is 1<sup>st</sup> November 08. Feedback from the lead partner of the project has been positive.

It was felt that the project is an exciting opportunity and could bring substantial funding to the county; however some concerns about the possible overlapping of some activities were expressed. The Chair re-assured the board that detailed discussions with partner organisations and groups will hopefully avoid overlapping.

John Byrne asked if Board Directors would have enough information on the INTERREG project at the end of August to go back to their respective bodies and enable them make a decision on supporting the project.

Colin explained that the project proposal is subject to amendment by the lead partner and others and that the 'Green Roads' concept means in effect 'clean roads'.

#### **6. SUMMER 2008 NEWSLETTER**

A 12-page newsletter was completed and distributed to the board prior to the meeting. The Chair thanked all involved and to Lenka for editorial and co-ordination. It was expressed that the newsletter is a top class professional production.

Sean Malone will provide a photograph of Wicklow Cheviot sheep to use in place that of a Scottish black horn sheep used in the mast head of the autumn 2007 newsletter.

#### **7. AGM, Glendalough Hotel, Wednesday 23 July 2008**

Panel meetings are scheduled for 7pm and the AGM for 8pm.

#### **8. AOB**

##### **a. Membership**

Philip Maguire felt that WUC should improve communication to our individual members re membership renewal and company plans.

##### **b. Forestry project**

Saive Coffey enquired about Wicklow IFA's, involvement in the forestry project. Joe Walker explained that at present WIFA is not involved and will be invited to join the statutory/non-statutory Wicklow Forestry Forum in the near future.

#### **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Wednesday, 20 August 2008**

**(Venue to be confirmed)**

**8.00pm**