



MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
Glenasmole, Wednesday 17 September 2008

Present: Stephen Arthur, John Byrne, Sean Byrne, Claire Chambers, Michael Cogan, Pat Dunne, Sean Eustace, Pat Ewen, John Flynn, Pearse Foley, Daire Gilvary, Peter Galvin, Philip Geoghegan, Dermot Hand – Chair, Michael Keegan, Tim Kyne, Philip Maguire, Sean Malone, Richard More-O’Ferrall, Mervyn Sunderland, Joe Walker.

In attendance: Lenka Mulligan.

Apologies: Pearse Connolly, Tony Flynn, Brian Kehoe, Eileen Kennedy, Edmond Kenny, Helen Lawless, Colin Murphy, John Power.

Lenka Mulligan brought item 4 of the agenda (election of officers) forward and co-ordinated the elections.

1. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Lenka outlined procedures for election of officers. John Byrne queried how many seats are on the executive committee in total. Dermot Hand clarified that the executive committee has seven seats in total, five officers and two others.

The following board directors were elected to the executive committee:

Office	Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
1. Chair	Dermot Hand	Sean Byrne	Claire Chambers
2. Vice Chair	Sean Byrne	Dermot Hand	Michael Cogan
3. Secretary	Claire Chambers	Pat Ewen	Richard More-O’Ferrall
4. Treasurer	Joe Walker	Philip Maguire	Tim Kyne
5. PRO	Richard More-O’Ferrall	Pat Ewen	Philip Geoghegan
6.	Stephen Arthur	Sean Malone	John Byrne
7.	John Byrne	Claire Chambers	Tim Kyne

Lenka handed over chairing of the meeting to the elected Chair Dermot Hand.

Chair asked all board members to introduce themselves in a few words. A round of introduction followed.

Chair thanked the outgoing board directors, Stephen Bray, Donie Anderson, Murtagh O’Keeffe, Saive Coffey, Eoin Browne, Mark Fenton for their contributions while serving on the Wicklow Uplands Council board.

Chair welcomed new board directors Stephen Arthur, Michael Keegan, Daire Gilvary, Mervyn Sunderland, Sean Eustace and Richard More-O-Ferrall to the board.

Sean Malone expressed his disappointment at the results of the co-option process and his regret that Saive Coffey and Murtagh O’Keeffe were not co-opted to the Board. The Chair, Claire Chambers and Sean Byrne also complimented Saive and Murt on their contribution to the Board over the years. The Chair also pointed out that it is the responsibility of each panel to nominate Directors and that the elected Directors democratically decided on this year’s co-options, in accordance with the Articles of Association.

Claire Chambers informed the board that Saive is recovering well after her operation and that she will be in Caritas Convalescent Centre, Merrion Road for couple of weeks. Well wishes were extended to Saive for a speed recovery.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 August were approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING

a. Outdoor Recreation Strategy

Suggestion to invite Pat Mellon to attend next board meeting and brief directors on the walk scheme was carried over.

b. Briefing/training procedure for new directors

Richard More-O-Ferrall was glad to see this item on the agenda and Sean Malone also felt that there is a need for a briefing on the new legislation.

Chair suggested inviting an external person to talk to the board about responsibilities and liabilities of directors.

4. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS & FUNDING

Treasurer reported expenditure of €5k below budget at present and expressed some concerns on income side and suggested reviewing of the project funding and core funding. A delay of funding in Wicklow Sustainable Trails Network (WSTN) was also mentioned. In conclusion, the overall situation is that at present Wicklow Uplands Council is under budget on expenditure and income. Stephen Arthur enquired about where core funding comes from. Chair answered that most of the funding comes from Heritage Council and other County Councils. Wicklow Uplands Council also intends to get management charge through projects as compensation for time and efforts of staff and also contributions through business forum, for example Denis O'Brien contributes €10k per year.

5. PROJECTS

a. Monthly project update

i. Wicklow Private Woodland Owners Group (WPWOG)

Wicklow Uplands Council was helpful in establishment of the group. Sean Eustace explained the aims and objectives of the group, which focuses on forest management and renewable energy crops and can provide benefits to individual owners such as a group insurance.

ii. Access Project

Pat Dunne reported that the Zig-Zags route in Glenmalure proved to be very successful and maybe too successful as he noticed an erosion developing above the route finish on the mountain (above the style). Pat suggested possible impact by walkers whose numbers recently doubled.

Mervyn Sunderland said that perhaps the weather played its part in the erosion development also. Pat Ewen said that it is a cause for concern, obviously the problem with erosion has moved more higher up when the Zig-Zags route was repaired. The improved conditions of the track on the Zig-Zags attract probably more walkers.

Sean Byrne reported on his access route to Kanturk which was affected by the bad weather and is very wet at present.

Pat Ewen suggested highlighting the occurring environmental damage through other journals (Mountain Log – MCI) and asked Helen to make hill walking clubs aware of areas sensitive on erosion.

Richard More-O-Ferrall suggested inserting on the existing sign a notice not to walk further due to erosion.

It was also suggested that consideration be given to temporarily closing the walk for a period to avoid further damage.

Philip Geoghegan enquired if there are any plans for maintenance of access routes.

Chair asked Pat Dunne to talk to Helen about taking up the problem at Zig-Zags.

iii. Village Interpretive Panels

Lenka reported that the Rathdrum Interpretive Panel was delivered and it is in process of installation. The works on artwork for Dunlavin Interpretive Panel are progressing and the talks with Roundwood & District Community Council about their panel are also on the way.

iv. Young Observers / Leave No Trace Day

Preparations for the Transition Year Leave No Trace Awareness Day are on the way, schools being contacted and transport being organised. The event will take place in Wicklow Mountains National Park Education Centre at the Upper Lake in Glendalough and the programme on the day will be provided by the NP. Lenka was looking for volunteers to help with supervision on the day, Pearse Foley and Richard More-O'Ferrall came forward and are willing to help on the day.

b. Renewable Energy (RE)

John Flynn offered a possibility to visit a heat pump heating system in his son's house. Chair reminded the board who is on the committee and asked 'what exactly do we want to do?' The committee is represented by Sean Malone, John Byrne, John Flynn, Pat Ewen, John Power, Pat Dunne, Philip Geoghegan, Claire Chambers, Peter Galvin, Pearse Foley.

A discussion about the focus of the group followed. Pat Ewen suggested narrowing the focus and concentrating on those renewable energy types which affect the uplands such as wind and hydro schemes. Philip Geoghegan suggested in regard to wind turbines that we should suggest constructively what kind of landscape are they for. Philip Maguire suggested developing guiding principles for alternative energy initiatives (similar to access principles). Chair suggested forming a broad sense of policy. Pat Ewen said that the principle of renewable energy is a good one and that we need to flesh it out. Chair asked how can we come up with something meaningful and avoid getting into too much detail. Richard More-O'Farrell said that there needs to be balance between scale of projects and landscape. Philip Geoghegan mentioned that IPCC have strong views on location of wind farms on bog lands. Claire Chambers commented that smart metering systems are needed and also community scale projects.

John Byrne stressed that soil of Wicklow totally differs to West Clare / Ireland and that Wicklow Co Co – have a policy on RE which states that RE can be considered only outside of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Sean Malone said that Wicklow has lot of potential for wind farms (right soils, right speed of wind). SACs are a problem for wind farms.

Tim Kyne suggested to scope the issues on RE in preparation for the new County Development Plan. Claire Chambers mentioned that Stephen Bray would be qualified to help us with scoping of the research. Pat Ewen talked about examples of farms abroad, which are powered by own wind turbines (small turbines).

Sean Eustace suggested to (a) inform ourselves and (b) to have some input in economics of the projects and viability and (c) to consider grid location and (d) price. John Byrne suggested leaving the economic viability up to the developers themselves.

Chair suggested to re-establish the project team, expand it if necessary, and that the group should aim to narrow down the issues, agree a policy, decide on what type of developments to be looked at, size big or small, check information available and find a way how to better involve ourselves.

Tim Kyne suggested a timeline of three months and to formulate a submission for the County Development Plan. Pat Ewen suggested that everyone on the group should write 10 points about what are they expecting to get out of the RE group. It was agreed that the RE group will meet on the 22nd of September, 8pm in Glendalough.

6. JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

Sean Malone reported on recent meeting of the joint policing committee, where it was reported that the crime in upland areas is in alarming increase (e.g. drug related crime increased from 15% to 50% in Roundwood area) and he talked about the upcoming public meeting in Blessington, Avon Rí on Wednesday 24th of September, 8pm and urged for good representation at the meeting.

7. ECOAM

Chair briefly updated the board about the ECOAM project. Wicklow Uplands Council is the only partner from Ireland participating in this project. The decision on the project is due in late October / early November. At present all involved partners and statutory groups are updating the budget template for each action. A meeting with statutory partners about the seven actions in ECOAM was held on the 4th of September and Marie-Claude Esculier, the ECOAM facilitator, will visit Wicklow on 6th and 7th of October, when all actions will be finalised.

John Byrne would like to see more detailed information about the ECOAM actions to inform his decision on the project.

Chair suggested that giving the scale of the project, Wicklow Uplands Council will organise a special board meeting to provide a detailed briefing to the board including main objectives and plans. Board directors will have an opportunity to review the formal offer.

The meeting concluded with a minute of silence for Mrs. May Power.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Wednesday, 15 October 2008
Glendalough Hotel
8.00pm