



MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
Glendalough, Wednesday 18 June 2008

Present: Dermot Hand – Chair, Donie Anderson, John Byrne, Sean Byrne, Claire Chambers, Saive Coffey, Michael Cogan, Pearse Connolly, Pat Dunne, John Flynn, Peter Galvin, Eileen Kennedy, Edmond Kenny, Tim Kyne, Philip Maguire, Sean Malone, Murtagh O’Keeffe, Johnny Power, Joe Walker.

In attendance: Helen Lawless, Lenka Mulligan.

Apologies: Stephen Bray, Colin Murphy.

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed back Sean Malone and congratulated Edmond Kenny on his 90th birthday.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 May were approved subject to:

Under Item 1 - inclusion of ‘categorisation’ with designation in the memorandum of understanding (this was an oversight by both Wicklow Uplands Council and Wicklow IFA).

Under Item 5 – John Byrne suggested that a representative of Wicklow Uplands Council attend a Wicklow IFA meeting to explain the ECOAM project.

Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Sean Byrne and seconded by Claire Chambers.

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Chair confirmed that letters have been sent to Declan O’Neill confirming the Wicklow Uplands Council’s acceptance of the terms of the memorandum of understanding and to Noel Keyes thanking him for his assistance. Regarding the National Landscape Strategy, Colin Murphy is to seek an update from Michael Starrett for the next meeting.

4. CASHFLOW AND FUNDING

4a - Year-end accounts

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.

4b - Current year accounts

Transactions up to February have been inputted, showing €3k below projected expenditure levels, however the Treasurer cautioned that he would prefer to see quarterly figures before judging progress.

7. PROJECTS

7a – Monthly Project Update

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

WSTN

Helen Lawless confirmed the status of the WSTN project, and the role of Pat Mellon who has been appointed by Wicklow Rural Partnership as Rural Recreation Officer, with responsibility for the Wicklow Way.

Village Interpretive Panels

The Aughrim and Laragh panels have been installed, artwork for the Rathdrum panel has been finalised. Lenka Mulligan is seeking two communities to do panels this year.

Young Observers

Eight schools (a full quota) have registered for the Young Observers Leave No Trace Awareness Day which takes place on 8 October in conjunction with Wicklow Mountains National Park.

7b – ECOAM

Colin Murphy sent updated papers on this possible INTERREG project before going on holiday. Colin has liaised with Marie Claude and also met with a number of the proposed partners in Wicklow and plans to confirm our outline bid on Tuesday 24 June. After that we have until 25 July to provide details of each proposed action. Regarding Action 1, deer control, Sean Malone suggested the section listing partners should include Luggala Estate. John Flynn mentioned that Wicklow Deer Management Group is seeking funding to do a deer counting project. Wicklow Mountains National Park do not have the ranger capacity to control deer numbers on their lands and may need to bring in outside assistance. It was noted that Actions 1 and 2 rely on NPWS support and funding. Regarding Action 6, Ecolabelling, establishment of a small abattoir to kill Wicklow lamb and venison could open the opportunity to market these products. A new directive on abattoirs coming into place may make this feasible. The Chair advised the meeting that it will be September before we know if the ECOAM bid is successful.

8. SUMMER 2008 NEWSLETTER

Lenka Mulligan is finalising content this week and getting costs for a 12-page issue; Lenka is aiming to have newsletters printed in time for the AGM.

9. PREPARING FOR THE THREE-YEAR PLAN 2009-2011

While it had been suggested during the recent discussions with IFA that Wicklow Uplands Council engage an external consultant to assist in preparation of its next three-year plan, a number of board members felt that this was unnecessary and could be expensive. The Chair suggested that the headings in the Monthly Project Update be used to prepare a draft plan for discussion at a dedicated full-day meeting to be supported by an outside facilitator. Tim Kyne pointed out that if the ECOAM bid is successful that that will form the bones of the next three-year plan. There was suggestion that each organisation should think about its own needs, however Saive Coffey pointed out the need for an overall philosophy, and that Wicklow Uplands Council was formed out of a desire to bring different interests together. In summary, the Chair suggested that work should begin by reviewing and updating the last three-year plan, revisiting the priorities agreed at the January panel meetings, and considering the actions proposed for ECOAM. Each panel should also discuss the plan. It may be necessary to bring in external help later, but we should be able to do most of the work ourselves.

10. COUNTY WICKLOW PARTNERSHIP

Saive Coffey commented on delays in getting funding for the new Rural Development Programme, submissions have been requested and it is hoped that the programme will commence in October 2008. Election of Community and Voluntary representatives to the board of the new County Wicklow Partnership takes place on Monday 7 July.

11. WUC AGM

Diarmuid McAree, Forest Service, has agreed to be the guest speaker at this year's AGM which takes place on Wednesday 23 July in Glendalough. Claire Chambers asked that all community groups be invited to the AGM. The Chair urged the panels to consider their respective nominations ahead of the AGM. It was suggested that Wicklow Uplands Council should next year get a speaker for the AGM who would appeal to community groups.

12. AOB

12a - Murtagh O'Keeffe reported on a meeting of the Joint Policing Committee (JPC) which took place on 12 May. The new county-wide policing district came into effect on 2 June; external support will be available to the west and south for an unspecified transition period. A presentation by the National Drugs Squad highlighted the challenge in dealing with home-produced drugs. The next meeting of the JPC takes place on 1 September 2008. Tim Kyne raised the issue of cameras at crucial points in the uplands. Murtagh confirmed that this is being considered but no definite

information is available at this time. John Byrne suggested that Garda cars and other emergency vehicles should be equipped with satellite navigation.

12b - Regarding vegetation management, Tim Kyne asked that Lenka Mulligan write again to Minister Gormley pointing out that the legislation on burning was amended without scientific research, asking for immediate action and suggesting that there be a derogation for Wicklow. Tim is compiling photographs and information on the botanic composition of burnt areas near the Sally Gap.

12c - John Byrne requested a copy of the Wicklow Uplands Council's Memorandum and Articles of Association.

12d - Murtagh O'Keeffe queried the move of the Executive meeting to the same night as the Board meeting. It was decided that the Executive would review the arrangements for Executive meetings.

12e - The Chair congratulated Donie Anderson and his wife Angela on the birth of their daughter Mary. Lenka Mulligan mentioned the arrival of Ian Davis's second son, Rhys. The tragic death of Alan King was noted and it was agreed that a message of condolence be sent to his wife Sylvia.

12f - Philip Maguire reported that Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council are preparing their Development Plan for 2010-2016. Dublin IFA made a submission and Wicklow Uplands Council also made a brief submission. There will be two further consultation phases.

12g - Saive Coffey suggested a presentation to the Board about the Wicklow Rural Transport programme.

12h - Plans to explode a small number of Hydrogen Cyanide canisters at Kilbride were discussed and it was agreed that the media coverage may have exaggerated concern about this out of proportion to the risk involved.

12i - On behalf of an IFA member, John Flynn sought information about the maintenance of the graveyard in Glendalough. While OPW (National Monuments) owns the entrance, NPWS is in charge of the rest. A new entrance with a wheelchair ramp is to be created.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 16 July 2008

Glenmalure Lodge

8.00pm.