



MINUTES OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
Glendalough Hotel, Wednesday 20 August 2008

Present: Stephen Arthur, John Byrne, Claire Chambers, Michael Cogan, Pearse Connolly, Pat Dunne, Pat Ewen, John Flynn, Tony Flynn, Peter Galvin, Michael Keegan, Brian Kehoe, Eileen Kennedy, Tim Kyne, Philip Maguire, Sean Malone, John Power.

In attendance: Colin Murphy, Helen Lawless.

1. APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Apology received from Daire Gilvary who is away.

Colin Murphy welcomed Stephen Arthur and Michael Keegan.

Colin invited proposals for Chair of meeting. Philip Maguire proposed Brian Kehoe to chair seconded by Pat Dunne. Tim Kyne proposed Pat Ewen, seconded by Michael Cogan. Brian was happy for Pat to chair and withdrew his name. Sean Malone also happy with Pat Ewen.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July were approved, subject to addition that John Byrne's question re ECOAM project had been omitted. John Byrne had asked if we would have enough information at the end of August to go back to member bodies to get a decision. Amendment was proposed by Pearse Connolly and seconded by John Byrne.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. CO-OPTIONS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sean Malone queried if officers would be elected at next meeting. Pat Ewen outlined procedures and confirmed that officers would be appointed at the September meeting.

The following were proposed:

Richard Ryan proposed by Philip Maguire (farmer for south county Dublin), seconded by Sean Malone
Murt O'Keeffe proposed by Sean Malone, seconded by Pat Dunne
Sean Byrne, proposed by Tim Kyne, seconded by Pearse Connolly
Sean Eustace, proposed by Tim Kyne, seconded by Michael Cogan
Philip Geoghegan, proposed by Tim Kyne, seconded by Claire Chambers
John Byrne proposed Liam Heaney hill farmer from Donard, an area not represented on board, seconded by Pat Dunne
Saive Coffey, proposed by Sean Malone, seconded by John Power
Joe Walker, proposed by Pat Ewen, seconded by Michael Cogan
Mervyn Sunderland, proposed by Pat Ewen, seconded by Tim Kyne
Pearse Foley proposed by Pat Ewen, seconded by Pearse Connolly
Dermot Hand, proposed by Claire Chambers, seconded Pearse Connolly,
Edmond Kenny, proposed by Claire Chambers, seconded by Eileen Kennedy
Richard More O'Ferrall, proposed by Claire Chambers, seconded by Peter Galvin

At this point meeting agreed to close nominations.

John Byrne commented on co-option of Sean Eustace, who represents the forestry project which, 'Colin said at last meeting', may not continue to exist and is a producer group. John felt that we were creating a dangerous precedent. Tim Kyne responded that Sean is a member of Kildare/West Wicklow IFA and is therefore eligible.

Stephen Arthur expressed a view that Liam Heaney would have a lot to contribute as a member of the IFA National Hill Farm Committee. He is from an area not represented and would have a lot to contribute to WUC board. Pat Dunne supported this view.

Pat Ewen explained that the procedure, based on precedent, would be a secret ballot, with each director to make up to nine votes. It was agreed that Colin Murphy would leave the room to count the votes with observers from each of the four panels. Philip Maguire, Tim Kyne, Claire Chambers and Pearse Connolly were proposed and agreed for this purpose.

6. DISCUSSION DURING COUNTING OF VOTES

a) ECOAM

Michael Cogan understood that meeting with Marie Claude Esculier which was to have taken place on 25 August has been deferred.

b) Renewable energy

John Byrne query of page 2 of minutes – renewable energy project should be kept on the project list. John Flynn has loads of material on heat pumps, domestic wind turbines and solar panels that can be shown to the sub-committee. It was agreed to put the resurrection of the sub-committee on the agenda for next meeting. (It was noted that Stephen Bray who was chairing this sub-committee is no longer on the board). John Flynn said that the committee had agreed to survey different kinds of projects and to bring ideas back to the directors. John Power made the point that Wicklow Uplands Council should decide whether it is for or against wind turbines before there is a planning application. Should we let the decision rest with planning authority? Issues could become personalised if we don't have a policy. Pat Ewen said that we need to talk about how to proceed. John Power proposed that we focus on wind-farms as individual home energy system cases are not so important.

c) Website and newsletter

In response to Sean Malone's enquiry, Pat Ewen drew the meeting's attention to website update and summer 2008 newsletter.

d) Mourné Heritage Trust

Sean Malone pointed out that when Wicklow Uplands Council is meeting with groups like this, representatives should be selected by the Board of Directors.

e) Business Forum

Chair advised Michael Cogan that Business Forum follow-up involves chasing attendees who promised to pay up and had not yet done so.

(The vote-counters then re-joined the meeting).

7. RESULTS OF BALLOT FOR CO-OPTIONS

Chair reported that the following were co-opted as directors for 2008/9

Sean Byrne
Sean Eustace
Pearse Foley
Philip Geoghegan
Dermot Hand
Edmond Kenny
Richard More O'Ferrall
Mervyn Sunderland
Joe Walker

Chair asked Colin to write to these new directors and invite them to the meeting on 17th September.

5. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS & FUNDING

Colin Murphy reported that management accounts were completed up to end of May, slightly under budget, Colin to do more work on fundraising, but confident objectives in year plan will be met.

6. PROJECTS

a. Monthly Project Update

Colin Murphy had no update from ECOAM since last meeting He was expecting Marie Claude over next month. When she comes he would like her to meet with Pat Dunne and John Byrne. As far as we know the bid is going through the works and we expect information by end September if it's going ahead. Stephen Arthur queried which EU source is funding ECOAM. Colin confirmed this is a European Atlantic Arc, INTERREG 4b project. Colin briefed new Directors on background to the project and the themes within our proposal. Colin reported on recent meeting with Wicklow County Council Heritage Officer to discuss possible action around the living history of the Ballyknockan granite quarries.

John Byrne asked who a lead partner is and what their influence would be on project. Lead partner is Spanish nature conservation NGO whose responsibility is to collect ideas from various partner countries, agree budgets for each action and make a bid. If the bid is accepted the lead partner will set up a project management committee involving each partner and will be responsible to EU for good governance and administration as to deliver all actions as close as possible to the plan that was approved.

Colin hopes to have a progress report for the September directors' board meeting.

John Power asked when do Wicklow Uplands Council Directors make a go/no-go decision on participation.

Colin said this would happen when the contract is offered, probably in November.

John Byrne queried if NPWS/Forest Service funding would be cut given current cutbacks. Colin replied that most potential statutory partners see ECOAM as an opportunity to plug gaps left by government budget cuts. The level of cash that partners put in is up to us, there is no minimum amount.

b) Mourne Heritage Trust/Belfast Hills Partnership

Colin reported on meeting with Martin Carey, of Mourne Heritage Trust and Dr Jim Bradley of Belfast Hills Partnership. The three directors had updated each other on what they are doing and discussed opportunities for co-operation between the organisations. He had learnt that Mourne are involved in a new project about guarded car-parks on farms that facilitate recreational users and provide income for landowners. Sean Malone commented that this is a very good idea and should be looked into in the Wicklow uplands.

c) WUC newsletter

John Byrne has been talking to people in the wind turbine industry who were very complimentary on Claire's newsletter article on recent study visit which was very balanced and informative.

d) Outdoor Recreation Strategy

Stephen Arthur asked for information about the relationship and on the benefit of everyone working to the same agenda. Brian Kehoe gave an outline of the Walks Scheme and the role of the Rural Recreation Officer. Sean Malone suggested that Pat Mellon attend to brief the board.

7. PREPARING FOR THREE-YEAR PLAN

Colin Murphy reported that due to focus on ECOAM a start has not yet been made on this issue and noted that in June directors' meeting took a decision to do the job 'in house'. This issue is to be discussed at a staff meeting this week. A first draft is likely in October/November, depending on ECOAM.

8. BRIEFING/TRAINING PROCEDURE FOR NEW DIRECTORS

In response to John Power's query, Colin explained that this agenda item arose from something raised by Claire Chambers regarding duties of Directors. Colin feels that with new board coming in it's an opportune time to get somebody in to explain directors' duties and responsibilities and possibilities associated with WUC's position as a registered company and charity.

9. AOB

John Power proposed we send our best wishes to Saive Coffey (in St.Vincent's Hospital).

Philip Maguire said that Murtagh O'Keeffe and Saive have been long-standing board members who will not be with us this year and that they should be contacted and thanked for their efforts. Philip asked if Murtagh could remain as chair of WDMB. This was seconded by Pearse Connolly.

John Power suggested that we include both Saive and Murtagh with minutes of board meetings.

Claire thanked the Directors for support on her recent bereavement.

Sean Malone complimented Pat Ewen on the fair and balanced way in which he conducted the meeting.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 17 September 2008

Glenasmole Community Centre (With thanks to Donie Anderson), 8.00pm