

**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING**  
**Glendalough, Wednesday 28 May 2008**

- Present:** Dermot Hand – Chair, Pat Ewen, Murtagh O’Keeffe, Tim Kyne, Joe Walker, Philip Maguire, John Power, Pearse Foley, Saive Coffey, Claire Chambers, Pat Dunne, Stephen Bray, John Byrne, John Flynn, Sean Byrne, Eoin Browne, Pearse Connolly.
- In attendance:** Helen Lawless, Colin Murphy, Lenka Mulligan.
- Apologies:** Sean Malone, Donal Anderson, Brian Kehoe, Tony Flynn, Eileen Kennedy Edmond Kenny.

Chairman congratulated to Mr. and Mrs. Donie Anderson on the excellent news of the arrival of their baby daughter Mary.

**1. WICKLOW COUNTY IFA EXECUTIVE CONCERNS**

The Chairman asked the members of the board who had recently suspended their participation to temporarily withdraw from the meeting.

The Chairman informed the remaining board members about the agreement which was reached between representatives of Wicklow County IFA (WIFA) and Wicklow Uplands Council (WUC) at a recent meeting with Noel Keyes, a director of the Heritage Council. The agreement is based on a memorandum of understanding between the representatives. This memorandum was read out to the board members at the meeting. The memorandum of understanding between WIFA WUC reads as follows:

1. Three Year Plan 2006/2008 to be withdrawn.
2. Landscape management / designation / categorisation / national park governance off the agenda for foreseeable future.
3. Minutes must be a description of what occurred at meeting rather than a brief outline.
4. Members to receive information in hardcopy format by post. Important information to be sent by registered mail.
5. Proper protocol observed when dealing with IFA
  - a. Board members informed of any contact with County Executive
  - b. National officers / ex officers – staff only contact with permission of County Chair and Executive and IFA board members.
6. New Three Year Plan
  - a. Drawn up by appropriate consultant not facilitator.
  - b. All relevant organisations to have input e.g. farmers, walkers, interests etc.
  - c. Final draft posted to members in advance of decision.

This agreement was signed by Declan O’Neill, Chairman of WIFA Executive, Colin Murphy, and Noel Keyes. The document was discussed and accepted at the last meeting of the WIFA Executive and WUC Executive. The WUC Executive strongly recommended to the WUC board to accept these terms.

A discussion took place on the individual points of the agreement and their implementation. The WUC board has agreed to accept the memorandum on the proposal of Pearse Connolly seconded by Tim Kyne. The Chairman will confirm formally to Declan O’Neill WUC’s decision. The Chairman expressed a special word of thanks to everyone who was involved in the process of resolving the IFA concerns over the last five months.

The Chairman then welcomed back those WUC board members who had suspended their participation. Pat Dunne made suggestions to thank Noel Keyes in writing for his significant contribution in resolving the issue.

## **2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April were approved subject to amending second sentence of section 4. Wicklow County IFA concerns to “*An email was received on 25 March confirming Wicklow IFA’s decision to suspend participation, pending final decision on April meeting on 14 April*”. Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Sean Byrne and seconded by Claire Chambers.

## **3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

### **A) Briefing document on landscape**

Helen Lawless circulated a background document about current landscape legislation in EU and Ireland to the board and explained the content of the document. The document consists of information on:

- European Landscape Convention (ELC),
- The Heritage Council’s position re ELC,
- Landscape Character Assessment,
- Proposal for National Landscape Strategy,
- Notes of WUC meeting with the Heritage Council on April 21,
- Types of landscape designations,
- Types of conservation designations,
- Info related to links between agriculture and landscape in current practice
- Further readings via websites.

Board members provided some feedback on the document, Claire Chambers found the document to be very useful and Tim Kyne congratulated Helen on excellent work. Concerns were expressed about not knowing who has a seat on the steering committee, which was formed by the Department for Environment to begin talks about implementation of the ELC. The meeting acknowledged that the matter about landscape arose from the minutes of the last meeting. However, given the recent agreement with WIFA, it was agreed to let the matter rest. In the mean time WUC will enquire about report of the meeting of the ELC steering committee through the Heritage Council.

## **4. CASHFLOW AND FUNDING**

Joe Walker confirmed that 2007 draft accounts are with the auditor and that there would be an up-date of the 2008 position at the next meeting.

## **5. EUROPEAN COASTAL ATLANTIC MOUNTAINS (ECOAM) INTERREG PROJECT**

Colin Murphy gave update on the preparation of funding proposal for the ECOAM INTERREG IVB project. At the March joint WUC/WDMB board meeting the board decided to find out more about the project and Colin and WUC Executive began initial talks with the ECOAM leading team in Spain, potential Irish partners and project co-ordinator from France, Ms Marie-Claude Esculier, who is working on the joint international proposal as well as on the proposal on behalf of WUC. WUC’s participation in the project could attract in around €750k to County Wicklow. WUC staff and WUC Executive initiated several meeting with potential Irish partners, including Wicklow County Council, NPWS – WMNP, Forest Service, Wicklow County Tourism, PURE project and Coillte. A set of seven possible actions was identified with the help of all partners and Colin has been working on the budget side of the proposal. A draft project proposal was circulated to the board members with outline of all actions and budget. The project proposal needs to be finalised within next two weeks with view to be ready for approval by WUC executive on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, when the executive committee will formally decide on WUC’s involvement in ECOAM. Marie-

Claude Esculier will visit WUC on 10.-11. June to finalise the proposal with WUC and the Irish partners. Chair explained that signing of the proposal will not cause any financial liability for the WUC – this is one of core principles of WUC's involvement in the project.

John Byrne welcomed the opportunity of bringing more money to County Wicklow and requested more detailed info about the project to circulate to the board members, which would inform their decision. John suggested that a representative of Wicklow Uplands Council attend a Wicklow IFA meeting to explain the ECOAM project.

John Power enquired about whom controls the INTERREG project spending. Colin explained that there will be applied four control measures including WUC, INTERREG EU, INTERREG Ireland and Department of Finance.

Eoin Browne enquired about how flexible the INTERREG programme is with regard to re-allocation of money between actions. Colin will find out more about this from Marie-Claude.

The board agreed that Colin will circulate more detailed project info in next 2-3 days to all board members and that a staff of WUC will meet with WIFA prior to 10<sup>th</sup> of June.

Colin requested that the meeting would delegate signing authority to the Executive. This was supported on proposal of Pat Ewen and seconded by Tim Kyne. Philip Maguire enquired if there is a percentage target within all measures of the project and suggested to describe under each action what the success will look like at the end of the project in 2011.

## **6. PANEL MEETING**

Chairman thanked Helen Lawless for successful Leave No Trace Awareness Day and joint Economic and Tourism / Environmental and Recreational meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup>. The Farming & Landowning Panel meeting planned for 7<sup>th</sup> of June was cancelled.

## **7. AGM**

Chair proposed a new date for the WUC AGM for Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2008, which was accepted by the board.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **a) Countryside Recreation Strategy**

Helen Lawless circulated three documents with relation to the ongoing Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy Project (WORS), in which she is acting as project co-ordinator on behalf of WUC. These included an information sheet, draft position paper on behalf of WUC including Outdoor Recreation Objectives and Planned Activities 2008 – 2012 and a vision statement. The vision statement formulated by the WORS Expert Advisory Group on 22<sup>nd</sup> May reads as: *"Wicklow has a vibrant and sustainable outdoor recreation culture, based on partnership, trust and mutual respect"*. Helen asked all present board members to carefully read the information and come back to her with suggestions if any by Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June.

### **b) Summer 2008 Newsletter**

The board approved that Lenka will proceed with the next issue of WUC newsletter, which is now planned to be published early July 2008.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Wednesday 18 June 2008**

**Knockree Hostel**

**8.00pm**