

## **Minutes of Meeting through teams of Climate Change & Biodiversity**

### **Strategic Policy Committee held on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

#### **I Láthair:**

**Baill:** Cllr. Alastair Mc Kinstry, Cathaoirleach  
Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly  
Cllr. Noel Thomas  
Cllr. Joe Sheridan  
Cllr. Evelyn Francis Parsons  
Cllr. Martina Kinane  
Mr. John Hynes  
Ms. Mairsil Claffey  
Mr. Henry Walsh  
Ms. Janice Fuller  
Dr. Liam Morrison

**Oifigigh:** Ms. Eileen Ruane, Director of Services;  
Mr. David O'Loughlin, Assistant Engineer;  
Ms. Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer  
Ms. Angela Quinn, A/Administrative Officer.  
Ms. Sabina O Connell, A/Assistant Staff Officer

**Apologies:** Mr. Pat O'Hora

#### **1. Confirmation of the Minutes of Climate Change & Biodiversity SPC meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

The Cathaoirleach noted that Confirmation of the Minutes of Climate Change & Biodiversity SPC held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were omitted from the Agenda. The Minutes of the meeting were confirmed by Cllr. McKinstry and agreed by all. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Cllr McKinstry confirmed that meetings of working groups have been postponed until September due to COVID 19.

## **5. All Ireland Pollinator Plan**

Ms Ruane introduced Ms Janice Fuller, Ecologist, who has worked with Ms Mannion, Heritage Officer, GCC for the last number of years. Ms. Fuller gave a detailed presentation on the National Pollinator Plan. Councils can play a leading role in implementing the Plan by making lands more pollinator friendly. Bees, butterflies, moths and other pollinators are in trouble in Ireland, so we need to act now to protect pollinators. Bees are the most important pollinators in Ireland, 1/3 are now threatened with extinction. This is because we have reduced the amount of food (flowers) and safe nesting sites for bees in our environment.

With this Plan, the Council aim to create an environment where pollinators can survive for the benefit of people and nature. 24 local authorities have signed up to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Galway County Council is already engaging with communities in relation to biodiversity, heritage and are involved with a number of pollinator projects. Galway have more local biodiversity action plans than any other county, it has over 20. It is proposed that each MD to have their own plan as areas have different needs.

Cllr Thomas said that they had planted apple trees in estates in Maigh Cuillin, and he also mentioned Blue Steeple a bi-annual which was excellent food source for pollinators.

Ms Ruane advised that it would be of great benefit if this SPC group would endorse the All Ireland Pollinator Plan before it goes before the Plenary Council in September 2020. Cllr. Cronnelly proposed to adopt the plan and it was seconded by Ms. Claffey.

Cllr McKinstry also endorsed the adoption of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan by Galway County Council.

## **6. Hedgerows & Verges – guidelines for cutting**

Cllr. McKinstry proposed that guidelines on how to minimise the cutting of hedgerows & verges, would be prepared by Ms Fuller. These would include the before and after photos of problematic hedgerows and would be discussed between Environment & Roads Section. There is a lack of understanding by contractors with regards to how much cutting back should be carried out. Ms Claffey said it should be in the contract for contractors. Cllrs Thomas & Kinane agreed that discussions need to take place with the Roads Section and H&S is paramount at all times. Different areas have different needs for eg in Connemara area there is an increase in wildlife and many areas have been developed for nesting to accommodate this. Cllr Mc Kinstry noted Cllr Kinane's request that when Contractors cut hedges / verges, they should clean up and dispose of cuttings correctly. It was agreed that there would be further liaison with the Roads and Transportation unit.

## **7. Regulation of single use plastic including specific wipes**

Ms. Claffey introduced Dr Morrison, Researcher with NUIG who delivered a presentation on microplastics in our oceans which is of increasing concern. 80/90% of litter washed up on

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Cllr Mc Kinstry agreed to Cllr Kinane's request for Coastal Erosion to be included in the Agenda for the September meeting. There is a need for a dedicated staff member assigned to supporting Municipals Districts in preparing applications for Coastal Erosion to the OPW, there is a lot of work involved. In response Ms Ruane agreed and she will link in with Jim Cullen, Roads Section.

Next meeting will be final week in September 2020, to be decided on later.

**CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CHRUINNIU ANSIN**



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**CATHAOIRLEACH ALASTAIR MC KINSTRY**