

Minutes of Meeting through teams of Climate Change and Biodiversity

Strategic Policy Committee held on 7th October 2021

I Láthair:

Baill: Cllr. Alastair Mc Kinstry, Cathaoirleach
Cllr. Evelyn Francis Parsons
Cllr. Martina Kinane
Cllr. Joe Sheridan
Cllr. Noel Thomas
Cllr. Gabriel Cronnolly
Mr. Henry Walsh

Oifigigh: Ms. Eileen Ruane, Director of Services
Mr. David O'Loughlin, Assistant Engineer
Ms. Maria Finn, Administrative Officer
Ms. Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer
Ms. Sabina O'Connell, C.O.

Note: Audio issues experience by various members during meeting

Special Guest: Ms. Niamh Phelan, National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC)

The Cathaoirleach opened the meeting by introducing Ms. Niamh Phelan from National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) Ireland and welcoming her to today's meeting. He expressed thanks to everybody for their attendance at the meeting and asked for confirmation that a copy of the agenda and minutes from 30th June had been received by all. Ms. Finn and her team were thanked for their hard work and for providing concise and details minutes.

1. Confirmation of the Minutes of Climate Change & Biodiversity SPC meeting held on 30th June 2021

The Cathaoirleach proposed that "Active Travel" should be put on the agenda regularly for future meetings of this SPC Group. At future meetings an update on progress made to-date and planned proposals was suggested to be made available for discussion by members. The Cathaoirleach stated that active travel is vital to keeping energy down and reduces budget by 80%. Galway County Council he added is committed to energy reduction.

Cllr. Cronnolly sought clarification on SEAI grant applications. It was his understanding that when any individual had claimed a grant from SEAI, they were not eligible to apply for a second grant. Retrofitting, he stated is an expensive job and COVID has had an impact on many householders' budgets. Grants for retrofitting should be more readily available he believed. The Cathaoirleach agreed that it would be advisable for that this SPC group to look further into this query.

Ms. Ruane confirmed that she will seek clarification on one off grant claims with SEAI. She further added that she will link in with Derek Pender in Infrastructure Department of Council with regards to updates on Active Travel projects to date and to obtain reports on future projects for upcoming meetings of this SPC group.

The Cathaoirleach enquired if there was any update on EV charging points. Ms. Ruane confirmed that the "LA Electrification of fleet and EV Charging Guidance Document" has been prepared by the EV Charging Working Group and this has been shared with the local authorities through the CCMA. This is a very comprehensive document which provides information and recommendations on both electrification of the Local Authority fleet and the provision of public EV charging infrastructure.

As this is a very complex document, the Executive team and the Fleet Management team within Galway County Council will examine the document thoroughly before consideration can be given to the development of an EV and EV Charge Point (EVCP) strategy.

Budgets / funding will be challenges faced by GCC in implementing recommendations contained in the EV charging guidance document.

The Cathaoirleach added that at national level party leaders are involved in discussions around funding issues and understand that national support will be very important for local authorities to allow them to implement the suggested recommendations contained in final report.

The Cathaoirleach discussed a recent discussion by Cork County Council re the management of invasive species and in particular Japanese Knotweed with treatment by an herbicide called Glyphosate. It is believed that injection of the herbicide into the plant rather than spraying the plant is a most effective treatment. The Cathaoirleach sought clarification as to how contractors working for GCC treats the invasive species. Ms. Ruane agreed that she can follow up on this with the relevant department.

The Cathaoirleach proposed the minutes from 30th June 2021, and they were seconded by Mr. Walsh.

Ms. Mannion proposed that Item 3 on agenda be allowed to proceed to allow for Ms. Phelan to attend another meeting. This was agreed to by the Cathaoirleach.

2. Presentation from National Biodiversity Data centre Ireland

Ms. Phelan thanked the members of the SPC group for inviting her to attend today. She introduced herself as the Biodiversity Engagement Officer with the NBDC Ireland and she has worked with Ms. Mannion over the years in various projects. Her role with NBDC includes provision of better supports, training, and managing records.

The NBDC works to make biodiversity data and information more freely available for people to better understand and assist the protection of Ireland's biodiversity. Citizen scientists are always welcome by the NBDC and their numbers are growing. The citizen science portal allows for citizen scientists to log onto the portal and to update their information on sightings etc. The "Butterfly monitoring scheme" is one such project. Updates entered onto the portal feeds into the national database. A lot of data is collected in this manner thus growing the biological recording. During lockdown in 2020 when Ireland experienced a prolonged period of good weather people were exercising outdoors more and an increased growth in data was observed by the centre. An increase in national data in turn feeds into the global database.

The NBDC are running a variety of entry level recording schemes with the hope that citizen scientists move onto their higher-level recording schemes. The farmer's wildlife calendar is supported by DAFM and is aimed at the farming community, but anyone can join. It is directed by seasonal events. It tracks the timing of seasonal events in Ireland and responses to climate change. The NBDC would like to work with Galway County Council to promote this project. Green Party politician Pippa Hackett has worked with NBDC in making a video to promote the farmers wildlife calendar.

The Spring Flowering Plants Project is seeking records for 20 easily identifiable wildflowers. People can find out how they can take part through Ireland's citizen science portal and how the records submitted contribute to furthering plant conservation in Ireland. The record numbers annually for Co. Galway has fluctuated in the period 2017 – 2021.

Backyard biodiversity is a lovely family project and can be carried out in a person's own back garden. The NBDC invites everyone to submit sightings of any 20 species that we know commonly occur in gardens. The species chosen are a mix of vertebrates and invertebrates, from different taxonomic groups. Each of the species can be relatively easily identified provided that key identification features are carefully noted.

Oisín Duffy at NBDC has a video and provides active support with on-line training to improve the quality and quantity of data submitted by the public. He also leads the Centre's work on the development of new surveys to address existing knowledge gaps.

The NBDC hopes to create a longer partnership with GCC who in turn can assist in working with local communities / farming community in promoting NBDC projects thus increasing awareness of NBDC and its mission.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms. Phelan for her very interesting presentation and enquired if contact had been made with Scouts / Guides Groups in Galway. This connection has not been made by NBDC. The Cathaoirleach confirmed that he has contacts within Scouts / Guides Groups, and he will be happy to try to bring them on board.

Ms. Mannion thanked Ms. Phelan for a thoroughly enjoyable presentation. She confirmed that the Heritage Forum have worked with the IFA for many years, who have actively supported the Holy Well Audit. Ms Mannion confirmed that she will liaise with Ms. Phelan with regards to doing presentations to Tidy Town's and Heritage Groups. GCC have 600 plus people on their lists from these groups. Ms. Mannion will also be willing to work with Ms. Phelan in arranging school and farming community presentations. Bespoke training, she stated would be necessary for those individual groups.

Cllr. Thomas asked what was NBDCs stance on the ragwort weed. Ms. Phelan confirmed that it is very high in pollen and nectar for pollinators but that it would be recommended to remove it from agricultural land. It is alright to leave on road verges (this was an opinion).

The Cathaoirleach enquired if the Biodiversity Story Maps would be rolled out countrywide as they would link in with climate change and tracking. Ms. Mannion confirmed that consideration will be given at a later stage.

3. Biodiversity and Pollinators update by Ms. Mannion

Rodenticide awareness and best practice rodent control training for Galway County Council Staff online 19th October 10am – 12 noon

The aim of this course is to increase awareness of the risks associated with the use of rodenticides and to improve understanding for the requirement and capacity for best practice rodent control. This course will be relevant for anyone who is responsible for rodent control (either directly undertaking rodent control or responsible for the staff or contractors who undertake rodent control) as well as those who are responsible for premises or grounds where rodent control is required.

This course will provide an overview of commensal rodents in Ireland, including their ecology and behaviour and the situations in which their control is necessary. The environmental implications of the use and misuse of rodenticides will be discussed through a range of locally relevant examples of how these compounds enter the food chain, the pathways of contamination to non-target wildlife species with a focus on our current knowledge of exposure of rodenticides to Irish Wildlife. The legislation regarding the control of rodents and use of rodenticides will be provided and an overview of the methods for best practice rodent control including the requirement for an Integrated Pest Management approach to achieve effective rodent control while minimising the environmental risks.

It is also hoped to roll out training for community groups in the future as well as creating a brochure on the rodenticides. This initiative is being funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council.

Pots for Pollinators

Galway County Council in partnership with several Tidy Towns Groups in the county of Galway and the National Biodiversity Centre have launched a new initiative called ***Pots for Pollinators***.

One third of our bee species are threatened with extinction from Ireland. This is because we have drastically reduced the amount of food (flowers) and safe nesting sites in our landscapes.

The ***Pots for Pollinators*** is an initiative where local communities working with a Tidy Towns Group can take a very simple action for bees and pollinators and generate a very positive impact for nature.

People are becoming more conscious of nature and biodiversity and taking a great interest in the birds, bees and bugs that are all around them. It is hoped that this simple project ***Pots for Pollinators*** which gives details of plants that can be bought in any garden centre in the county will see lots more people helping our pollinators.

Planting a 'pot for pollinators' is a wonderful project for patios in nursing homes or hospitals, apartment balconies, urban hotels and small gardens."

We have had a lot of interest in this initiative from community groups, heritage groups, Tidy Towns Groups and Schools.

Biodiversity Training for Galway County Council Staff and Community Groups

Forty members of Galway County Council staff received 3 training sessions with regards to biodiversity and pollinators (this was co-ordinated by the HR Dept Training Unit)

Eighty members of Tidy Towns and Community Groups received a 5week training course on biodiversity and pollinators (this was run jointly by Tidy Towns Section and Heritage Section of Galway County Council and funded by the Public Participation Network).

Upcoming Biodiversity Online Training for Council Staff & Communities

Dr Amanda Browne, Ecologist will deliver a series of 6 recorded online presentations that will primarily be aimed at community groups who would like to get a better understanding of the biodiversity of their local area as well as ways in which they can enhance it. In addition to this she will also deliver a series of 6 recorded online presentations for local authority staff to assist them in dealing with biodiversity issues and support them in finding opportunities to enhance biodiversity of towns and villages in the county. This initiative is being funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council.

Forum Connemara Biodiversity Training

Forum Connemara are offering two courses Biodiversity and Water Biodiversity. Both courses will be carried out with a mixture of online classes and on location field trips by experts in the field Biodiversity. The course is interactive, and this training requires no previous experience or knowledge. The schedule has been devised in a manner that a participant can choose to attend one or both courses. Forum Connemara and the course organisers have liaised with GCC Heritage Officer when developing the course outline and Heritage Officer has also recorded a piece that will be played at the beginning of each course. They have also consulted extensively with Conor Ruane, Community Water Officer, LA Waters. For more information please see:

<https://www.forumconnemara.ie/biodiversity-training>

Invasive Species

The Invasive Species working group of Galway County Council has established a system to record details of invasive species that are submitted by members of the public and staff with regards to invasive species on Council property. Targeted Gunnera and Japanese Knotweed control measures are taking place in several places in the ownership of Galway County Council. It is also hoped to undertake invasive species management plans for a small number of areas of the county. In addition to this advice and guidance is given to members of the public with regards to invasive species.

GCC have also began discussions with Dr Karen Bacon, NUIG re Japanese Knotweed research and innovative ways to deal with individual sites. This initiative is being funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council. It is expected that this will be a good partnership and findings will be very useful for the future. A student will work with GCC on this matter. Statistics will be available for next SPC meeting and plans for 2022 treatment of these plants may change

Barn Owl conservation and research in County Galway

The Barn Owl was once a much more common sight in the Irish countryside. Due to extensive declines in their breeding range, they are categorised as a Red-listed Bird of Conservation Concern. As a top predator and sentinel species for the health of our countryside, these declines are worrying and indicative of wider biodiversity declines. There is a unique opportunity to harness the interest and goodwill towards the species to deliver widescale biodiversity benefits through conservation and education focused on Barn Owls.

There is a long history of Barn Owl monitoring and conservation efforts in Galway. Work is currently ongoing to:

- 1) implementing a citizen science and strategic survey to assess the status and breeding performance of Barn Owls and to identify their conservation requirements,
- 2) producing three high-quality videos to provide practical guidance on: nest boxes, managing and creating habitat, and rodenticide use. This initiative is being funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council and a few other local authorities.

Audit of Wetlands in North East Galway

This desktop audit is currently being undertaken and it is envisaged that it will be completed by the beginning of November 2021. The development of StoryMaps will be an output of this initiative. This project is being funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council.

Yellowhammer Survey in south Galway

The Yellowhammer was formerly a widespread breeding species in Ireland but is now mainly restricted to the east and south. The breeding range of the Yellowhammer is strongly linked with the cultivation of cereals, so much so that their population has declined and disappeared from areas where cereals are no longer grown, to the extent that the species is included on the Red list of the Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland. A few isolated Yellowhammer populations have been recorded in areas such as the Burren in County Clare and small numbers of birds in Connemara in Galway.

In recent years, Yellowhammer have been recorded in an area of intensively farmed land in south Galway during the winter and breeding season, even though there is no cereal grown in this area. A survey to establish the size and extent of the breeding population and to determine their habitat associations and feeding patterns is currently underway. This initiative is being funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council.

Signage for Pollinators

Signs have been distributed to each Municipal Districts as well as some community groups and schools. 3 different b-lingual signs produced of varying sizes in conjunction with NBDC which have GCC logo on them. These cost €1000.00 out of a limited budget Ms. Mannion added.

Ms. Mannion acknowledged the volume of work carried out by Galway People and Nature which includes GCC staff of Rosina Joyce, Ita Gordon and Patricia Delaney along with LAWPRO's Conor Ruane. Ms. Mannion concluded by expressing a huge thank you to Sinead Monaghan in HR who has been involved in organising all training events

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms. Mannion for the excellent work that has taken place and commended future objectives. He stated that it was critical work that it is being carried out on very limited resources.

Cllr. Cronnolly thanked Ms. Mannion for the amazing work that she is progressing on a limited budget. He enquired if GCC had any engagement with Coillte in relation to an app which they are promoting. He understands that the app costs €73.00 and may be popular with walking clubs. Improved biodiversity awareness is all about net working with as many relevant groups as possible he concluded. Ms. Mannion stated that she had no knowledge

of the Coillte app, but additional information would be necessary, also €73.00 is expensive for an app. Cllr. Cronnolly thought that it may have been a Hungarian Company who created app.

Cllr. Kinane joined the meeting and apologised for her late arrival she had a prior commitment.

Cllr. Thomas advised that there a natural rodent poison that can be made which is as successful as the chemical rodent poison and that he himself makes it. He suggested that GCC take the lead in public awareness of the use of natural rodent poisons which can be used in a clean safe manner.

Ms. Mannion stated that the planned rodenticide training will focus on staff awareness and legislation surrounding the use of rodenticides. Following the training event there will be a feedback opportunity and GCC will proceed forward in a positive way from there.

Cllr. Thomas expressed interest in GCC partnership with NUIG with regards to innovative means of treating invasive species. Experience has proved that burying it 4 metres underground has good results. In Japan there is a natural predator in form of a beetle which controls the weed. He also stated that GCC currently have a policy of spraying in September, but as a horticulturist himself he does not believe this to be the best method.

Cllr. Thomas believes that if weed is sprayed in September the weed has spring / summer for it to regrow and during those seasons the roots continue to spread out. He stated that if it is to be sprayed his preference would be to spray on a more regular basis – let it die back and once it starts to grow again, re-spray it. After 2 years the weed dies back, he explained.

Ms Mannion confirmed that the meeting with NUIG in relation to invasive species control methods was exploratory. GCC will work with the college on different spraying / injection methods. New research is constantly emerging, and the next few months will be a learning curve.

Cllr. Parsons thanked Ms. Mannion for the excellent presentation and the various projects in progress. She enquired as to size of the pollinator signage, as she has seen signs on roundabouts and found them to be quite small. Cllr Parsons also sought clarification regarding relaying of information to members of the public.

Ms. Mannion clarified that the 3 signs are of different sizes. She added that in due course it will be expected that an information session will occur. The Cathaoirleach enquired as to what format such an information session may take. Ms. Mannion indicated that it will be the NBDC message that we will be relaying and that a representative from NBDC will be present. GCC will manage the public relations element. Bilingual leaflets will need to be prepared and it will be anticipated that a few sessions will take place.

Cllr. Parsons thanked Ms. Mannion and enquired there is any course available on urban bee keeping. Ms. Mannion confirmed that she has spoken to a beekeeper, and he will check availability in the New Year.

Over the summer months enquiries had been received by Ms. Mannion from members of the public seeking advice / help with beehives on their property and Ms. Mannion was very appreciative of the bee keeping community who gave advice / relocated beehives

4. Biodiversity Story Maps

Story Maps is due to be launched by GCC in the next few weeks. Ms. Mannion expressed her thanks to GCC GIS officers Barry Doyle and Bridin Feeney who together with a student have done a phenomenal amount of work in getting this to launch stage. 134 sites have been uploaded onto Story Maps. These locations are in the east of the county at Carrawnagappul Bog, Athenry Town Trail and Tawin island. These has been shown in schools and to community groups and feedback has been tremendous.

The project has been funded by GRD. People can log into this by downloading from GCC and inserting a code to access. Community groups will be able to embed link and code into their own facebook page etc. The intention is to allow data to be accessed and sharing of data with the public. Walking groups using the maps will be able to hear sounds, e.g., Grouse whilst walking at certain points in bog

Cllr. Parsons enquired if there are plans to extend Story Maps to other sites if funding was available. Ms. Mannion confirmed that there are no plans to extend this project. A huge number of resources, technology and time has gone into this project to date between GCC GIS officers, John Lusby and Bird Watch Ireland. It is intended to expand the Wetland Audit Ms. Mannion added, and the audit of Holy Wells is currently ongoing.

The Cathaoirleach acknowledged that a vast amount of work has been carried out on the story maps project and requested that a thank you from this SPC group be conveyed to the GIS team for their work in bringing this project to fruition. Ms. Ruane likewise commended the work and efforts of all involved in project. She added that it was very professional and a fantastic resource to have and that whilst Ms. Mannion accredited the work to the GIS officers, Ms. Mannion was herself the driving force behind it.

5/6 Climate Action Plan / Decarbonisation Zones

Ms. Ruane updated the SPC members on activities / progress

Decarbonising Zones

GCC still awaiting related guidance from the Department's DZ Advisory Group. A draft Guidance Document for LAs has been developed and is being reviewed by the Department. The document is expected to focus on how the LAs can manage the process rather than getting into the technical details of baselines, energy monitoring etc. In anticipation of the Guidance Document being published in October/November 2021, CARO will establish a Regional Group to share ideas, leverage resources etc. GCC will be represented on this Group

Resources available to Galway County Council, coupled with limited national guidance relating to Action 165 of the Climate Action Plan 2019 have shaped our approach to requirements to date. Further challenges advancing Decarbonising Programs are projected in the absence of dedicated resources and appropriate guidance on a proposed framework.

Climate Action Plan

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 – The bill was enacted in July 2021

- Each LA shall prepare a Climate Action Plan which shall specify the mitigation measures and the adaptation measures to be adopted by the LA.
- The LA Climate Action Plan shall relate to a period of 5 years
- The Minister must direct LAs to develop their Climate Action Plans within 18 months of the enactment of the Bill.
- LAs must develop their Climate Action Plans with 12 months of such a direction
- Plenary to approve LA Climate Action Plan
- A business case has been presented to Government and LAs are awaiting direction from Minister on matter.

Resources

Resources have been identified to develop the Climate Action Plans. Shortlisting for Galway's Climate Change Co-Ordinator was finalised the day prior to the SPC meeting.

CARO continue to work with SEAI on Policy Document and Memorandum for Bureau proposal. CARO are due to meet with SEAI shortly to close out any outstanding items on the Policy Document and recruitment campaign to follow thereafter.

- Regional Coordinator to be appointed initially
- Local appointments to be filled within 12 weeks
- SEAI considering the inclusion of a Community Engagement Officer in the Bureau
- Linking SEC programme

Climate Action Opportunity Fund 2021

The Environment Section wrote to several applicants in early Sept 2021 requesting additional/supporting information required to complete the assessment of their applications. Staff are in the process of reviewing additional information received and are working towards the following timeline:

- Award recommendations submitted to Ms. Ruane – End Oct 2021
- Report (complete with award recommendations) considered at Council Meeting – November 2021.
- Results communicated to applicants – Dec 2021
- Project delivery Q1 + Q2 2022.

Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs)_MOU with SEAI

GCC have issued the following Letters of Acceptance for the development of Energy Master Plans to date to Ballinasloe, Headford, Athenry and Dunmore with plans to issue letter of acceptance to Milltown in the coming weeks. GCC's support for this program amounts to a commitment of €75K in Bridging Loans. David O'Loughlin GCC is working with the groups. It is hoped to have a report at the end of October to take to the Plenary meeting in November.

- County Level EMP
- Galway's Green Recovery Working Group are a group of PPN members and individuals aiming to address environmental concerns in County Galway.
- The Group have established a Steering Group to facilitate the Development of a County Level EMP. GCC are represented on the Steering Group.

Opportunities for Collaboration and Partnership

European City Facility (EUCF)

GCC Application** to EUCF Fund for 60K to develop an Investment Concept (Call No. 2)

GCC Application on behalf of Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann Teoranta (CFOAT)

In this instance, GCC's application was not selected within the EUCF call (Call No. 2), for applications to receive support from the European City Facility

GCC have confirmed support for NUIG funding applications for:

Green New Deal Proposal:

Project Details: Assess the feasibility and social acceptability of different options to increase renewable energy in case study location.

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Discovery Funding Project:

Project Details: The Samhail Consortium - Convene a network of organisations and individuals to promote and strengthen education and public engagement with science within the Galway region (city and county).

Apprenticeship / Trades – Retrofitting Sector

Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann Teoranta (CFOAT) are currently working with Údarás na Gaeltachta to promote Climate Science and Renewable Technology with a view to raising awareness and encouraging the uptake of technical training courses and apprenticeships within the Sector. The Second level school on Inis Mor currently facilitates this awareness campaign hosting extra-curricular presentations on same.

An Údaras Na Gaeltachta Meeting took place in July. Support for the trade is of major concern. Training is a critical challenge with ½ million houses expected to be retrofitted by 2030. It is estimated that 20 personnel will need training to meet anticipated retrofitting requirement

Skilled training takes 1 year – 2 years to complete with refresher courses also a necessity. GRETB should be doing some of the training. Much preparation will be required, and this provides a major opportunity for GCC to become involved.

Ms. Ruane to engage with Economic Development and Enterprise SPC to explore opportunities to promote / encourage uptake of Technical Trades.

The Cathaoirleach to engage at national levels to promote / encourage uptake of Technical Trades

Training / Webinars

The County and City Managers Association (CCMA) endorsed a Local Authority Climate Action Training Plan developed in response to Action 150 of the Climate Action Plan which calls for “the development of Local Authority climate action leadership and capacities”.

An Introduction to Flood Risk Management is a training course under this Program targeting key Local Authority staff involved in managing, planning, and responding to flood risk. (GCC Staff contributed to the development of this training program). The training program (consisting of 8 x half days) will commence on Monday, November 1st, 2021 and will be delivered online.

Energy performance

From Nov 2021 another Energy Audit will be required, delivered either as part of an energy or environmental management system (ISO 50001) or as a standalone audit.

Cllr Sheridan thanked Ms. Ruane for the updates and introduced the subject of grid enhancement technology. He enquired if there was any scope through the CARO office for a feasibility study for an inline benthic deployed micro hydraulic generator under the new proposed micro renewables scheme launch quarter 3 2022. Ms. Ruane confirmed that she will raise the issue with David Mellotte at CARO and will contact Cllr. Sheridan after the meeting.

The Cathaoirleach confirmed that resources are to be prioritised for marine planning offshore energy. Over 2000 personnel have been hired to grant licenses which he understands has been because of a large uptake in planning grid applications

Proximity to grid and line voltage was discussed with Cllr. Sheridan of the opinion that upgrades are taking place along the east coast. Transmission is supply and demand he stated hence upgrading for Dublin is what is happening. Moving data centers closer to windfarms is vital to support the industry.

Cllr. Sheridan stated that it is incumbent on this SPC group to put a motion forward to the Department regarding the ring fencing of offshore renewable energy and grid enhancement technology as is for communities in the renewable energy scheme which is at stage 2 in deployment. We should ringfence 5% of capacity for community's deployment off the Galway coast.

The Cathaoirleach agreed that a motion should be put forward by this SPC. Galway Shannon and Cork are been adjudicated for suitability.

Cllr. Sheridan proposed that outside of this meeting a working group be assembled. In the meantime, Ms. Ruane will link in with CARO and discuss with the Cathaoirleach and Cllr. Sheridan thereafter. (That specific positive bias and piloting be given to 100% owned community entities and projects with regard to GETS under the RESS auction process, items such as groups of containerised battery packs modulating grid systems ancillary's and electrolysis deployment should be considered.)

7. AOB

Cllr. Cronnolly expressed thanks to Kieran Coyne of GCC for working on FLAG grant applications that had been discussed at previous meetings of this group. 1 per year is the normal allocation but Mr. Coyne is trying to progress 2 for Galway.

Cllr. Kinane added that she had also sought information on FLAG grants and that she had not received same. Ms. Finn confirmed that she will follow up on this.

The Cathaoirleach acknowledged that the members had discussed and cover a few topics throughout the meeting.

Ms. Ruane confirmed that four meetings of the members of this SPC group has taken place during 2021 and that hopefully the next meeting will be in person. Budget meetings currently in progress and work will be ongoing with County Development Plan until 14/1/2022, so overall the final months of 2021 will be very busy.

The Cathaoirleach concluded by saying that the working group in relation to the Grid will be set up separately to SPC group members meeting.

8. Date of next meeting:

The agreed date for the next meeting was set for Wednesday 19th January 2022 at 11am.

Meeting Concluded

CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CHRUINNIU ANSIN


CATHAOIRLEACH ALASTAIR MC KINSTRY