



Kildare Public Participation Network

Representative: Ali Sheridan

Name of Committee: Climate Action Strategic Policy Committee

Date of Meeting: 12/05/21

Attendees:

Geraldine Morris
Cllr Peter Hamilton
Joe Boland
Peter Mulhern
Cllr Bill Clear
Alan Dunney

Judith Browne
Ali Sheridan
Cllr Fintan Brett
Paula O' Rourke
Cllr Ciara Galvin
Jesmond Harding

Lisa Rothwell
Lorraine Benson
Cllr Naoise Ó Cearúil
Ray Stapleton
Tom Malone

Key Issues Discussed

a) Minutes

Previous Meeting Minutes Accepted

b) Glyphosate

- Tom Malone raised the issue that glyphosate is an important input into farming systems
- Tom raised the point that glyphosate has been proven safe and only those with training and licenses should be allowed to use it.
- Judith responded that she does not believe it is a safe product and raised ongoing court cases in this space.
- Judith acknowledged that farming has few alternatives, and that the focus should be on the LAs, local communities, and individuals use of Glyphosate in Kildare.
- Cllr Clear supported the call for reduced use of Glyphosate as well as acknowledging the unique needs of agriculture.
- Cllr Clear suggested a targeted campaign for sports clubs.
- Cllr Hamilton suggested an awareness campaign on the health impacts of glyphosate.

c) Workplan

- Cllr Hamilton presented the suggested workplan for the SPC and reminded the group that the SPC is a policy group so detailed, individual actions don't form part of the workplan
- Cllr Hamilton suggested a frequent review of the workplan



- Ali requested that the workplan is shared on the website for transparency and to align our work with other SPCS. (Geraldine will action this)

d) New Graduate

- Paula O' Rourke shared an update that her team will be getting a new graduate
- The graduate will be assigned a mentor and will access training throughout their placement
- This graduate will support community engagement
- Paula will update on the progress of the graduate coming on board
- Joe Boland mentioned that there is likely to be a big shift on community work from a national and local authority point of view with funding coming through in this space

e) Climate Action Linkage Group Submission

- The Planning Dept have received the document and are working through it
- The Councillor's Development Plan Review begins next week and Cllr Hamilton suggested all Cllrs read the submission prior to this process beginning
- Paula congratulated the group on the quality of the submission
- Ali highlighted the collective effort of the linkage group to pull together the submission
- Cllr Brett raised the issue of the need to better engage wider parts of the community to build more support for climate and biodiversity action measures.

f) National Peatlands Park Proposal (presentation attached)

- Lorraine Benson and team presented a proposal to create a national park on Kildare peatlands
- A wide working group has been established for this proposal
- The proposal focuses on the Bog of Allen site
- The proposal hopes to achieve:
 - A new relationship with our peatland heritage
 - Develop tourism opportunities
 - Create a network on interconnected nature areas
 - Engage communities
- All of our current national parks are on the east coast bar one in Wicklow
- The site will encompass existing areas of interest such as Lullymore, Bog of Allen, Umeras
- Tristram from IPCC showed aerial images of the vast boglands
- Bog of Allen covers 115k+ hectares – most in Kildare, some in Offaly
- The Bog of Allen is not a single large bog, but a series of interconnected bogs
- Tristram showed some of the regeneration work happening at bogs that have been taken out of production
- Jesmond Harding (Butterfly Conservation Ireland) brought us through some species of interest for the Bog of Allen
 - A number of Amber and Red listed species exist in the area including Hen Harrier, Curlew



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- Also lots of unique flowers and invertebrates – Large heath butterfly, Marsh Fritillary, Wall Brown
 - Habitat richness – bog, grassland, marsh, open water habitats, deciduous woodland
 - Partnership with farming needed to manage habitats e.g. grazing is essential
 - Ray Stapleton discussed the tourism potential of the site
 - Spoke of the growing demand from people to experience nature and the outdoors
 - Lots of potential to draw tourists – walking, hiking, educational, food, day trips, boating
 - Could boost new opportunities in the midlands
 - Drawing from international examples such as the Lake District in the UK
 - Challenges
 - May be seen as a threat to cutting bog
 - Group stated that they do not want to stop private cutting
 - They want to celebrate the rich history and heritage of the area
 - This plan can also help to increase the carbon sequestration ability of our peatlands
 - Need to strike a balance between renewable energy development and biodiversity conservation
 - Point was made that this proposal won't require major land purchases as the land is already state owned.
 - The group requested the following as next steps:
 - To have support from elected reps in the county
 - To include the proposal as part of the County Development Plan
 - To seek the endorsement of KCC
 - Action: Joe and Peter to validate the correct process.
 - Queries
 - Cllr Galvin enquired as to whether the park would be carbon neutral given the focus on tourism and a potential dependence on driving etc. Cllr Galvin suggested including a visitor offset scheme.
 - Joe Boland spoke of his own experience with Wicklow National Park. Highlighted potential to tease more detail about funding and to ensure consultation with the land owner.
- g) Updated Climate Bill and upcoming Climate Action Plan**
- KCC is now planning to create a Climate Action Plan (CAP) that will encompass the requirements of the new Climate Bill, the SECAP, as well as taking account of the current Climate Adaption Plan and the workplan of this SPC.
 - Each LA must create a CAP that will be updated every 5 years
 - Local Authorities have a key role in converting national ambition into local actions
 - Timeline
 - Energy officer has tendered for SECAP consultants – closes 12/5/21
 - CARO are creating guidelines for LAs to use, will be ready in October.



- One document will cover CAP and SECAP
- KCC eager to get started.

h) Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) (Alan Dunney)

- Kildare has put forward Maynooth as the proposed DZ.
- The Dept will come back to LAs by end of month to confirm their decision
- The DZ implementation plan is to be submitted by KCC to the Department by Dec 2021
- Some things we need to consider
 - The DZ needs to be 'all of council' project, and go beyond this SPC
 - There is no guidance on implementation plans as yet but only a short timeframe to complete it. We may need to move ahead of the guidelines. –
 - Key opportunity areas include retrofit, energy generation, school awareness, school branding competition, partnership with ICARUS, Maynooth Local Area Plan, Eastern Ring Road, Strategic Transport
 - The DZ Implementation Plan has been considered as a work item in the SECAP tender so KCC should have more support
 - There may be potential to take on a Project Manager to lead the DZ project

i) Energy Update (Peter Mulhern)

- KCC is considering implementing ISO 50001
- Currently developing a Registrar of Opportunities
- Energy team are creating new awareness ideas – green week etc
- Identifying top 20 energy users so that improvement projects can be targeted
- KCC working with Meath, Wicklow and Louth on a proposal to develop an Energy Bureau as part of SEAI pathfinders programme.
- Cllr Clear asked about libraries and EVs
 - KCC have been dealing with libraries to find opportunities – lighting and heating
 - EV chargers – KCC are awaiting guidance. Trying to understand how much demand there will be for EV chargers
 - KCC has 3 EVs (1 fire, 2 MD offices)
 - Looking at EVs for litter wardens
- SECAP/CAP will include energy use as per SECs as well.

j) Glyphosate and Hedgerows (Judith Browne)

- Judith presented images of weedkiller use and hedgerow cutting that members of the PPN had queried
- Highlighted need to raise awareness of the need for training and licenses
- Highlighted the need to educate Residents Association, community groups etc



- Suggested that a glyphosate free approach should form part of the 10 Biodiversity Plans being rolled out across Kildare
- Outlined that the PPN want to see a county wide glyphosate plan
- Requested that KCC staff and contractors are asked not to spray and to ensure awareness of risks
- Queried:
 - Can grants be linked to glyphosate ban?
 - Can KCC support local, organic food through procurement?
 - Can KCC influence National Roads Authority, clarify law on road verges, watercourses?
 - Can KCC change hedge cutting policy to better support hedgerows?

Response from Parks (Paula O' Rourke)

- Parks Department are not spraying but this is not the case for the rest of the Council's Departments
- Paula hopeful that other departments will follow the lead of Parks
- Grants currently do have an environmental weighting
- KCC does not have influence over NRA spraying
- Verges – if it is a household or farm verge, KCC cannot control spraying
- Buffer zones around drains depends on the chemical being used
- Public awareness – Inland waterways have ran a local campaign
- Hedgerows – some farmers need to cut hedges to create airflow to crops
- NPWS oversee timelines of hedgecutting
- Parks are currently working on guidelines for developers to protect biodiversity of note
- Council aim to replace trees that are cut down, but this is not always done

Date of next meeting: 8th September