

## **Climate Action SPC Linkage Group Meeting 24/11/20**

In attendance:

Jennifer Whitty

Ali Sheridan

Eddie Smyth

Sean O'Broin

Liz Cullen

Stephen Deegan

Jude Browne

Fionnuala Corcoran

Thelma Stronge

Ronan Anthony O' Reilly

Ann Behan

Brendan Wyse

Emer Conway

Stephanie Alves

Mary Jennings

Apologies: Cliona Kelliher, Deirdre Lane

### **Discussion**

Eddie Smyth – Umeras Project

Eddie gave us a fantastic talk on his progress so far with the Umeras project:

- Eddie's background is as an ecologist and in community development
- July 2019 – he approached Irish Peatland Conservation Council to see if the bog could be used as a conservation project
- Bord na Mona current plans for larger bogs include industrial development (landfills) or wind project (potentially biggest onshore wind project in Ireland).
- Eddie saw potential to create a biodiversity project that could act as a tourism attraction given a town regenerative plan was being conducted for Monasterevin, the Blueway was approved in 2019, a new distillery was in the works just outside Monasterevin which will attract circa 50k visitors a year
- Referenced Lough Boora as a best-case example
- How did they consult with community?
  - o Developed a leaflet with layout of the park
  - o Printed 400 leaflets and went house to house
  - o Developed website
  - o Worked with local councillors/TDs to gain support – gained support across the board
  - o Went to heritage officers in Kildare, Laois and Offaly Local Authorities
  - o Also went to Kildare Failte and IPCC
  - o Secured letters of support
- Funding
  - o Just Transition Fund was announced: applied for a design study for the park
  - o They had to have own funding of 15% - raised it locally through GoFundMe (8.5k) and got another 3k from local Councillors.
  - o Kildare Leader going to fund a strategic study
- Umeras Project
  - o One of first 6 projects approved for the Just Transition fund
  - o Design Study is made up of 2 parts:
    - § 1. architectural and planning layout.
    - § 2 biodiversity assessment

- o Differentiating their offer from Lullymore – not for private profit. More tranquil and nature focus.
- Biodiversity
  - o Became aware of unique biodiversity on the site
  - o Site added to curlew monitoring project in 2020.
  - o Barrow SAC runs alongside which floods and attracts whooper swans.
  - o Roosting hen harriers in Winter
  - o Plan is to let the site regenerate/rewild. Potential to reintroduce other species.
- Green tourism project
  - o visitors can come by bike, walk, public transport, barge – no need for cars
  - o coffee shop on site
  - o Hope is visitors will visit local towns for foods, café
- Tips to success projects
  - o Get a strong team in place with relevant skills
  - o Registered as a CLG group
  - o Keep the groups small initially – dedicated and professional people. Then broaden out.
  - o Divide list of projects into Large, medium, small projects, prioritise them and then out names to each one.
- Next steps consultants planning out next few years of projects
- More info - <https://umeraspeatlandspark.ie/>

### **Stephen Deegan, Climate Action Officer for KCC – Funding**

- Stephen spoke about his own success with funding for the Ballymore Eustace walking route success he had – through Towns and Village Renewal Scheme
- Emphasised need to create tangible projects
- Stephen provided a fantastic overview of funding opportunities including:

- o 25k funding available in Celbridge-Leixlip MD – Climate Innovation Fund
- o Just Transition Fund
- o EPA research calls
- o SEAI research calls
- o Science Foundation Ireland research calls
- o EU Life Grants
- o Horizon 2020 funding
- o Interreg Europe
- o EUCF
- o IDA Ireland
- o Pobal
- o Leader
- o LA21 (Community Engagement Action Fund)
- o LCDCs
- o Woodland Environment Fund
- o Community Gain Funds
- o And lots more – details available in Stephens slides.
- Tips for funding success
  - o Can be an advantage to be a serial applicant for grants – gain experience
  - o CGMA has a document on where to find funding
  - o Stressed the need for communities to come forward with projects

### **Jude Browne, PPN Rep**

- Jude gave an overview of her proposed presentation to the council
- Some additional ideas from the group included:

- Biodiversity
  - o Add 10 biodiversity plans
- Sustainable Transport
  - o Park and ride – cover roofs in solar. Bus Connects going to reduce lanes on N4. We need park and ride
  - o School Cycle Buses
  - o Barges – most use diesel. In Holland moving diesel boats to electric. Any scheme here? Reduce pollution – decarbonise the waterways
  - o Extending Dart to Kilcock
  - o Reduce speed limits
  - o Green Economy
  - § Working with LEOs to better support sustainable business
  - § Potentially use BCorp metrics
  - o Circular Economy
  - § Repair Cafes – Can the council help with insurance
  - § Recycling industry – opportunity to create local jobs

### **Other Input**

- Fionnuala suggested we build on existing groups rather than create new projects.
- Jude suggested the Linkage Group becomes the advisor/supporter to the smaller groups