

North Bull Island Nature Reserve Oversight Forum

Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 22nd February 2023

Attendees

Richard Curtain (RC)	Senior Coastal Programme Officer, Dublin, An Taisce
Tara Adcock (TA)	Bird Watch Ireland (BWI)
Chris Fusco (CF)	North Bull Island Conservation Volunteers
Sean Fagan (SF)	North Bull Island Conservation Volunteers
Gerard O Rourke (GoR)	Clontarf Residents Association (CRA)
Miranda Pheifer (MP)	North Bull Island Residents Association
Melinda Lyons (ML)	Dublin Naturalists Field Club
Mairéad Stack (MS)	National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)
Clare Farrell O' Sullivan (CFoS)	Raheny Tidy Village Group
Stephen & Billy Aylmer(SA/BA)	Greenkeepers, St Annes Golf Club
Cllr Deirdre Heney (DH)	Clontarf Ward Councillor
Cllr Donna Cooney (DC)	Clontarf Ward Councillor
Cllr Naoise O Muiri (NoM)	Clontarf Ward Councillor
Leslie Moore (LM)	Head of Parks, Biodiversity and Landscape Services, DCC.
Pat Corrigan (PC)	North Bull Island Nature Reserve Manager
Fergus O Carroll (FoC)	Senior Executive Parks and Landscape Officer, North Central Parks District
Lorraine Bull (LB)	Biodiversity Officer, DCC
Fionnuala Collins (FC)	Executive Parks and Landscape Officer, North Central Parks District

Apologies

Helen Boland	Bird Watch Ireland
Phil	Bull Island Action Group
Jeff Fallon	Manager, Royal Dublin Golf Club
Brendan Price	Irish Seal Sanctuary
Cllr Damien O Farrell	Clontarf Ward Councillor
Cllr Jane Horgan Jones	Clontarf Ward Councillor
Cllr Catherine Stoker	Clontarf Ward Councillor

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
1.0	Introductions	
1.0	LM welcomed the group and introduced Fionnuala Collins, the new Executive Parks and Landscape Officer who will be administering the NBI OF meetings taking over from Shane Casey who joined another Local Authority.	NONE
2.0	Previous Minutes	
2.1	<u>Actions arising:</u> Option for Toilets: Provision is deemed to be inadequate at both Bull Wall and Causeway Road. Feasibility report on Eco/Self-contained serviced toilets was requested for next meeting. Sign to raise awareness of tidal currents has been erected at Wooden Bridge as requested by Residents Assoc.	DCC NONE
3.0	Updates from Stakeholder Organisations	

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
3.1	<p>DCC: <u>Lorraine Bull, Biodiversity Officer</u></p> <p>LB distributed Birds of the Biosphere Swatches and Seaweed Laminated Sheets.</p> <p>LB distributed copies of the first comprehensive Breeding Birds survey carried out between DCC and Birdwatch Ireland in 2021.</p> <p>LB provided an overview of current DCC biodiversity projects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Brent Geese Ambassador Programme</i> in Schools – which is being relaunched Biosphere wide. - The NUIG study of <i>Ectocarpus</i> in the bay and its effects on sea grass is being finalised with report to issue later this year. <p>LB confirmed that the Dublin Bay Biosphere Conservation and Research Strategy has been updated by the Partnership's Biodiversity Officers and that it links to actions in the City Biodiversity Action Plan and North Bull Island Management Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bay wide actions include a seal research project with St Andrews University and research on Harbour porpoises and Brent geese. <p>LB is finalising the <i>City Biodiversity Newsletter</i> and will email an invite to subscribers (ensuring GDPR requirements).</p>	LB
3.2	<p>DCC: <u>Fionnuala Collins, Executive Parks and Landscape Officer:</u></p> <p>FC is setting up a St Anne's Park and Bull Island online newsletter to provide regular updates of what's going on. FC to send email to invite subscribers, (GDPR requirement) Organisations to forward to their members.</p> <p>Requests from mobile sauna operators to locate on North Bull Island was discussed. Agreement that the Nature Reserve is not appropriate.</p>	<p>FC/ALL</p> <p>DCC to respond to enquiries</p>
3.3	<p>Raheny Tidy Village Group <u>Clare Farrell O Sullivan</u></p> <p>Biodiversity Study commissioned – Dr Mary Tubridy. Provide scientific basis to the work they do. (Clontarf Res Assoc doing same – they can collaborate)</p> <p>#1 in Ireland Pride of Place (Urban Neighbourhood Villages)</p>	NONE
3.4	<p>National Parks and Wildlife Service <u>Mairéad Stack</u></p> <p>Mairéad Stack briefed the group on the new Conservation Measures Unit in NPWS and the broad requirements of the conservation objectives for Bull Island</p> <p>MS to circulate the conservation objectives for Bull Island</p> <p>MS welcomed the 2021 Breeding Bird Survey and asked: how it related to historical data; and about the conservation status of the named species. MS suggested the NPWS Conservation Measures Unit and NPWS LBAP Fund could be used possibly here.</p>	MS (DONE)
3.5	<p>St Anne's Golf Club <u>Stephen and Billy Aylmer</u></p> <p>STRI (Bob Taylor) undertakes ecological survey 6 times per year. St Anne's GC to make reports available to all.</p> <p>MS (NPWS) brought up discussion on water abstraction on NBI as an issue at the Alder Marsh, an annexed habitat. PC said UCD research (Fiona Deveney) 10 years ago indicated water abstraction is impacting on Alder Marsh; additional climate</p>	St Anne's GC to send reports to FC for circulation

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	change impacts. A proposal for INTERREG funding to complete research has been submitted by UCD, Queens and a Scottish Uni.	
3.6	<p>Dublin Field Naturalists Club Melinda Lyons <i>'Mibora minima'</i> Early Sand Grass, first found to occur on the island in 2019 by ML, has been added to the Flora Protection Order 2022 and is therefore now a legally protected species.</p> <p>Severe erosion by the sea at the north end of the island during winter 2022/23 has reduced the length of the island by 60m and caused the northern-most 200m (approx.) to become much narrower (reduced to about half its former area).</p>	NONE
4.0	Visitor Access Management Plan	
4.1	A Visitor Access Management Plan requiring people not to access the northern part of the island and to keep dogs on lead in the dunes to minimise disturbance to habitats and species was presented by FoC. Agreed to proceed. Launch date of Sunday 2 nd April 2023 with prior awareness raising promotion in various media.	DCC
5.0	Appointment of Rangers	
5.1	DCC appointment of 4 No. Park Rangers is being progressed. Awaiting date for advertising from DCC Human Resources.	DCC
5.2	Councillors requested a copy of the duties	DCC
5.3	MS (NPWS) enquired if Rangers are to be trained about FPO species on the Island and why dogs on lead important i.e. designated status, visiting waterfowl. DCC will provide appropriate Ranger training on flora, fauna, habitats, dealing with antisocial behaviour, conflict etc.	DCC
6.0	Update On Dublin Bay Discovery Centre Project	
	LM advised that a full report/update will be provided to NCA Committee Meeting with a subsequent presentation to the NBIOF.	DCC
7.0	Re-Purposing Disused Toilet Block (For Birds)	
	DCC consulted with BWI to consider the re-use of building to provide nesting sites for Swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>), acoustic monitoring of nocturnal migration and potentially Bats, Mining Bees and mural. BWI options discussed and NBIOF agreed to proceed subject to concerns subsequently raised by the Dublin Naturalists Field Club. Suitably experienced architects being sought to bring project to construction. Proposals to be presented for review again once the detailed specifications for the proposed works are available.	DCC
	MS (NPWS) brought up that all information for architects on wildlife and buildings is available online, doesn't need another big input of funding to find this information. Any works should have identify if it is an 'ARC' (for which DCC is Consenting Authority).	DCC
8.0	Traffic, Car Parking And Emergency Access On Bull Wall	
	LM advised that an Initial report had been received from consulting engineers but it was not satisfactory. DCC to revert to the consultants to request clarification.	DCC
9.0	Access For Vulnerable People – Beach Matting And Wheel Chairs	

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	FoC/PC briefed the meeting on the problems experienced with the beach matting which had been trialled. It was noted that trial was unsuccessful and some alternatives for limited access to the beach will be considered.	DCC
10.0	Sea Buckthorn Eradication	
	Traditional eradication by volunteers was discussed and noted as having limited success. DCC to investigate mapping by drones to inform a renewed plan for eradication. This could include use of mini digger and contractors as well as volunteers.	DCC
	MS said NPWS LBAP funding could be availed of to conduct a survey before and after volunteers remove buckthorn.	DCC
	MS raised issue of grazing to maintain diversity. Discussion re rabbits and their importance and if grazing should be trialled.	
11.0	Waste management	
	New bins were installed. DCC and NBI OF to keep issue under review.	NONE
12.0	New Showers – North Bull Wall	
	New showers were installed at swimming shelters and were well received	NONE
13.0	NBI Conservation Volunteers	
	Volunteers outlined their work on invasives (sea buckthorn) and the need for more recruits.	DCC to advertise
	Article in Ezine on work of Volunteers.	FC to liaise SF/CF
14.0	Review Of Action Plan For Next Meeting	
	Action Plan to be reviewed at the next meeting.	DCC
15.0	NEXT MEETING	
	Next meeting is scheduled for 10.00am Wednesday 26 th April 2023 (<i>Rescheduled from 19th April</i>) Venue: Bull Island Visitor Centre	