



**North Bull Island Nature Reserve Oversight Forum**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**Attendees**

Tara Adcock (TA)	Bird Watch Ireland (BWI)
Chris Fusco (CF)	North Bull Island Conservation Volunteers
Sean Fagan (SF)	North Bull Island Conservation Volunteers
Miranda Pheifer (MP)	North Bull Island Residents Association
Cllr Karl Stanley	Representative of Catherine Stoker
Cllr Damien O Farrell	Clontarf Ward Councillor
Cllr Jane Horgan Jones	Clontarf Ward Councillor
Declan Doogue	Dublin Naturalists Field Club
Mairéad Stack (MS)	National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)
Clare Farrell O' Sullivan (CFoS)	Raheny Tidy Village Group
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**

Melinda Lyons	Dublin Field Naturalists Club (TU Dublin)
Proinsias Mac an Bheatha	Dublin Field Naturalists Club (TU Dublin)
Jeff Fallon	Royal Dublin Golf Club
Brendan Price	Irish Seal Sanctuary

ITEM No	SUBJECT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
<b>1.0</b>	<b>PREVIOUS MINUTES – ACTIONS ARISING</b>	
1.1	TOILETS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coin system has been changed to card by JC Decaux</li> <li>Tender for toilets to be prepared</li> </ul>	NONE FC
1.2	EZINE	
	Articles based on biodiversity reports will be provided on an on-going basis (Bull Island-St Anne's Park Ezine).	FC
1.3	RANGERS	
	Awaiting a timescale from HR on date for advertising/recruitment.	DCC HR & Union
1.4	RE-PURPOSING DISUSED TOILET BLOCK FOR BIRDS	
	Due to the concerns for the potential of this project to impact rare and protected flora, this project will be fully reviewed by the new Scientific and Technical Advisory Group (STAG) and with the NPWS prior to any works taking place.	To be considered by STAG
1.5	TRAFFIC, CAR PARKING AND EMERGENCY ACCESS ON BULL WALL.	
	Consultant Engineer (CE) required to meet with key Stakeholders prior to reverting with options.	LM follow up with CE



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1.6	INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO BEACH	
	Beach matting trials not successful. Not being pursued. Mats in too poor condition for recycling. FoC stated Pat Hestor the Access Officer wants to get in touch with Groundswell to ask how wheelchairs borrowing from Pure Magic is going. DCC to investigate provision of an area(s) to move on to off the Bull Wall for wheelchair users e.g. extend the area of hardstand.	FoC/PC
1.7	NBI Conservation Volunteers	
	LB said Garda vetting process underway and additional advertising will be required.	LB
<b>2.0</b>	<b>VISITOR ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>	
	Forum agreed feedback was broadly positive.  'Short lead' to be added to the Signs.  CF suggested a potential collaboration with Dublin Zoo.	FC  Meeting to be arranged between DCC and Dublin Zoo.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>REVIEW OF 2020-2025 ACTION PLAN</b>	
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b><i>Continue an evidence-based approach to management of the Nature Reserve by supporting research and monitoring of species and habitats.</i></b>	
	LB provided update on current research and monitoring projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NUIG – algal blooms in Dublin Bay and along Dollymount Strand (report due May 2023)</li> <li>• TCD – Iris Moeller (Pat to confirm)</li> <li>• Breeding Birds – Irish Midlands Ringing Group ringing project (2023)</li> <li>• Updated NBI Impact Survey of Dollymount Strand – to establish the level and effects of recreational activities on Dollymount Strand (commencing 2023, report due autumn 2023). Updated NBI Impact Survey of the Saltmarsh (Winter) – to establish the sources, level and effects of recreational activities on the Bull Island Saltmarsh (commencing 2024, report published 2025).</li> <li>• To look at undertaking bat monitoring with NBI volunteers or Dublin Bat Group (2023-2025).</li> <li>• To update/publish Herpetological surveys by H.S.I. (2023/2024)</li> </ul> <p>Concern raised about the placement of lizard surveying mats and their impact on habitats and flora. LB to raise with Herpetological Soc</p>	PC          LB
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b><i>Integrated Management of North Bull Island through the Dublin Bay Biosphere Biodiversity Conservation and Research Strategy</i></b>	
	Lorraine Bull circulated hard copies of the Dublin Bay Biosphere Biodiversity Conservation and Research Strategy 2022-2026 prepared by Biodiversity Officers in the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere. The strategy includes specific actions for NBI as well as Dublin, Bay wide.  LB explained that the DBB bay wide grey seal tagging project with St Andrews University, Scotland and University College Cork will start next year, 2024. The project involves fitting satellite tags to seals to discover how the seals are using the bay and identify areas that may need further protection. The tags will also be able to provide data on length of time seals rest at locations. Current indications are that seals are	NONE       LB



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	hauling at NBI can only rest for 1-2 hours compared to 5-6 hours in other parts of the bay. LB to report when results available	
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Support on-going hydrology studies to inform management of the Island's dune slack habitats</b>	
	Groundwater monitoring at two boreholes was re-established in 2019 by NPWS, and the scope of a hydrology study for the island and broader water table is currently being progressed by DCC and NPWS. A tender may be required.	LB/FC
<b>ACTION 4</b>	<b>Carry out mapping of the extent of the saltmarsh every 5 years.</b>	
	An aerial mapping survey of the salt marsh in 2018 (by Brady Shipman Martin) indicated that there was (1) no discernible change to the edge of the saltmarsh and (2) accretion of the sand dunes had occurred on the north side of the island. This survey is due to be updated in 2023-2024. Survey needed. Drone option discussed. LB report in next meeting	LB
<b>ACTION 5</b>	<b>Implement a 5-year strategy to control sea buckthorn using established best practice methodologies.</b>	
	Control of sea buckthorn has been ongoing with the support of the NBI volunteers. Mapping of the buckthorn along with a larger scale removal is planned for 2023. A broader mapping survey using drones and LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging/Imaging technology) is being investigated and will tie in with action no. 6.  Agreed there is a need for drone surveys for all Invasive Alien Species (IAS). Tender is required.  PC explained ongoing management: mechanical by DCC; Manual by volunteers.  LB successfully applied for NPWS Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) funding for equipment, plant hire (mini-digger), GPS, shovels, PPE etc.	FC/LB Tender required   PC - ONGOING  NONE
<b>ACTION 6</b>	<b>Carry out a survey of Common Cordgrass to inform a future management strategy.</b>	
	LB reported. The use of drones and LIDAR technology is being investigated to enable a comprehensive survey Common Cordgrass ( <i>Spartina Anglica</i> ) and other IAS. Tender is required.	FC/LB.
<b>ACTION 7</b>	<b>Engage with St Annes Golf Club to survey their boundary and propose a fencing solution.</b>	
	Significant work done on fencing. One short 30m stretch to be completed	PC
<b>ACTION 8</b>	<b>Manage the northern end of North Bull Island as a refuge for wildlife by dissuading and restricting public access from this area all year round.</b>	
	Being addressed in implementation of Visitor Access Management Plan (VAMP). Signage to be erected.	FC/FoC
<b>ACTION 9</b>	<b>Protect important bird roosting and feeding areas on the salt marsh by restricting public access west of the golf courses all year round.</b>	
	Being addressed in implementation of VAMP	FC/FoC
<b>ACTION 10</b>	<b>Permit dogs to be allowed off-leash on the southern part of the beach from the Causeway to the Bull Wall, outside of the bathing season.</b>	
	Being addressed in implementation of VAMP	FC/FoC
<b>ACTION 11</b>	<b>Require dogs to be kept on-leash on all parts of the dune system and the northern section of the beach all year round.</b>	
	Being addressed in implementation of VAMP	FC/FoC
<b>ACTION 12</b>	<b>Support the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Partnership to undertake a Dublin Bay wide seal tagging study.</b>	



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	The original survey date of 2021 was delayed due to Covid and personnel changes in UCC. LB explained that the DBB bay wide grey seal tagging project with St Andrews University, Scotland and University College Cork will start next year, 2024. The project involves fitting satellite tags to seals to discover how the seals are using the bay and identify areas that may need further protection. The tags will also be able to provide data on length of time seals rest at locations. Current indications are that seals are hauling at NBI can only rest for 1-2 hours compared to 5-6 hours in other parts of the bay. LB to provide update when results available.	LB
<b>ACTION 13</b>	<b><i>Collaborate with sports/recreational bodies to include provisions for responsible behaviour towards wildlife into recreational codes of practice.</i></b>	
	Collaboration with Pure Magic and the Kite Surfers Assoc. (IKSA) was ongoing pre pandemic. DCC to re-engage with Kitesurfing groups, Volleyball etc.	FC/FoC
<b>ACTION 14</b>	<b><i>Implement a signage and communications strategy for the Island that reinforces its status as a National Nature Reserve, promotes sensitive habitats and species and encourages responsible behaviour.</i></b>	
	<i>Signage prepared and to be erected. Seasonal 'Thank You' signs to be prepared. ARC required.</i>	FC
<b>ACTION 15</b>	<b><i>Continue beach maintenance in line with the Blue Flag standard, promote the 'Leave no Trace' policy to visitors and continue to support the Bull Island Action Group to keep the Island litter free.</i></b>	
	LM explained due to bad water quality results in some previous years we didn't want to apply to be refused. However beach is maintained to Blue Flag status.  LM talk to DCC Protection of Water Bodies Unit.	LM
<b>ACTION 16</b>	<b><i>Monitor traffic levels to the island and promote walking, cycling and public transport.</i></b>	
	LM met with Dublin Bus and looking into feeder bus	LM
<b>ACTION 17</b>	<b><i>In accordance with the ethos of the UNESCO Biosphere designation, Dublin City Council will establish an Oversight Forum to guide and monitor the implementation of this Nature Reserve Action Plan 2020-2025.</i></b>	
	Forum established. Meetings ongoing.	None
<b>ACTION 18</b>	<b><i>Devise a public engagement programme with users of the Island to inform a zoning plan which will minimise recreational disturbance and impacts on wildlife</i></b>	
	<i>Visitor Access Management Plan being implemented and monitored.</i>	FC
<b>ACTION 19</b>	<b><i>Continue support for a Volunteer Programme that facilitates the local community to participate in conservation activities and to share their knowledge and passion with visitors to the Island.</i></b>	
	<i>North Bull Island Conservation Volunteer Programme in place.</i>	
<b>ACTION 20</b>	<b><i>Progress the planning for an accessible Interpretive Centre for education, interpretation, visitor management and research to support the nature conservation objectives of North Bull Island Nature Reserve, the vision of the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere and the goals of UNESCO.</i></b>	
	Plans advanced for a replacement to existing Visitor and Interpretive Centre. LM to provide update in next meeting.	LM
<b>4.0</b>	<b>DUBLIN BAY BIOSPHERE CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH STRATEGY</b>	
	Complete. LB circulated hard copies prepared by Biodiversity Officers in the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Conservation and Research Strategy (2022-2026). (refer also Action 2 of Item 3.0)	NONE



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5.0	<b>SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP</b>	
	LM recommended the establishment of a Scientific Technical Advisory Group as suggested by Dublin Naturalists Field Club. That was agreed.	LB
6.0	<b>AOB</b>	
	DC requested toilets be added to the <i>North Bull Island Nature Reserve Action Plan 2020-2025 for the Implementation of Management Objectives</i> . It was agreed that this would be added to the Oversight Forum agenda as the plan has already be published.	FC
7.0	<b>NEXT MEETING</b>	
	Next meeting is scheduled for 10.00am Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> July 2023 Venue: Bull Island Visitor Centre	

Fionnuala Collins, Executive Parks and Landscape Officer. Dublin City Council

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023