

**Minutes of meeting Climate Action, Environment, Recreation & Amenity Strategic Policy Committee held on Wednesday the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 via Microsoft Teams & in Council Chamber, City Hall, College Road, Galway.**

**Presiding:** Cllr. M. O'Connor

**Present:** Cllr. D. Lyons, Cllr. T O'Flaherty, Cllr. N Murphy, Cllr. J. Connolly, Cllr. A. Curran, Ms. E. Hough, Ms. Mr. B. Smyth, Mr. P. Greene, Director of Service, Mr. B. Barrett, Director of Service, Cllr. C. Connolly, S. Connolly, Senior Engineer, Mr. D. Redington, Climate Action Coordinator, Ms. P. Kearney, Bio-Diversity Officer, Mr. P. O'Grady, Senior Executive Officer, Ms. M. Collins, A/ Administrative Staff Officer, Ms. P. Fahy, Assistant Staff Officer.

**Absent/Apologies:** Caroline Stanley, Friends of Merlin Woods

**Presentation by Dr. James O'Connell - Dr. James O'Connell is a Specialist Registrar in Public Health Medicine in Merlin Park University Hospital and his presentation *will be on* an assessment of the health impacts of transport in Galway.**

**Item 1. Minutes of Meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

The Minutes of the SPC meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were proposed by Cllr. D. Lyons and seconded by Cllr. T. O'Flaherty and adopted by members.

**Item 2. Matters Arising**

The members requested updates on the following:

1. Update on the appointment of a Tree Officer.
2. Update on the Kissing Gates.
3. Framework for Renmore area and would like a response before the next SPC.

The issues raised were responded to by Ms. S. Connolly as follows:

1. Will revert in relation to the appointment of a Tree Officer, no response from the department as yet.
2. Kissing Gates tender for Terryland has gone out this week, shortly followed by South Park.
3. Will bring an updated report to the next SPC but focus is on budget.

### **Item 3. Galway City Biodiversity Action Plan Presentation by Paula Kearney.**

Members raised the following matters:

1. Requesting further information on the pilot project of “Dexter Cattle” winter grazing specific areas at Ballyloughane?
2. Does Biodiversity plan include a yearly review as per 10 years ago? Without one, no progress to protect ecological parks.
3. Are areas of ecological importance accommodated?
4. More awareness needed around green spaces and management is needed to protect habitats and to diffuse use of herbicides and pesticides.
5. Galway City Council has not adapted park bye - laws.
6. Who is “we” – the members questioned who is responsible for the Galway City Bio-diversity plan and whether Paula is supported by a Team.

S.Connolly and Paula Kearney responded as follows:

1. There will be a substantial communication piece drafted and then issued regarding the Dexter Cows, it is currently being drafted in Irish Language. The cattle are the property of a local farmer and will be returned to his care when not grazing the land at Ballyloughane. This will allow grass and wildflower to grow during the summer months. Ireland has long history with farming and its role in bio-diveristy with sustainable farming has been carried out for years in SAC. The Welfare of the Dexter cows will be paramount. The farmer will lease the lands for a period of time, with Galway City Council accepting the costs of waste removal.
2. Yes there will be regular reviews undertaken on the plan
3. Yes there has been accommodation provided for ecological importance with their requirements facilitated
4. More awareness needed around green spaces and management is needed to protect habitats and to diffuse use of herbicides and pesticides. Galway City council has been trialling various non-chemical options for weed/pet control to varying levels of success. While there is continuous improvements being made in the use of herbicides, their use is still proving to be the most beneficial with regard to control of invasive species.
5. Although Galway City Council has not yet adopted the Park bye-laws, this will not affect the bio-diversity plan.
6. The Galway City Bio-diversity plan has the back and support of a team comprised of 2 Parks superintendents, the Tree Officer, 3 engineers as well as an outdoor crew and administration supports.

#### **Item 4. Mr. T. McCusker, Community Climate Action Fund. – Presentation**

The members raised the following queries:

1. Questions about applications for communities – where is it advertised and where do they get their funding?
2. Are sports clubs eligible and is it on council owned land?
3. Where are the presentations taking place?
4. Clarification on the Knocknacarra presentation date – was it the 5<sup>th</sup> December? And clarification also on the Renmore presentation date of 12<sup>th</sup> December

B.Barrett and Mr. McCusker responded to queries:

1. It was told to members that groups are to engage with Tiarnan McCusker and the ideas he discussed in presentation. Closing dates are a long way away, and to engage sooner rather than later to avoid refusals to rectify issues.
2. Yes it can be used on council land if community groups want to use it.
3. Westside Community Centre, Knocknacarra Community Centre and Renmore Community Centre.
4. Knocknacarra presentation is being held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 6.30pm to 8.30pm and Renmore Community Centre is 12<sup>th</sup> December 6.30pm to 8.30pm.

#### **Item 5. Mr. D. Redington Climate Action, Galway City Council – Local Authority Climate Action Plan**

- Opened submissions on 25<sup>th</sup> November and closing date is 29<sup>th</sup> December.
- Have not received any submissions thus far.
- Predicts an influx of submissions on the final week.
- Suggests members discuss businesses to get involved more.
- The first of three awareness campaigns took place on 28<sup>th</sup> November with 27 attendees from the private sector attending, 10 industry specialists and had demonstrations on the night from Electric Ireland, Windsor Motors, SAI for various grants and retrofitting.
- Two more events taking place in December.

The members raised the following questions:

1. Have local bike shops been invited.
2. Was it electric charging cars that were demonstrated at the events.
3. Timeline for submissions is too short.

D. Redington responded to queries:

1. Local Bike shop was invited but couldn't attend but plans to expand their invitations to more local bike shops going forward.
2. Windsor motors attended demonstrating EV motors and plan to attend the next two events.
3. They are working within the timeframe and deadlines given and cannot extend – when the deadline is reached it will be put forward to full council to adaptation.

B. Barrett also re-iterated that we are bound by national deadlines of 23.2.24 and is agreed by GCC.

#### **Item No. 6. Dublin Road Cemetery**

Sharon Connolly informed SPC:

- Galway City Council are finalising design, and it should be done in the next few weeks.

Members raised the following:

1. Who has access to the grounds until then? Can kids still have access to it or will it be closed off?

P. Greene responded:

1. It will be used as normal until tender for construction is complete.

#### **Item No. 7. Proposed meeting dates 2024**

- Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024
- Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024
- Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024
- Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**Approved by Cllr. Terry O'Flaherty and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Cllr. Donal Lyons.**

It was requested a review of the litter management plan as the current strategy is out of date and litter is a serious issue currently. Would like this included in 2024 work programme.

More information regarding timelines and priorities for work programmes set out, would appreciate more details, and would like a report on progress on last year's work programme.

**Item no. 8 AOB**

Cllr. T. O'Flaherty sent her condolences to employee Mr. Pat Philbin and his family on the passing of his mother and gave funeral arrangements.

1. August update on programme of works for Kingston & Millers Lane
2. Representatives for a 'Little Free Library', can there be a policy adapted to allow this as its been previously denied.
3. Antisocial activity at toilets in Silverstrand at night, requested a contact to discuss this further.

P. Greene responded as follows:

1. Millers lane tender periods extended due to the need of clarity and a timeline will be provided and its not unusual for a two week time extension. Last year's work programme will be reviewed at the next
2. They will revert back regarding the little library with more information as they are unaware of it and don't know the reason why it didn't go ahead.
3. He stated that the issues in Silverstrand are an issue for An Garda Siochana.

A further update is that the dune fencing installed at Ballyloughane in June was a great success. Initial removal of fencing pre-winter was removed from the work plan, and so the fencing remained in situ until recent storm Debbie. It proved successful in preventing seaweed and debris onto the roads.

**The Meeting concluded.**