



Public Participation Network Feedback Form: Climate Action & Planning SPC



PPN Community & Voluntary elected representatives: Marcella O'Connor, Anna Delaney

PPN Environmental Rep: Francesca Pawelczyk

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 3rd February

Meeting Agenda

1. Confirmation of minutes of the Climate Action & Planning SPC held on the 21st October 2020.
2. Matters Arising.
3. Declaration of interests by members.
4. To note - Supplementary Standing orders - Remote Meetings - adopted at November meeting of Longford County Council.
5. Presentation by Donall Mac An Bheatha.
6. Presentation by Tom Murtagh - Climate Action Regional Office (CARO).

Presiding: Councillor Gerard Hagan, Chairperson.

Present: Councillor - Uruemu Adejinmi, Mark Casey, Garry Murtagh, Peggy Nolan.
Andrew McHugh, Francesca Pawelczyk, Anna Delaney,
Marcella O Connor and Sharon Devlin.

In Attendance: Mr. John Brannigan, Director of Services.
Mr. Tom Murtagh, Senior Engineer.
Mr. Donall Mac An Bheatha – Senior Planner
Ms. Nora O'Farrell – Senior Executive Officer
Ms. Lorraine McKee – Environment
Ms. Aoife Moore – Regeneration
Ms. Sheila Healy – Planning

Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services
 Ms. Ann Marie Mc Keon, Administrative Officer
 Ms. Nora O'Farrell, Senior Executive Officer

Presentations: Yes / No (details if Yes)

Item 5 on the agenda: Presentation by Donall Mac An Bheatha on the Mid Shannon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Proposal

Item 6 on the agenda: Presentation by Tom Murtagh - Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) on Climate Action Training for Local Authority Members, staff and sectoral reps.

Agenda item	Member	Discussion	Actions / Who
<u>Item 1</u> Minutes of the previous meeting Held on 21.10.2020		Proposed by Cllr. Peggy Nolan Seconded by Cllr. Gary Murtagh	
<u>Item 2</u> Matters Arising		Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi asked for an update on the proposals made at the previous meeting on 21st October 2020, regarding the establishment of a columbarium wall, pricing for the use of this facility and revised pricing of burial plots, all at Ballymacormack. The Chairman advised this item was not on the agenda for the day.	
<u>Item 3</u> Declaration of interests by Members		There were none	
<u>Item 4</u> To note - Supplementary Standing orders re remote meetings - adopted at November meeting of Longford County Council.		Noted by Peggy Nolan A copy of the standing orders were circulated to members prior to the meeting.	

<p>Item 5 Presentation by Donall Mac An Bheatha (Planning Office) on the Mid Shannon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Proposal</p>		<p>Donall Mac An Bheatha gave an interesting presentation on the Mid Shannon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Proposal. He outlined the process and the requirements to become a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve via consultation and application to the International Coordinating Council of the MAB program. He noted that should the proposal be successful it will not restrict anyone's rights, nor would there be any additional requirements on landowners or the general public. Achieving the designation would be about protecting our landscape, nature, culture, heritage and economy. We currently have two UNESCO Biospheres in Ireland - Dublin Bay Biosphere Reserve and Kerry Biosphere Reserve. He showed maps of both these areas and explained the different zones, functions and benefits of such reserves. The Mid Shannon Biosphere reserve area is positioned in the middle of the Shannon System connected to many other important sites. It's different to the other two Irish sites in that it is based on wetlands and their unique importance for wildlife and role in climate change solutions, carbon sequestration, and eco-tourism development. The Biosphere Reserve encompasses parts of Longford, Leitrim, Roscommon and Westmeath with particular focus around Lanesborough and Lough Ree environs. Mr Mac An Bheatha outlined the costs involved, the staff required, the target dates for the process and the date for submission to UNESCO, September 2021. It was agreed by in attendance that the project has incredible potential and would be a tremendous achievement for the Mid Shannon region should the project submission be successful.</p> <p>Andrew Mc Hugh raised the concern of farmers on the impact of increasing numbers of Whooper Swans on the land and grass, particularly as the bogs are rewetted. These swans are a protected species so Mr Mac An Bheatha suggested that should the situation worsen, a discussion should take place around the issue and in his opinion a compensation of some kind be ideally devised for those who are affected. He added that one aim of the Government Climate Action Plan is to protect biodiversity and halt the loss of species so as the boglands are rewetted we are likely to see increased species in the area and this is a good thing. Ensuring farmers concerns are also addressed will be a balance that is necessary.</p> <p>He stated that Bord na Mona are aware of the impact of rewetting on the land and have stated their commitment to discussion and dialogue around the process. They can currently control the height of the water. Corlea was given as a good example of flood management.</p> <p>The Bord na Mona boglands were discussed in terms of flood management and ensuring that as much farmland as possible is protected. Donal noted that there are however certain</p>	
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		<p>lands that simply can't be protected with the rising water levels. Andrew spoke about groups of farmers in other counties who will be paid to rewet their lands. This offer will be coming in via a new scheme next year but there are concerns for farmers who do not want to engage with such a scheme. Their concerns must also be taken into account.</p> <p>Another discussion was around Forestry plantations and the access roads created to extract the timber. Hedgerows are being ripped out, replaced by stone entrances and barbed wire. The entire countryside is being destroyed but it's outside the control of local authorities. Conversation with local</p>	
<p>Item 6</p>		<p>Tom Murtagh - CARO - Climate Action Regional Offices - gave a presentation on the Local Authority Climate Action Training program.</p> <p>Tom Murtagh also introduced a video by Claire Moran (CARO) and her team in Kildare who have organised the training program for Local Authorities. Technical difficulties were experienced on the day so the video presentation would not work. It was forwarded afterwards. I include the link in the email.</p> <p>Tom Murtagh discussed the Local Government Climate Charter for local authorities which was signed in October 2019. It's one of the measures included in the National Climate Action Plan.</p> <p>He explained that Local authorities are regarded as a lead partner in 8 actions and key stakeholders in a further 22 actions within the National Action Plan.</p> <p>The Climate Charter is an important document that sets out the priorities for Local Authorities, and for Longford in relation to Climate Action and adaptation.</p> <p>Training and awareness are a key part of the Climate Charter. A Climate Action Training program for Local Authorities has therefore been designed. Six training pillars have been identified.</p> <p>The first training pillar 'Championing Leadership', was delivered to senior management, senior officers and elected members last week.</p> <p>The second training pillar 'Raising Awareness' is being offered to all local authority employees, as well as the various sectoral reps in the coming weeks. It's a 2.5 hour long online training.</p>	

		<p>The third training pillar is 'Building Capacity' - This training is for local authority Climate Action Teams who will be involved in quite detailed Climate Action Training.</p> <p>The fourth training pillar is 'Empowering Change' - Communities and outward facing employees will be involved in classroom-based training.</p> <p>The fifth training pillar is 'Delivering Action' - All outdoor employees will be trained to implement outdoor action measures.</p> <p>The sixth training pillar is 'Actioning Policy' - How to mainstream climate actions into the functions of the County Council.</p>	
<p><u>A.O.B</u></p>		<p>Andrew Mc Hugh Agriculture is one of the few industries at the moment where it's difficult to get grants for solar panels on buildings such as the roofs of sheds. A grant is only available if previous building grants haven't been used up so most individuals who would use it can't access it as most dairy farmers have used up grants over the past 10 years. He noted it as an anomaly and requested anyone with access to those in the seats of power to request a change to this regulation. He also highlighted other issues with grants relating to low emissions slurry spreading.</p> <p>Donall Mac An Bheatha suggested including the issue as a notice of motion at the next council meeting which can then be brought forward to the relevant authorities. Gerry Hagan and Peggy Nolan agreed on this as a notice of motion. Andrew is to work with Gerry in drafting the notice of motion.</p> <p>Anna D Atkinson Anna advised the members that Longford PPN currently deliver a monthly online training program for groups, businesses and organisations interested in learning more about Sustainable Living and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, wherein Climate Action, Mitigation and Adaptation are also discussed. She gave Helen Gorman, Siobhan Cronogue and herself as contacts for booking or requesting further information on the training sessions/workshops.</p>	

