

MEETING MINUTES
LOUGH CARRA CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION (LCCA)
 Tuesday 23 April 2019
 8.00 To 9.00 pm Corley's Abbey Lounge, Ballintubber

Chairperson	Tom Byrne
Vice-Chairperson	Peter Byrne
Secretary	Lynda Huxley
Treasurers	Joe Flannelly and Pat Gibbons
Technical Advisors	Chris Huxley and Cilian Roden

Antony Baynes	Peter Corbett	Lynda Huxley
Patrick Bresnihan	William Cormacan	Al McDonnell
Deborah Broughton	Sean Coyne	Joe McHale
Ray Broughton	Frank Fahey	Pat McHale
Peter Byrne	Eugene Finnerty	Michael Sweeney
Tom Byrne	Joe Flannelly	Deirdre Walsh
John Campbell	Pat Gibbons	Jim White
Paul Connolly	Chris Huxley	
APOLOGIES : Verena Berard Sue Callaghan	Peter Comer Teresa Moran Mick Kane	Peter Mitchell Bernie White Fiona White

AGENDA ITEMS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He also gave a special welcome to Eugene Finnerty, the new NPWS ranger for the area.

Bride Project

The meeting started with a viewing of the Ear to the Ground programme featuring The Bride Project (Biodiversity Regeneration in a Dairying Environment). This is a farmer led EU EIP project (European Innovation Partnership). It has €1.1 million funding.

The funding enables farmers to carry out various environmentally friendly initiatives on their farms such as leaving 2 metre wide field boundary between the hedgerows and grass especially for wildlife – a wildlife corridor. They have experts to help them. They employ a project ecologist, Tony Nagle, and using his expertise there is a tailor-made plan for each farm. They monitor the insect and bat populations. The result is that they have the best of both worlds - wildlife and intensive grazing. The farmers commented that they feel they have done damage to the environment over the years and they wanted to change this so came together to apply for the EIP. The EIP funding pays them for positive environment actions which would not be funded through other grants. They believe that consumers will increasingly want to know where food is coming from and their way of farming will be a good selling point for their product.

The Chair highlighted that this was clearly a very important farmer led project, where farmers have found a way of starting to 'put things right' – as one farmer put it in the programme. If LCCA is successful it will be able to find funds for such projects.

Minutes of the last meeting

The Chair read out the minutes of the March 2019 meeting.

Proposed : Sean Coyne

Seconded : Ray Broughton

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Matters Arising

a) John Sheridan's Biodigester Project

The digester will be up and running by the end of the 2019 and not in May as noted in the March meeting minutes.

b) Education

Purchase of copies of the 'All about Water' publication introduced to the group by Paul Connolly, has been sponsored by the Carra and Robeen Group Water Schemes. It has been distributed on behalf of the LCCA by Teresa Horan to all schools in the catchment - as listed in the March minutes. The schools will deliver this programme before the summer break.

The 'Something Fishy' programme was being delivered in schools by IFI, John Campbell and Ronan Cusack, and very positive feedback was being received 'the children loved it'. The chair remarked that this is one of the best ways of raising awareness and thanked John and Ronan.

The Lough Carra A6 booklet has been allocated funding of €1,000 through the Community Water Development Fund towards production costs. Tom Byrne and Joe Flannelly signed the acceptance document on behalf of the LCCA. Mick Kane will guide the group on obtaining the remaining funding required. The full cost for design and printing will be €2,055.00.

It was suggested that if need be the shortfall could be made up from LCCA funds :

Proposed : John Campbell

Seconded : Paul Connolly

The Art Competition is being deferred until after the summer break. Al McDonnell has ensured support for this from Mayo CoCo.

Fiona White of GMIT has informed Tom Byrne that she will be discussing with her colleagues the possibility of carrying out student projects on the lake, for example ;

- Decline in Mayfly
- Insect species affected by deteriorating water quality
- Explosion of chironomids
- Heritage in the catchment
- Folklore
- Wells and Holywells

The Secondary Schools in the catchment are interested in some sort of education programme linked to Lough Carra Catchment but have requested a written proposal. Other ideas put forward at the Education Committee meeting :

- A reusable water bottle carrying a logo – possible LCCA logo – could be distributed to schools. Paul Connolly is investigating this.
- A calendar of photographs
- A meeting with Bernie White of Mayo CoCo., who may have useful educational material

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c) Funding and Bank Account

Total in the Credit Union account to date : €6,145.98

Less €400.00 cash given to the secretary at this meeting

Grand Total : €5,745.98

The Chair announced that a cheque for €500 had been presented to him this evening as a donation from the Carra Mask Federation and this was acknowledged with thanks.

Joe Flannelly highlighted that the account does not have a cheque book and the Credit Union will probably not be in a position to provide one. Joe had to take out cash to refund the secretary - to cover various bills. He requested that some solution be sought because it is not wise to keep drawing out cash amounts to pay bills.

It was suggested that the Treasurers investigate other possibilities such as an An Post account or some other provider that could provide a cheque book and/or on-line banking option. Chris Huxley suggested holding off on this until the LCCA has obtained Legal Status.

d) Legal Status

Chris Huxley reported that all the committee members had signed the relevant documents. The fee of €115 could only be paid by cheque so this was covered by Chris Huxley and refunded in cash from the Treasurer as per above. We expect to hear in the near future if the LCCA has been accepted as a Co. Ltd by Guarantee.

Once Legal Status is granted the Constitution of the LCCA will be put on the Lough Carra website.

The next step will be to apply for charitable status in order to qualify for funds from many grant giving bodies.

Paul Connolly asked who had given advice on the articles of association. Chris confirmed that the template used by Rivers Trust and the Moy Trust had been used and adapted for LCCA.

e) The Wheel

The PPN service is not as comprehensive as that provided by The Wheel, especially the Funding Point access. It was suggested that LCCA become a member of The Wheel.

Proposed : Tom Byrne

Seconded : Sean Coyne

The secretary will apply for membership on behalf of the LCCA.

f) ASSAP Farmers Meeting (Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme)

Chris Huxley gave a brief report on the ASSAP meeting for farmers organised by Teagasc. Invitations were sent out by the Dept of Agriculture. Peter Comer was informed that letters were sent out to 503 farmers in the catchment which roughly coincides with the number of farms in the catchment. However, at least one small farmer in the catchment did not receive a letter. Around 35 farmers attended the meeting. Presentations were made by Peter Comer and Mary Roche of Teagasc, as well as Peter Mitchell of LawPro.

The aim of the ASSAP programme is to provide farmers with free support and advice on how to improve practices on their farm relating to water quality in the catchment. This advice is given on a confidential basis.

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There was also a very good presentation on the native woodland scheme by Noel Kennedy of Teagasc in Roscommon.

Teagasc want farmers to engage in this scheme to improve biodiversity, reduce nutrients which would lead to an improvement in water quality. There would also be a climate change benefit.

Chris suggested that Peter Comer and Mary Roche be asked to give an abbreviated version of their presentations to the LCCA as it would benefit the Association members to hear them. He also suggested that Noel Kennedy be asked to present about the Native Woodland Scheme.

Proposed : Tony Baynes
Seconded : Al McDonnell

The observation was made that not many farmers are attending the LCCA meetings. It was suggested that this would change if the association gets LIFE funding and has something concrete to offer them.

The Chair confirmed the observation that if good practice is established under a LIFE project this would spread. He added that raising awareness on water and health was vital. Everything the Association does is a 'win' such as the education programme, the booklet etc. Farmers hear about this and know a process has started. Every little thing is positive progress and the engagement with our meetings is all positive so we must endeavour to keep with it.

It was also noted that the vast majority of farmers are compliant with the regulations but even so the rush pesticide spray MCPA is sometimes evident. It is positive progress that Teagasc is going to pay farm visits because at least farmers will know what needs to be done to improve practices for water quality.

Al McDonnell highlighted that the LCCA had made great achievements and come a long way in a short space of time. The general public is convinced there is a problem and aware of the health issues.

Chris Huxley highlighted that LIFE is not the only source of funding, there are other possibilities and work being done for LIFE will be useful when applying for any other funding.

g) Update from Woodrow Sustainable Solutions

Will Woodrow had sent an update by email as below and confirmed he will be present at the May meeting to give a further update :

Since the last meeting we have:

- Met with LAWPRO staff (discussing the work undertaken to date on catchment characterisation and how it may tie into the project)
- Met with NPWS local, regional and national staff (in Galway), including water quality, agriculture experts and those with LIFE funding experience to discuss the LIFE bid, options for NPWS involvement and also key considerations for a successful application. A previous successful NPWS concept note has been provided to us for reference.
- Mayo County Council (to ask if they would consider taking a leading working role in the project)
- Had conversations with Coillte, Vincent Wildlife Trust and Teagasc Forestry.
- Organised meetings with Coillte and the Vincent Wildlife Trust for early May to discuss potential involvement / support
- Attended the LIFE information day and followed up with detailed questions with the LIFE office. Most importantly at this stage we have requested clarification on the following:

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- Rules and recommendations relating to the number / proportion of associated beneficiaries and supporters
- Exact details on the rules relating to percentage funding
- We are currently re-assessing the bid in the light of the 2019 published LIFE requirements (published 4th April) on the advice from the LIFE office to ensure best alignment with the LIFE priorities and thematic areas as directed by the NPWS LIFE office

Our key areas for late April and May are:

- Complete discussions with all potential partners
- Organise discussions with other stakeholders on actions / measures for the project
- Fully explore funding issues, including full project costs
- Provide draft concept note

Any Other Business

a) Prof. Ken Irvine

Prof. Irvine may be coming to Mayo in May. We could ask him to give a short talk to the group on Lough Carra since he had a team of students working on the lake in the 2000s.

Proposed : Chris Huxley

Seconded : Al McDonnell

The Chair asked for blanket approval for all decisions and discussions from the meeting. There was full approval from the floor.

NEXT MEETING

The May Meeting will be held in Partry Community Centre on TUESDAY 14 May 2019 starting at 8pm sharp.

All meeting minutes and other documents relevant to LCCA can be found on the Lough Carra website <http://loughcarra.org/catchment-association/>