



# LOUGH CARRA CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION (LCCA)

Reg. Charity No. 20206138

## MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 5 October 2021

8.00 To 9.30 pm, Partry Community Centre

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	Declan Cooke - IFI	Lynda Huxley
Sarah Blake - GSI	Ronan Cusack - IFI	Jean-Pierre Maire
Peter Bowyer	Philip Doddy	Stephen McCormack - Irish Bioenergy
Michael Brennan	Natalie Duncan - GSI	Al McDonnell - Cllr
Philip Brookes	Olivia Feeney	Pat McHale
Ray Broughton	Sean Finan – Irish Bioenergy	Alasdair Pilmer - GSI
Martin Butler - IFI	Joe Flannelly	Pat Roberts
Peter Byrne	Pat Gibbons	Sean Roberts
Tom Byrne	Michael Hegarty – JCWL	Cilian Roden
John Campbell - IFI	Sinead Higgins - NFGWS	Benjamin Thebaudeau - JCWL
Norita Clesham – SWMayo Dev Co	Teresa Horan	Eamon Walsh - IFI
Paul Connolly - NFGWS	Chris Huxley	

<b>APOLOGIES :</b> Verena Berard Deborah Broughton Tom Carolan - LawPro Peter Comer - Teagasc	Peter Corbett Sean Coyne Ailbhe Douglas - LawPro Mairead Lyons	Peter Mitchell – LawPro Catherine O’Reilly Michael Sweeney Bernadette White - LawPro
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### AGENDA ITEMS

The Chair welcomed everyone to this first public meeting of the LCCA since February 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated Government guidelines.

#### Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last public meeting held on 18 February 2020 were emailed in March 2020 and posted on [www.loughcarra.org](http://www.loughcarra.org).  
Proposed : Cllr Al McDonnell  
Seconded : Paul Connolly

#### Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

#### Update on EU Carra LIFE project by Chris Huxley

Chris Huxley gave an update on the EU Carra LIFE project. This update is attached to these minutes and can be found on the Lough Carra website at the following link <https://loughcarra.org/catchment-association/life-project/>

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### **Geological Survey Ireland by Sarah Blake (Senior Geologist in the Groundwater & Geothermal Unit) and Natalie Duncan (Geoscientist in the Groundwater & Geothermal Unit)**

Sarah Blake thanked the LCCA for inviting GSI to get involved with the LIFE Project after their presentation in 2019. GSI are involved in A2 of the Project Groundwater Catchment Study and will be contributing the equivalent of €198,000 to the project. In addition, there will be a part-time Groundwater Officer on the LIFE Project Team.

Natalie Duncan gave a presentation outlining GSI's Groundwater investigations around Lough Carra including the work they carried out in 2019 mapping the karst feature and the results. The presentation presented the Lough Carra catchment from a groundwater perspective showing examples of the various features. It also outlined the next steps which will be carried out which include a LiDAR survey, private well survey and Dye tracing.

A pdf copy of Natalie's presentation can be found on the Lough Carra website <https://loughcarra.org/catchment-association/presentations/>. You can also find more information on [www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie)

**Post meeting Note :** Slide 7 highlights the groundwater vulnerability of the Lough Carra Catchment which shows the majority of the catchment area to be of high to extreme vulnerability to pollution. Sarah Blake will give a presentation focussing on this at the December 2021 LCCA meeting.

### **'Biochar and Biobased Filtration – Addressing water quality and excess nutrients' by Sean Finan and Stephen McCormack of the Irish Bioenergy Association**

Joe Flannelly introduced Sean Finan, CEO of IrBea and Stephen McCormack who were invited to give a presentation on the potential of Biochar as one possible solution to addressing the water quality issues of Lough Carra.

Sean gave a brief introduction on what Biochar is, how it is made and what it is used for. Stephen then gave a more detailed presentation on the production process and how it can be used in a water body and drainage channels. He highlighted that it is important to get baseline data before setting up a Biochar filtration system so that effectiveness can be monitored. This is a new and growing sector in Ireland and IrBea are willing to work with the LCCA to trial its use regarding water quality and excess nutrients.

A pdf copy of their presentation can be found on the Lough Carra website <https://loughcarra.org/catchment-association/presentations/>

### **Post Meeting Note : Note of Clarification from the Irish Bioenergy Association (IrBEA) October 2021.**

“We would like to thank the Lough Carra Catchment Association and Joe Flannelly for the invitation to speak and present at the AGM of your Association. Our presentation on the night referenced the current retail price of biochar. The prices referenced are the commercial value ranges that our members are currently securing for biochar material on the open market. We didn't make it clear on the night and would like to subsequently clarify that our biochar supplier members are happy to supply, free of charge, a quantity of Biochar to Lough Carra Catchment Association to facilitate some trial work with the material as a filter medium. If the association considers carrying out a biochar trial in due course, we would be very interested in supporting and helping this effort. We are available to assist you at any time. Thank you”.

### **Treasurer's Report**

**Credit Union current balance : €3,724.00**

**Bank of Ireland current balance : €179.00**

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### Report from Farmer Liaison Group

- LawPro are delivering a course 'Mayo Communities - Caring for Water' which is a citizen science programme promoting the understanding the ecology of water bodies. The Water Communities Officer, Tom Carolan is co-ordinating the programme and it is open to all. The course is being delivered by Ken Whelan and Martin McGarrigle and is free of charge. You can register for the programme on the website <http://mayo.waters-project.com>
- The LCCA continues to roll-out the SPS solar pump systems in locations in the catchment with the assistance of IFI. These systems are not to replace existing water supply. A Terms and Conditions form has been introduced which is read and signed by the farmer.
- LCCA has three publications 1) booklet 'Lough Carra – A Gem worth Preserving 2) Catchment Map 3) The Marl Crusts of Lough Carra. These are being distributed widely and being well received. Credit to Dr Philip Doddy and Lynda Huxley who have produced these publications.

### Any Other Business

- a) Paul Connolly of the National Federation of Group Water Schemes highlighted that the €500,000.00 mentioned in the Secretary's AGM report for the Integrated Catchment Plan is allocated between 7 separate water schemes, one of which is in the Carra Catchment. This plan includes raw water analysis. Information will be available in collaboration with LCCA. Sinead Higgins is the newly appointed Soil Protection Officer with the NFGWS.
- b) Chris Huxley highlighted that the LCCA is very fortunate to have two experts amongst its members : Peter Bowyer physical oceanographer who has, on a voluntary basis, been looking at flow patterns in the lake. Phil Brookes who is a leading expert on soil chemistry who was working for Rothamsted Research station in the UK and has made links with them regarding and innovative soil testing kit. LCCA should be receiving on of these prototype kits which will enable soil testing for a fraction of the price currently charged – this has enormous potential for the Carra Catchment.
- c) Joe Flannelly raised the point that farming *per se* goes beyond the individual farmer and extends to the wider 'agricultural family' which has implications for the wider aspirations and expectations of the agricultural sector. It was agreed that this be given further consideration at a future meeting.

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

### NEXT MEETING

**The Next Meeting will be held on MONDAY 1<sup>st</sup> November at 8pm in Belcarra Community Centre.**

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