



LOUGH CARRA CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION (LCCA)

Reg. Charity No. 20206138

MEETING MINUTES

7 February 2023

8.00 To 10 pm Carnacon Community Centre

	Directors
Chairperson	Tom Byrne
Vice-Chairperson	Peter Byrne
Secretary	Lynda Huxley
Treasurers	Joe Flannelly and Pat Gibbons
Technical Advisors	Chris Huxley, Cilian Roden, Philip Doddy Sean Coyne

Present:		
Antony Baynes	Mike Faherty	Rachel Irwin
Samirah Blaauw	Olivia Feeny	Damian Jordan - LIFE
Deborah Broughton	Martin Feerick	Padraig Kelly - LIFE
Ray Broughton	Pat Feerick	Michael Kingdon
Peter Byrne	Joe Flannelly	Al McDonnell - Cllr
Tom Byrne	Kieran Flynn - LIFE	Pat McHale
John Campbell - IFI	Pat Gibbons	Ciara Moynihan
Norita Clesham - SWMDC	Celia Graebner	Micheál O Cinneide
Peter Comer	Joe Greene	Sean O Farrell
Declan Cooke	Caoimhe Hickey	Sean Roberts
Will Corcoran - IFI	Teresa Horan	Mary Roche
Sean Coyne	Walter Hughes	Cilian Roden
Ronan Cusack - IFI	Chris Huxley	David Scully
Philip Doddy	Lynda Huxley	Pat Stanton
		John Thornton
APOLOGIES :		
James Conran		
Lucy Roberts		
Michael Sweeney		

AGENDA ITEMS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular Samirah Blaauw, PhD student from SETU (South East Technological University) and Caoimhe Hickey of GSI (Geological Survey Ireland).

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last public meeting held in November 2022 were circulated by email and it is taken that they have been received and read by all present.

Proposed : Pat Stanton

Seconded : Teresa Horan

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

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Lough Carra LIFE Project update by Kieran Flynn, Project Manager

The year got off to good start and now have a full team in place.

Geological Survey Ireland: Caoimhe will talk about their work this evening.

Agri Environment Scheme – closed mid-January, but there is still possibility for some extra to come if they complete an expression of interest asap. 80 interested farmers in the catchment area. Currently contacting all of them and planners to get maps and will then look at selecting the highest priority farms to get into the scheme for 2023. Will be basing the selection on clusters in High Priority Areas, Vulnerability and those that will have the greatest impact for water quality. Want to get the scheme right for the 2023 farms and look to bring another tranche in 2024. Advising initial farmers at the end of Feb for 2023. This process will carry on until April. All farmers that are on list will be contacted in coming weeks. Also be holding a public meeting at the end of February early March to discuss specifications and score cards. As always office open every day so anyone can contact us with any queries.

Biodiversity plans and site restoration. Coillte has been out with Project Team to look at forestry in the area regarding biodiversity management of forests in the area. Interesting to see what they'll be doing with woodland in the area. Ongoing enhancements to bat habitats at Moorehall.

Chemistry and biology is ongoing on lake with gathering of data by EPA and LawPro to give a good handle on existing data and the current situation. Base-line data giving information on the quality of the lake is being pulled together and plan to continue monitoring. The specifications for tenders is being developed regarding crust monitoring and snorkel surveys, boat surveys, drone surveys.

NPWS are carrying out bat surveys and invasive species surveys.

Public outreach. www.loughcarralife.ie is live and still being developed. Any feedback is welcome. Twitter and Facebook are live on-line. Please follow and share. Noticeboards to raise awareness about the project are being installed this week in the following locations: Partry, Ballintubber, Carnacon, Belcarra, Moorehall, Cloondaver and Brownstown.

Networking with LIFE projects in Mayo to share best practice is ongoing and also with others nationwide.

LawPro Regional meeting was held in Belcarra last week and this included a visit to Lough Carra. The meeting participants included Western Regional Operational Committee: EPA, Group Water Schemes, CoCos, GSI, Marine Inst, Teagasc etc. – a good gathering of public bodies and were delighted to host them.

Lough Carra LIFE Project Launch. Making plans for formal project launch for Spring 2023. Date to be decided for March/April.

LCCA Agricultural sub-committee update

The LCCA have applied for a grant to the LawPro Water Communities Development fund to set up a Solar Pump system. This is a joint application which includes application for funding educational leaflets.

There's a new product on the Irish market 'Supersoil' which professes to replace the need for chemical fertiliser and improves fertility naturally by adding microbes to the soil. You can find out more on their website www.supersoil.ie

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There is a requirement under agricultural schemes such as Acres to identify plants on the land. There is a an APP that can assist with his 'Picture This'

Treasurer's Report

Credit Union current balance : €10,608.32

£3,500 have been received from the Vi and Maurice Webster Charitable Trust and these funds will be used towards the LCCA contribution to Lough Carra LIFE and educational projects.

€2,000 funding has been received from LawPro to cover Insurance and other operational costs for the past year.

Bank of Ireland : €131,347.90 – LIFE project funding to be used for land purchase/lease only.

Otter and Mink in Lough Carra by Samirah Blaauw, SETU

Samirah introduced herself as PhD students from SETU with a BSc in Forensic Biology, an MSc in Molecular Biology and her area of interest is Wildlife and Conservation Genetics.

She is currently doing her PhD research on the Otter and Mink in Lough Carra. The Eurasian Otter is a native species and the American Mink is an invasive species. Her research has the following elements:

- Non-invasive (genetic) monitoring through the detection and analysis of spraints (Otter droppings). She will not be using traps to take blood or tissue samples because this disturbs the animals and causes stress. Whereas collecting samples of spraints found around the lake is a non-invasive method.
- Population Genetics – determining the status of the Otter Population of Lough Carra through the spraint analysis. This will give known status of the population (numbers, sex ratio male to female, relatedness of families, individual territories) and help inform conservation policies.
- Dietary Analysis – determining the prey species and niche overlap between Mink and Otter

Samirah would welcome help in collection of Otter spraints

Samirah is looking for assistance in collection Otter Spraints for her to analyse. If any LCCA members are able to assist they can get the necessary collection bags from the Lough Carra LIFE Office on the first floor of Belcarra Community Centre F23 HY58. Attached is a one page document showing how to identify Otter spraints and how to collect them using a plastic sample bag to prevent touching them. It is also important to record the location co-ordinates. Any collected samples should be delivered to the Lough Carra LIFE office as soon as possible where they will be stored in a freezer.

Otter spraints are grey/grey black, cigar shaped and have a pleasant jasmine/lilac smell. The spraints are often found on vantage points to make them visible e.g. under/near a bridge or on a clump of earth.

Mink faeces are dark and have an unpleasant smell like burnt rubber or rotting meat.

If you have any questions you can email her on samirah.blaauw@postgrad.wit.ie

Lough Carra LIFE Groundwater team update – Geological Survey Ireland – Caoimhe Hickey

Caoimhe highlighted that the GSI involvement in Lough Carra LIFE is:

Action A.2 (Groundwater Catchment Study) of Lough Carra LIFE will define groundwater-surface water connectivity in the catchment to confirm the catchment boundary more exactly and help target nutrient-reduction actions.

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The Lough Carra catchment is in a karst landscape. Karst is a landscape with distinctive hydrology and landforms that come about when the underlying rock is soluble - such as limestone. Karst landscape features include sinkholes, caves, enclosed depressions, disappearing streams and springs.

GSI's main role is to try to define groundwater and surface water connectivity. Lough Carra has a large groundwater influence.

Groundwater can move very fast and over large distances. GSI have been tracing underground connections by placing dye into disappearing streams because Groundwater catchments can be much bigger than the Surface Water catchments.

There are two known springs in the lake. One is at Moorehall and the other one is known as Bull's Well at Quinn's Bay. Both springs have been photographed using thermal imaging. The thermal image and aerial images of the Moorehall spring show an alarmingly large ring of nutrients.

The water tracing that has been carried out involves 'tagging' water as it enters the Karst system and monitoring the locations where it re-emerges and the time it takes to travel from one point to the other. The 'tagging' is done using uranine (an organic fluorescing dye used in field tracer experiments because it can be detected in very low concentrations). Although the dye is coloured and fluorescent it is not toxic.

At the Moorehall spring, in-situ loggers have been put in place. There is a fluorometric data logger and a fluorometer and submersible data logger.

Dye was injected at a turlough near Ballyglass, outside the known Surface Water catchment, on 20 June and on 24th it was recorded at Bull's Well, Rooghaun and Annie's Bridge.

More dye tracing will be carried out and the current focus is the area to the East of the lake.

[GSI would welcome information on Karst features you may know of](#)

If anyone knows of Karst features such as : swallow holes, sink holes, dolines, springs, turloughs then GSI would welcome information on the locations to help them understand how the groundwater moves within the Lough Carra Catchment. For more information and to download the GSI Karst Features Questionnaire, go to <https://loughcarralife.ie/forms>.

Any Other Business

The Chair thanked Joe, Kieran, Samirah and Caoimhe for their presentations.

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 Tuesday 4 April 2023 at 8pm in Partry Community Centre.

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