

County Wicklow Maritime Business Development Group (MBDG)

Meeting at Wicklow County Campus,
Clermont, Rathnew

Wednesday 15th January 2020 at 11.00am

Present:

Tom Delahoyde	-	TD
Christine Flood	-	CF
Cllr. Pier Leonard	-	PL
Cllr. Gail Dunne	-	GD
Stephen Kavanagh	-	SK
William Tyrrell	-	WT
Simon Greenwood	-	SG
Paul Ivory	-	PI
Merlin Ovington	-	MO
Derek Cullen	-	DC

Apologies:

Frank Curran	-	FC
Roy Conway	-	RC
Lorcan O' Toole	-	LOT
Pat O' Suilleabhain	-	POS
Matthew Carroll	-	MC
Cllr. Steven Matthews	-	SM

MINUTES

TD welcomed the group and wished a happy new year to everyone.

Item No. 1

Minutes of meeting from 21st November 2019 and matters arising

LOT emailed in absence to note that the minutes of the meeting from 21st November 2019 did not mention the discussion between Marc Devereaux and him in relation to the Arklow Harbour Rates. This has now been included below.

LOT requested that something is done about the rates in Arklow harbour as they are unworkable at present. He asked if something could be sorted by the next meeting”.

MD stated that he doesn't want to have the harbours competing with each other. He added that currently there is work underway in preparing the publication regarding explosives bye-laws and they are nearly complete. He added that the next project will be to review existing bye-laws and existing rates.

CF noted that no one opposed the Maritime Strategic Review and this has now proceeded to the next stage. CF also informed the MBDG that the Draft Marine Framework has been rescheduled to 12th February 2020 in the Arklow Bay Hotel and Offshore Wind will be the main theme of discussion. **This event has since been postponed by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government until further notice.*

TD asked if the MBDG could make a submission in relation to this. He also asked if there is a need to have a sub-group meeting.

CF stated that it is probably best to wait till 12th February 2020 following this meeting. She also added that it is probably sufficient to do this via email circulation. CF also informed the meeting that there is a new foreshore bill that she will circulate to the group in the coming days.

TD asked when that Bill is due.

CF stated that it is due later this year (2020).

Item No. 7

Report on Simon Greenwood's meeting with Enterprise Ireland

It was agreed to discuss this item at this point.

SG informed the meeting that Liam Collins of Enterprise Ireland met with various stakeholders in the maritime industry recently. He stated that he was brought on a tour of Wicklow harbour and discussed items such as climate action funding. He added that Mr. Collins was shown the facilities in Wicklow port and explained to him about the Wicklow port project concept. He also stated that he asked Mr. Collins if funding would be available and this is why he directed us toward the Climate Action Fund. He stated that the CAF is part of the National Development fund; a fund that has an allocation of €500 million; and funding from this can be distributed by the Department of An Taoiseach of up to €30 million at a time. SG added that this funding is usually distributed in smaller allocations though.

CF stated that she also met with Liam Collins and although there were no discussions such as climate action funding they did discuss business opportunities with the possibility of developing a cluster.

MO informed the meeting that Climate Action Funding is very new to the Council but if there is something positive there then we'd be very happy to look into it.

CF also stated that there is the possibility of funding through the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) and Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) channels. She also added that the issue with this option is that the local authority has to provide match funding. She added that the deadline for submissions for these is 20th February 2020.

SG stated that as part of the government's commitment to renewable energy there was a search for a port as a lay-down base. Insofar as organising this there was a meeting of ports (Rosslare, Cork, Galway etc). It is disappointing though that the Government seem to have bypassed Wicklow in this regard.

TD stated that a feasibility study needs to be completed as the first stage to show that this is the project. It may or may not prove to be

WT stated that he doesn't think this is a runner as he feels that the only port in Ireland suited is Belfast port and this could become an issue with Brexit impending. He stated that Arklow would likely be an 800mw farm with 10 mw machines but there would possibly be a limitation on a putting wind farm in Arklow. WT added that we should probably be looking at the spin-off from the bigger ports as this could benefit us easily.

SG stated that the discussion taking place here today is to set the plan in place for the next 100 years or more. He added that we are trying to prepare ports as best we can and to increase infrastructure for the benefit of future generations.

CF informed the meeting that there will be a Renewable Energy Summit event taking place in Croke Park aimed at showcasing off-shore wind energy on 20th February 2020. SG stated that Liam Collins also mentioned this event to him.

Item No. 2

To discuss the impact of Brexit

TD informed the meeting that he wanted this item on the agenda as it is very relevant to the MBDG.

PI stated that the ports in Wicklow will still be importing and exporting logs etc but a lot will depend on decisions made by the government departments and it is hard to say exactly how to prepare for various outcomes.

CF also stated that it is a complex issue and carries a huge amount of uncertainty.

TD requested that this item is kept on the agenda for the next meeting in March.

Item No. 3

General Update on Harbours (including update on fishermen's huts)

PL informed the meeting that there is a lot of development proposed for Arklow with the Fishermen's huts and the flood relief plans that will affect the harbour but there seems to be a disconnect to an overall development plan for the area to show how all of these will fit in. She added that she would have concerns over the location of the Fishermen's huts and how they will operate going forward and also what effect this will have on tourism in the area. She also stated that there is great potential for tourism in Arklow especially when the Sewerage treatment plant is built that there can be aquaculture activities, for example with Avoca Mines and the Arklow to Shillelagh greenway etc. She added that Arklow could be a great location for day trips but we need to get this plan right. She added that she would like this group to have some input into the Flood Relief plans as this would be a good opportunity to put the infrastructure in that is needed to benefit marine tourism.

PI stated that a public consultation was held last year but he was not sure how well attended this was.

CF stated that there are currently two issues with the Flood Relief scheme. She added that there are planning and funding issues and that the OPW are funding this and they are very clear that they will fund flood relief. CF also stated that it is very hard to get them to fund anything additional, unless it brings additional benefits and that the OPW will look at any proposals and then ask if that would impact the flood relief scheme. She also stated that all of Wicklow County Council's projects involve statutory consultation.

CF stated that Wicklow County Council will be proceeding to Part VIII with regard to the fishermen's huts and if anyone has any views, thoughts or ideas they can feed into this process. She also informed the meeting that she spoke to the Senior Planner, Ms. Sorcha Walsh, about Arklow harbour and Ms. Walsh's view was that a plan was needed for the harbour area. She added that Wicklow County Council will engage consultants to do the plan for the harbour.

PL stated that there are proposals in the flood relief to make a one-way system around the harbour. She stated that she wanted to emphasise the importance of this in relation to the planned off-shore wind farm effect, with restricted access etc.

TD asked if Wicklow County Council are getting a consultant in to do a report will it affect the feasibility study?

CF stated that two studies will be done in tandem; one for Arklow and one for Wicklow. She also stated that they will be looking at short, medium and long term opportunities.

MO informed the group of the plans for the Fishermen's huts. He stated that Wicklow County Council hope to proceed to Part VIII in quarter 1 of 2020.

BT asked how these huts will be allocated to the fishermen.

MO stated that there are some containers being used by some fishermen on the harbour at the moment and these will be given priority. Following that they will be allocated under a licence scheme that will yield a yearly income stream. He added that terms and conditions will apply to all tenants for the maintenance and upkeep of the huts but Wicklow County Council will ultimately be the owners.

PL stated that she would prefer to see the fishermen are moved to the north side of the harbour.

MO said that Wicklow County Council is consulting with other agencies also and the Part VIII process will give people the opportunity to add any submissions.

PI then gave an update on Wicklow Harbour. He informed the meeting that Wicklow harbour is currently at full capacity and there will eventually have to be some infrastructural work done to create more space.

SG asked if there are any plans to free up any berths on the North quay or to deepen the river so boats can travel further up the quay.

PI stated that there are no plans for this currently.

MO stated that foreshore licensing is probably the councils biggest issue.

TD stated that it is vitally important to get someone to examine the four harbours and to keep this item on the next agenda.

SG asked that when the consultants are preparing the report that they incorporate joined up thinking and include some direct engagement for what they need so the best possible outcome can be achieved.

CF stated that Bray has a very good harbour user group and it was discussed at the previous meeting about setting up harbour user groups for Arklow and Wicklow.

TD added that unless anyone has any objections to this that it is a good idea.

PI stated that Bray have two key elements that makes a good user group. He said that these are a good chairman and a goal.

CF stated that JJ O' Dwyer is the chairman and she would ask if he would be willing to assist in setting groups up in Arklow and Wicklow. CF added that Mr. O' Dwyer is keen on terms of reference etc.

Item No. 5

Update on Native Oyster Reef Restoration (NORRI)

SK updated the meeting on the NORRI project to date. He stated that the funding came through on 23rd December 2019 but as of today none of this funding has been used yet. He added that Dr. Anamarija Frankic was in Edinburgh recently at the Bio-Security conference. He stated that both Dr. Frankic and he will be putting together a shortlist of people for the upcoming workshop and they hope to have a date selected for this within the next week or two. SK added that they will need to invite people and then consider what questions the workshop will need to address etc. SK also added that Dr. Frankic has met with representatives of NORA in Edinburgh and has invited a few to Ireland to look at their NORRI project. He advised that he had recently been to Donegal where he was speaking to a group who in the past had submitted a proposal to Brussels about a 3km no-fish zone around Ireland and then from 3km – 7km for a certain sized vessel only to be used and outside that would be the bigger boats. He added that going forward this would be a model that we should be looking at because you can't have fishermen trawling or dredging where a marine restoration project is underway. He stated that more will be known once the workshop has taken place. He also added that the project ticks all the boxes in relation to bio-diversity, climate change, community involvement etc. SK stated that the next stages are to hold the work-shop, to set up an office and a committee, including graduates and someone to co-ordinate the project, to work on the project.

SK asked, in terms of a no-fish zone, and with the planned Marine Planning Framework, is there anything this group can do?

CF stated that there is a need to be very careful because, for example, with the Wicklow to Greystones proposed greenway as this is a Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). She added that basically anywhere with an SAC is a 'no-go' area and very difficult to try negotiate works. In addition to that, even with regard to coastal protection, there are issues regarding putting rock armour on the beaches because of the SAC. It's a dilemma because without being able to protect the beach by setting up coastal protection works the beach could be destroyed. She stated that Wicklow County Council has proposed that there is some form of

no-fishing zone but is cautious because she wouldn't want to see a temporary or pilot no – fishing zone translated into an SAC which means that nothing could be done

CF added that on a more positive note, the coastal protection scheme developed by ARUP are talking about building a series of light barrier reefs to alleviate damage to the Murrough. She added that this should enhance the coastal area but ARUP might be able to develop the protection of the Oyster Restoration area.

SG stated that the sailors and people working out at sea would see the problem differently. He added that it is obviously due the increasing frequency of bad weather and that approximately 70% of southerly gales eat into the Murrough. He stated that as a result of this the wave action is causing the erosion. He added that putting in light barrier reefs or sea groynes will only temporarily alleviate the problem and what is needed really is a breakwater solution.

Item No. 6

To discuss Code of Conduct in respect of the ethical framework for all non-Councillor members on committees of local authorities.

CF informed the members of the Code of Conduct in respect of the ethical framework for all non-Councillor members on committees of local authorities that must be circulated to all groups annually.

Item No. 8

Correspondence

FLAG funding

CF informed the group that she had recently spoken to John Hickey of BIM regarding FLAG funding applications. She stated that there were three applications in total. CF also stated that Mr. Kit Dunne is looking, with the support of the MBDG, to apply for FLAG funding on his behalf, to investigate wreck fishing as he feels it is a good opportunity to attract tourism. CF read out Mr. Dunne's proposal for this project to the group.

The MBDG supported this application.

SK asked when the closing date for the FLAG applications is.

CF stated that the closing date is 28th February 2020. She added that they might have another call towards the end of this year and we would have to ensure that all of our FLAG funding is spent by 2021 and there will probably be a year without FLAG applications and a new round the following year.

National Marine Planning Framework

CF informed the group that this meeting was originally arranged to take place on 9th January 2020 has now been moved to 12th February 2020 at 6pm in the Arklow Bay Hotel.

SSE Letter of support

CF informed the meeting that a letter of support for SSE was sent to the Foreshore department in the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. She added that this was in support of their application for site investigation works licence at Arklow banks.

This concluded the meeting.

Date of next meeting: 12th March 2020 at 11am