**Report on**

**Third Meeting of Joint-SPC Sub-Committee on Biodiversity,**

**25th August 2021**

In attendance:

Cllr. Shane Moynihan (Chair), Cllr. Alan Edge, Deirdre Mooney (Business Pillar), Úna Ruddock (Environmental Pillar), Rosaleen Dwyer (SDCC Heritage Officer).

Location : Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

1. **Progress updates**

The Heritage Officer presented an update on progress with the agreed projects/actions for 2021, using a previously circulated Excel updated spreadsheet of the BAP objectives and actions.

The discussion included the following updates:

* Objectives to map habitats and species is pending, awaiting the finalisation of the Green Infrastructure Map for the County which is currently on public display as part of the County Development Plan review. This GI Map will form the foundation upon which other biodiversity information for the County can be layered into the future.
* Annual Swan-tagging project is underway in SDCC Parks.
* Autumn programme of mink trapping is planned for Oct/Nov 2021.
* The SDCC Invasive Species Mapping and Treatment programme is underway for 2021. Grant-aid was applied for and received from National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) for the preparation of an in-house training video on invasive species.
* The final phase of survey work for the Parks Pollinator Survey is due to be completed in the week ending 27th August. This 2-year project was 80% funded by NPWS under the National Biodiversity Action Plan. At its completion, plant and insects will have been surveyed over two years (2020 and 2021) in selected grassland areas in Tymon Park, Waterstown park, and Lucan Demesne. This data will form the foundation of an on-going monitoring programme for these species-rich grasslands, to monitor impacts of climate change and biodiversity changes.
* The hedgerow and woodland survey of Tymon Park has been completed and a report is awaited. This survey will deliver a record of the species and the condition of the Park’s hedgerows and woodlands and will include a management plan for this resource into the future. It is planned to investigate the use of the data for a follow-on project to calculate the carbon sequestration value of this biodiversity resource for Tymon Park.
* The planned follow-up on the Swift project has been postponed, possibly to early in 2022.
* The ecological survey of St. Finian’s churchyard has been completed. Report is awaited. This survey will support the activities of the Society for Old Lucan in their efforts under the Heritage Council-funded programme ‘Adopt a Monument Scheme’.
* The third meeting of the SDCC Internal Working Group for Biodiversity is scheduled for Thursday 2nd September. This group is composed of the Heritage Officer and staff members from LUPT (Planning, Roads) and from EWCC (Public Realm, Water and Drainage, Water Pollution Section, Climate Change, and Environmental Awareness).
* The Heritage Officer contributed biodiversity information and recommendations to the development of policy objectives for the draft County Development Plan. CDP is currently on public display until 15th September 2021. Input will be made to the review of any received submissions on biodiversity, with input to possible amendments as required.
* Communications and engagement activities include: preparation of Vol 2 of Nature on our Doorsteps publication; submission of weekly biodiversity articles to local Echo; facilitation of student research project in Tymon; facilitation of filming of biodiversity information video in Tymon; financial contribution to Tidy Towns national Pollinator Award prize fund.
1. **Possible additional project commitments**

The Heritage Officer is currently investigating an additional project from a two-person team of biodiversity educators who have worked in the primary school environment. The project would provide monthly wildlife briefings and advice on wildlife gardens to schools around the country. The Heritage Officer will revert to the Sub-committee with further details following a scheduled meeting with the project proposers.

1. **Planning for 2022**

Looking ahead to 2022 and biodiversity projects that could be addressed next year, discussions included a possible wetlands survey for the county. Other ideas are to be developed and discussed at the autumn Sub-committee meeting.