**Report on**

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

**10th May 2022**

***In attendance:***

Cllr. Yvonne Collins, Cllr. Gus O’Connell, Deirdre Mooney (Business Pillar), Rosaleen Dwyer (SDCC Heritage Officer).

Apologies: Cllr. Eoin Ó Broin, Úna Ruddock (Environmental Pillar)

**Location:** Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

1. **Governance**

Elected Member representation on the Joint SPC Sub-committee for Biodiversity changed in 2022 due to revolving positions held by Elected Members on Council’s SPCs.

Cllr Yvonne Collins replaced Cllr Shane Moynihan as representative of the LUPT SPC;

Cllr Gus O’Connell replaced Cllr Alan Edge as representative of the EWCC SPC.

Thanks was extended to Cllr Moynihan and Cllr Edge for their interest and contribution to the meetings in 2021.

Cllr Yvonne Collins was noted as the Chair for the Joint SPC Sub-committee for 2022 and will report on the Joint SPC Sub-committee to the LUPT SPC. Cllr. O’Connell will report on the meeting to the EWCC SPC.

1. **2022 Work Programme**

The Heritage Officer presented a not-exclusive programme of work for the year ahead, highlighting annually recurring projects; carry-over projects from 2021; and new projects for 2022.

The presentation and discussion included the following issues:

* The annual Swan-tagging project in SDCC Parks is underway. Now that over 5 years data has been collected on tagged swans and gulls in SDCC Parks, a report is being compiled by the voluntary group undertaking the tagging and recording. This is expected to issue by September 2022 and will be presented in an engaging, easy to access style, highlighting key stories of particular swans and gulls. An outdoor event is proposed for Heritage Week in August 2022.
* Autumn programme of mink trapping is identified for Oct/Nov 2022.
* The partnership project with Kildare Co. Co. is underway, to research alternatives to herbicide usage in public spaces. An update on 2021 project start-up activities and a 2022 work programme is expected shortly from Kildare Co. Co.
* An early season biodiversity survey is planned for early June at selected pollinator sites in Tymon Park, Waterstown Park and Lucan Demesne. This early season survey was not possible in 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions. At its completion, plant and insects will have been surveyed over two years (2020 and 2021) in selected species-rich grassland areas in the three parks, forming the foundation of an on-going monitoring programme for these sites to monitor results of changing grass management regimes and potential impacts from climate change. Due to the richness of the plant and insect diversity in Tymon Park, this park was chosen by the National Biodiversity Data Centre as one of its national annual pollinator monitoring sites. This is a positive reflection on how the management of the grasslands in Tymon Park have allowed diversity to be sustained.
* Volumes 2 and 3 of the publication ‘Nature on our Doorsteps’ are in preparation. Vol 1 was published by in 2019, representing the first 52 weekly columns written by the Heritage Officer for the weekly ‘Nature on our Doorsteps’ column in the Echo newspaper. To date, 242 weekly columns have been published, representing a regular communication of positive biodiversity topics and photographs.
* The 2021 Swift nest-box project, which was delayed by Covid-19 restrictions, is to proceed in 2022 in conjunction with the national experts BirdWatch Ireland. Three potential sites are being considered for the installation of specially designed nest boxes for Swifts, including Waterstown Park and Vessey Park.
* A submission for funding was made by the Heritage Officer to National Parks and Wildlife Service for the survey of ponds, lakes, and wetlands in the County. While many of these features are located in SDCC Parks, an element of the project will be a public engagement process to encourage the submission of records of ponds and lakes on residential and business properties.
* A submission for funding was made to National Parks and Wildlife Service by Public Realm for the survey of hedgerows and woodlands in Corkagh Park. The information gathered will inform a management plan for the trees and hedgerows in the park. This is the second park to be surveyed in detail for these habitats. The survey of Tymon Park was commissioned by the Heritage Officer in 2021 with funding from the Heritage Plan.
* Following a commitment at ACM, a successful grant application was made by the Heritage Officer to the Heritage Council for a biodiversity survey of the Woodstown Village Estate and Park. However, due to the imminent surveys for a recently proposed Council project at Woodstown, and to avoid duplication of costs and effort, the grant has been declined. Survey data will be shared with the Heritage Officer.
* The Heritage Officer continues to input to on-going biodiversity issues for: Council projects,

planning applications, Part VIIIs, SHDs, SDZ, County Development Plan etc.; SDCC’s Pollinator Plan Sites *e.g.* monitoring plant and insect diversity, liaising with and advising Public Realm re optimal grass-cutting schedules and involvement with biodiversity filming projects; liaising with community and research groups; input to Council’s Invasive Species Management Programme; and the SDCC Climate Change Action Plan on the ‘Nature Based Solutions’ sub-committee.