**Consultative Committee to undertake a review of the issues surrounding the impact of gulls in urban areas**

**90 North King Street, 4 February 2020**

**Meeting 4**

**Minutes**

Attendees:

Dr. Derek McLoughlin (Chairman) (Chair)

Tom Cardiff (Balbriggan Community Committee) (BCC)

Gerry Coffey (Balbriggan Community Committee) (BCC)

John Daly (Fingal County Council) (FCC)

Dr. Steve Newton (Birdwatch Ireland) (BWI)

Dr. David Tierney (National Parks and Wildlife Service, (NPWS)

Department of Culture, Heritage and

The Gaeltacht)

Roy Thompson (National Parks and Wildlife Service, (NPWS)

Department of Culture, Heritage and

The Gaeltacht)

Joe McMahon (National Parks and Wildlife Service, (NPWS)

(Secretary) Department of Culture, Heritage and

The Gaeltacht)

**Apologies:**

Oonagh Duggan (Birdwatch Ireland) (BWI)

Gerry Leckey (National Parks and Wildlife Service, (NPWS)

Department of Culture, Heritage and

The Gaeltacht)

Dr. Hans Visser (Fingal County Council) (FCC)

***1 Approval of CC2 and CC3 Minutes***

Balbriggan Community Council stated with reluctance that they would accept condensed meeting notes, only if statements made were corrected and gave an example of statement from Department referring to revocation of UK licence.

The Chair went through the actions points from CC2

Invitation issued to Dr. Dearbhaile Morris to make presentation on AMR – she accepted.

Invitation issued to Professor Martin Cormican – no response received

Actions from CC3

Legal expert on Birds Directive and EU Law invited to attend (David Browne).

**Action Point** - **Committee members to submit specific questions within 3 weeks to inform David Browne’s presentation at CC5.**

BCC had concerns that legal expert would just be looking at protective rights of gulls not people. They also stated that there was no State advocate for schools, businesses etc. and these are being ignored by the Consultative Committee meetings to date.

**Action Point – National Parents Council to be sent invitation for representative to attend next meeting.**

**Action Point – Professor Moynagh who has done research on Sleep deprivation be asked to do presentation.**

**Action Point** **FCC requested that bullet point from CC3 attributed to them be removed (around issue of noise).**

***2 Presentation by Dr. Dearbhaile Morris (AREST Project)***

Dr. Morris gave an outline around her experience with AMR having studied it for more than 20 years and having a PhD in it, and also working on the One Health Programme (NUIG).

Summary of key points from her presentation:

* Many different types of AMR – MRSA, CPE
* Up to 10 million deaths a year from effects of it
* HSPC Centre publishes data from hospitals (usually quarterly)
* CPE has been declared a Public Health Emergency in Ireland
* All hospitals now screening for this
* AMR data on animals is not as good
* Wide spread of Locations for project chosen due to different factors (e.g. raw sewage being pumped into sea)
* Report due to be finalised end March 2022

**Action Point – Copy of presentation to be circulated to Committee after meeting.**

There was a Q&A session after presentation.

BCC asked about gulls on schools, easy to pick up and high risk of infection, longitudinal studies of AMR in gulls, and HSA guidelines re. cleaning of sites not to use power washers as that can cause spread of infection.

**Action Point - BCC requested that Dr. Morris take a paper they had produced on AMR on gulls which she agreed to.**

Dr. Morris stated that consequences of infections varied e.g. Barcelona study found CPE in gulls, and no data of infection of CPE from wildlife. She indicated there should be abundance of caution principle to high density colonies. 1% of people pick up CPE from another person, and that they are behind in research from animals. AMR has naturally occurring resistance in environment e.g. fungus. In relation to longitudinal data, data being built, DNA sequence being looked at and compare “Isolat” ecoli from humans, gulls, etc. and are they related.

NPWS asked about quantifying risk, at what level is high risk of spread from gulls.

Dr. Morris stated that there was use of AMR resistance is limited so that AMR resistant drugs are taken away. Certain level of data available in next 6 months. CPE could be in human body for years; doesn’t necessarily mean it will affect you.

Chair asked about MRSA and International Perspective.

Dr. Morris stated that MRSA can be on skin or in nose, and is easier to clear than CPE (in guts). Good hand hygiene/cleanliness and sanitary wear, very little transmission rate from person to person. Ireland only EU Country doing “One Health” approach in EU. Very few countries have looked at seawater, their focus has been more on animal and human waste.

NPWS asked about communication and who should this target (DAFM, Dept. Health etc.)

Dr. Morris stated communication with general public, stakeholder groups, had no ranking of priority, and it was also aimed at Dept. of Environment, Irish Water, Policy makers etc.

NPWS stated that evidence based, degree of risk and what means to health of human individuals and resistance and urgency of this information.

***3 Draft Interim Report***

The Chair asked for general commentary on Report and then focus on Recommendations.

(General Commentary)

NPWS (Regional Management) – happy with report.

NPWS (Scientific Unit) – resource Issue around gull management

BWI – Feel report very herring gull-centric, issue around other gull species in different cities. Any programme to come out of Report to be evidence based and logical approach, important to have research done first and have baseline set. Problem might only be moved to different community, need to have research linked to nest sites with feeding criteria etc. and ringing of birds to be done. There is no evidence of bird control measures on current blanket derogation e.g. how many nests removed, where birds have gone to, this type of evidence required.

FCC - what type of research needed for target species before action taken and how long would research take.

BCC - Report should and does set out issues and what will happen for subsequent reports. Important to flag “hot” issues – schools. They have additional topics/observations that are larger than report. Importance of remedies for citizens, BCC have been looking for assistance since 2016. Important to have type and severity of issues on communities and costs to be included. BCC stated it did not see anything in Report relating to mitigation measures to feed into annual derogation process. BCC has drafted its own recommendations for the Report, and that their “public health and safety measures” concerned are not being addressed in Report.

The Chair stated that the Recommendations would be going to the Minister and the Department, that the Report is focussed rather than detailed, and that the Derogation public consultation process would be earlier in the year.

**Action Point** - **BCC group recommendations be circulated to Committee Members for their observations after the meeting.**

(Recommendations Commentary)

FCC – Health risks to be looked at and timeline for getting information would be long term. No research on mixed noise impacts not the same for everybody.

**Action Point –** Get short report from Associate Professor Barry McMahon

BCC – their recommendations are in addition to what is in Interim Report. In relation to public health and safety recommendations (6.5.4) – doesn’t reflect what other government department have put on record on their remit. In derogation for 2020/2021 will there be funding available for mitigation measures. It is priority for their Community to have this in place.

BWI – Important to have chronological order to recommendations, some re-ordering is needed

NPWS – Cumulative effect of different types of noise need to be addressed. Indicative timelines and sequencing and prioritisation. Site specific problem for certain species – Birds Directive, rather than general species.

NPWS (Regional Management) – Recommendations fine with them. Priority is to conserve species, and licensing arrangements v. legal framework needs to be looked at, and that future licensing may be impacted.

The Chair concluded it was important to agree high level recommendations, and what is doable now and what costing of same, submit to Department and get timelines from Committee and hierarchy of actions. If actions can’t be undertaken reasons need to be given.

**Action Point - New recommendation on schools and how they can be used as communications tool for local community, around waste management, feeding, education etc.**

***4 2020/2021 Derogation***

A summary was given of the public consultation process and the recommendations received from the various stakeholders. BCC asked if any plan to change the dates or issue the declaration sooner, as this would help locally with planning of work by individual householders for the coming season. The Department indicated that there was no plans to change the dates.

***5 Any Other Business***

The Date of next meeting 7 April 2020, and the venue to be offices of Fingal County Council in Swords.

**Action Point - A draft Survey to be circulated to Committee Members for their comments in advance of public meetings to be held in North Dublin in April and that this be sent out to householders/stakeholders in area in advance of meetings.**