

**Minutes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Open Meeting of the Environment & Natural Resources Committee held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019 @ 11:15am in the Council Chamber.**

<b>Present:</b>	Hon. Russell K Yon	-	Chairman
	Hon. Dr. Corinda Essex	-	Deputy Chairperson
	Hon. Gavin G Ellick	-	Member
	Hon. Cyril K Leo	-	Member
	Hon. Cruyff G Buckley	-	Member
	Mr Derek Henry	-	Acting Director of I&T
	Miss Karen Thomas	-	Secretary
<b>Invited:</b>	Miss Ludi Kern	-	Invasive Plant Specialist (Item No 21.2)
	Mr Darren Duncan	-	Ag Director of ENR&P (Item No 21.2)
<b>Apology:</b>	Mr Nicky Lawrence	-	Secretary (Leave)

**Welcome.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone present and proceeded to the Open Agenda of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

**Open Agenda.**

**21.1 Matters arising from the Open Minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.**

**Proposal for excision of land from the Forest Estate.**

A list of lands to be excised for the SHG Forest Estate has been to Executive Council and has now been published for public consultation.

**Action: Chairman.**

**Heritage Report.**

A Memorandum has been prepared for presentation to Executive Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

**Action: Chairman**

**St John's Parking.**

The Roads Manager has submitted a Business Case for the St John's Parking proposal as well as parking for Jamestown in general.

**Action: Chairman**

**Community & District Roads Grant Funding.**

The Chairman advised that funding is now available for Community and District Roads. The Committee will need to meet to discuss this.

**Action: ALL**

## **Oil slicks in Harbour.**

The Chairman advised that the Marine Conservation Officer has taken samples from the area of the oil slicks which have been sent to the RRS Discovery for analysis whilst other samples have been sent to the Public Health to test for e-coli.

**Action: Chairman**

## **21.2 Update on progress of the Invasive Plants Project.**

The Invasive Plant Specialist (IPS) presented to Members an update on progress of the Invasive Plants Project and the following points were highlighted:

- Stakeholder sessions will be conducted later in the year.
- Biosecurity legislation is being drafted and the project has had an input in respect of invasive plants.
- A Management Framework is still a key output to be delivered from the project.
- The IPS is currently working with the St Helena National Trust and there will be an Invasive Plant Species Awareness week commencing on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019.
- Training will be delivered on safe use of pesticides with a trainer arriving to deliver training to pesticide users and potential future local trainers. Training will be funded through the Darwin Project and persons trained will receive certification. Supporting documentation will be kept as a database to enable continuous training exercises.
- A Management Plan is being prepared with data to be inputted.
- Sample of top 5 invasive species were made from the haul road.
- Gorse is not a top priority species identified by the invasive plant stakeholders generally, is a top 5 for agriculture pastureland but is included in the top 10 species overall for the Island.
- Pheasant tail fern is a very challenging problem particularly in the Diana's Peak area. Trials for removal have been conducted manually in the Plantation area which is very labour intensive.
- Although not in the top 5 priority species, Bull grass is becoming a problem on pasture land such as on Deadwood Plain. The St Helena National Trust is assisting the project to extend the range of trials using a *driven* mower to cut off the grass and then the area is given a spot spray treatment. The IPS explained that every precaution is taken to protect Wirebirds.
- Discussions are held with the Waste Management team on removal of green waste.
- Horizon scanning and pest risk analysis workshops involving invasive plant import risks have been held with people from Tristan da Cunha, Falkland Islands and United Kingdom.
- Restoration Plans for Cooks Bridge.
- Mapping and Monitoring for future reference.
- Additional actions – Weeds Watch Posters.

The Acting Director of ENRP added that a key requirement post-project is the resourcing of a dedicated management function for invasive species in the form of a 5 man team to potentially work with the Bio-Security Unit, and who would lead on the following:

- The National IP Management Framework.
- Work with relevant land-based sectors (such as agriculture, forestry, conservation and roads management) to mainstream invasive plant actions coherently for the Island.
- Further capacity building, training and IS development – funding and skills.
- Invasive species outreach and fund raising activities in the form of projects etc.
- Additional funding resources for out the ground management actions for Agriculture, Forestry and Roads Sectors to prevent the spread of invasive plants generally as well as up to the Peaks.

In response to questions regarding erosion and safe use of herbicide, the IPS explained that there is a risk of increasing erosion when removing invasive plants. However, these impacts can be mitigated through appropriate methods. Since manual and mechanical removal of invasive plants are very costly and time consuming, the use of herbicides in some situations is still a valuable method to control weeds. By using the correct methods i.e. spot spraying instead of foliar spray with the relevant safety equipment can limit these impacts.

Members are to seek a Budget for this proposal.

**Action: Members**

### **21.3**

#### **Update on restructure of ENR Directorate**

The Acting Director of I&T gave a brief update on the restructure of ENR Directorate which became effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. There have been no major problems to date. There has been a change over with Director's i.e. Derek Henry has become Acting Director of Infrastructure & Transport (I&T) and Darren Duncan has taken on the role of Acting Director of Environment, Natural Resources and Planning (ENR&P)

#### **Support Services.**

The Acting Director reported that the Finance Manager will be retiring soon. This key post has been advertised several times and will need to be filled soon. Also due to resignation a vacancy also exists for an Administration Assistant.



**ENR&P Directorate.**

The Acting Director of ENR&P Directorate was commissioned to conduct a functional review of the restructure to examine ways to improve our services following the restructure, and this will be finalised shortly.

It is hoped that the recommendations of the review will be available shortly to be implemented for the improvement of all services.

Under the restructure all sections and job roles have remained the same with the Support Services supporting both Directorates. A paper was circulated giving an overview of the services that are provided by the various divisions under each Directorate.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12:40pm.

Confirmed..........Date.....09 MAY 2019.....