

Biodiversity Update – Cregagh Wood and Beelicious Projects	8th March 2016
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Information	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Protecting and enhancing our unique natural environment
Outcome	Community engagement with biodiversity
Lead Officer	Peter Thompson – Head of Tourism and Recreation Rachel Bain - Biodiversity Officer
Cost: (If applicable)	Zero Cost

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the Cregagh Wood viewing hide and the Beelicious projects.

Cregagh Wood Viewing Hide

The GRSG first developed a small feeding and observation site at Cregagh Wood in 2009, which is now regularly frequented by red squirrels. Also drawn by a constant supply of feed provided by the squirrels “digging” into the feeders, it is now a popular spot for a wide variety of song birds. The wood itself is an excellent example of an old mixed woodland and provides a varied habitat that lends itself well to nature trails.

The wood was designated as a local nature reserve by Moyle District Council in 2015, and the Council entered into a management agreement with the land owner to open up the public access and manage the site for access and biodiversity. As part of the management agreement put in place, there was an aspiration to create a low impact education focused viewing hide and develop a multi-species feeding station to help engage the wider community and interest groups with the diverse biodiversity rich site, targeting local schools, youth groups, BSBI, Butterfly Conservation etc.

The Biodiversity Officer, Countryside & Coast Officer (Moyle) in partnership with the Glens Red Squirrel Group successfully submitted an application to the NGO Challenge fund and secured **£8k** to develop a red squirrel viewing hide (see Annex A), interpretation and to carry out some access improvement works. This work is now almost complete and it is hoped the hide will be open within the next month. This project was fully funded and zero cost to the Council.

Beelicious Project

An application has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) by a partnership of 8 Biodiversity Officers, which if successful will provide **£5,617** to deliver the project within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.

This project will focus on the natural heritage of Northern Ireland using pollinator species and the ecosystem services value of pollination to reconnect people to their natural heritage. It will

involve a wide range of people and local groups, and will emphasise how plants rely on insects to pollinate them. Without these insects we would not have many of the foods we take for granted, such as apples, raspberries, tomatoes and blackcurrant. The funding will be used to deliver 6 training / education events and undertake habitat restoration on four sites within the Borough.

HLF will inform the partnership in March 2016 on the outcome of the application. If successful this will be a fully funded project at zero cost to the Council.

ANNEX A

Red Squirrel Viewing Hide

