

**Community Meeting with representatives of DLRC and DFB on 27/10/2023**  
**Presentation of DLR Wildfire Plan Report**  
**Facilitated by Killiney Village Residents Association**

DLR Parks Department represented by **Ruairí Ó'Dúlaing**, Senior Parks Superintendent and **Darragh O Daly**, Senior Executive

DLR Environment Department represented by **Ann Murray**

DFB represented by Assistant Chief Fire Officers **Michael O Reilly** and **Paul O Reilly**

**There were 28 people from our community present.**

All were welcomed by Mary Holohan (Secretary KVRA) who introduced the officers from DLR and DFB.

The report was summarised by Ruairí Ó'Dúlaing highlighting the high conservation value of Mullins / Roches Hill as a semi natural distinctive habitat different from the more managed local parks. He also outlined the background to the necessity for this report and how much had been learned by involved DLR departments and by DFB since the devastating fire.

Ann Murray, Biodiversity Officer, then discussed the duty of care to local residents, the public who use the area, flora and fauna. The width of the buffer zones was questioned and agreement regarding some individualised approaches is to be considered.

Plans to use goats to control the gorse are advanced with an initial pilot project in the quarry of Killiney Hill. A further attempt to support the red squirrel will be undertaken. Dog control in relation to wildlife and the goats is a very considerable problem. Other significant issues are people management and vegetation care. In relation to vegetation on Mullins / Roches Hill, it was acknowledged that this natural heath habitat (now an EU designation) was already in decline before the fire due to overgrowth.

It is planned to undertake the essential clearance in January 2024 with a skilled contractor in the presence of an ecologist with annual clearances thereafter.

### **Responses and Comments**

Compliments on the plan were offered - that it was thoughtful, strategic and showed evidence of international expertise.

The clearance in January will be undertaken by skilled workers. Inappropriate machinery will not be used.

The modelling of the course of fire suggests considerable alteration in the past decade due in part to climate changes. Thus, the northern border (with Ballinclea Heights) must now accommodate a buffer zone. The width of the park that separates some houses from this border will be taken into account.

The goats would initially be in an area bounded by an appropriate electric fence. Later a GPS tracker that emits a somewhat irritating sound would control the range of movement of the goats. The goats would be in a shelter at night.

Gorse control would be selective and overgrazing prevented by managing the number of goats in a particular area.

It was acknowledged that there are pockets of soil suitable for the planting of trees but that trees are not in tune with the natural habitat.

Pine martins have been noted to control the grey squirrel population but are not being considered for Killiney Hill presently

Renewal and protection of the ponds in a safe manner is planned

Foxes are not a problem. Indeed, foxes help control the rat population.

An Garda Síochána have been appraised of the plans for the goats.

The damage to the area by unskilled clearance was acknowledged as was the continuing impassible paths as there was no opportunity for these paths to dry in recent months. Access to Mullins / Roches Hill will be permitted during clearance within safety considerations. The specifics of the pathway through the centre of Mullins / Roches Hill still have to be defined but will primarily use existing paths. The Report can be published on the Killiney Village website once it has been sent to Councillors.

Comments were ascertained from DFB who confirmed that their approach was Prevention, Planning and Response. The consideration is that, in the event of another incident, engines and tenders would arrive at the designated access points (Glenalua and Claremont Roads). Fire fighting would then be via the central pathway and buffer zones. The number of hydrants and the water pressure have been assessed as now sufficient. A practice run will be conducted when the clearance is complete.

### **Actions**

Circulation of Report to DLRCC Councillors

Communication of the detailed plan for clearance of the buffer zones and the central pathway

Communicate clearly and widely plans for the introduction of the goats.

Communicate measures to ensure protection of habitats for wildlife

Communicate plans for vegetation management and potential impact

END