



Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council

Full Council

Agenda Item No.20

Office Ref:FC-2021-06008

Submitted By: Cllr. Albert Doherty

Assigned To: Water and Environment

Motion "Rights of Nature. Donegal County Council (DCC) notes the legal and social movement globally for the 'Rights of Nature' aimed to strengthen protections for people, place and planet. DCC recognises that Rights of Nature can help catalyse an innovative rethinking about how to create regenerative, not extractive economies while also making human and other living communities safer, stronger and more resilient. DCC commends the excellent work already being done by council staff and community groups on the climate emergency and biodiversity crises but recognises the need for a rights-based approach to nature. DCC will over the next eighteen months, collaborate with civic society including The Gathering, Friends of the Earth(NI), Trade Unions and those who have carried out biodiversity audits and drawn up biodiversity action plans for areas of Donegal to explore what Rights of Nature means for the people and economies of the region and to investigate how Rights of Nature could be expressed in community plans, corporate plans, improvement objectives and other strategic frameworks. In particular, the council will in the next eighteen months hold a number of community workshops and work with the local community and stakeholders to draw up a "Declaration for the Rights of Nature" for the council area to be brought back to the plenary council for adoption. DCC asks for a report to come to council on embedding 'Rights of Nature' as a keystone concept into council's operational practices, planning processes and long-term decision making. Donegal County Council notes our position as a border region and our mutual environmental obligations under the 'Espoo Convention' and so invites all border counties to also explore 'Rights of Nature' for their council areas."

Signed Off By: MICHAEL MCGARVEY

Response: Rights of Nature is an initiative supported by the Environmental Justice Network Ireland (EJNI). It is "a way of re-thinking our relationship with nature – from one of dominance to one of sharing, caring, respect and interdependency. It can also act as a catalyst to shift our thinking from an extractive economy towards a regenerative economy. The EJNI's Rights of Nature project will provide support and a platform for collaborations between activists, NGOs, lawyers, and academics who aim to develop the rights of nature conversation on the island of Ireland." (<https://ejni.net/rights-of-nature/#resources>) In the event that this motion is adopted, Donegal County Council will explore this initiative through engagement with other Local Authorities, relevant agencies, academia, NGOs and communities and will bring a report on the initiative to the Climate and Environment SPC in early 2022. Michael McGarvey Director of Water & Environmental Services

implement

13/12/21 MOTION ADOPTED by DCC

Cllr Albert Doherty proposed.

Cllr Terry Crossan seconded.