

AGREED MINUTES

DATE: 4<sup>TH</sup> September 2018

TIME: 10.30 am

LOCATION: Midlands Hotel, Portlaoise.

**PRESENT**

Dr. Tom Collins (Chairperson)

Connie Rochford, Keith Hyland, Denis Drennan, Thomas Cooney, Ollan Herr, Charles Stanley Smith, Sinead O'Brien, Martin McEnroe, Tim Fenn, Dr. Tim Butter, Dr. Suzanne Linnane, Dr. Thomas Harrington, Laurie Kearon, Kevin Ryan, Liam Berney, David Wright, Derry Dillon and Patrick Murphy.

**APOLOGIES**

Mindy O'Brien, Michael Spellman, Barry Deane, Jonathan Small, Neil Walker, Bernadette Connolly, Gerald Quain and Jean Rosney.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Carol McCarthy (LAWCO)

Sharon Kennedy (NWF)

Item		Details	Action
1.1	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked the members for their attendance. He noted the apologies received. He also extended a welcome to Patrick Murphy who has joined An Fóram in place of Francis O'Donnell.	Noted
1.2	<b>Minutes of meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> July</b>	The draft minutes of meetings held on the 17 <sup>th</sup> July were noted and agreed.	Agreed
1.3	<b>Matters arising</b>	No matters arising.	
1.4	<b>To note An Fórams submission to CRU on Irish Waters non domestic tariff framework proposals.</b>	The members noted the submission to the CRU which had been drafted following consultation with An Fóram.	Noted

1.5	<b>Report on Financial status</b>	Sharon Kennedy presented on the current expenditure by An Fóram for 2018 as per the report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. A discussion took place with regard to requirements to the end of the year and also for 2019 and onwards.	Noted
2.	<b>To receive update from the water services standing committee</b>	A note regarding the second meeting of the Committee had been circulated before the meeting and was noted. It was further noted that issues arising may be considered in the context of the next item regarding the Strategy.	Noted
3.	<b>Development of a strategy for An Fóram.</b>	<p>Sharon Kennedy gave a presentation on the work of the working group that had been established by An Fóram on the 9<sup>th</sup> January to commence drafting the strategic plan.</p> <p><b>Membership</b> It was noted that working group included Sinead O’Brien, Connie Rochford, Martin McEnroe, Barry Deane, Thomas Cooney, Gerald Quain, Suzanne Linnane and Charles Stanley Smith with Tom Collins as chair.</p> <p><b>Meetings of the group to date</b> It was noted that the working group has met on seven occasions and was assisted/facilitated by Tom Barry and Michael Donnelly.</p> <p>The group had provided updates to An Fóram at meetings held on the 20<sup>th</sup> February, 10<sup>th</sup> April and 17<sup>th</sup> July.</p> <p><b>Work assigned to the working group</b> The work assigned to this working group was categorised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Identify and prioritise issues for research and policy development.</li> <li>B. Consider how An Fóram can monitor and oversee the implementation of the River Basin Management, the Water Services programme and other issues pertinent to the Water Framework Directive.</li> <li>C. Review and prepare recommendations regarding An Fóram’s role and work programme in the context of public engagement, consultation processes and public awareness. This review will have regard to experiences from the Rivers Trusts and Group Water Scheme Sector and will also provide for the development of a communications strategy.</li> </ul> <p><b>A. Identify and prioritise issues for research and policy development.</b> In relation to its role in the context of prioritisation of issues the group, in the first instance, considered the core principles governing the selection of issues and agreed upon the following five principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The work should have an impact on government policy</li> </ul>	Agreed

		<p>and/or public behaviour.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. It should enhance the role (profile) of the National Water Forum.</li> <li>3. It should currently be an issue of public concern.</li> <li>4. It should add value to the current activity (and not displace other projects).</li> <li>5. Is there scientific evidence to support the concerns in this area?</li> </ol> <p>Having agreed on same, the group then examined a range of issues which it considered to be of importance and made a recommendation at the July meeting that the following 5 issues receive prioritisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrient pollution</li> <li>• Source Protection</li> <li>• Invasive Species</li> <li>• High Status Water Bodies</li> <li>• Physical alterations to water bodies.</li> </ul> <p>These proposals were approved by An Fóram at the July meeting.</p> <p><b>B. monitoring/overview of the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan</b></p> <p><b>C. reviewing and preparing recommendations regarding An Fóram’s role and work programme in the context of public engagement, consultation processes and public awareness.</b></p> <p>Since July, the group concentrated its attention on items B and C. The group identified the following 7 strategic themes in relation to its role, having regard to the legislation and its terms of reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advising the Minister and leading (facilitating) the debate on the formulation of national policies relating to water.</li> <li>• Promoting water conservation and informing relevant national policy.</li> <li>• Actively monitoring, assessing and reporting on the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan and the Water Framework Directive.</li> <li>• Monitoring the performance of Irish Water and promoting the interests of the consumers of Irish Water.</li> <li>• Supporting and monitoring rural water services.</li> <li>• Leading a programme of public awareness and education on the value of water.</li> <li>• Supporting and promoting public consultation and engagement on all matters relevant to water.</li> </ul> <p>The group then examined each theme under the following 4 headings - purpose, urgency, success and destination and made a number of proposals regarding same. Following on from this work, they commenced developing a draft list of key</p>	
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		<p>goals and actions.</p> <p>At this stage in the presentation, it was agreed that the members would break into a number of groups and further develop the suggestions in relation to key goals and actions under the seven strategic themes. Once this was completed, the members came back and reported on progress. Following further discussion, it was agreed that Sharon Kennedy and Tom Collins will incorporate this work into the draft strategy and then post same on the members Forum for their further consideration and suggestions. The draft will then be completed before the October meeting and will be finalised at that stage.</p> <p>At this time, Carol McCarthy and Sharon Kennedy recused themselves from the meeting and the members considered matters relating to office accommodation/location and staffing requirements.</p> <p>The minutes for this portion of the meeting were taken by Sinead O'Brien as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask Sharon to continue in her role with the Forum, analogous to CEO (although structures in Tipperary County Council may preclude her job title being this);</li> <li>2. Develop process for nominating representatives to external bodies from Forum staff, depending on their skill-set, noting that this may not be the CEO, depending on the body and how technical nature of remit is;</li> <li>3. Sharon to review the possible office locations in County Tipperary and report to the Forum, ideally at the next meeting, with a proposal;</li> <li>4. Appoint a group led by David and to include Suzanne, Charles and Sinead and with Liam as advisor, to develop job descriptions for the following posts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. CEO</li> <li>b. Catchment oversight person [Group to deliberate on appropriate job title]</li> <li>c. Water Services person [they will work on the interests of Irish Water customers and also rural water service users and will report to the Water Services Standing Committee]</li> <li>d. Research Manager</li> <li>e. Communications / Education / PR person</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Develop an MOU with Tipperary County Council on the relationship between the Forum, the Forum staff and the Council.</li> </ol> <p>Once this part of the meeting concluded, Sharon and Carol re-joined the meeting.</p>	
5	<b>To give further</b>	The Chair referred to this item which had been subject to	Agreed

	<b>consideration to Irish Waters Eastern and Midland Water Supply Project</b>	<p>consideration at the symposium in Farmleigh and had been also discussed at the July meeting. Following further discussion it was agreed that the process would commence with an invitation to be extended to Irish Water, Ms. Emma Kennedy and Mr. Dick Gleeson (former Senior Planner with Dublin City Council) to attend and to make individual presentations at the next meeting of An Fóram on the 16<sup>th</sup> October.</p> <p>In advance of same, a list of issues to be addressed will be drafted (in consultation with the members of An Fóram) and given to each presenter as soon as is possible. The presenters will be requested to prepare a paper, addressing those issues, for submission to An Fóram at least one week in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>On the day of the meeting, each presenter will be given an opportunity to present their papers (approx 20 minutes) and to then answer questions arising.</p> <p>The meeting will be facilitated by Mr. Michael Donnelly Following this process, An Fóram will consider the further steps that it requires to take in order to develop a view on the project.</p>	
5	<b>To receive an update on the Water Environment (Abstractions Bill) 2018</b>	Sharon Kennedy advised on a recent communication received from the Department and it was noted that it might be necessary to convene a focus group to prepare a response in relation to same it due course.	Noted
6	<b>An Fóram's role in relation to the RBMP</b>	This item was taken in conjunction with item 3 above.	
7	<b>AOB</b>	<p>No further issues were raised.</p> <p>This concluded the business of the meeting – next meeting scheduled for the 16<sup>th</sup> October in Dublin.</p>	

Signed:

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**Dr. Tom Collins**  
**Chairperson**