

## Plenary Committee Meeting No. 34

Meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 via ZOOM

### Minutes DRAFT

**Attendees:** Tom Collins (Chair), Denis Drennan, Paul O'Brien, Dominic Cronin, Neil Walker, David Wright, Gerald Quain, Suzanne Linnane, Bernadette Connolly, Ollan Herr, Charles Stanley-Smith, , Connie Rochford, Barry Deane, Siobhan Ward, Sinead O'Brien, Tim Fenn, Liam Berney, Izzy Petrie, Derrie Dillon, Keith Hyland, Tim Butter, Brendan Fitzsimons, Jean Rosney, Martin McEnroe & Elaine McGoff.

**Apologies:** Laurie Kearon,

**In attendance:** Donal Daly, Gretta McCarron, Triona McGrath, Angelos Alamanos and Donal Purcell

Item	Details	Summary
1.1	<b>Welcome</b>	The Chair welcomed the members & staff to the meeting.
1.2	<b>Minutes</b>	Minutes of meeting of 27 <sup>th</sup> April were agreed.
1.3	<b>Matters arising</b>	none
2.	<b>Corporate Issues</b>	<p><b>2.1 To receive update on the Forum's expenditure for 2021</b> Detail of Expenditure to 30<sup>th</sup> April had been circulated in advance of the meeting showing a total expenditure of €109,796.96.</p> <p><b>2.2 To receive update on the Forums next Strategic Plan</b> A/SEO informed the meeting that the Consultants were consulting with the various stakeholders &amp; that they have ongoing engagement with the steering Group &amp; Staff. It is intended to have a draft strategy prepared by 30<sup>th</sup> September.</p> <p><b>2.3 Correspondence</b> Email from the DHLGH regarding the National review of Rural Water Programme. The Dept. are to provide a briefing to the WSSC in July. The review is being carried out in 2 sections literature review &amp; then a consultation process with key agencies incl. EPA, Dept, NFGWS. Process to be complete by autumn. It was explained that there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 500k people served by Rural Water Schemes.</li> <li>• 400 regulated private supplies</li> <li>• GWS under DW directive</li> <li>• Customers pay an excess usage charge in GWS.</li> <li>• Excessive use is for domestic houses only, farms and schools pay for all their water. State is paying for domestic water in the rural water sector as well.</li> </ul> Suggested that if NFGWS could also make a presentation to a WSSC meeting on the issues facing the sector.</p>
3.	<b>Education and Comms</b>	<p><b>The Education Lead provided the following update:</b></p> <p><b>Webinar</b> 385 attended the recent Webinar on Peatlands with very positive feedback from delegates. Members were of the view that it was a very successful event &amp; acknowledged</p>

		<p>the work of all the speakers, the Chair, staff &amp; in particular the Education Lead for her work in co-ordinating the event.</p> <p><b>FILLM Document</b> The FILLM document is being circulated via PDF and Cover letter. Hard copies to be printed and will be circulated after the draft RBMP comes out.</p> <p><b>Eco Eye Programme</b> Ed WG will review the outline for the Eco eye programme and follow up with the Programme makers.</p> <p><b>Projects</b> Funding available for Adopt a Stream and exploring a transition year programme pilot to create a vision for local river catchments.</p> <p><b>Submission</b> Currently preparing a submission on new National Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.</p> <p><b>AFU Education and Awareness in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle</b> Role of AFU Education and Awareness in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle; learnings from 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle. Currently confusion of who is responsible for what; needs more coordination, current communication ad-hoc. Requires more structure in next RBMP cycle.</p> <p><b>Future Role of the Water Forum in Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members were of the view that the Forums focus on education should be on seminars at policy level, outputs from research including disseminating what is in FILLM. Recommend high quality webinars like the Peatlands one as key outputs.</li> <li>• Need to define roles of education and communications as the forum cannot take on communications at all levels, important to see where AFU fits into the structure.</li> <li>• Education is seen as fragmented in this sector.</li> <li>• Forum needs to crystallise who should do what around education as it is not the role of the forum to act at the coalface in the community.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair asked the Ed working group to prepare a 2 or 3 page view on the role of the Forum in education; to reflect on questions and the points made in the discussion. What value added can AFU bring to education, what distinct contribution.</p>
4.	Research and Policy Update	<p><b>Overview by Research Lead</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Water conservation research project with UCD has commenced.</li> <li>• The Invasive species draft reports received &amp; will be circulated to members</li> <li>• Review of 2021 bursary/research topics: Suggestion that the policy question be considered for larger research project to ensure adequate experience.</li> <li>• Possibility of examining the impacts of mariculture on WFD, could feed into Dept review of current regulations.</li> <li>• Include UN SDGs in relation to water.</li> <li>• In larger Research areas need to keep Results based payments and CAP. CAP intended to produce a strategic plan, out for public consultation useful to get someone to review its impact on water quality so we and give an informed response.</li> </ul> <p><b>MPA public consultation;</b> Held 1st of Group meeting since last Plenary. Agreed to write to the Richard Cronin who is leading the process in DHLGH re insufficiencies in public engagement during the consultation process.</p> <p><b>Public consultation on Draft Agri-Food Strategy 2030;</b> Holding a Catchment Management meeting on Friday to commence the drafting of a response to this. Members were asked to email any input to the research Lead before then.</p> <p><b>Dialogue Matters (Training body based in the UK specialising in public participation) ;</b> Possibility of training on stakeholder engagement. Some interest from members, others felt it should be a recommendation that the Department pay for a tailored training in</p>

		public engagement for the RBMP so they understand engagement and consultation. Education Lead suggested speaking to CARO on their policy. Important to differentiate between consultation and engagement. Need to say more explicitly what the Dept should be doing. How to characterise a successful public consultation?
5	<b>WS Standing Committee</b>	<b>5.1 To receive update on WSSC meeting.</b> The Chair updated the members on recent engagement with IW about the NWRMP with overview of relevance of to the Forums submission. Final plan published. Upcoming liaison meeting with IW to discuss regional plans and EMRP.
6.	<b>CM Standing Committee</b>	The A/SEO informed the meeting that the draft RBMP had yet to be published & will have a 6 month public consultation period. Next CMSC meeting is on Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> June to discuss a draft submission in response to the consultation on Agri-food Strategy 2030.
7.	<b>AOB</b>	The Chair explained that he intends to step down as Chair of AFU at the end of September 2021 having been in the role since 2017 & previously as chair of the PWF from 2015. Members expressed their gratitude to Tom for his leadership & for the fair-minded manner in which he chaired meetings. It was explained by the A/SEO that he would be notifying the DHLGH of the Chairs intention to step down in September & that it is the Departments role through Stateboards.ie & the PAS to oversee the recruitment of the next Chair which would be a Ministerial appointment.  The Rural water week is on Sept. 2 <sup>nd</sup> week of September & includes a webinar and the NFGWS would like members to participate in events.  EPA conference 16 and 17 June. Anyone registered will get email.
8.	<b>Date &amp; time of the Next Plenary meeting</b>	Next meeting 13 <sup>th</sup> July VIA ZOOM