

**PLENARY Meeting No.**  
Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January - VIA ZOOM  
Agreed MINUTES

**Attendees:** Connie Rochford (Chair), Denis Drennan, Paul O'Brien, Derrie Dillon, Dominic Cronin, Martin McEnroe, Neil Walker, David Wright, Gerald Quain, Suzanne Linnane, Bernadette Connolly, Ollan Herr, Charles Stanley-Smith, Barry Deane, Keith Hyland, Tim Butter, Jean Rosney, Tim Fenn

**Apologies:** Sinead O'Brien, Issy Petrie, Siobhan Ward, Brendan Fitzsimons, Elaine McGoff & Liam Berney

**Presenters:** Dr Sarah Cotterill

**In attendance:** Gretta McCarron, Triona McGrath, Angelos Alamanos, Donal Purcell, Donal Daly & Ricardo Morroquin (INVENT Water Project Student)

No.	Details	Summary	Action
1.1	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.	
1.2	<b>Minutes</b>	The minutes of the plenary meeting of 14 <sup>th</sup> December were approved by the meeting	Place on the website
1.3	<b>Matters arising</b>	None	
2	<b>Corporate Issues</b>	<p><b>2.1 To receive update on the Appointment of a new Forum Chair</b></p> <p>The SEO Explained that the DHLGH had advertised the position &amp; that he &amp; Barry Deane (Forum Member) had attended a meeting with the Water Policy Section on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January to review the applications. Barry Deane explained that the name of one person was forwarded for recommendation for appointment as Chair to the Minister &amp; that we were now waiting for the Minister's approval.</p> <p><b>2.2 To receive update on Staffing</b></p> <p>The SEO explained that staffing sub-group had met last week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The contract for the Post doc policy analysisist support from DKIT is coming to an end in March 2022. Proposed extension until 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022 to complete the Regional Water Resources Plan submission and to assist with the RBMP submission. This approach was agreed by the members &amp; to be followed up with DkIT.</li> <li>The Forum has DHLGH approval for 5 staff positions; SEO, Research Lead, Ed &amp; Comms Lead, part time Clerical officer, CM &amp; WS Lead (this post is currently assigned to the Post Doc position. The work on the development of the new strategy and action plan has identified the needs for a Policy &amp; Research Executive position. Staffing Sub-Group</li> </ul>	Contact DkIT to extend the agreement to 15/07/22.

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		<p>recommend seeking this role through Tipperary Co Council at Exec Scientist grade with the Role outlined for 3 years in the first instance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To source expertise in WS as required to support the Forum’s work &amp; to examine the sourcing of a Forum Member with WS expertise.</li> <li>• Members in agreement with approach. Forum to proceed, SEO to finalise details on the Post Doc with DkiT &amp; then liaise with the DHLGH &amp; TCC re filling the Policy &amp; Research Executive role as the funding is in place, to liaise with Barry Deane re the job description.</li> <li>• Members also recognised the need in long term for expertise in Water Services for dealing with technical submissions as it’s important not to miss the link to the water services role, either through employing someone directly or hiring in additional expertise when it is required. Priority needs to be policy assistance. Should consider approaching the DHLGH for an additional post once the Policy &amp; Research support position is filled.</li> <li>• Members mentioned the importance of expertise to assist with EPA &amp; IW reports &amp; policy submissions where reports are very technical &amp; often need to be simplified in everyday language for the members to enable proper decision making.</li> </ul> <p><b>2.3 To receive update on the Forum’s expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> December.</b>  The SEO explained that expenditure to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 was <b>€572,437.59</b> He explained that the main areas of underspend were connected to COVID 19 including underspends in meeting costs (meetings were held on ZOOM), members expenses, Training &amp; office related costs. The budget submitted to the DHLGH for 2022 is similar to the 2021 budget of approximately €695,000.</p> <p><b>2.4 To receive update on the Forums Strategic Plan - Action Plan 2022/23</b>  The SEO updated the members in the Strategic Plan 2022-27 &amp; Action plan for the years 2022/23 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The actions in the plan were based on the 5 Goals in the strategy which were divided down into 15 Objectives with associated actions and timelines &amp; that actions would be finalised once the budget for the year was confirmed by the Department.</p> <p>Members mentioned the review done in 2021 as part of the Strategic Planning process which would act as a self-evaluation exercise. Members suggested that a sub-group could look at this for the future &amp; also review the forum representation including representation for coastal-marine, fisheries etc. as the coastal area has some of the poorest water quality which can be discussed with the new Forum Chair.</p> <p><b>2.5 To note correspondence</b>  The SEO referenced a letter of resignation he had received from Laurie Kearon, Forum member. The members of the Forum said they were sorry to see Laurie step down but also understood her position. The members acknowledged her contribution to the work of the Water Forum since its commencement in 2017 &amp; her previous involvement with the Public Water Forum since 2015. The members mentioned in particular her interest,</p>	<p>Finalise details with DkiT &amp; discuss job description with B. Deane.</p>

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		knowledge & involvement in the work of the Water Services Standing Committee & its contribution to water policy in Ireland.	Letter of acknowledgement from the Forum to be sent to Laurie Kearon
3.1	<b>Research and Policy Actions</b>	<p>The Research Lead gave an overview of the actions in this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dRBMP submission deadline is 31<sup>st</sup> March which is been advanced with the CMSC. Donal Daly will give us support on developing the submission. RBMP identifies issues, pressures, for restoration, it deals with each pressure but the actions or measures are not clearly defined.</li> <li>• Need to protect all waterbodies to achieve good status by 2027, achieve protected area objectives and high-status objectives. Need more focus on outcomes along with pressures in our submission.</li> <li>• Submission to recommend focus on water bodies, each should have an objective (high status, good status or protected area) and timeline for achieving objectives. Restore, protect or reassess. Table with all of this information, could include which county the water body is in, this could guide future inspections and targeting of measures going forward. Could include leading agencies, estimated timelines.</li> <li>• Time-lags may be an issue that was included in the SWMI submissions, this could be referred to in the submission.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members welcomed the proposed approach. The EPA have this information and we could engage with them to interrogate this information. Criticism of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle, only a small fraction of the bodies at risk were protected to achieve good status within the time.</li> <li>• Idea to include this information as an Appendix in the Plan.</li> <li>• Information is there for most of it. It is to get a focus in each catchment rather than leaving it vague as it is at the moment. Idea is to get targeted and focussed actions in every water body.</li> <li>• AFU to encourage that dates and outcomes are set and these can be monitored and reviewed.</li> <li>• Agree we need to focus on all of the water bodies, having a plan for every water body is crucial. This is our last chance to bring water quality up.</li> </ul> <p><b>Governance for RBMP</b></p> <p>The Research Lead explained that the TORs for the governance structures in the RBMP levels need to be reviewed; WPAC has wide representation, TOR exist but it is not being implemented. Need to engage with the DHLGH re the governance structures &amp; engagement with the Forum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations: Propose oversight for governance structure, Forum to engage with WPAC &amp; report back to members and the Forum can raise issues;</li> </ul>	dRBMP Submission to be drafted, circulated to members.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members expressed concern that it will take 2 years to do the review of the local authority sector resources. Forum should recommend that this is done quicker.</li> <li>Recommend addressing the disconnect between Local Authority activities and the WFD objectives (supported by IPA research) Governance within catchments will be informed by the webinar.</li> </ul> <p>Members agreed to hold an additional plenary if necessary. SEO to circulate a doodle poll to get agreement on the most suitable date. All members need to be aware of this. In original structure AFU a standalone pillar capable of feeding in at every level. Link to Reginal committees, NCMC and WPAC we need access to information at every level.</p> <p>Feb 10<sup>th</sup> CMSC meeting: Dept. meeting on hydromorphology and forestry</p> <p><b>NWRP submission</b> Agreed to share the summary with the Members &amp; members to revert to the Research Lead.</p>	<p>Carryout doodle poll to get a suitable date for a special plenary to discuss draft submission</p> <p>Circulate NWRP summary doc. to the members</p>
3.2	<b>Water Conservation Research</b>	<p>The Presentation on the research of <b>A Framework for Domestic Water Conservation was presented by by Dr Sarah Cotterill</b></p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impressive and informative presentation.</li> <li>Very informative, we need a water conservation strategy. Enough scope here to take to the next level, additional research on this.</li> <li>Bring to attention of Minister and Dept. very keen to hear the views of the wider group.</li> <li>Could we share this with IW, How expensive are water metres? Is it technologically difficult to provide free water meters to householders?</li> </ul> <p>Q: Attempt to bring water meters in place but huge resistance, any idea of why there was such huge resistance? How can we get over this? A: <i>The key thing is to be clear on how effective meters are to deliver conservation benefits. Decoupling from the pricing is key. It is an education strategy. Issue will be that some people will see this as a step toward pricing, need a trusted messenger. Need to think about order to do this. Need right people, funding and strategies in place to support implementations. Least disruptive things first.</i></p> <p>Q. Strongly wish to move towards 80 litres per person per day. We need to take steps to the highest water conservation savings. AFU should identify the barriers to building regs from preventing some of the new technologies. Put focus on voluntary aspect and education so that a growing number of people will no planning obstacles to water less toilets etc.</p> <p>Q. I would like to see whether meters have had behavioural change. IW do not communicate with those houses in terms of usage, but it would be good to find out. Something similar to ESB saver meters for water would be very useful. A. <i>Metering behavioural changes, examples in full report on smart meters in showers could see water use in clear time led to associated reductions in</i></p>	

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		<p><i>use. Could encourage the use of these devices in the home. Denmark reports apartment metering reduced water use in addition to water saving devices.</i></p> <p><i>Looking at barriers to building reg needs to be done, this sort of research would be valuable, 80 litre target in the Dublin areas but maybe 100 where there is less stress. Barriers will fall away if there is a target set. Need to build the right houses with the right infrastructure.</i></p> <p>Q. Propose a meeting with Dept and IW together to present the research and have the discussion on challenges. IW Regional Plan shows supply issues with no information on how to reduce demand. Long time before the proposed solution is in place, conservation should be a key interim measure.</p> <p><i>A. Public feeling, links with leakage, might not want to make recommendations because of potential public opposition to it.</i></p> <p>Agree to send the report to Dept with cover letter &amp; to send also to rural water section.</p> <p>WSSC will review and come back with a plan and strategy on what and how we will advance these.</p>	<p>Send report to DHLGH for attention of Minister/ officials &amp; to Irish Water.</p> <p>WSSC to put on the agenda for discussion.</p>
3.4	<b>Comm. &amp; Education Update</b>	<p><b>The Education &amp; Comms Lead updated the meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 162 people registered for the Webinar for public participation on 030222. Comms and Ed Lead will do the introductions and Suzanne has agreed to do the Q&amp;A in Session 1 and Comms and Ed lead will do Session 2 Q&amp;A. Suzanne will do the closing statement.</li> <li>• Eco Eye on Water Conservation will be broadcast on 1<sup>st</sup> March and we will publish the Water Conservation report findings in the week running up to that.</li> </ul>	Circulate to the Media
4.1	<b>AOB &amp; Next meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEO to circulate doodle poll for special meeting to focus on the Forums draft submission on the drBMP for late February early March 2022.</li> <li>• Next ordinary Plenary is on 15<sup>th</sup> March</li> <li>• Meeting with the Minister for Housing, Darragh O'Brien T.D., &amp; Minister of State Malcolm Noonan T.D., is scheduled for Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March in Dublin</li> </ul>	Send out doodle poll to get suitable date