

PLENARY Meeting

Tuesday 15th March 2022- VIA ZOOM

Agreed MINUTES

Attendees: Matt Crowe (Chair), Denis Drennan, Paul O’Brien, Derrie Dillon, Dominic Cronin, Martin McEnroe, Neil Walker, David Wright, Gerald Quain, Issy Petrie, Suzanne Linnane, Bernadette Connolly, Ollan Herr, Sinead O’Brien, Charles Stanley Smith, Elaine McGoff, Brendan Fitzsimons, , Connie Rochford, Keith Hyland Barry Deane, Tim Butter, Tim Fenn&

Apologies: Liam Berney, Siobhan Ward & Jean Rosney,

In Attendance: Donal Purcell, Triona McGrath, Angelo Alamanos, Gretta McCarron & Donal Daly

No.	Details	Summary	Action
1.1	Welcome & Apologies	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted. The minutes of the Plenary meeting held on the 25 th January & the special Plenary on the dRBMP on 1 March were adopted	Place on website
2	Corporate Issues	<p>2.1 To receive update on the Forum’s expenditure The SEO informed the members that expenditure to the end of February 2022 was €68,989.22</p> <p>2.2 To receive update on Staffing Post Doc Position: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SEO explained that he had been in contact with DkIT to agree an extension to the Post Doctorate position to the 15th July 2022. Policy/Research Executive role: The SEO explained to the meeting that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He had discussed the Policy/Research role with Water Policy Section. Reviewed job description with Barry Deane re inclusion of Water Services & CM focus. That the details had to be agreed with the DHLGH & Tipperary County Council re finalising the job description & advertising the post. </p> <p>2.3 To note correspondence SEO referenced the following correspondence received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter of Appointment of Dr Matt Crowe as Chairperson of the Water Forum for 3 year term from 1st February 2022 to 1st February 2025 was noted Letter from the DHLGH re. funding of €696,998 to the Water Forum for its activities for 2022 was noted </p>	SEO to follow up with DHLGH & TCC
3.1	Consideration of the Forums draft submission on the 3rd cycle dRBMP	The Research Lead & Communications/Education Lead highlighted the key recommendations in the areas below. The draft recommendations were discussed & feedback was provided by members & noted by the Research Lead to be incorporated where relevant for inclusion/circulation in the next draft:	

No.	Details	Summary	Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry • High Status Water bodies • Peatlands • Aquaculture • Transitional/coastal Waters <p>Discussion on Forestry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with transparency, lead with recommendations that all Hydro-for report is implemented. Request an explanation for why it is not happening. • Include cessation of planting on acid sensitive upland catchments. • Training on pip maps by EPA. EPA or Lawpro could provide training. Need to work out how the Forum engages with other agencies, to ensure this training happens. • Catchment scale assessments of cumulative impacts of forestry. Should recommend the resources are put in place. • Without forestry in peatlands means we will be off target for forestry objectives. • Point is good that we need a map of where is suitable for forestry. Might strengthen this point, i.e. Forest Zoning. <p>Discussion on Aquaculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members expressed some concern re suggesting changes where the members don't know the implications for the aquaculture sector • There should be an aquaculture/fisheries rep on the Forum • Open net subject to escapees and mixing with wild salmon, this can be put on land to prevent disease and escapees, still producing salmon on land. Cages at sea can be moved on land and fish produced there. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Scotland, hundreds more than here, operate off Scotland, pushing to get more licences. Bridge too far for Forum to recommend ending industry that is more extensive elsewhere. • Conflict of interest between aquaculture and angling. • Similar to forestry sector, need WFD assessments for aquaculture licencing is needed. Call for stronger regulation and enforcement of salmon farms. • Bringing the aquaculture systems to land will probably not work. More information is needed for this. • Suggest to get someone in to present on this topic in the future for members to get a better understanding. • Vets can close down a meat factory, we need this sort of oversight for open cage aquaculture as well. A step up in regulation is needed. • Needs WFD specific assessment of licencing, assess new & current licenced farms to ensure they are operating correctly, monitoring point needs to be made and tied back to marine monitoring. <p>Seek to get more information on this, IFI and further engagements on this going forward as plan develops, we can make additional recommendations later. Idea of speaking with the Scottish salmon industry as well.</p> <p>Discussion on HSWB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good to emphasise need for actions, need ICM approach, control of unregulated activities is needed as well. Land drainage is an issue, 	

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		<p>strongly recommend urgent is included to this. Last pristine sites. No emphasis on measures,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only 20 pristine sites, should be some sort of emphasis on those 20 sites should be included. • Resources focused towards a plan of actions, focused on measures needs to be added. • Very specific action plans for each waterbody, to address the multiplicity of pressures. • Scale up monitoring and increasing community engagement. <p>Discussion on Transitional/coastal Waters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of data on waterbodies needs to be addressed as it is a large proportion that are in review. • Transitional has seen the greatest declines in the last 2 rbmp, need attention, no work in the PAAs on transitional waters. • Major impacts on estuarine waters is nutrients, river nutrients, discharges from boats and have an action plan for each element. • Targeted measures, coastal specific measures, dredging, shipping, seaweed harvesting etc. • Specific regarding policy coherence, MSFD links need to be integrated, • No data on coastal, because DAFM did not release information to allow monitoring, need WFD specific monitoring data to make progress. Strong on proper integration and proper monitoring. • Would like a strong submission on this, needs further work. <p>The Chair highlighted the need to engage with the EPA national monitoring programme, give a greater understanding of the issues. Need to identify smart approaches. Excellent work done using satellite imagery to monitor lakes in the past.</p> <p>Discussion on Peatlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should not allow planting on peat soils, lets off GHG, not carbon friendly, rewetting land, paludiculture can be done, reduced cattle numbers, but planting trees on wet peatlands, do not agree with this recommendations. • Louth planning to build ring road around Ardee on wetlands, AFU needs to recommend road are not built on wetlands. • Rewetting, huge issue for farmers growing forestry on peat soils, major compensation needed for agriculture, due to land value change. • Include a linkage back to hydromorphology to have WFD specific assessments for land drainage and drainage of peat. Not averse to farmers well compensated. • Rewetting, no proposals so hard for us to recommend this without knowing compensation levels etc. If farmers are going to devalue land, need to know compensations • Need to plant trees, do not know where the land will come from. Do not know how the land will be made available. • Where are we at with the Bord na Mona plans in the second cycle? • Afforestation, willow growing naturally on restored peatlands, natural regeneration, not harvested forestry • Need a proper plan of how rewetting should be done on bogs and farmland, that makes sense for everyone. Compensation and using scientific evidence to do this. Use research and EU projects to develop this. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with ask for an update on waterbodies at risk 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply a WFD assessment to activities to peatland restoration and management • Paludiculture too specific. Impact of pressure on water quality, ensure strong plan within this to address pressures and maximise chances of co benefits. • National strategy on rewetting is required to deal with this and link in with this section. Keep at high level. • focus on water quality, the single most effective economic benefit for carbon is planting of sitka spruce on the right sites replace grass based agriculture with trees. For carbon uptake. • All farmers allowed in AECMs <p>Discussion on the first Version of draft recommendations on drBMP (from last Plenary)</p> <p>Hydromorphology section: assessment of member states progress in the 2nd cycle. Regulation of dredging, grey area not considered in hydromorphology authorisations permits needed, these need to be in line with WFD. Legal work done on this, env regulations on surface waters, licencing regulations that need to be assessed for WFD impacts. What is legal requirements? Suggests more work is required on public participation.</p> <p>Next steps: Additional work to be done on the areas from today. Gretta and Sinead to meet to discuss public participation. Position paper will be done on nutrient recovery with early career research outputs, rather than including details in submission.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agreed to send out revised draft addressing topics from today with tracked changes. 2. To send out the final draft of the full document next week. <p>Meeting Ministers re the drBMP: The SEO outlined that the meeting with the Ministers on the drBMP is now changed to Thursday 31st March at 11.30am. Members asked to confirm their attendance with the SEO. The SEO went through the proposed format for the meeting which includes an input by the Chair & Research lead on the high-level recommendations including outcomes based approach, governance and public participation from the submission to be followed by discussion between the members & the Minister.</p>	<p>Amend draft document & circulate for feedback.</p> <p>Members to contact SEO re attendance</p>
4.	Update on Research:	<p>NWRP E & M submission: Submission agreed with members & to be submitted tomorrow. This was agreed.</p> <p>CRU consultation on IW Disconnection policy Agreed by members & already submitted.</p> <p>Position paper on nutrient recovery Future research on Nature based solutions, Angelo worked on this along with policy brief</p> <p>Data centres Angelo working on a background paper</p> <p>Commissioned research topic suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change and water quantity - science to policy • Climate change on water quality – science to policy 	Submit response on NWRP E &M to IW

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental, social, carbon, capital and operational costs of state projects in face of environmental crises (carbon implementations) compare with international approaches • Review of environmental funding, CAP LEADER, GLAS, effectiveness and efficiencies • Current enforcement systems (international examples) <p>ESR bursaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ragging issues in wastewater treatment • How to fund community actions, links to public participation. <p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members suggested that we look at list of issues creating a problem for the WFD today as research topics incl. coastal and transitional management for water framework directive in manging pressures in this area. • Climate change work done on this, would like climate change and catchment management, land use and water quality and quantity. • Urban wastewater and regulation, why public health issues, regional temporal impacts of UWW. Lots done on this in the UK. Real time information for swimmers etc • scoping exercise on intangible assets of communities to deliver intended outcomes within the GWS sector. Could tie in with other structures such as rbmp. Like AFU part of steering group on this. <p>The Chair was of the view that more thinking is needed on this. Work with other agencies needs to link back to the strategy. Idea of members agreeing criteria for prioritising research in the future. To examine strategic alliances in research area as well.</p>	
5	Communications & Education Update	<p>The Comms & Education lead updated the members on the Communication & Education Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 256,000 people had watched the Eco Eye programme on the value of water with repeat showings during 2022 to reach another 200,000. • The draft Annual Report for 2021 has been circulated & members are asked for feedback by Wednesday next 23rd March so that it can be finalised & designed for print • Launch of the Forums strategy <p>Executive to review & make suggestions on Launch format.</p>	<p>Feedback to be incorporated into draft 2021 Annual Report.</p> <p>Executive to review options for the launch</p>
6	AOB	<p>Issue of the CRU Decision paper on publicly sourced GWS was highlighted. Executive requested to review the CRU document to assess its relevance & to prepare a summary of key points. Members to review this 1 page submission for approval or otherwise by the 23rd March.</p>	<p>Exec to review CRU doc & circulate draft for feedback.</p>
3.1	Next meeting	<p>Next meeting on the 26th April re workshop/ plenary & strategy launch incl a possible overnight.</p> <p>Idea also to link in a meeting with the EPA Water conference in Galway on 18th May.</p>	<p>Follow up with the EPA re the Water Conference</p>