



## Plenary Meeting

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Aisling Hotel / Zoom

Agreed Minutes

- Attendees:** Matt Crowe (Chair), Connie Rochford, Bernadette Connolly, Keith Hyland, Denis Drennan, Derrie Dillon, Dominic Cronin, Martin McEnroe, Ollan Herr, Gerald Quain, Tim Fenn,
- Attendees Online:** Barry Deane, Charles Stanley Smith, David Wright, Elaine McGoff, Issy Petrie, Jean Rosney, Neil Walker, Sinead O’Brien, Suzanne Linnane, Tim Butter,
- Apologies:** Brendan Fitzsimons, Paul O’Brien, Liam Berney, Siobhan Ward
- In Attendance:** Donal Purcell, Triona McGrath, Gretta McCarron (online)

No.	Details	Summary	Action
1.1	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>	Welcome	
1.1	<b>Consideration of minutes of last meeting</b>	Minutes approved	Minutes to be placed on website
2.1	<b>Corporate Update</b>	<p><b>Membership</b> – committee met to identify gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fisheries, National Inshore Fisheries Forum,</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> Level students, National Youth Council not just academia</li> <li>• Food and beverage, Bord Bia</li> <li>• Irish Water customers: DHLGH</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion</b> Broad representation needed and inshore fisheries could be considered Members term is complete Jan 2024 and would need to be reviewed then. Once membership vacancy areas are identified &amp; agreed they will need to be finalised with the Dept &amp; agreed on how to fill them</p> <p><b>Budget &amp; Expenditure:</b> – no confirmation for 2023. Some underspends in 2022 including the 4<sup>th</sup> staff position which is being filled from November, meeting costs. The strategy implementation budget will be spent.</p> <p><b>Climate Action Mandate:</b> The SEO explained that the Forum has to adopt a climate Action Mandate which includes actions for climate</p>	<p>SEO to circulate a summary report with recommendations and next steps. Members to send in any observations</p> <p>SEO to circulate a summary report with recommendations &amp; next steps.</p>

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		<p>mitigation. Need to establish a Green team, climate road map, champion,  Research, FILLM pro climate and these can be integrated into our roadmap.  Need to lead by example &amp; use public transport, when possible, for travel.</p>	<p>Members to send in any observations</p>
3.1	<p><b>High-level work programme for 2023</b></p>	<p><b>Work programme:</b>  Priority themes:  Water Conservation, RBMP, Governance and Role of Forum, Water and Climate, Policy Coherence, Public PPT.  <b>Water Conservation</b>  2<sup>nd</sup> workshop, response to JOC, Position paper on Water Conservation, Engage with Dept and IW, Research outputs  <b>RBMP</b>  Gov and Role of Forum, Ongoing Advice WPAC, Sectoral pressures, National and LA resource review  <b>Water and Climate</b>  Podcast, research, conference, advice to Dept, IW and Rural Water  <b>Policy Coherence</b>  Position paper, advocate for Policy Coherence  <b>Public Participation</b>  First meeting, advice to Lawpro and Dept. on pilot CMP  <b>Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to include water services including Rural Water review which is on the agenda.</li> <li>• Planning &amp; wastewater issues need to be looked at further.</li> <li>• Public participation to be included.</li> <li>• RBMP governance, need to zone in on management as well as governance.</li> <li>• Phosphorous recovery needs to consider recycling in new facilities.</li> </ul>	<p>Team to review this input.</p>
3.2	<p><b>To consider &amp; approve the draft Research Strategy</b></p>	<p><b>Research Strategy proposal</b>  The Research Lead gave an overview of the draft Research Strategy that had been circulated to members.  <b>Discussion.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forums research needs to focus on policy. Water conservation good research, good model for a modest budget, impactful output.</li> <li>• IW, not developing conservation strategy because lack of cost benefit analysis. Not keen on exploring this or the need for it.</li> <li>• direction of research should be influenced by resource challenges, oil resources running out, challenges need to dictate research, recovering N and P from wastewater would be useful</li> </ul> <p>The research Lead explained that the Forum can't take on circular economy as a direct topic as the Forum needs to keep focus on water quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity should be added to climate change and water, landscape solutions fitting with FILLM</li> <li>• Focus on public ppt, need to build on that.</li> </ul> <p>KEY area also: how to communicate the research, agree with publishing to the Forum, need to make the best to capitalise by holding workshops and developing policy positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Services have broader catchment issues, how to capture carbon, protect biodiversity.</li> </ul>	<p>Identify research gaps</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support biodiversity, area of water quality and ecosystems, important to consider abstractions? Quality, quantity, water conservation is important here.</li> <li>• water and health, using research fund efficiently, consider best practice elsewhere? EU project in Cork on heat stress. Could use these learnings</li> <li>• we could raise our profile on this by being advocates on this (bathing water and health)</li> </ul> <p>Question if the Forum has a role in directing research of other bodies? It was explained that the Research Lead sits on the National Research Coordination group with EPA, need to look at what research is currently happening then we can fill the gaps.</p> <p>Approved by members in principle subject to amendments</p>	
3.3	<b>To consider &amp; approve the draft Education &amp; Awareness Strategy</b>	<p><b>Education and Awareness Strategy</b></p> <p>The Comms &amp; Education Lead gave an overview of the Education Strategy that had been circulated to members.</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>Chair was of the view that the Forum needs to look at different audiences in Comms Strategy for different topics. Very valuable work being done, great input, great research but not getting enough value. Need to get more out of this next year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDG Forum good to be involved. Need to keep eye on this as well.</li> <li>• social media tag, members for circulation to build profile</li> </ul> <p>Key generate research, policy positions, communicate these. Would like to heavier emphasis on communicating policy, should focus comms more on water conservation workshop, not with schools unless a clear gap.</p> <p>Outside support, upskilling where needed for media savvy, need policy positions stronger. Research Policy Messages is key.</p> <p>Need for another advice to Minister on where to next on Water Conservation.</p> <p>Research lead explained that the steps for water conservation is ready, need to finalise the Policy brief.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• roadmap for what happens to reports, suggest clear actions for Ministers to do and then follow up that these actions are done.</li> </ul> <p>Ed and Awareness Strategy approved in principle</p> <p>Professional input for comms strategy was included in the budget submission.</p>	
4.0	<b>RBMP</b>	<p><b>AFU Response to RBMP POM</b></p> <p>The research Lead gave an overview of the meeting the CMSC had with the DHLGH on the 18<sup>th</sup> October re the RBMP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dept. still working on POMs, finalising details, before formal approval process.</li> <li>• Still opportunity to offer advice. Positive feedback from AFU input to WPAC.</li> <li>• Aiming POMs finalised by 1<sup>st</sup> November.</li> <li>• Formal approval process (5-6 weeks).</li> <li>• Requires formal view taken by WPAC.</li> </ul>	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministerial sign off by both Ministers before going to Government.</li> <li>• Likely to publish plan early 2023.</li> </ul> <p><b>Draft Programme of Measures for the RBMP including</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catchment Plans</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Hydromorphology</li> <li>• Forestry</li> <li>• Urban Wastewater</li> </ul> <p><b>The Research Lead outlined the Forums response including Catchment Management Plans</b></p> <p>Need to identify actions at waterbody level, right measure in right place. Timeline Q4 2023 for template needs to be quicker, plan for the other 41 catchments, needs to be progressed.</p> <p><b>Outcomes based approach,</b></p> <p>Where &amp; what: Proposal for right measure in right place: use tables already available in catchment reports, include issue, soil type, id mix of measures, lots of waterbodies will have similar measures,</p> <p><b>POM</b></p> <p>AFU Input: Actions at national level need to be matched to outcomes Increased farm inspections or enforcement, what will the outcome be? Forest licence map? What will this achieve?</p> <p><i>AFU recommends All measures should identify the outcomes.</i></p> <p><b>Resourcing</b></p> <p>To minister and WPAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional resources for ASSAP, LAWPRO and Las.</li> <li>• Resources should be led by the actions required.</li> <li>• No mention of WFD officer, to get better alignment within LA and with Lawpro</li> <li>• Need programme management secretariat</li> </ul> <p><b>Agriculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List waterbodies 'At Risk' from Agriculture</li> <li>• Outline what initiatives (CAP, NAP, EIPs, etc) will support right measure right place (i.e. gap analysis!)</li> <li>• Increased inspections; a new inspection regime is required; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the proposed outcome of the inspection (is it to address N, P, sediment, etc)</li> <li>• Allow for compliance promotion/awareness/advice to be included as the first stage.</li> <li>• Follow up inspection and enforcement if required.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Urban Wastewater</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of the 208; 60 complete by 2027; 73 in total complete by 2030</li> <li>• Recommend the 22 – UWW is the sole pressure, projects to be complete by 2027.</li> <li>• Recommend more urgency for remaining assessments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Forestry:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend a list of the 233 waterbodies; say where they are and what forestry activity is causing it to be a significant pressure.</li> <li>• Look at all of the proposed actions/measures in the POMs and say if/where they will address the 233 waterbodies.</li> <li>• For every action/measure for forestry – say what the water quality outcome is, e.g., are they to protect or restore. Again – this is for transparency and realistic expectations in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle.</li> </ul>	

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		<p><b>Letter of advice to WPAC</b></p> <p>The Chair proposed that the Executive would draft a letter of advice to go to WPAC regarding the Forums position &amp; recommendation re the draft Programme of Measures &amp; would circulate it to members for their input.</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should elaborate on the outcomes-based approach. Make the point strongly that we need to get to the right action in the right place as quickly as possible at waterbody level. Water is complex, likely to have combination of measures to get improvements. Policy coherence is key to right measure in right place.</li> <li>• Restore and protect objectives needs to be included, work being done at Regional Committees, information is out there and not a lot to get to where the Forum has asked for.</li> <li>• Greater transparency, Executive team accessing this information is important for reassurance that the outcome-based approach is being implemented.</li> <li>• UWWT disappointing to see so many will be in assessment post 2030, starts with capital funding, the 208 waterbodies should dictate the investment.</li> <li>• Needs to make more use of community structures in plan</li> <li>• Plan does not say we will bring x amount of waterbodies to good status? 1/3 upgraded by 2027, not good enough. If assessments are not starting to 2029, not good enough.</li> <li>• 233 forestry impacts, not acceptable response, legislative impediments need to be addressed.</li> <li>• Hydromorphology; No mention of heads of legislation as promised in the draft plan.</li> <li>• Operational groups, Catchments.ie and WFD app would be useful to see the details and reports on what is happening. Can keep abreast of what is going on. Need clear direction to local authority to link to WFD.</li> <li>• Lots at review status, would like to see status assigned to these to target measures.</li> <li>• Challenge with N regs is one size fits all, actions are not appropriate for both, N farm inspections will not be beneficial, needs a different approach. N measures massive challenges without herd reductions.</li> <li>• GAP beneficial but unlikely to improve water quality. Virtually impossible to stop P runoff without buffers, extended buffers need to be planted but do not have the resources for this. Needs to be incentivised. P issues can be sorted.</li> <li>• Public ppt is not being leveraged. Where is the community &amp; engagement plan, need people to be aware &amp; involved in the solutions.</li> <li>• Dept of Agriculture seeking grant aid for riparian zones. Intensive farmers want to access ACRES but cannot get in because not in priority catchment.</li> <li>• Forum needs to be strong. Looking at failure we cannot be associated with this. Moral issue if we do not take a strong approach. Behavioural approach to do what is right.</li> </ul>	

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		<p>The Chair summarised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forum’s role is to give advice</li> <li>• Recognise frustration, lack of visibility of how the measures would make a difference to deliver desired outcome for water.</li> <li>• Start with agreed submission. Do we need more information? Not sure we do as I do not think we will get it.</li> <li>• Need to draft a response maybe ask for additional information as we do this.</li> <li>• Requesting the Executive to take the points raised on board and to draft a response to circulate to members for consideration</li> <li>• Important message to communicate re. high risk entering into a plan that will not work for outcomes that we need to achieve.</li> <li>• Need more information. Cannot effectively analyse the plan without information on how many waterbodies will be improved. Cannot accept this without targets.</li> <li>• We need to develop a detailed response and give the DHLGH time to give a response.</li> </ul> <p>Need an analysis of how the POM’s relate to the AFU submission, do tracking on this and follow up with Dept. Research Lead can do that but to review our submissions takes time. Can go back to what we recommended</p> <p>It was agreed that the Executive would draft a letter of advice/submission to go to WPAC &amp; circulate for comment to the members as soon as possible. Chair will phone Dept on outcome of this discussions.</p>	
5	<b>AOB</b>	<p><b>AFU Submission on the 4<sup>th</sup> Biodiversity Action Plan</b></p> <p>The Comms &amp; Education lead gave an overview of the submission on the 4<sup>th</sup> Biodiversity Action Plan. It was agreed to submit as presented Submit as shared.</p>	
6	<b>Next meeting</b>	<b>Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December in the Aisling Hotel Dublin &amp; hybrid</b>	Arrange meeting