



**Plenary Meeting**  
**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024**  
**Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise**

**Attendees:** Matt Crowe, Dominic Cronin, Maria Snell, Neil Walker, Michael Kenny, Maria O’Gorman, Keith Hyland, Connie Rochford, Karin Dubsby, Marie Doyle, Jean Rosney, David Downes, Eimear Manning, David Wright, Eamon Carroll, Fintan Kelly, Elaine McGoff, Barry Deane

**Apologies:** Tadhg Buckley, Suzanne Linnane, Constanze O’Toole, Steve Conlon, Karan O’Loughlin, Martin McEnroe, Ciarán Maguire, Sinead O’Brien, Charles Stanley Smith

**In Attendance:** Donal Purcell, Gretta McCarron, Aisling Corkery, Triona McGrath, (Donal Daly & Cormac McConigley for the fieldtrip)

No.	Details	Summary	Action
1.0	<b>Welcome &amp; Minutes</b>	<p><b>1.1 Welcome and apologies</b>            The Chair proposed a vote of condolence to Charles Stanley Smith on the passing of his wife, Elizabeth McGrath (RIP) which was acknowledged by the members present.</p> <p>Barry Deane, NFGWS CEO is taking up a new position and will be leaving the Forum. He thanked the Forum members and commended the growing professionalism of the Forum. Mark Farrelly will be appointed as his successor.</p> <p>Chair thanked Barry for chairing the WSSC &amp; wished him every success and looks forward to working with him under LAWPRO. Members &amp; staff thanked Barry for his contribution to the work of the Forum since 2017 &amp; wished him well in his new role.</p> <p><b>1.2 Consideration of draft minutes of Meeting no. 59 held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024</b>            Minutes Approved, typos noted.</p> <p><b>1.3 Matters arising from the minutes</b>            None</p>	Minutes to be updated and published on Forum website
2.0	<b>Corporate Update</b>	<p><b>2.1 Update on Forum’s expenditure to 30/06/24</b>            The SEO explained that Forum expenditure to the end of June 2024 was €305,106.69 &amp; that the budget for 2025 had been submitted to the DHLGH.</p> <p><b>2.2 Correspondence</b>            Letter received from DHLGH Assistant Secretary on 8<sup>th</sup> July seeking the Forum’s views on the administration &amp; oversight of the Rural Water Sector. Letter to be considered as part of discussion on the Forums GWS Position.</p>	



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenge of change in staff in LAs, a dedicated shared service would prevent this happening.</li> </ul> <p>Q: What is a shared service? A: A shared service is a national service that supports all local authorities similar to LAWPRO and CARO &amp; usually is provided by one or more local Authorities</p> <p>Some members concerned that if we keep pushing for shared services, the community side will be lost. Comment: We have a unique sector that we don't want to lose, don't think a shared service will affect that. Need to have further discussion on Shared Services</p> <p><b>Consultations:</b> UÉ Cork Wastewater Strategy: The draft strategy consultation is in 2025, so will look at whether we need to make recommendations on this when the time comes.</p> <p><b>3.2 To consider and approve the Forum's draft submission in response to the consultation on Uisce Éireann's Water Services Strategic Plan and to agree the next steps.</b> Briefing to WSSC on 6th June, WSSC meeting on 26th June. WSSC Supporting the plan but strengthening some aspects. 14 strategic aims are in line with previous recommendations made by the Forum. Most of this submission is based on previous submissions and also emphasises some additional points. Approved by WSSC, seeking plenary approval today.</p> <p><b>Discussion</b> Chair: Suggest we include the <i>Forum is of the view that an implementation plan is put in place to make sure actions are implemented in a timely manner.</i></p> <p>Comment: Tier 1 plan, tier 2 action plans are under this plan. This is very high level. Chair: The 35 specific actions need to be tracked. Comment: Support chair on including this in the submission, even if it will be repeated in the next tier. Chair: Not all nature-based solutions are community led. UÉ can be the lead on NBS as well. <i>Change to champion community led and other nbs.</i> Comment: Would like communications highlighted and timely data availability Chair: Communications are a significant challenge for UÉ Comment: Forum should put communications on the agenda for the next meeting with Uisce Eireann Approved with minor changes.</p>	<p>Approved with minor changes</p> <p>Edit and send to UE</p>
4.0	<b>Education &amp; Communications actions</b>	<p><b>4.1 Update on Communications &amp; Education Actions</b> Discussed Forum Water and Climate Conference plan – 20<sup>th</sup> November, Tullamore Court Hotel Session1: Present the Science – Connor Murphy and Forum commissioned research Session 2 Panel Discussion – Agency perspectives</p>	

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		<p>Session 3 Sectoral Perspectives – Catchment management for water, nature and climate adaption</p> <p>Q: Who are we targeting the conference at?  A: We have a list of potential delegates including reps from Climate Action officers in Local Authorities, CARO offices &amp; Regional Committees for the RBMP etc</p> <p>Summer Newsletter is coming out with a save the date.  Education Module 4 - Water Quality and Pollution is on the website.  We are considering a launch of all modules on Water Heritage Day 25<sup>th</sup> August</p> <p>Upcoming activities for the Forum:  Plenary (WAP Launch, Plenary meetings, AFU Water and Climate)  CMSC (NAP consultation, LAWPRO meeting – tentative date 5<sup>th</sup> Sept)  WSSC (Rural Water position; CRU Consultations: RC4, Non-Domestic Tariffs - both Q4 2024)</p> <p>Comment: Concern that Communities often have little say with agencies, find it hard to be productive apart from throwing stones.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Many groups have no say in water, we need insight into how GWS communities/ Tidy Towns work – wellbeing benefits, links to water quality etc there is a higher element to what we do here, greater sense of ownership in community and voluntary sector but feel isolated from big agencies (UÉ, LAs etc)</li> <li>- Giving UÉ advice on gaining trust of their communities</li> <li>- We dealt with this a lot in the liaison group, we got some in roads into how they were communicating. They are not fully aware that there is so much distrust about what they do. – Basic Communications</li> </ul> <p>Chair of the view that the Forum should consider giving formal advice to UÉ on Communications and Engagement.</p> <p>IBEC Member will be chair of UE National Stakeholder Forum from September.</p>	
5.1	<b>AOB</b>	<p><b>5.1 AOB</b></p> <p>Q: Any update on the RBMP?  Chair: It hasn't gone to cabinet yet, can't see it happening this side of September. NIS process needs to be completed. We have requested a meeting with the Minister when it is to be launched. Will give update during the summer if we get any.  Will discuss future research topics at next meeting. Considering focusing on marine issues next year</p>	
6	<b>Confirm date for next Plenary meeting</b>	<p><b>7.1 Confirm the date &amp; location of the next Plenary meeting.</b></p> <p>Plenary Meeting:  Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September in the Ashling Hotel, Dublin  And Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October</p>	