

## 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 Dubsky, 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
<b>No.</b> 1.0	Details Welcome & Minutes	1.1 Welcome and apologies  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.  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.  Chair thanked Barry for chairing the WSSC & wished him every success and looks forward to working with him under LAWPRO. Members & staff thanked Barry for his contribution to the work of the Forum since 2017 & wished him well in his new role.  1.2 Consideration of draft minutes of Meeting no. 59 held on 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	Action  Minutes to be updated and published on Forum website
		Minutes Approved, typos noted.  1.3 Matters arising from the minutes None	
2.0	Corporate Update	2.1 Update on Forum's expenditure to 30/06/24  The SEO explained that Forum expenditure to the end of June 2024 was €305,106.69 & that the budget for 2025 had been submitted to the DHLGH.  2.2 Correspondence  Letter received from DHLGH Assistant Secretary on 8 <sup>th</sup> July seeking the Forum's views on the administration & oversight of the Rural Water Sector.  Letter to be considered as part of discussion on the Forums GWS Position.	

No.	Details	Summary	Action
3.0	Policy &	3.1 To consider and approve the Forum's draft Policy position on the	
	Research	future of Group Water Schemes and to agree the next steps.	
	Actions &	Draft Rural Water Group Water Scheme Forum Position was outlined by the	
	Update	Research Lead. The draft position was informed by briefings from	
		Department, NFGWS, Fieldtrip to GWS, Members Discussion (2 meetings)	
		At a high level there are recommendations on:	
		Governance: (Strengthen LA role, Review Rural Water Strategic Plans,	
		consider shared service for rural water, long-term DBO contracts should	
		have mid-term reviews and non-DBO schemes should expedite contracts)	
		Funding: (Source protection, climate change adaptation, improved governance and training)	
		Communications: Access to information	
		Sustainability: Planning for climate change	
		Water Quality: emergency/incident plans	
		Discussion	
		WSSC Chair: Commended work of members and team on this and	
		recommends it to the plenary.	
		Q: Were there any areas of contention during meetings?	
		A: No	
		Members of the view that the balance is correct in this position paper and it	
		is a position of the Forum.	
		Comment: Include communications with HSE in addition to LAs in last	
		paragraph.	
		Q: Who's responsible for making the emergency plan, the scheme or water	
		supplier? A: Onus is on the Water supplier, will adjust to make this more clear	
		Position Approved by Plenary	
		Chair: Recommend that we submit the position paper to the Minister & Officials	
	C	SEO Read letter From Department requesting Forum input on Rural Water	
	Correspondence	services	
		Discussion	
		Research on private wells will be complete in September, could	
		provide a strong position on this.	
		Q. Is there a timeframe on the letter response?	
		EPA, HSE, CCMA, NFGWS also got this letter. NFGWS will respond this month. Rural Water WG will be working on this going forward.	
		Points to consider:	
		Governance shared service agreed in principle but has not been	
		addressed.	
		<ul> <li>Currently public water supplies regulated by EPA, for GWS it is Local</li> </ul>	
		Authority, Question is their sense in 2 regulators, views for and	
		against but worth considering.	
		<ul> <li>Need for a more joined up approach to manage domestic wells.</li> </ul>	
		Challenge of inconsistency, of regulation and administration of	
		programmes between all LAs.	

No.	Details	Summary	Action
		Challenge of change in staff in LAs, a dedicated shared service	Approved
		would prevent this happening.	with
			minor
		Q: What is a shared service?	changes
		A: A shared service is a national service that supports all local authorities	
		similar to LAWPRO and CARO & usually is provided by one or more local	Edit and
		Authorities	send to
			UE
		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	
		Consultations:	
		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.	
		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.	
		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.	
		Discussion	
		Chair: Suggest we include the <i>Forum is of the view that an implementation</i>	
		plan is put in place to make sure actions are implemented in a timely	
		manner.	
		mumer.	
		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. Change to champion community led and other nbs.	
		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.	
4.0	Education &	4.1 Update on Communications & Education Actions	
	Communications	Discussed Forum Water and Climate Conference plan – 20 <sup>th</sup> November,	
	actions	Tullamore Court Hotel	
		Session1: Present the Science – Connor Murphy and Forum commissioned	
		research Session 2 Banel Discussion - Agency perspectives	
		Session 2 Panel Discussion – Agency perspectives	

No.	Details	Summary	Action
		Session 3 Sectoral Perspectives – Catchment management for water, nature and climate adaption	
		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 & Regional Committees for the RBMP etc	
		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 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)	
		Comment: Concern that Communities often have little say with agencies, find it hard to be productive apart from throwing stones.  - 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)  - Giving UÉ advice on gaining trust of their communities  - 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	
		Chair of the view that the Forum should consider giving formal advice to UÉ on Communications and Engagement.  IBEC Member will be chair of UE National Stakeholder Forum from	
F. 6	400	September.	
5.1	АОВ	<ul> <li>5.1 AOB</li> <li>Q: Any update on the RBMP?</li> <li>Chair: It hasn't gone to cabinet yet, can't see it happening this side of</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Will discuss future research topics at next meeting. Considering focusing on marine issues next year</li> </ul>	
6	Confirm date for next Plenary meeting	7.1 Confirm the date & location of the next Plenary meeting. Plenary Meeting: Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> September in the Ashling Hotel, Dublin And Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> October	