



## Plenary Committee Meeting No. 26

### Minutes

Meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 10.00 am via ZOOM

**Attendees:** Tom Collins (Chair), Paul O'Brien, Gerald Quain, Suzanne Linnane, Derry Dillon, Ollan Herr, Sinead O'Brien, Charles Stanley-Smith, Connie Rochford, Barry Deane, Thomas Harrington, Liam Berney, Dominic Cronin, Tim Butter, Tim Fenn, Brendan Fitzsimons & Izzy Petrie

**Apologies:** Neil Walker, David Wright, Elaine McGoff, Bernadette Connolly, Dominic Cronin, Martin McEnroe, Keith Hyland, Laurie Kearan & Jean Rosney,

**In attendance:** Gretta McCarron, Donal Daly, Alec Rolston and Donal Purcell

Item	Details	Summary	Action
1.1	Welcome	The Chair welcomed Issy Petrie Research and Policy Officer with SVP as the new Forum member representing the Community & Voluntary Sector.	
1.2	Minutes	Agreed	Noted
1.3	Matters arising	The Chair explained that the Forum was in discussion with the DoHPLG regarding the possibility of providing some financial support towards technology costs to assist members that required support to participate in meetings of the Forum in the context of Covid-19.	DP to continue to progress this.
2.1	To receive update on the Forum's expenditure and budget for 2020 including revisions/additions to the research plan for the Year	<p>The A/SEO explained that the welcome letter had been issued to the new Minister Darragh O'Brien &amp; that the Forum had also received a letter of introduction from the new Minister.</p> <p>Reviewed budget to address Covid shortfall. As the Forum hasn't been hosting face to face meetings it has €50,000 of budget savings in 2020. It was agreed by the members to request sanction from the Department re allocate this funding as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional €15,000 towards the peatland research project</li> <li>• Additional €10,000 for the early career research projects which will facilitate 6 projects rather than 4.</li> <li>• To allocate €25,000 into a study on Invasive Alien Species</li> </ul>	

		<p>The Chair of the WSSC highlighted that the Standing Committee had identified a further area that required research re water conservation including the idea of carrying out a high level international comparison on what is happening in other countries, levels of investment and unaccounted for water. It was agreed to investigate this further and to utilise funding that is available under technical assistance to pursue this action.</p> <p>Once the current research on CAP is complete there is potential for a follow up project to look at on ground delivery of higher level recommendations. Members supported the idea of further CAP research.</p>	
2.2	To discuss the Water Forum's proposed effectiveness review	<p>Following discussion it was decided that the Effectiveness review would be postponed until next year when it would also be in a position to include the review of the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Members were of the view that it is important to record all submissions made by the Forum as part of the work programme.</p>	Noted
2.3	To receive update regarding the appointment of members to the Water Forum by the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage	<p>The A/SEO informed the meeting that he had forwarded the list of the Members that had agreed to let their names go forward for appointment to the Forum by the Minister. The officials in the Department are currently finalising the documentation for forwarding to the Minister including the regulations associated with the Water Services Act 2017 that deal with the formal appointment of Members to the Forum.</p>	
2.4	To discuss Standing Orders.	<p>Following some suggestions by David Wright who was unable to attend today's meeting the Chair suggested that the Staffing Sub- committee working group of Liam, David, Charles, Sinead, Suzanne &amp; Dominic be asked to discuss &amp; progress Standing Order proposals.</p>	
2.5	Staffing Issues	<p>A/SEO informed the meeting that the recruitment of the Post Doc with DkIT was underway &amp; that it was planned to carryout shortlisting &amp; to hold the interviews via Zoom on 10<sup>th</sup> August. Interview Board to be comprised of a member from the Governing Body of DkIT as Chair, Suzanne Linnane, Donal or Alec and Sinead (if available) as a Forum Member.</p>	

3.1	To consider & approve the <i>Draft Framework for Integrated Land &amp; Landscape Management</i> .	<p>Donal Daly made a presentation on the <i>Draft Framework for Integrated Land &amp; Landscape Management</i> which he explained was an expansion of the concepts &amp; ideas in Integrated Catchment Management presentation.</p> <p>Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently siloed approaches in environmental management.</li> <li>• Different disciplines work independently, and organisations lack co-operation and communications even within organisations.</li> <li>• Solution is to work in a more integrated way which is starting to happen.</li> <li>• New vision emerging, STG development goals, EU Green deal, Biodiversity strategy, CAP.</li> <li>• Need to enable co-benefits - it is a framework for the actions.</li> <li>• This draft framework links to these strategies.</li> <li>• Whole of environment approach is needed to include from air to underground implicitly including human activity from windfarms to mining.</li> <li>• Systems approach to environmental management, that needs multidisciplinary, multi-objective, framework.</li> <li>• Water connects all systems.</li> <li>• Need for a change of mindset, but there is no system or framework to enable integrated actions. This proposal aims to do that.</li> <li>• What is proposed here is a broadened, reframed and improved integrated catchment approach that can be applied to water and other systems such as biodiversity and climate.</li> <li>• Critic of ICM was it did not include stakeholder engagement at all stages whereas FILLM address this. Co-benefits are included at all stages as well. It will connect and help to achieve a wide range of Directives including water, habitats and climate. (Benefits and delivery dealt with on page 6-8.)</li> <li>• Includes idea around public money for public goods.</li> <li>• <b>Key question is why is AFU appropriate body for this? AFU is independent, statutory and a stakeholder forum &amp; is the only such body in the environmental sphere. Policy domain and public aligned over a single strategy. So AFU is a significant player.</b></li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked Donal Daly for his work on the draft Framework which in his view contained some very important ideas around water management &amp; its integration with bio-diversity &amp; climate change.</p> <p><b>Response from Membership</b></p> <p>The Members expressed support for the proposed approach. Key challenges include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That delivery will be more challenging.</li> <li>• The need to introduce the concepts to other Organisations &amp; the Department</li> <li>• The Members were of the view that the Forum needs to show leadership with promoting the concepts in the document &amp; that</li> </ul>	
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3.	<p>To consider &amp; approve the <i>Draft Submission in response to the SWMI Consultation</i>.</p>	<p>Alec Rolston made a presentation on the Forums draft SWMI submission which is due for submission to the Dept. on 7<sup>th</sup> August.</p> <p>Outline of the document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part 1 sets the scene</li> <li>Part 2 overarching comment on SWMI consultation with FILLM as the backdrop. Recommendations for new approach to SWMI by identifying sector, pressure and stressors linkages, highlights complexities of water management.</li> <li>Part 3 SWMI issue response. The 79 questions in the consultation document are very technical and can create barriers and inequity for engagement. The Forums response includes 5 components that were not in the consultation documents, coastal issues, forestry, microplastics, water availability &amp; temperature.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that members would use Google documents online to make suggested changes so that everyone could see them.</p> <p><b>General responses from the members:</b></p> <p><b>SDGs:</b> Members supported the reference to the SDGs. While a number of organisations are SDG champions, to promote SDGs in their operational area, no one organisation better placed in the area of water than AFU. We need AFU to become champion for promotion of SDGs as water cuts across the themes of the SDGs.</p> <p>It was proposed that the FILLM document should emphasise the SDGs and it can be referenced in the SWMI document. The Chair explained that we had a discussion within the team &amp; it was acknowledged that the</p>	

		<p>SDGs need to be included in the next strategy. The idea of a workshop for members on SDGs was proposed for a future meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed to explicitly mention SDGs in the final section of the FILLM document delivering FILLM into the future.</p> <p><b>Prioritisation:</b> It was felt that the wording was not strong enough. Explicit statement of the obligations of the WFD and what is proposed is not compliant. Revision priority should be given to drinking water, we should outline that prioritisation is not in line with directive.</p> <p><b>Peat</b> which is listed as a SWMI particularly extraction is not identified as an issue. Some members were of the view that the country needs to stop it being extracted in the first place.</p> <p>Members were of the view that the Forum had to be balanced on peat extraction as it impacted on workers. It was agreed that the important message here is to follow the regulations &amp; the direction that LAWPRO are taking on this.</p> <p><b>Regulation:</b> WFD requires regulations for physical modifications, it is taking too long. Better regulation of wetland drainage.</p> <p>It was agreed to forward all proposed changes to Alec Rolston who will upload them to google docs so that everyone knows the changes that are made.</p> <p>The Chair outlined that we need to sign off online. It was agreed that Alec will make the agreed changes and these will be uploaded online.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes will be made by Close of business on Monday next.</li> <li>• Notes on agreed changes will be added to the google doc online.</li> <li>• Revised SWMI will be circulated by close of business on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> &amp; to be back with comments by Wed 29<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Need to close document by 31<sup>st</sup> July</li> </ul>	
4.	Education Strategy	<p>Gretta presented the Draft Education Strategy</p> <p>Members supported the content of the document &amp; were of the view that Forum needs to be planning a national campaign to promote the value of water &amp; that the AFU was the right organisation to lead such a campaign.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education proposals need to be of quality, take time to research needs and opportunities, Covid gives us the space to do that.</li> <li>• Mapping, evaluating, metrics are all very important to allow us to lead on campaigns going forward.</li> </ul> <p>Members adopted the Strategy.</p> <p>It was agreed that a Working group will be set up through communications with Gretta.</p>	
5.	CAP Research	<p><b>Update on the CAP Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alec has met with the Researcher &amp; given guidance on final report.</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft report due on 15<sup>th</sup> August with 2 weeks for comments and then 2 weeks to the final report. Agreed to give a two-week extension to cover the holiday period</li> <li>• Guidance on potential for further research &amp; the need for a 2<sup>nd</sup> stage proposal</li> </ul> <p>Discussion on CAP process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likely to be 2-year transition.</li> <li>• CAP strategic plan produced a swot document. Sept will be prioritisation of needs and intervention logic, such as eco-schemes.</li> <li>• Commission agreed on broad programme but needs to get through the EU parliament, in October.</li> <li>• There is a reduction of 13% in pillar 2 money which is the eco schemes, overall, less money &amp; more asks.</li> <li>• Important to ensure that the financial situation does not impact on water quality and the wider environment &amp; that CAP supports people who need to be supported.</li> <li>• The Chair suggested that the Forum should wait to get the final Research report from Charles Larkin so that it will then be in a better position when writing to the Minister or the Department. This was agreed by the meeting</li> </ul>	
6.	Update from the WSSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison group meeting IW, good information from IW on some areas and poorer on other areas such as wastewater where the information is not adequate but we are trying to find a solution to this issue.</li> <li>• Held two workshops on water conservation in June &amp; July. Background paper highlights the key areas, focused on our own strategy and OJC committee recommendations. Identified actions and gaps, the process was very useful. Will share the outputs with Plenary in due course.</li> <li>• Research survey of learnings from GWS ongoing with DKIT.</li> <li>• The Committee discussed the THM paper &amp; has commenced communications with the Dept on this. There are some water supplies failing on these parameters &amp; work to resolve the issues is ongoing. Some members were of the view that consideration should be given to greater encouragement to rainwater harvesting as it is a safer source of water than relying on public water supply sourced from bogs with a THM issue &amp; it should be promoted &amp; included as part of building standards.</li> </ul>	
7	Next meeting	Rescheduled to 15 <sup>th</sup> Sept at 10.00am via zoom	Noted.