

Plenary Committee Meeting No. 27

Meeting held on the 15th September 2020 at 10.00 am via ZOOM

Minutes Agreed

Attendees: Tom Collins (Chair), Denis Drennan, Paul O’Brien, Derrie Dillon, Dominic Cronin, Martin McEnroe, David Wright, Gerald Quain, Izzy Petrie, Suzanne Linnane, Bernadette Connolly, Ollan Herr, Sinead O’Brien, Charles Stanley-Smith, Elaine McGoff, Connie Rochford, Keith Hyland, Barry Deane, Jean Rosney, Tim Butter & Liam Berney.

Apologies: Neil Walker, Laurie Kearon, Tim Fenn, Brendan Fitzsimons & Thomas Harrington.

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

Item	Details	Summary	Action
1.1	Welcome	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished Thomas Harrington well who is stepping down from the Forum as the River trusts representative & who will be replaced by Siobhan Ward from the Moy River Trust. The Chair & members acknowledged the significant contribution that Tom Harrington had made to the establishment & work of the Forum & wished him well for the future.	Letter to issue
1.2	Minutes	Agreed	Noted
1.3	Matters arising	None- items included in the agenda	
2.1	Update on the Forum’s expenditure and budget for 2020	<p>Reallocation of budget 2020 The A/SEO informed the meeting that the Dept. had approved the reallocation of funding from meeting costs, staffing & members expenses to Research as proposed at the July Plenary meeting.</p> <p>IT support costs for AFU members The A/SEO informed the meeting that following discussion the Dept has also approved once off financial assistance to members to facilitate their participation in online meetings with funding to purchase IT equipment (laptop or tablet) or towards the installation of broadband to a maximum of €500. This will be a once off contribution & must be</p>	Liaise with Dept to finalise details of funding for IT costs & circulate details to forum members

		vouched expenditure. The Forum will develop an application form and circulate to members. This funding comes from the 2020 budget & must be paid out in this calendar year.	
2.2	Update regarding the appointment of members to the Water Forum by the Minister for HLG&H	The A/SEO updated the members that the Dept expected to be in a position to formally write out to each member by the end of September with the 31st October as commencement date for the statutory instrument regarding this area.	
2.3	Staffing	Recruitment of the Post Doc Policy Analyst in Water & Wastewater Services in association with DkIT The members were informed that 10 individuals applied & 6 were shortlisted for interview, 5 candidates attended for interviewed & all 5 were qualified as suitable for the position. DkIT have offered a contract to candidate number one- Angelos Alamanos who is a Civil Engineer with a PhD in Water management. Angelos will be moving over from Greece on 25th September. There was a broad welcome for this appointment from the Chair & the members	Noted
2.4	Correspondence	Email from Forum Member Charles S Smith requesting a report from OPW on the recent issues with the flood relief scheme in Bandon. Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members concerned that millions was spent and that there was an issue with the pumps during the recent flood. Need to be specific about what we are asking the OPW Members concerned that OPW engineering works often cause siltation that can result in the destruction of spawning beds & that There needs to be a proper way to address these issues. Members were asked to send any questions they would like to be considered by the OPW to the Research Lead who is to compile them into an initial letter to the OPW. The Forum would like to ask the OPW to meet the CMSC in the first instance & any other members with a particular interest can also participate in this meeting. 	Research Lead to collate questions & draft letter to go to the OPW with a view to the OPW meeting the CMSC in the near future.
3.1	To receive update on the CAP Research Project	CAP research: Draft final report received & the review and response was sent to Charles Larkin. Charles will meet with Working Group. A 2 week no cost time extension to project final date 12 th October has been agreed which gives more time to engage with WG and address their points.	Arrange WG meeting
3.2	Update on other research areas incl. Early career Bursaries & the Peatlands research	The research lead updated the meeting on the following areas: Peatlands research: Project closing date yesterday 14 th Sept. €25k research project, 2 submissions received. Both consortium applications Florence Renee Wilson of UCD, with national peatland experts and ecologists second from RPS and QUB Ray Flynn recently completed the cubed	Assessment Panel to consider & meet.

		<p>project and worked with RPS on peatland hydrology. Need to assemble a small assessment panel. Assessment criteria in place. Chair asked for CAP Group to remain in place: Suzanne, Dominic, Charles & Sinead or Elaine.</p> <p>Early stage research bursaries: Deadline for receipt of proposals is the end of September. 9 topics included with up to 6 to be funded. Possibility to considering more depending on number & quality of applications. Research Lead to set up a panel to consider applications closer to the time.</p> <p>Research on Invasive species: Meeting arranged with Martin McEnroe and Joe Caffrey on 24th September and will begin to work on that.</p> <p>NFGWS Water conservation research: PhD student working with GWS and DKIT on water conservation measures and their impact and changes in demand over the past 10 years. Survey gone out across the country with upto 100 responses so far. Looking at raw data in 60 schemes to see changes in water demand, whether it is policy, weather etc. To give more data on impacts on water demand in light of climate change etc.</p>	<p>Set up panel to review applications.</p> <p>Meeting arranged</p>
4.1	Progress on Education Strategy	<p>The Education Lead provided an update on actions in the Education Strategy including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of 3 short videos for National Science Week on the Magic of Water using simple experiments to explain the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of water. These will be promoted as part of Science Week and through SFI networks to Discover Maths and Primary Science Centres • Developing an animated video on the impact of our everyday use of water in the home • Need to develop a video on invasive species re. what should not be in our rivers to be promoted when our Invasive Species research is disseminated. • Non-formal educators survey has been issued and hoping to have 100 responses, currently have 60 	
4.2	Formation of an Education & Awareness Working Group	<p>The Education lead explained the need to set up an Education and Awareness Working group as per the TOR circulated. Members agreed that Connie Rochford will chair the Group & that the Education lead will liaise with the Membership to get other reps on board.</p>	<p>Education Lead to follow up with request for volunteers to the Membership</p>
4.3	Symposium/webinar	<p>The Education lead explained plans for a Webinar to replace the original hotel based Symposium with similar topics, content and speakers to the Symposium. Members discussed the event & were of the view that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water should be at the top of the Agenda in the order of speakers. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to have the balance, rep from traditional farming, how they are adapting to the changes. • Would like to hear fresher voices on topics. • Needs strong moderation, around the Q&A. the issue of EU affairs, questions are sent in the chat format. • Education lead to liaise with the NFGWS re the learning from organising their event including the use of Q&A & chat etc <p>Members requested to forward their ideas to the Education Lead</p>	Education lead to Organise symposium meeting for next week
5.	Update from the CM Standing Committee	<p>To consider the approach for engagement with the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage during the preparation of the 3rd cycle draft RBMP</p> <p>Chair explained that the Dept is offering the Forum the opportunity to engage during the drafting of the RBMP in the period end Sept to December including the SWMI analysis, catchment characterisation and measures. Timeline includes the review of the 2nd cycle measures by end October & a draft plan completed by the end of November for sign off by the Minister before publication. Members were of the view that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forum could engage at the beginning, middle and end of the process. • The value of the Forum engaging with the Dept now, in the first instance by having a meeting with the CM group to get an update, on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SWMI submissions ○ programme of measures and ○ characterisation <p>The Chair explained that the Forum would essentially be consulting in the drafting, as opposed to consulting on the draft. Members expressed the view that there wasn't a conflict engaging at this stage as the Forum can still give its views at the consultation stage.</p> <p>The A/SEO explained that his understanding from the meeting that he & the Chair had with the Water Advisory Unit was that the Dept is still following the timeline that was circulated & they are working on a range of measures & that when they have the SWMI input they will review the draft measures to see if they need change or additional ones. Members were of the view that this is an important piece of work for the Forum.</p>	A/SEO to contact Dept & arrange a meeting with CMSC for update first - 12 October
6.1	Research on Experimental Governance on the RBMP 2018-21.	A/SEO referenced the report on Governance in RBMP that was circulated & presented the key findings from it which were broadly positive. IPA are hoping to publish this as part of the supporting documents as part of their review. This will feed into our own effectiveness review.	

		<p>The Chair outlined some key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for a conversation with the Dept on water governance. • Concern from some members in the Forum regarding the impact of the Forums work <p>The Chair queried an area that was not addressed regarding how the forum was interacting with groups around the table - value in discussion as to the role the Forum members have with facilitating membership.</p> <p>Members thought that communication could be enhanced by developing a quarterly Newsletter that could be published online & circulated to member organisations.</p>	Investigate the Publishing of a newsletter
7.	WSSC	<p>The Chair congratulated Barry & Jean from the NFGWS on their successful webinar as part of their Rural water week.</p> <p>The A/SEO explained that the WSSC had Irish Water in with an initial presentation of the NWRP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25-year Strategy to assess quantity, quality and demand and ways to meet future demand. • Public consultation on this plan likely end November. • National consultation on National plan then a 2nd consultation on Phase 2 Regional plans. Public consultation as well. <p>The CRU are meeting the WSSC on 30th September to present on the performance assessment framework (how they assess IW) as part of a public consultation process.</p> <p>WSSC has to setup another liaison meeting with IW Members queried the East & Midlands Water supply project.</p> <p>The CRU has not completed their assessment of the Water Project. Members asked that the Forum should request an update from the CRU & to also get an update from the Dept on the Water abstraction legislation which has implication for the MEWSP.</p> <p>Members brought up the issue of beaches being closed over the summer bathing season, good time for somebody to do an analysis of the season on what is causing the problem with beaches? Propose to put on agenda for WSSC to talk about issues and what the timeline is for addressing them.</p>	<p>Request an update from CRU on the review of the IW Project & from the Dept on the Abstractions bill</p> <p>Agenda item for WSSC</p>
8	AOB	<p>The Chair explained that he intended to step down from the WAB & was recommending that the A/SEO would replace him on the Board as the AFU nominee. In his view it is an important organisation to have continuous flow of information from WAB to AFU & that it would be better to have a staff member sit on it. This was approved by the members.</p>	<p>Noted. Chair to write to the WAB Executive with the proposed change</p>
9	Next meeting	20 th October at 10.00am Via ZOOM	