



Plenary Meeting

Tuesday 12th July 2022
Hudson Bay Hotel, Athlone
Agreed Minutes

Attendees: Matt Crowe (Chair), Barry Deane, Connie Rochford, Keith Hyland, Denis Drennan, Paul O’Brien, Derrie Dillon, Bernadette Connolly, Ollan Herr, Charles Stanley Smith, Siobhan Ward, Suzanne Linnane, Tim Butter, Neil Walker, David Wright, Gerald Quain,

Attendees Online: Liam Berney, Sinead O’Brien, Martin McEnroe

Apologies: Dominic Cronin, Issy Petrie, Elaine McGoff, Tim Fenn, Brendan Fitzsimons, Jean Rosney,
In Attendance: Donal Purcell, Triona McGrath, Gretta McCarron,

No.	Details	Summary	Action
1.1	Welcome & Apologies	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.	
1.1	Consideration of minutes of last meeting	The minutes of the meeting held on 27 th May were approved The Chair offered condolences to Martina Ryan on the death of her brother Kenneth (RIP)	Minutes to be placed on website
2.1	Corporate Update	<p>Staffing The SEO informed the meeting that the interviews for the position of Research & Policy Executive are due to take place on 21st July in Nenagh. The interview board to consist of David Wright as Chair, Suzanne Linnane & Triona McGrath.</p> <p>Forum Membership & representation of sectors The review of the Forums membership by staffing group is ongoing. SEO explained that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the WS Act outlines that the Forum membership will consist of between a minimum number of 20 & a maximum of 40 members. The quorum for plenary meetings is set as a majority of the current membership. The Interests currently not represented on the Forum include; disability sector, fisheries and aquaculture, students, women, artisan food and beverage sector. The Chair was of the view that he would like the members to agree the optimum number of members that should on the Forum & who needs to be represented taking into account the balance between fair representation and the practicalities of running a meeting. He also was of the view that the Forum also needs to look at a plan for succession of its membership, currently members are appointed for a 3-year term with the possibility of a second 3year term (6-year cycle 	

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		<p>maximum). The Majority of the current members were formally appointed in January 2021 with the end of the term in January 2024. Members were of the view that a more staggered appointment would be better for succession.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas that members thought should be represented include fisheries, aquaculture and marine waters. The disability sector is included under the Community & Voluntary pillar through Izzy Petrie. • Concern expressed by a member that some of the former Public Water Forum members are still on NWF & he would like to see opportunity for a substitute delegate, to cover when there is a heavy workload. One alternate to this that might address this is to include non-members on working or standing committees. • A member made the point made that other State boards give a stipend for members & he would like to see this considered due to the workload of members & the increasing cost of travel which is an issue. • Members of the view that up to 30 members on the Forum seem feasible. Members of the view that alternates could work but they would need to be up to speed with the issues. Idea of going back to the Dept on the regulations if required. <p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of members up to 30; • Look to include fisheries and young people; • Concern that alternates could double the numbers so this may not be a good idea- possible as a last resort; flexibility on working groups, could bring in other people and experts to these. <p>Next step:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Group to meet & consider points from the plenary & report to a future plenary with recommendations • Agreement on level of attendance should be included in recommendations. <p>Budget Update</p> <p>SEO explained that the DHLGH require an end of year budget forecast this week & will also be requesting the budget for 2023 in July. SEO outlined that for the 2022 budget the areas of Strategy implementation will use its full budget & there will be some savings in areas of salary and meetings costs.</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member would like to invest more in public ppt & would like meetings around the country to raise profile of the Forum. • Research tends to be desktop, could we consider more innovative research in new technologies, pilot demonstration systems. Chair explained that this type of research is not appropriate for the Forums budget & that the research is to support policy positions. • Members of the view that innovative research requires collaboration with other organisations and making suggestions for such research. Collaborate with other orgs such as the NFGWS, valuing intangible assets etc. Members of view that the Forums research is more of a desk research role & that the Research Lead can liaise with other organisations. 	<p>Working Group to meet in Sept & to continue their deliberations & to report to plenary with recommendations once they have completed their work.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to raise profile through policy positions, push through national and comms channels, need the time and facilitated sessions to agree positions on ag etc. • Members agreed re the need to raise our profile, looking at overlaps, division of labour, lawpro liaise with them and push our message through them. Our role is of national stakeholders, issue joint positions at national level. • Worth looking at this in more detail, need spokesperson on the media to react to water situations. It is not about raising your profile in the public, but around the country, do PR with other outlets, such as the examiner. Need to deliver messaging around the policies., • Need to engage with secondary schools and primary schools on water quality in local areas. • The Chair was of the view that the Forum has an important role – in providing advise & important to make the most of it in terms of communicating to the wider public including Dublin & across Ireland to link in with local media at different locations. Value of Opinion Pieces- Power of collaboration and common ground. Need to think about this in planning work programme for next year. Agree with benefit of media training for the staff to help to sharpen press releases and to also develop a communication plan. 	<p>Coordinate messages with LAWPRO, EPA etc</p> <p>Funding for Communications plan Agree positions to communicate (Key messages) PR and Comms training for the staff.</p>
3.0	RBMP Dept meeting	<p>The Chair explained that the Forum met with the DHLGH & LAWPRO on the 29th June & that it had been a positive meeting. As a follow up it was agreed that the Forum would write a formal letter to WPAC, on foot of the meeting with the Dept. We can re-iterate key messages on the Forums submission on the dBMP, such as the catchment pilots, project management office, outcomes-based approach. The Chair will work with the secretariat on this & to circulate it to members.</p> <p>Members expressed concern about the commitment to public ppt in the plan & that it seems to be left to LAWPRO to workout. Members of the view that they should seek international models for public ppt, need to look at the outcomes, consultations ticking a box, we have an opportunity to say international thinking and proven models. There is a sense of a commitment from the DHLGH but maybe not our understanding of it.</p> <p>Actions necessary for public participation based on research and webinar discussions is detailed in our submission & this information is available to the Dept.</p>	<p>Letter to WPAC with agreed priorities to try to ensure that submission recommendations are in the final RBMP</p>
4.0	Role and Focus	<p>The Chair explained that the work on the Role & focus was to assist the Forum to have a clear focus for next 3 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the strategic goals work already completed • Rooted in the statutory role – advice and recommendations • Build on the strengths of the Forum and its members • The work provides the Forum with a clear focus for the next three years to advocate for through submissions and other forms of engagement. <p>The water Forum has advisory roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minister and Department ○ Irish Water ○ Water Policy Advisory Committee ○ CRU ○ Rural water 	

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		<p>The Chair explained that it was important to have agreement on the key areas the Forum should focus on when engaging with these bodies and providing them with advice and recommendations over the next three years as outlined in the ppt presentation).</p> <p>The Members agreed to adopt the proposed key areas of focus for advice for the next three years as outlined in the Report of the workshop held on the 26th April & previously circulated to members under the headings:</p> <p><u>Advice to the Minster</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Quality and Quantity • National and Rural Water Services • Water Conservation and Resilience • Policy Coherence and Implementation Across the Water System • Legislation <p><u>Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured Engagement Between AFU and WPAC • Roles and Responsibilities • Transparency <p><u>Irish Water</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban wastewater • Quality of drinking water • Security of supply • Water Conservation • IW Communications • Nutrient recovery <p><u>CRU</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Resources Assessments of IW • Engagement Assessments of IW; • Review of IW Investment Plan <p><u>Rural Water</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Rural Water Services • Review building regulations and planning for rural development • Sustainability of Rural Water sector • The social value of the community sector <p>The Chair also proposed 3 high level messages to guide the work of the Forum for inclusion in the Forum’s communications strategy/plan):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real and lasting improvements for water quality in all Irish water bodies • Consistently safe and high-quality drinking water for all Irish citizens from public and private supplies • Building much greater public awareness and appreciation about the value of water <p>Key points from discussion with Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of getting our Water Quality to a good ecological status, RBMP • Building much greater public engagement, awareness and appreciation about the value of water • Real and lasting improvements and restoration for a water status in all waterbodies. 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question if it's the Forums role to advocate for effective public ppt, or is it for the forum to build awareness? Believe awareness is not our role & that it's the role for lawpro. • Rising cost for N, concern for N pollution in rivers. • Only 41% UWWT in compliance, 50% of N from WWT. P is more contaminated. Why are we not getting bang for buck from media, no one is saying IW is non-compliant. • Important to focus on what we want to see in the RBMP. Need to advocate for good water governance, included in bullet 3. Public engagement in integrated catchment management. • Need to include water quantity as well as quality • Need for a consistent supply of safe drinking water <p>It was agreed to review the wording of the three messages as part of drafting the communications plan. The Chair thanked the members for their input & said that we can review the language</p>	
5.0	Research Update	The Research plan for 2023 to include two large projects & some bursaries. Need to consider research topics for this. Can consider doing some of the research topics in collaboration with another body.	Research Lead
6.0	Comms Update	The Comms budget plan for 2023 similar to 2022. Need to enhance communications engagement with media & to include PR profile, include engagement. Budget line for comms planning, PR and Training. Idea of PR corporate inclusion and training to be included.	Budget expertise for comms plan
7.0	AOB	IAS meeting, cancelled, no update on alternative date. Farewell presentation to Tom Collins, boat trip for members on the River Shannon and photographs of presentation and members.	
8.0	Next Plenary meeting	13 th September in Dublin to include engagement with WAB	Arrange meetings & notify members