

AGREED MINUTES

DATE: 17TH July 2018

TIME: 10.30 am

LOCATION: Ashling Hotel, Dublin

PRESENT

Dr. Tom Collins (Chairperson)

Mindy O'Brien, Michael Spellman, Barry Deane, Connie Rochford, Keith Hyland, Denis Drennan, Thomas Cooney, Ollan Herr, Charles Stanley Smith, Gerald Quain, Sinead O'Brien, Martin McEnroe, Tim Fenn, Jean Rosney, Dr. Tim Butter, Dr. Suzanne Linnane, Dr. Thomas Harrington and Laurie Kearon

APO LOGIES

Kevin Ryan, Neil Walker, Liam Berney, Bernadette Connolly, David Wright, Derry Dillon and Jonathan Small

GUEST ATTENDEES

Michael Pollard, LAWCO

IN ATTENDANCE

Carol McCarthy (LAWCO)

Sharon Kennedy (NWF)

Item		Details	Action
1.1	Welcome and Apologies	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked the members for their attendance. He noted the apologies received. He also extended a welcome to Laurie Kearon who has joined An Fóram, having previously been a member of the PWF. It was noted with regret that Francis O'Donnell has resigned due to personal commitments and that arrangements are all ready being put in place to arrange for his replacement.	Noted Agreed
1.2	Minutes of meeting held on the 10th April	The draft minutes of meetings held on the 10 th April were noted and agreed.	Noted
1.3	Matters arising		

1.4	Farmleigh Symposium	<p>It was further agreed that the minutes format might be expanded to give a more in-depth view of the range of discussions at meetings.</p> <p>A discussion took place with regard to the symposium which was held on the 11th June last. The contributions of the speakers were considered particularly where there was a direct relevance to the work of An Fóram. It was agreed that many of the approaches taken by the Citizens Assembly may have merit in the context of the work of An Fóram and could be incorporated into our work programme.</p> <p>Consideration was also given to holding a similar event next year and that arrangements can be put in place during the course of the year in the context of venue, invitees and topics for consideration. It was agreed that the facilitation of participation in discussions by attendees is particularly important and also that the attendance of stakeholders and the general public should also be considered.</p>	Agreed
1.5	Annual Report 2017	<p>It was noted that the draft Annual Report 2017 had previously been circulated and same was approved on the proposal of Michael Spellman, seconded by Gerald Quain and agreed to by all present.</p>	Noted
1.6	Report on Financial status	<p>The report will now be submitted to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government as is required by statute and will also be placed on our website.</p> <p>Sharon Kennedy outlined the current expenditure by An Fóram for 2018 and it was agreed to circulate a report to all with regard to same. Arrangements in relation to the payment of the Chairpersons Allowance were noted.</p>	Approved
2.	To receive update from the water services standing committee	<p>Barry Deane, Chair of the standing committee, referred to the first meeting of the committee which was held on the 12th July and referred to the summary and documentation relating to same which had been circulated to all.</p> <p>Attention of the members was drawn to the proposed work of the committee in relation to a number of issues including water conservation. A discussion took place with regard to the current drought and the implications throughout the country in the context of domestic, commercial and agricultural users as well as potential impacts on the water environment. Serious concern was expressed with regard to the need for behavioural change by consumers together with a more focussed water conservation programme lead by Irish Water. It was noted that Ms. Angela Ryan from Irish Water was attending the meeting in the afternoon and that there would be an opportunity to discuss a number of issues at that stage. It was agreed that An Fóram should issue a statement</p>	Agreed

		<p>with regard to the on-going situation as soon as is possible and that the statement should focus on thanking consumers for their co-operation whilst encouraging the commencement of real engagement with regard to all the issues pertinent to water supply, quality, conservation, distribution and public attitude.</p> <p>It was also agreed that An Fóram would support policy development in the context of the building regulations for new builds, requiring improved water conservation measures as part of standard building practices.</p> <p>It was further agreed that the position of the PWF in relation to the metering programme and water charges, as presented to the Joint Oireachtas Committee, should be upheld by An Fóram – that An Fóram supports the completion of the metering programme on public water supplies for the purposes of the efficient management of water supplies and further, that An Fóram still supports the introduction of water charges in relation to excessive usage as a method of ensuring behavioural change.</p> <p>It was noted that it may be necessary to hold an emergency meeting of An Fóram in August should the current situation deteriorate much further and same was agreed.</p> <p>In relation to Irish Waters presentation to the committee regarding consultation on their Investment Plan 2020-2024, it was agreed that a submission would be made to same along the lines of the issues highlighted by the members of the committee.</p>	
3	CRU consultation document with regard to Irish Waters non domestic tariff framework proposals.	<p>The current consultation process was noted and a number of concerns in relation to the impact of the changes in the tariffs were noted. It was agreed that a special meeting will be held on the 26th July to consider An Fóram’s position in relation to the proposals and to formulate a response to same which will be shared with all members of An Fóram prior to submission in mid August.</p>	Agreed
4	Update from work programme working group and arrangements with regard to developing a strategy	<p>A report on the work of the working group was read out by Sharon Kennedy at the meeting.</p> <p>Meetings of the group to date It was noted that the working group has met on five occasions with a further meeting scheduled for the 25th July.</p> <p>Work assigned to the working group The work assigned to this working group can be categorised as follows:</p>	Agreed and noted.

- A. Identify and prioritise issues for research and policy development.
- B. Consider how An Fóram can monitor and oversee the implementation of the River Basin Management, the Water Services programme and other issues pertinent to the Water Framework Directive.
- C. Review and prepare recommendations regarding An Fóram's role and work programme in the context of public engagement, consultation processes and public awareness. This review will have regard to experiences from the Rivers Trusts and Group Water Scheme Sector and will also provide for the development of a communications strategy.

Prioritisation process

In relation to its role in the context of prioritisation of issues for research and policy development, the group, in the first instance, considered the core principles governing the selection of issues and agreed upon the following five principles:

- 1. The work should have an impact on government policy and/or public behaviour.
- 2. It should enhance the role (profile) of the National Water Forum.
- 3. It should currently be an issue of public concern.
- 4. It should add value to the current activity (and not displace other projects).
- 5. Is there scientific evidence to support the concerns in this area?

Having agreed on same, the group then examined a range of issues which it considered to be of importance, having regard to An Fóram's role as per legislation and also the range of topics considered by An Fóram over the past 14 months. A list of those topics were as follows:

Afforestation/ forestation	Nutrient pollution
Aquaculture	Peatlands
Commercial users	Pesticides and insecticides
Curriculum	Phosphates recovery
Energy recovery from water	Physical alteration/flood management
Environmental remediation	Pressures on coastal/transitional zones
Flood management	Source protection
High status water bodies	Water abstractions
Industrial discharges	Water Conservation
Invasive Species	

		<p>Having regard to the range of issues in the context of the principles listed above, and notwithstanding the importance of all issues, it was noted that the group wishes to recommend to An Fóram that progress should be focussed, in the first instance, on the following 5 issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrient pollution • Source Protection • Invasive Species • High Status Water Bodies • Physical alterations to water bodies. <p>It was further agreed to recommend to An Fóram that the primary value of the work on each issue will be to develop a joint, acceptable position for all stakeholders on An Fóram, to address any conflicted positions that may have been held heretofore, and based on same, to recommend to the Minister a policy proposal.</p> <p>Methodology for researching the priority issues and developing policy proposals</p> <p>It was noted that there are a variety of ways in which a research project could be arranged including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct employment of a researcher; • Direct employment of a research graduate; • Co-sponsor with the Irish Research Council; • Tender on a project by project basis; • Set up framework; • Apply to EPA research programme; • Set up calls for proposals for research. <p>It is considered that at this point in time, setting up a framework and/or arranging for specific tenders might be the preferred routes but no decision was taken with regard to making a final recommendation on this.</p> <p>For any type of tendering purposes, it will be necessary to design a policy analysis document which will incorporate details on the specific subject matter and require the following work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To identify and collate all current available research findings, policies, legislative provisions, projects and programmes etc pertinent to the subject matter. b) To identify any current policies or programmes or legislation etc which might be considered to be working against the specific policy objectives as contained in the River Basin Management Plan. c) Based on A and B above, to develop policy considerations and recommendations with a view that our stakeholders can find a level of agreement to move the issue forward and develop an agreed policy recommendation. 	
--	--	--	--

		<p>It terms of managing each process, it was considered that the following steps might be taken by An Fóram:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A project steering group should be put in place to oversee each project. b) That group will assist in developing the policy analysis document (with such external assistance as may be considered necessary) and for overseeing the project. c) When the report and recommendations are developed, it may be necessary to provide independent, external, professional facilitation in order for An Fóram to reach an agreed position. d) Each project should also be accompanied by a communications strategy. e) Once An Fóram has completed its deliberations and agreed on a final recommendation, same will be presented to the Minister. <p style="text-align: center;">A. Consider how An Fóram can monitor and oversee the implementation of the River Basin Management, the Water Services programme and other issues pertinent to the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>The working group noted that the EPA is leading in relation to the monitoring of activities and progress in relation to the River Basin Management Plan. It was also noted that the National Co-Ordination and Monitoring Committee has been assigned a role in this regard and that LAWCO are also involved in relation to implementation issues. Having regard to the range of agencies involved and the extent of work being done in this area, it was agreed to recommend that the October meeting of An Fóram should be focussed singularly on receiving reports in respect of the arrangements, reporting mechanisms, agencies, monitoring arrangements and development of KPIs in respect of the RBMP. Following same, it will be possible for An Fóram to identify any gaps or anomalies with regard to same.</p> <p>The working group also noted that the newly formed Water Services Standing Committee of An Fóram will be best placed to focus on the Water Services Programme, including conservation issues.</p> <p>Finally, the Working Group will be addressing outstanding issues in relation to the Water Framework Directive and also its interaction with other related Directives including the Floods Directive and the Marine Directive.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">B. Review and prepare recommendations regarding An Fóram’s role and work programme in the context of public engagement, consultation processes and public awareness.</p> <p>The working group will now be turning its attention to these issues and intend to address same at its meetings on the 25th</p>	
--	--	---	--

		<p>July and 30th August next, with a report to issue at the September meeting of An Fóram.</p> <p>The members of An Fóram noted the progress report and agreed to give further consideration to the recommendations at the September meeting.</p>	
5	<p>To give further consideration to Irish Waters Eastern and Midland Water Supply Project</p>	<p>The Chair referred to this item which had been subject to consideration at the symposium in Farmleigh when it had been indicated that a process for the detailed consideration of this project would be developed. It was noted that Mr. Michael Donnelly from the Futures Forum had attended the symposium at Farmleigh on the invitation of the Chair and that the Chair has since discussed with him the possible options available to address this issue.</p> <p>The proposal forthcoming is the holding of at least one focussed meeting on the issue or indeed further follow up meetings, as required, with presentations invited from Irish Waters perspective, the opposing perspective and also independent and perhaps international perspectives. The presenters would be given a brief to work to which would ensure that they address the issues of particular concern to An Fóram. Following this process, it would then be possible for An Fóram to reach a level of consensus and recommendation.</p> <p>It was agreed to proceed along the line set out above and to revert in due course with further details. In the meantime, it was agreed to circulate a prior presentation received from Gerry Geoghegan of Irish Water in relation to the project.</p>	
6	<p>Presentation on website and forum</p>	<p>Michael Pollard, LAWCO presented on the recently developed forum linked to the website and how same can be accessed and operated by the members.</p> <p>This facility was welcomed by the members and it was agreed that this mechanism will be used for future communications by individual members and that general e-mails will only be circulated by the Secretariat.</p>	
7	<p>Presentation from Irish Water on the National Water Resources Plan</p>	<p>Ms. Angela Ryan, Mr. Pádraig Fogarty and Ms. Calista Brien from Irish Water joined the meeting and gave a presentation on the National Water Resources Plan.</p> <p>The presentation addressed a wide range of associated issues including water conservation issues, protecting existing sources and supplies, identifying new supplies, linking sources and distribution networks, building in for resilience in the context of drought and climate changes and future planning.</p>	

		<p>The members welcomed the presentation and raised a number of issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a model, similar to that developed for Poulaphuca for Lough Derg. It was noted that such a model is under development. • Concerns with the proposed abstraction from the Parteen Basin and implications in terms of environmental consequences in that area (and along the old River Shannon) and also in the Upper Shannon Region. It was noted that Irish Water consider that their abstraction proposals can be accommodated without any negative impact on the region. • Queries with regard to the definition of unaccounted for water and the percentage of water lost through leakages. It was noted that leakage accounts for in excess of 90% of water loss with the balance associated with undocumented and unauthorised connections. • Plans to commence new programmes for grey water and rainwater harvesting. • The sustainability of current abstractions and the impact of non-registered abstractions on same. Also the implications of the new register of abstractions. • Catchment management issues and the linkage with source supply. • Conjunctive use combining surface water abstraction and groundwater abstraction to allow for flexibility during low flow periods. • Conservation programmes and public engagement with regard to same. • The usefulness of the metering programme to date and its impact on the management of water supplies. • The development of further storage options and the potential to provide community/recreational facilities on site. • Phosphorus recovery and the reuse of effluent. <p>At the end of the presentation, it was noted that An Fóram will be making a submission with regard to Irish Waters Investment Plan 2020 – 2024 as discussed earlier in the day and that a number of additional items regarding conservation and resilience building would be made as part of that submission.</p>	
8	AOB	<p>No further issues were raised. This concluded the business of the meeting – next meeting scheduled for the 4th September in Portlaoise.</p>	

Signed:

Dr. Tom Collins

Chairperson