

Minutes of Meeting

Shannon Flood Risk State Agency Co-ordination Working Group

Meeting on 18th May 2018

11.00 AM at Bedford Hall, Dublin Castle.

Introduction

Maurice Buckley welcomed the Minister and attendees and outlined the agenda that was agreed.

Opening Comments from Minister Moran

Minister Moran thanked the OPW staff on the work to launch of the Flood Risk Management Plans, which took place on 3rd May in Athlone. The Plans are the output from the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme.

He paid tribute to the members of the Shannon Group for their input to the Plans and highlighted that delivery of the measures in the Plans will require a continued effort across the system.

Minutes of Meeting of 23 October 2017

The draft minutes of 23rd October 2017 were approved.

Correspondence and Matters arising

Nicola Haran reported on:

- a request of 15 May under Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) relating to the targeted maintenance works on the Shannon.

Review of Winter 2017/2018

John Murphy reported that last Winter had been wetter than normal but no significant floods reported, including during the two main weather events last Winter, Storm Ophelia and Storm Emma.

Minister Moran acknowledged the excellent work and communication between the agencies and the public during the severe weather events during last Winter.

Shannon CFRAM/Launch of FRMP/Shannon Outputs

Two presentations were given by the OPW on the national launch of the Flood Risk Management Plans, the measures in the Plans for the Shannon and the launch of a new website www.floodinfo.ie, that contains all of the maps, Plans and other related details.

The Chairman advised that the OPW is establishing steering groups for the flood relief schemes announced by the Minister and will engage with members of this Group. At his suggestion, given the role of this Group is to be informed by the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme, it was agreed that the Group would review its terms of reference at the next meeting. Minister Moran emphasised the important role for this Group. The Minister also emphasised the requirement to address flood risk for those areas not studied by the CFRAM Programme.

Update from Irish Water

IW gave a presentation updating the Group on the Water Supply Project- Eastern and Midlands Region. A Planning Application is being prepared for submission to An Bord Pleanála during 2019 and IW would provide a further update to the Group. The Group thanked IW and highlighted that as a Group it could not comment on the project.

Sub-committee on the Work Programme and Measures

A draft Work Programme for 2018 had been prepared and was approved, in principle, subject to any final observations in the coming two weeks to the secretariat.

The OPW provided an update on:

- the protocol for lowering lake levels in Lough Allen. It was agreed that the protocol be reviewed and the Minister asked if the timeframe to start release of water could be brought forward. It was agreed to continue for the third year of the trial, subject to the review,
- the targeted maintenance work. To date, work on two of the seven areas is complete, some licences are to be renewed over the summer and works on a further three areas are being scheduled for this autumn, subject to the weather and prevailing conditions,
- the proposal to remove the Callows pinch points. Data has now been provided to the OPW to model the predicted flows and to estimate if the proposal is cost beneficial taking account of potential agricultural and environmental benefits. The disposal of material is a significant aspect to the proposal and the OPW and WI expect to be able to report to the Group in October on pre-feasibility of the proposal.
- drafting a tender for a hydromorphological study on the past experiences of the lower Shannon (or old channel) and the possible impact if no works are completed. It is expected that the proposal for this study can be discussed at the October meeting, and
- the EPA initiative for desk-top research that looked at European best practice in relation to environmental consents and routine maintenance. A report has now been prepared by the consultant and provides an overview of European Best Practice for the environmental assessment, licensing and permitting requirements of waterway maintenance dredging works for both inland and tidal waters. The Minister thanked the EPA for delivering on the initiative so quickly.

Sub-committee on Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

The value of sharing information between members of the Group was highlighted and the new OPW website, www.flooding.ie was highlighted as a valuable resource for members to inform their work including attendance at meetings, conferences etc.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Group will be held on Friday 12th October at a venue to be decided. Chairman thanked Nicola Haran for her work as secretary to the Group and wished her well in her new role within Corporate Services of the OPW.

Members of the Shannon Flood Risk State Agency Co-ordination Group (or their representatives) in attendance

Department/Agency	Representative
Office of Public Works	Maurice Buckley, Chairman
Waterways Ireland	Éanna Rowe
Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	Philip Buckley.
Inland Fisheries Ireland	Dr. Ciarán Byrne
Environmental Protection Agency	Karen Creed
Bord na Móna	Michael Barry
ESB	Tom Browne
City and County Managers Association	Lar Power
Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	Colin Ryan
Irish Water	Gerry Galvin

Other People in Attendance

Minister of State	Kevin Moran TD
Office of Public Works	John Curtin, Nicola Haran, Ciaran Conroy, John Murphy, Brian Brogan, Joan Murphy, Stephen Finn.
Irish Water	Pat Murphy

Apologies:

Jerry Grant - Irish Water
Dawn Livingstone - Waterways Ireland.
Niall Ó Donnchú - NPWS
Pat O Doherty - ESB
Joe McGrath - CCMA