1. **Welcome and agenda**

The Chair welcomed the group and thanked all for joining the teleconference. As this was an *ad hoc* meeting of the NPHET convened via teleconference, the group agreed the following agenda item:

“In light of data unfolding in other European countries, the need to bring forward consideration, on a recommendation on whether the St Patrick’s Day Festival Events should proceed”; noting that this is covered by the agenda for the scheduled meeting on Tuesday, 10th March 2020.

2. **St Patrick’s Day Festival Events**

   **Current Situation**

In light of the rapidly evolving global situation and that the St Patrick’s Day is now nine days away, it was considered timely that the NPHET assess the current situation and consider the advice it should give to Government in relation to the Festival.

An update was provided by the DOH on the evolving epidemiological situation in Europe and Ireland.
Consideration was also given to the cases of local transmission that have now arisen in Ireland and the appropriateness of reducing contact between individuals.

It was generally noted that recommendations on mass gatherings are applied as a part of a suite of measures to decrease transmission.

**Discussion**
A robust discussion took place concerning issues such as the nature of the events that form the St. Patrick’s Day celebrations, the duration of the festival events, the large volumes of people travelling from numerous national and international locations, and the location within Ireland of events. It was also noted that such events can be international, national or local in scope.

The group agreed that the NPHET make the following recommendation:

*Given the unique nature and scale of the St Patrick’s Day festival events in terms of size, the mass gathering of local and international travellers and the continued progression of community transmission in some European countries along with the emergence of a number of cases (albeit small) of local transmission in Ireland, the NPHET recommended that the St Patrick’s Day festival events do not proceed.*

Agreement on this recommendation was informed by considerations on:
- Unique nature and scale of this St. Patrick’s Day festival events;
- Transmission seen to date in Ireland; and
- Transmission as seen in other European countries.

This public health recommendation from NPHET will now be communicated to the Department of the Taoiseach to inform decision-making by Government on the matter. The need for timely and clear communication of this recommendation was acknowledged on by all.

**3. AOB**
The Chair reminded attendees that all NPHET discussion and material is deliberative until such time as Government makes a determination in relation to the appropriate course of action, and this is publicly communicated.

**4. Date of next meeting**
Tuesday, 10th March 2020 at 2:00pm.