

## **Minutes of Meeting**

### **Shannon Flood Risk State Agency Co-ordination Working Group**

Venue: OPW, Shannon Room, 1GQ, Georges Quay, Dublin 2

31 October 2024 at 11:00 am

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#### **1. Introduction**

The Chair welcomed all members to his first Working Group meeting since being appointed to the OPW.

#### **2. Minutes**

The minutes of meeting held on 10 April, 2024 were agreed.

#### **3. Correspondence**

The OPW updated the Group on correspondence received since the last meeting. A number of Parliamentary Questions relating to: the progress of the River Shannon Management Body Bill, number of meetings held and decisions made by the Group. Responses were coordinated with input from the relevant agencies.

#### **4. Sub-committee on Communications and Stakeholder Engagement**

##### 4.1 'The Mighty Shannon' T.V. Series

ESRAS Productions gave a presentation on the TV series "The Mighty Shannon" which is being produced by BUILDING IRELAND. The series will discuss a range of architectural, geographical and engineering heritage issues related to the Shannon Region. The group had a discussion around the contents and noted that they are happy to assist in development and support production of the series. The series is expected to air on RTE in late 2025 or early 2026.

##### 4.2 Group Website

Work is underway to develop real-time information on the operation of sluice gates for publication on <https://rivershannongroup.ie/> in early 2025.

#### 4.3 Stakeholder Engagement

OPW provided an update, Minister O'Donnell met the IFA in July 2024 to discuss their concerns relating to flood risk management on the River Shannon and the OPW also attended a meeting of the IFA flooding group.

Waterways Ireland have attended a number of meetings with the Save our Shannon Organisation this year and will continue to engage with relevant stakeholders as required.

### **5. Sub-committee on Work Programme and Measures**

#### 5.1 Work Programme 2024

All works set out in the 2024 Work Programme are underway and progressing well. A request will issue to all agencies to consider planned activities that may contribute to managing flood risk along the Shannon for the 2025 Work Programme, which will be circulated to the Group for approval to publish at next working group meeting.

#### 5.2 Lough Allen Protocol

The ESB informed the group that a licence under Section 21 of the Wildlife Acts was issued by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and received on 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2024. The ESB advised the lower level was reached at the end of September 24 and is providing some flood mitigation. It was noted that co-operation through Sub Committee on Work Programme and Measures contributed to the timely issuing of the licence.

#### 5.3 Study of Lower Channel

The OPW gave a presentation on the progress of the project. It is a study to identify feasible sedimentation and vegetation management options on the River Mulkear and Lower Shannon was completed in August 2023. Work is continuing on the development of possible measures to manage vegetation which has built up downstream of the University of Limerick and the Mulkear River. OPW advised that this work is expected to be completed by early 2025.

#### 5.4 Programme of Strategic Maintenance

Waterways Ireland gave a presentation to the group on the strategic maintenance programme. The Strategic Maintenance Steering Group on behalf of the Group has agreed on 23 sites for the Strategic Maintenance Programme on the River Shannon.

Five of these sites had an appropriate screening assessment undertaken previously with work now complete on 3 of the 5 sites, work is continuing subject to suitable conditions at the two remaining sites, Lack and New Cut.

Waterways Ireland on behalf of the group have appointed an Environmental Consultant to progress assessments on the remaining identified sites. National Parks and Wildlife Services acknowledged large body of work being done by Waterways Ireland.

#### 5.5 Project for Callows Region

The OPW appointed an Ecological Consultant to carry out a high-level environmental study, which commenced in June 24. The study will consider the potential positive and negative ecological impacts of the proposed works on the River Shannon between Athlone and Meelick. It is anticipated that the study will be complete by the end of 2024.

### **6. Update on Flood Risk Management Plans for the Shannon Region**

The OPW gave an update on flood relief schemes for the Shannon River Basin District (RBD). There are 13 completed schemes in the Shannon RBD which provide protection to over 2,600 properties.

There are 26 flood relief schemes currently being progressed in the Shannon region, which may be summarised as follows:

- Two schemes, at **Athlone** and **Springfield**, are currently at construction stage and are approaching substantial completion. On completion, these schemes will protect 575 properties.
- The OPW and Limerick City and County Council recently announced the signing of the main contract for the **King's Island** Flood Relief Scheme. Mobilising towards construction in November and is programmed for completion in 24 months. Some 500 properties will be protected.
- A further 12 schemes have engineering consultants appointed are moving towards planning consent and construction stages. OPW has given approval for Clare C.C. to submit planning application for **Kilkee** and it has been submitted to An Bord Pleanála when completed, the scheme will protect some 130 properties.
- 11 other schemes, 10 of which are small schemes, are being progressed directly by the relevant Local Authorities with funding and support from the OPW.

### **Future schemes**

Under the national programme, work has yet to commence on a further 12 flood relief (Tranche II) schemes in the Shannon region. The OPW announced that it would pilot a new delivery model through four Tranche II flood relief schemes in Donegal and Kilkenny. The Pilot will inform the delivery model to be applied for the future tranche of schemes nationally and, in doing so, will be relevant to all schemes, including those in the Shannon region

Clare County Council thanked the OPW for their assistance in getting the flood Relief Scheme in Kilkee submitted to An Bord Pleanála.

### **8. AOB**

The OPW advised that the Shannon Management Agency Bill is a priority for drafting in autumn 2024 and work is ongoing.

### **9. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the group will take place in April 2025

### Attendees

Department/Agency	Main Representative
Office of Public Works	<b>Kieran O'Donnell T.D.</b> , Minister of State <b>John Conlon</b> , Chairman & Chair, <b>Robert Mooney</b> , Assistant Secretary. <b>Stephen Manning</b> , Secretary to the Group & Chair Sub-committee on Communications and Stakeholder Engagement. <b>Miriam Mulligan</b> , Chair Sub-committee Work Programme Measures.
Inland Fisheries Ireland	<b>Barry Fox</b> , Head of Operations.
Waterways Ireland	<b>Brian Treacy</b> , Western Regional Manager.
ESB	<b>Paddy Hayes</b> , CEO. <b>Martin Stronge</b> , Hydro Manager.
Uisce Éireann	<b>Michael Goss</b> .
Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine	<b>Bill Callanan</b> , Assistant Secretary
County and City Management Association	<b>Alan Farrell</b> , Clare County Council <b>Joeseeph Gilhooley</b> , Leitrim County Council
Bord Na Mona	<b>Ger Breen</b> , Head of Land & Habitats.
Environmental Protection Agency	<b>Matthew Craig</b> .
National Parks & Wildlife Service	<b>Niall Ó Donnchú</b> , Assistant Secretary
Estras Productions	<b>Peter Kelly</b> , Estras Productions.

### Others in attendance

Office of Public Works	<b>Ann Devlin, Amanda Cummins, Eavan O'Brien, Lorna Dempsey, Jim Casey, Gavin Poole</b>
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### Apologies

Local Government, Clare County Council	<b>Pat Dowling</b> , CEO
Environmental Protection Agency	<b>Laura Burke</b> , CEO
Inland Fisheries Ireland	<b>Francis O'Donnell</b> , CEO
Bord Na Mona	<b>Tom Donnellan</b> , CEO
Uisce Éireann	<b>Niall Gleeson</b> , CEO

