

Minutes of Meeting

Shannon Flood Risk State Agency Co-ordination Working Group

**Venue: National Emergency Co-ordination Centre, Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine, Kildare Street, Dublin 2**

22 April 2026 at 2:30 pm

1. Introduction

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

2. Minutes

The minutes of meeting held on 15 October, 2025 were agreed.

3. Correspondence

The Secretariat provided an overview of correspondence received since the previous meeting of the Group. Topics covered included the management of water levels; River Shannon Management Agency Bill; the removal of pinch points in the Shannon Callows and the publication of minutes of the Shannon Flood Risk State Agency Co-ordination Working Group.

Responses were co-ordinated by OPW with input from relevant members of the Group, as appropriate.

4. Presentation on National Barriers Programme

Inland Fisheries Ireland gave a presentation on the National Barriers Programme which is an initiative to improve river connectivity by strategically targeting significant barriers to fish passage and structures that are degrading river form, flow and function.

The programme supports Ireland's commitments under the Water Framework Directive, the Nature Restoration Law, and the EU goal of restoring 25,000 km of free-flowing rivers by 2030.

5. Water Level Management

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, 14 October 2025, the protocol was in operation until March 2026;

Over the course of Winter 2025/2026, the ESB advised that the levels did not reach the protocol level due to the amount of rain.

ESB/Waterways Protocol for Management of Sluices

The ESB and Waterways agreed to the publication of a protocol, which sets out ESB and Waterways Ireland operating procedures for the management of sluices.

The preparation of the protocol for publication should be complete by Q3 of 2026 and an update will be provided at the next meeting of the Group.

6. Shannon Callows Sub Group

A Shannon Callows Options Working Group was established at the last meeting of the Group on 15 October 2025. The group includes representatives from Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, National Parks & Wildlife Service, the Office of Public Works and the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO).

The group has held three meetings since being established and is scheduled to hold a stakeholders meeting with the IFA in Shannonbridge on 30 April 2026.

7. Sub Group Work Programme and Strategic Maintenance

Work Programme 2026

The Work Programme for 2026 was agreed by the group and will be published on the Shannon Group Website.

Programme of Strategic Maintenance and review of MOU

Waterways Ireland updated the group on the Strategic Maintenance Programme. As part of the strategic maintenance works there are 21 sites identified for works to be completed (14 vegetation maintenance sites and 7 silt removal sites).

Work is continuing on the 7 siltation sites with the appointed ecological & environmental consultant. It is anticipated that these sites will be submitted for planning permission in Q4 of 2026 with works to start in the summer of 2027 when instream works are permitted.

It was agreed that a working group would be established to review the current Strategic Maintenance workload with the potential to expand beyond the current list of sites. The review would also look at the MOU in place and the potential resources required to deliver further strategic maintenance beyond the existing agreement.

Lower Shannon Options Report

A consultant was appointed by the OPW to identify feasible sedimentation management options on Lower Shannon. The report has been finalised and it was agreed to publish the report, subject to approval by the Sub Group for the Work Programme and Strategic Maintenance.

8. Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

TV Series 'The Mighty Shannon'

BUILDING IRELAND is producing a television series, titled 'The Mighty Shannon' with financial and logistical support from the OPW, the ESB and Waterways Ireland, with matching funding from RTÉ. Filming of the main content for the six episodes is now completed, initial edits are now available and consultation with all members will begin soon through the sub group on communication and stakeholder engagement. The production is on schedule to complete production for Q3 2026.

River Shannon Group Website

The group's website: <https://rivershannongroup.ie/> was officially launched on 15 October 2025. The website is designed to share information with communities and the general public about the work of the Group. Real-time information on the operation of water level controls by the ESB and Waterways Ireland through sluice structures on the river and the three lakes (Loughs Allen, Ree and Derg) is now available on the website.

The website provides a range of information on the work of the Group including the strategic maintenance activities planned and undertaken on behalf of the Group and the flood relief schemes being undertaken by the OPW in partnership with local authorities for the River Shannon catchment.

9. Save our Shannon Organisation Presentation

The Group invited Save Our Shannon Organisation, a voluntary community organisation that represents the interests of farming families impacted by summer and winter flooding in the Shannon Callows, to give a presentation.

Save Our Shannon Organisation gave an overview (including video footage) of the flood affected areas in the Shannon Callows, the changes that have occurred to stretches of the river within the Callows over an extended period of time and the impact of summer and winter flooding on the farming community.

A discussion was had around the issues raised.

10. A.O.B

10.1 Update on Flood Scheme Delivery for the Shannon Region

Current Position on Implementation in the Shannon Region

- There are 14 completed schemes in the Shannon RBD which provide protection to 2,680 properties.
- There are 25 flood relief schemes currently being progressed in the Shannon region with two of these currently under construction.

Schemes at Construction

- **Athlone**, which is currently at construction is expected to reach substantial completion in late 2026/early 2027, the scheme will protect some 550 properties. All pumping stations are now operational.
- **King's Island Flood Relief Scheme**. The scheme has a work programme of 2 years and has a preliminary substantial completion date of early 2027. Upon completion, the scheme will protect some 500 properties.

10.2 Uisce Eireann – Water Supply Project

Uisce Eireann updated the group on progress of Water Supply Project, Eastern and Midlands Region. The Water Supply Project has approval in principle under the Government's Infrastructure Guidelines. In December 2025, Uisce Eireann submitted a planning application to An Coimisiún Pleanála for the Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region complete with an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

12. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the group will be in October 2026, date to be decided.

Attendees

Department/Agency	Main Representative
Office of Public Works	Kevin Moran T.D. , Minister of State. Robert Mooney , Assistant Secretary. Lorna Dempsey , Chair Sub-committee on the Callows Stephen Manning , Secretary to the Group & Chair Sub-committee on Communications and Stakeholder Engagement. Miriam Mulligan , Chair Sub-committee Work Programme Measures.
ESB	Paddy Hayes , CEO.
Uisce Éireann	Mairead Conlon
County and City Management Association	Carmel Kirby , Clare County Council David Minton , Leitrim County Council
Bord Na Mona	Enda Mc Donagh , Environmental Manager
Environmental Protection Agency	Matthew Craig
Waterways Ireland	Brian Treacy

Others in attendance

Office of Public Works	Eavan O Brien , Amanda Cummins , Martina Mc Kiernan .
ESB	Henry Bouchier , Hydro Manager.
Inland Fisheries Ireland	Hazel King , Head of Barrier Mitigation.

Apologies

OPW	John Conlon , Chairman and Chair
CCMA	Gordon Daly , CEO and Joseph Gilhooly , CEO – Represented by Carmel Kirby and David Minton
Environmental Protection Agency	Eimear Cotter , DG – Represented by Matthew Craig
Waterways Ireland	John Mc Donagh , CEO – Represented by Brian Treacy
Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine	Bill Callanan , Assistant Secretary
National Parks & Wildlife Service	Niall Ó Donnchú , Assistant Secretary
Bord Na Mona	Tom Donnellan , CEO – Represented by Enda Mc Donagh
Uisce Éireann	Niall Gleeson , CEO – Represented by Mairead Conlon