

North South Ministerial Council  
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta  
Thuaidh Theas  
An Chomhrúnaíocht

## **NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

### **INLAND WATERWAYS MEETING**

#### **NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH**

**12 DECEMBER 2012**

### **JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

1. The seventeenth North South Ministerial Council Inland Waterways meeting was held at the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices in Armagh on 12 December 2012. The meeting was attended by Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dinny McGinley TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for Gaeltacht Affairs, Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA. Minister Deenihan chaired the meeting.

#### **OPENING REMARKS**

##### **St Andrews Agreement Review – Waterways Ireland Recommendations**

2. Ministers endorsed the recommendation that sponsor departments should consider options around the setting up of a Board for Waterways Ireland and to present proposals for consideration at a future NSMC Inland Waterways meeting. The aim is to present the paper at the next NSMC meeting in summer 2013.

## **PROGRESS REPORT**

3. The Council received a progress report from Mr John Martin, Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland on the work of Waterways Ireland including the following significant achievements:
  - (i) the ongoing sponsorship programme to promote the awareness of the waterways across all navigations with 94 events sponsored to date with an estimated attendance of almost 1.1m people and an estimated value to the economy of over €85 million ;
  - (ii) maintenance of the waterways with 99% of waterways remaining open from April to October;
  - (iii) at the 31 October 2012 a total of 591 metres of additional moorings have been provided - 50m at Spencer Dock on the Royal Canal, Dublin and 541 m at Lough Key Forest Park, on the Shannon Navigation;
  - (iv) 4 new publications, "A Taste of the Waterways", "Guide to the Barrow", "Good Boating Guide" & "What's On 2012";
  - (v) the continued involvement and engagement with the INTERREG IVC Waterways Forward Project; and
  - (vi) the Waterways Ireland Education Programme which includes the development of education packs for schools was launched in November by Minister Deenihan and Minister Quinn at the Waterways Ireland Visitor Centre in Dublin and before today's meeting by Minister Ní Chuilín and Minister Deenihan at the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices in Armagh.

## **PRESENTATION ON INVASIVE SPECIES**

4. There was a presentation on the negative effects of Invasive Species on the waterways by Dr Paula Treacy, Senior Environment Officer, Waterways Ireland. The presentation highlighted the types of invasive species which can be aquatic plants, riparian plants fish and invertebrates. The effect of each type of species on the waterway network was covered. Measures in tackling problems associated with invasive species were also discussed.

## **BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2012**

5. The Council noted progress on the development of Waterways Ireland 2012 Business Plan and Budget.

## **BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2013**

6. Ministers discussed the main priorities for Waterways Ireland in 2013 and noted progress on the 2013 Business Plan and Budget. The priorities for 2013 include:
  - ensure the navigations are open and all existing facilities operational during the main boating season from April to October.
  - To actively promote the waterways to extend and expand recreational use of the waterways in all its forms.

## **UPDATE ON THE RESTORATION OF THE UPPER LOUGH ERNE TO CLONES SECTION OF THE ULSTER CANAL**

7. The Council received a progress report on the restoration work for the Clones to Upper Lough Erne section of the Ulster Canal. Ministers noted the inaugural meeting of the Inter Agency Group on the Ulster Canal was held on the 20th September. The group will examine funding options for the project and the project is continuing to proceed through the planning process in both jurisdictions. Waterways Ireland has responded to all requests for clarification and to all objections to date and a decision is awaited from Monaghan County Council and the Department of the Environment Planning Service.

## **PROPERTY DISPOSALS**

8. The Council consented to two property disposals at the River Shannon at Harvey's Quay to Limerick City Council to facilitate the provision of a Boardwalk along the river's edge adjacent to the quay wall and along the Grand Canal towpath at Edenderry, Co Offaly to facilitate the development of a circular walkway by Offaly County Council.

## **CEO RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

9. Ministers thanked John Martin CEO of Waterways Ireland who is due to retire in March next year for his contribution to the Body and noted the process for appointing a new CEO.

## **NEXT MEETING**

10. The Council agreed to meet again in Inland Waterways sectoral format in summer 2013.

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12 December 2012**

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