

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, AND BY VIDEOCONFERENCE

3 NOVEMBER 2021

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty-eighth North South Ministerial Council Inland Waterways meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh, and by videoconference on 3 November 2021. The meeting was attended by Darragh O'Brien, TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Malcolm Noonan, TD, Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Nichola Mallon, MLA, Minister for Infrastructure and Robin Swann, MLA, Minister of Health. Minister O'Brien chaired the meeting.

PROGRESS REPORT

2. The Council noted the progress achieved by Waterways Ireland since the last meeting of the Council in the Inland Waterways sector including:
 - (i) major projects in NI such as the redevelopment of Bellanaleck Quay and Slipway; the refurbishment of Carnroe Weir and Carnroe Lock (works commence Q1/2 2022); the Lower Bann lock gate replacement programme; tender preparation work for dredging at Portna on the Lower Bann; and refurbishment works at Enniskillen HQ and an accelerated Asset Inspection Programme;
 - (ii) major projects in Ireland such as Barrow Blueway construction; Grand Canal Greenway construction; Shannon Tourism Master Plan projects at Rooskey

(new floating moorings), Red Bridge (new floating moorings), and Athlone (new floating moorings and slipway); work with our European partners on the GreenWIN project; embankment repairs and strengthening on the Royal and Grand Canals; lock gate replacement programme across Royal and Grand Canals; fixed jetty refurbishment projects across the Body's navigations; the completion of the Ballyconnell-Bellaheady Blueway Trail on the Shannon Erne; and continuing restoration works on Fort Eliza at Banagher, Co Offaly;

- (iii) the official re-opening by Minister O'Brien and Minister of State Noonan of the Meelick Weir and Walkway on 24 September;
- (iv) ratification of the Body's first ever Climate Action Plan, which stretches over 10 years and is ambitious in its scale and set of objectives;
- (v) the launch of the WI Digital Archive by Minister of State Noonan in June 2021; and
- (vi) approval of the business case for the Lough Erne Pilgrimage Trail by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

NEW DECADE NEW APPROACH COMMITMENTS

3. Ministers noted the progress achieved in the restoration of the Ulster Canal, including the ongoing work on Phase 2 of the restoration from Clones to Clonfad, the plans for Phase 3 of the restoration from Castle Saunderson to Clonfad, and the plans for the development of the Ulster Canal Greenway.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE MATTERS

4. The Council noted the Waterways Ireland Annual Report and Accounts 2019, which have been signed off by both Comptrollers and Auditors General and have been laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Assembly, and also noted that the Waterways Ireland Annual Report and Accounts 2020 have been submitted to both Comptrollers and Auditors General. The Council noted that the Waterways Ireland Business Plan 2022 is currently being prepared.

LOUGH ERNE (NAVIGATION) ORDER 2021

5. The Council approved the making of the Lough Erne (Navigation) Order 2021 in accordance with paragraph 4(5) of Schedule 4 to the North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 and noted the planned implementation of the said Order in advance of the 2022 season.

PROPERTY DISPOSALS

6. The Council consented to a number of property disposals.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7. The NSMC agreed to hold its next Inland Waterways meeting in early 2022.

Joint Secretariat
3 November 2021

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