**Minutes of meeting of Rural Water Committee held in the Old Reference Room, Farnham Street, Cavan on Tuesday 5th November 2019 @ 2.45pm**

**Present:** Cllr. John Paul Feeley, Cavan County Council

Cllr. Winston Bennett, Cavan County Council

 Cllr. Sean Smith, Cavan County Council

 Mairead Sheridan, Erne Valley GWS

 Seamus O’Reilly, Erne Valley GWS, IFA

 Paddy Connaughton, Cavan County Council

 John Denning, Cavan County Council

 Diane McEnerney, Cavan County Council

**Apologies:** Ms. Ellen Tully, ICA

 Mr. Jim Maguire, Mountainlodge GWS

 Ms. Jean Gibson, NFGWS

Meeting was chaired by Cllr. John Paul Feeley, Cavan County Council.

Minutes of previous meeting held on 10/5/2018 were discussed and adopted – proposed by Cllr. Sean Smith and seconded by Cllr. Winston Bennett.

***Progress Report on Programme of Works 2018 and Draft Programme 2019***

The Rural Water Liaison Officer went through the report and set out the spend for 2018 and allocations for the 2019-2021 period.

The RWLO highlighted the notable change to the 2019-2021 MARWP in that an expert panel had deliberated over all submissions, sought additional information where necessary and made recommendations to the Department and the Minister in relation to allocations for the 2019-2021 programme. It was also highlighted that given the lengthy deliberations and subsequent announcement that 2019 allocations would roll over into 2020.

Mairead Sheridan queried whether given the late notification of allocations relating to 2019 period would they be accessible in 2020. The RWLO confirmed they would.

The committee no longer has a role in relation to approving the programme as the decision making is now in the hands of the expert panel.

The A/Senior Engineer elaborated on the role of the expert panel and how they were selected from a diverse cross section of stakeholders, the large volume of submissions to be reviewed nationally and how their subsequent recommendations are scheme and project specific, removing any discretion from the council in relation to the allocation of this funding.

It was also noted and highlighted that given the new regime it would be very important for future submissions, that schemes put strong submissions/arguments together and if appropriate work in conjunction with their client reps to ensure the maximum impact of their submissions.

Seamus O’Reilly highlighted the fact that some GWS systems were ageing and that investment in upgrades would be required.

The continued steady uptake for the well grant for those not in a position to avail of alternative supplies was discussed.

The importance of source protection and the potential impact to farmers was highlighted by Seamus O’Reilly.

It was confirmed that letters in relation to allocations would be issued as a matter of priority to schemes. A courtesy letter would be issued to unsuccessful schemes in due course.

***Any other Business***

Cllr Winston Bennett thanked Tommy Costello for all his work as RWLO down through the years & welcomed Diane McEnerney as his replacement. This was seconded and endorsed by Cllr John Paul Feely, Cllr Sean Smith, Mairead Sheridan and Seamus O’Reilly.

It was proposed to have a meeting at the end of the first quarter 2020. Exact date and time of next meeting to be decided in the new year.