

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC WI 1 (16) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

INLAND WATERWAYS MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH

24 JUNE 2016

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty fourth North South Ministerial Council Inland Waterways meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh on 24 June 2015. The meeting was attended by Chris Hazzard MLA, Minister for Infrastructure, Paul Givan MLA , Minister for Communities and Sean Kyne TD, Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs and Natural Resources. Minister Hazzard chaired the meeting.
2. The Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland, Dawn Livingstone, provided a high level overview of the operation of the body and a forward looking approach, focusing on high level issues.

PROGRESS REPORT

3. The Council received an overview from the Chief Executive on the progress on the activities of Waterways Ireland to 31 May 2016 which included the following:-
 - management and maintenance of the waterways continued with over 90% of the waterways remaining open for navigation in the period from April to May;

- continued development of recreational amenities on the waterways;
- continued development and marketing of Blueways with the launch in May 2016 of the Shannon-Erne Blueway which runs from Leitrim Village to Belturbet comprising 70 km of water trail and over 17 km of walking and cycling routes;
- Work has commenced with relevant stakeholders to facilitate the development of a greenway along the route of the Ulster Canal from Castle Saunderson, Co Cavan to Charlemont, Co Armagh;
- support to 121 events offered under the 2016 Sponsorship programme;
- award of funding to 19 community groups under the Waterways Ireland 'Heritage in the Community' grants programme; and
- 3 new businesses have been developed: Erne Boat Hire and a new Water Taxi on the Erne, and a new hire cruise provider on the Shannon.

EU FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

4. The NSMC noted the update on Waterways Ireland's work to maximise the benefit of EU funding opportunities, including examining with relevant partners the potential under the following programmes:-
 - INTERREG VA;
 - Rural Development LEADER Co-operation Measure;
 - INTERREG Transnational Atlantic Area; and
 - ERASMUS +.

ANNUAL REPORT AND DRAFT ACCOUNTS 2015

5. Ministers noted that the Waterways Ireland Annual Report and Draft Accounts 2015 have been submitted to the Comptrollers and Auditors General and following certification the Annual Report and Accounts will be laid before the Assembly and both Houses of the Oireachtas.

PROPERTY DISPOSALS

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

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7. The Council agreed to meet again in Inland Waterways sectoral format in autumn 2016.

Joint Secretariat
24 June 2016

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