

## **River Meeting 31 October 2025 Notes**

Present: Pat Tuite, Malgo Rzata, Bilge Karaman, Louise Jordan, Colette Finn , James Little , Eithne Lynch , Maria Young, Julie Forrester,

Pat Tuite presented partly on The Ballynora Community Voluntary Plan for the Curraheen River but also on river monitoring in general. Pat invites CRAG to consider the document included with these notes and consider how, if we chose to engage in serious monitoring and data collection, we might go about it.

Pat's thought is that, "We are on our own, any help is a bonus" . In other words let us try to become self dependant when it comes to monitoring our rivers, not at the cost of professionalism, in fact we will need professional help in terms of training, usage of equipment, overseeing but that for the most part we equip ourselves with the where withal to monitor our local rivers and build up a bank of valuable data.

Please see Pat's notes and suggested plan included in attachments

We have limited resources to access expertise if we have funds  
A Co-ordinator would be helpful only if we have the manpower

### FUNDING Deadlines

Climate Action Fund

Lawpro 17 November - grants up to 5000 training ,

19-20 January - equipment rivers communities

Training for Group

WHEELS organisation training

Cork City partnership

And

Scientific - River training for collecting credible data

EPA and LAWpro can help with expertise and reporting

PLANNING - "Why are we doing it?"

- Objectives
- Methods
- Responsibilities
- Monitoring

We must prepare our ship to weather storms and difficulties and not to get blown off course.

### STRUCTURE

Planning committee

Study Coordinator

Key volunteers

Scientific advisors

Fundraising

Community engagement

Who is going to see the data?

This will indicate the quality and standards of data we need to collect.

Distribution of Data

Schools? Local authority? Other groups?

Depends on the resources of the volunteers

Time - expertise - funding

The experience of doing the work will inform further exploration

## STRATEGY

There are sites currently being monitored by experts

We could augment/support and learn from them and compare data.

Health & Safety issues and Accessibility to enough sites

Consistency: sites should be monitored at the same time each year and data samples compared at these times - time of day / time of year

How will data be monitored and presented?

Create CREDIBLE data - definition ensures we access particular data needed, use particular questions - use field study data sheets - this method goes beyond citizen science -

WHO is the AUDIENCE for the data we collect?

Develop framework and procedures

Work on Tributaries of the Lee

Narrow the field

Concentrate on one river - dissemination of knowledge bring learnings to others river by river

CIRAG can develop a methodology that can be shared amongst river groups.

Already at Ballynora;

8 sites were monitored to Citizen science level

Findings were that water is of "moderate quality"

This reflects official data - which also says the river is at risk

In practice much of the official data is "modelled" ie. modelled from other rivers thought to be similar. So What is the credibility of this data?

Working with people who are putting the river at risk

Dairy farmers - run off and fertilisers have the worst affects on river

Diplomacy with farming community a necessity

By reducing fertilisers saving money, a large percentage of fertilisers run off into rivers streams

Local authorities both city and county for the Curraheen (because it crosses boundaries) sending officials to work with farmers - perceived as bureaucratic and "the enemy" form filling

Finding examples of farmers who are successfully changing practices to interact with local farmers.

Perhaps the biodiversity hub could be a space in which to do this via talks, presentations, etc. This is part of the biodiversity hub's plans in any event.

Raising Public Awareness

The recent fish kill has not found any culpability - need to engage politicians to “Shine a light on the regulatory process” Minister Timmy Dooly, lobby mainstream parties

**There is not a functioning regulatory framework in Ireland** - This is an area that some in the group suggest we pursue. There are so many loopholes in the existing legislation, highlighted by the ineffective response to the Blackwater fish kill by the multi agencies, that without first addressing this issue all the monitoring in the world will not change the landscape.

Perhaps we can have a multi pronged approach

The EPA is there to give licenses to polluters

Reporting of carwash polluting Glasheen 7 months ago - Simon Harrison tests found evidence of dead invertebrates at this site - Council went and found nothing on first attempt promised to return and have not come back with anything conclusive.

The need to deal with hard and proven facts as opposed to opinions

Flooding - council prioritise areas where rivers are prone to worst flooding

Sociocracy an organisation without hierarchy, based on circles of interest. We are attending a talk on this in UCC in November

Schedule - Procedures - Methodology ——— create a map  
volunteers - training - water safety - insurance

Paul Holloway UCC - students are hopefully going to be engaged in a mapping exercise of the Glasheen river

Young Scientist Exhibition - strong at Ballincollig Community School and water has been a big topic for students here, the school has approached the Biodiversity Hub for help with human resources and support.

Tyndall Research Colette has worked with them and is prepared to approach them for technical scientific assistance

Shane O’Callaghan chair of the environmental water committee at Cork City Council is interested

Change legislation that see rivers as urban (and rural) drains, change culture - work on public awareness household waste is a contributing factor

Nitrates and phosphates worst pollutants

DECIDE What and Why - CRAG group to put it in writing.

To this end Maria Young and Malgo Ratza stated they plan to get trained in the use of a multi parameter device that measures amongst other items, temperature, flow, phosphates and nitrates levels. They have already started mapping the pipes along sections of the Glasheen River but wish to do a comprehensive survey involving measures outlined in Pat’s plan. To that end CRAG needs to be clear about what device to purchase, and will require funding for training in usage of the device and in the overseeing of the resultant data.

TRAINING - FUNDING - EQUIPMENT - pool resources. Pat has applied to Community Foundation Ireland for a device and is very open to sharing it with others from the community.