

Water Quality Results 2008

A total of 435 samples of the Kilmaley-Inagh GWS treated water supply were analysed throughout 2008, all of which tested clear for the crucial bacteriological parameters, total coliforms and E-coli.

As part of implementing our own quality assurance system, regular testing is carried out internally by the scheme so that any incidences of contamination can be quickly identified and resolved.

Consistent testing is carried out by the treatment plant operator, EPS, while Clare County Council and the HSE also monitor the

supply to assess compliance with the Drinking Water Regulations.

Cryptosporidium

A risk assessment for Cryptosporidium was carried out on our source and it was judged 'low risk'. Testing of our raw water confirms that this contaminant is not present.

Cloudy water

Members often ask why their water is sometimes cloudy when poured, but clears after sitting for a short while. The reason is that air has gotten into the supply (possibly through a faulty air valve). This is harmless!



A treated water sample being taken for analysis on Kilmaley-Inagh GWS. The scheme carried out 435 tests on the supply in 2008.

Financing a group water scheme

The introduction of a €100 capital charge by the Kilmaley-Inagh GWS committee last July prompted a range of responses from scheme members.

"The minister said I have free water, so why are you charging me?" "You're introducing stealth taxes." "People in town don't pay for their water." "Is this a one off charge?" "€100 is nothing for the service we get." "We have no problem paying it; we know how hard it is to raise money." "€100? I'd pay 200. People do not know how lucky they are!"

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The proposal for an enhanced treatment system is still awaiting approval but we are hopeful of receiving funding.

The reality is that the raw water quality we experienced could be a one off or it could be the new norm. Either way, we must have a treatment plant that is robust enough to deal with all types of raw water quality.

The proposed system is more expensive to run but we believe it will be worth it if it provides top quality water.

Facts

The fact of the matter is that since 1997 public water supply is 100% funded by the government. Group schemes are not.

While we get a substantial contribution towards supplying water to domestic consumers (for which we are very grateful) this doesn't meet all of our running costs.

The reality is that group schemes receive approximately 60% of their operational costs up to the maximum allowed for each household.

The allowance since 2000 has been just over €100 per domestic connection. This increased to €140 last year. No allowance is made towards the cost of non-domestic supplies.

The difference has to be made up from charges, whether on new connections or on the metered usage of those exceeding their generous 'free' allowance.

While we receive 85% of capital costs towards upgrades, the remaining 15% has to come out of our own resources.

Ours is the largest privately-sourced group water scheme in Ireland, extending over five parishes and with about 250 kilometres of distribution network and associated valves, as well as district reservoirs etc.

It cost almost €1 million to run the scheme last year and this is through very tight control over spending.

It is also important to state that our charge (where there was one!) has traditionally been far less than that paid on an annual basis by members of most other schemes.

Having said that, our income has to reflect the real cost of water production and distribution, in addition to reinvestment in our infrastructure. It is common sense.

Charge

The €100 charge introduced on this scheme last year is essential for us to continue our critical capital investment programme.

Remember, much of our infrastructure is 30 years old and it needs to be replaced. Otherwise,

the problems and costs will mount over time, especially the incidence of leaks and bursts.

Without this investment, having no water in your tap could become the norm.

Charge

We would like to thank all those who have paid it and to remind those who still have to pay to do so without delay. It is not a lot of money to ask for a vital service.

Every member of the scheme is obliged to pay their share towards charges agreed at an AGM.

Our earnest wish is to avoid having to enforce that obligation through strict application of the rules.



A reservoir ballcock held in place by a rope is just one of numerous items requiring replacement on our GWS.

Read your water meter

Hard frost in early January left us with many difficulties in supplying some areas of the scheme and many homes and farms in the Inch and Kilnamona area, in particular, were without water.

This was caused by leakage on our members' side of the connection, due to bursts in thawing pipes.

While it is always recommended to check your meter on a regular basis, it is vital to do so in periods of frosty weather.

Universal metering

The majority of our scheme is now metered and we are continually encouraging members to read their meters once a month, at a minimum.

It is simple to read your meter. The white dials are cubic meters and the red dials are hundreds, tenths and litres. If you see your litre dial moving and have no water running in your house at the time, then you may have a leak that needs to be investigated further.

Cost of leakage

If you have a water leak and you consume the allowed 180 m³ (i.e. 180,000 litres) per year, you are liable for charges above the free domestic amount.

A typical house uses 90 to 100 m³ per year. If you are using more than this then you should become more conscious of your usage and see how you can reduce it.

Thanks to

Jimmy Meehan

Jimmy Meehan retired from the Kilmaley-Inagh GWS committee at last year's AGM after nearly 30 years dedicated service.

Jimmy was heavily involved in running the scheme throughout

those years and without his hard work we would not be where we are today.

The committee extends its sincere thanks to Jimmy and wishes him well.



Schoolchildren learn about water



Pupils at Connolly NS (pictured left) were amongst hundreds of schoolchildren in the Kilmaley-Inagh GWS area to receive copies of the 'All About Water' workbook in February. 'All About water' is part of a wider curriculum developed through the National Source Protection Pilot Project.

The GWS sector is centrally involved in this project and individual schemes are being encouraged to provide local schools with copies of the workbooks, a 'lab in a box' and other learning aids.

Connolly, Inch, Kilmaley, Inagh, Kilnamona, Cloon-anaha schools have all received their workbooks.

Water wastage through leaks or carelessness will result in significant extra costs being incurred by the scheme and ultimately its members. To minimise wastage on your connections/meters, you should.

- Carry out a thorough check of your water pipes and systems and make repairs where necessary
- Replace all leaking tap washers, etc.
- Check your water meter reading regularly and take action if you notice any unusual water usage.
- Use your water supply in the knowledge that each litre or gallon used (beyond your annual allowance) will incur additional costs.

If you require help with the meter reading, please contact Noel Carmody @ 087-2836118.



Licensing of schemes

2009 sees the introduction of licensing for drinking water service providers in an effort to ensure that the required water quality standards are achieved across the sector.

Whilst there is an complex application process and stringent guidelines to obtaining a license, we are confident that Kilmaley-Inagh GWS has everything in place to be granted its license.

This will help reinforce the message that (despite the occasional setback) scheme members can have confidence in the water supply.

Undersink units

In our last newsletter we warned about a scam that has been played out in hundreds of rural households, where expensive and unnecessary undersink units are marketed through pressure sales techniques.

Since then, one of the most active of these companies, *Pure H₂O* has been named and shamed by RTE's Special Investigative Unit.

We would urge our members, if approached by any such company, to think carefully before purchasing anything.

Your tap supply meets all national and EU regulatory standards. There is, therefore, no need whatsoever to spend money on undersink units that can themselves pose a health risk.

Keeping you informed

We would like to set up a system where, if we ever an issue with our water supply and we needed to immediately contact you as a member, we could do so through your mobile phone.

March 25th date set for Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting will take place in Inagh Community Centre on March 25th at 8pm.

All our members are encouraged to attend if at all possible. New committee members would be particularly welcome.

We have areas in the scheme with no representation such as Kilmaley and Kilnamona.

The committee typically meets every 6 weeks for about 2 hours, so it is not a lot of time to ask for over a year.

Our current committee includes the following:

Chairman, James B. Lynch, *Boulyneaska, Kilmaley*;

Vice Chair, Richard Devereux, *Ballyvraneen, Ennistymon*;

Secretary, Noel Carmody, *Feighroe, Connolly*;

Treasurer, Tom Burke, *Moyhill, Ennistymon*.

Other Members:

Joseph Costello, *Kilmorane Ennis*;

Thomas Costelloe, *Edenvale Ennis*;

John Hehir, *Feighroe, Connolly*;

Raymond Foudy, *Been, Inagh*;

John Hegarty, *Moughna, Mil-town Malbay*;

Pat Crowe, *Ilanbaun, Inagh*;

Adrian McMahon, *Drimeen, Ennis*;

Thomas Keane, *Drimeen, Ennis*;

Michael Halpin, *Bushypark*;

Vincent Barry, *Clongowna, Kilnamona*;

J. J. Rynne, *Carrowkeel, Inagh*;

David Sheedy, *Kilmorane, Ennis*;

Pat Gallagher, *Moughna, Mil-town Malbay*;

Johnny Crawford, *Cloonanaha, Inagh*.

Agenda

The agenda for the Annual General Meeting is as follows:

1. Minutes of last AGM.
2. Chairperson's address.
3. Secretary's report.
4. Financial & Auditor's report.
5. Appointment of Auditor.
6. Election of committee.
7. Any other business.

Proposed Upgrade Works

Kilmaley-Inagh Group Water Scheme is currently seeking council funding towards the cost of the following upgrade works in 2009. Your development charge will go towards the 15% local contribution to such works, assuming that county council approval is secured.

- **Replacement of water mains in Inagh and Connolly Rural Housing Organisation.**
- **Refurbishment of 6 pumphouses.**
- **Refurbishment of 8 reservoirs.**
- **Deployment of secondary chlorination stations.**
- **Replacement of some mains at Fermoy, Cragliegh, Kilnamona, Ballymacooda, Maurice Mills, Clonboula and Furroor.**
- **Installation of 25 additional telemetry bulk meters to monitor water flow into various districts.**

Virtually all of the above works focus on water conservation, as this has to remain a priority in avoiding wastage.

As part of our drive to address the issue of unaccounted for water and to fix bursts as quickly as possible, the scheme has installed several Cully meters along the network [pictured right]. These alert us immediately of surges of water passing through our pipework.

However, for this to work we need your mobile contact details. We require one mobile contact detail per household. Please text your name, number and townland to **085-7039348** or email **noel.carmody@kilmaleynaghgws.ie**.

Remember it won't work unless you forward your details, so please do so without delay.

Website

To keep yourself informed of developments on an ongoing basis, why not visit our website **www.kilmaleynaghgws.ie**.


This includes alerts for planned outages, scouring, disruptions and important information on what is going on in the scheme. You can use it to keep in touch with your water supply.

Staff

Kilmaley-Inagh GWS employs three staff members to run the scheme on a day-to-day basis under the overall direction of the management committee. Our staff are:

Noel Carmody (Manager), Feighroe, Connolly;
Pat Lynch, Lisroe, Kilmaley;
Brian Barry, Ballyea, Inagh.





Kilmaley-Inagh GWS Report

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Message from the Chairman

Once again, as we approach our Annual General Meeting on the 25th of March, we look back on the past year and on our plans for the future.

2008 proved a disappointing year for the scheme, due to the deterioration of water quality in our source, Loch na Minna, and our consequent inability to deliver quality water to our members.

Although water quality has improved of late, we are seeking approval for the conversion of our existing treatment plant to a DAF (Dissolved Air Flotation) system that will cater a wide range of water quality and enable the scheme to once more deliver top quality water to our members.

This newsletter is intended to highlight this and other issues encountered by the committee and the management of the group scheme.

We firmly believe that you, as a member, have a right to be informed about such issues.

We would like to thank all those who have paid their development charge and remind those who have yet to contribute to forward their payment as soon as possible.

Finally, I would encourage all members to do their best to attend the AGM and to actively participate in the future development of this vital service.

Thank you for your support and co-operation.

James B. Lynch
Chairman
Kilmaley-Inagh GWS

Treatment Plant Upgrade is now being considered

deterioration in raw water quality prompts review

Winter of 2008 proved one of the most difficult periods in the history of the Kilmaley Inagh Group Water Scheme as raw water quality in our lake source seriously deteriorated, with a knock-on effect on our ability to provide quality drinking water.

This deterioration has prompted a review of our water treatment plant and the proposed addition of more robust treatment to deal with high colour and other parameters.

Worries

We believed that once our new treatment plant had come into operation that our worries on water quality would be over.

Indeed the plant provided good quality water for the most of its first 2 years, until the end of October 2008.

At that point, raw water quality in the lake deteriorated; in particular, it became highly coloured, probably due to the extremely long period of bad weather.

Difficulties

This created difficulties for our treatment plant which (like any other) is designed to treat colour and other parameters in the raw water up to a maximum level.

When that maximum is exceeded, as happened in our case, the plant may prove inadequate.

As a result, not all of the colour from the lake water could be removed. This led to a greenish colour in the treated water.

The committee and EPS (our treatment plant operators) decided that it was better to have some colour in the treated water and to have it still comply with

the Drinking Water Regulations than to laden it with chemicals in an effort to reduce the colour and have it undrinkable.

While colour has improved in the treated water, raw water quality is not back to where it should be and still exceeds the treatment plant design limits.

Unfortunately we have little control over this and will have to let nature take its course.

Application

To guard against future problems, we recently lodged an application with Clare County Council and the Department of Environment for a €597,000 modification of our plant to convert it into a Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF) system that can cater for raw water quality three times worse than we experienced.

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Deteriorating raw water quality in Loch na Minna in 2008 had an impact on treated water quality. A proposal is now on the table to enhance the treatment plant facilities so that a quality treated supply can be guaranteed, even with difficult raw water.