

Kilmaley-Inagh GWS

Report

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Message From The Chairman

As we approach our Annual General Meeting on the 25th of March we can reflect on another successful and busy year for the scheme. Our newsletter is intended to highlight some of the issues encountered by the committee over the last year.

A program of reservoir refurbishment was successfully completed on 4 reservoirs extending their life span for many more years to come. 2KM of 8 inch water mains were replaced resulting in significant water savings. Our treated water continues to pass all quality assurance testing by the scheme itself, Clare County Council and the HSE.

Irish water is now up and running with responsibility for public water supplies. Our scheme will continue to operate independently into the future as long as our financial viability is maintained. There currently no plans or reason for Irish Water to take group schemes such as ours in charge.

Revenue collection is ongoing and we would like to thank all those who have paid their charges and remind those who have yet to pay to forward their payment as soon as possible. Our arrears management policy is now in place to deal with those refusing to pay their way. Thank you for your support

Free Allowance To Be Significantly Reduced Following GWS Subsidy Cuts

Following a review of the financial subsidy given to group water schemes, the government have decided to cut the operation and maintenance subsidy from a maximum payment from €140 per house to €95 per house. This represents a cut of in operational funding of €89010 to our group water scheme. Unfortunately this cut will have to be recouped from you our members in order to maintain the same standards in the service we provide. A 50% cut in the free allowance to 50m3 would counteract the subsidy cut of €45 where an household is using 100m3 per year. However on the bright side all members who have registered with Irish Water will receive a government water conservation grant of €100 towards their water expenses. This will significantly help counteract the increased water charges that all group water will have to impose on their members going forward. Indeed those within the group scheme sector had feared the subsidy cuts

would be much more significant.

Thankfully the water treatment subsidy was left intact for the next 5 years which was a major relief for the group scheme sector as many DBO schemes such as ours are financially bound to significant water treatment contracts until 2026.

Who do we pay for our water?

KIGWS are the only company you should be paying a water bill to.

By now you should have received your Irish Water registration pack and returned it indicating that your water supply is from a group water scheme. This will insure that Irish Water does not incorrectly bill you for water & sewage. If you have not returned the Irish Water registration pack you should do so immediately to avoid being billed by both Irish Water and by Kilmaley-Inagh GWS. It is important that if you receive a water bill from Irish Water that you contact them on 1890

448448 and explain that you are on a group water scheme. Depending on your waste water facilities you may receive an Irish water bill for waste water if you are on public sewage scheme.

Prompt payment of your water bill is essential in order to ensure that the scheme has the necessary finance to meet its commitments.

We are looking at multiple payment facilities such as PayPal and being able to accept laser and credit card payments.

There is a high cost associated with taking card payments and up to now the requests for such facilities have been few but we do expect demand for this to rise now that most households will be exceeding the free allowance paying for their water.

Charging policies such as capped charges and allowances per child etc that are set by Irish Water have no bearing whatsoever on group water schemes. We are still free to set our own water charges based on the schemes financial needs.

How does Irish Water effect Kilmaley-Inagh GWS?

- Kilmaley Inagh GWS is a completely separate organisation to Irish Water. The scheme operates as an independent water supplier operated on a not for profit basis. Any financial surplus is reinvested back into the scheme in line with the committee's continuous improvement strategy.
- There is confusion and there is a nagging doubt within GWS boards and members that takeover at some point is inevitable nothing could be further from the truth: the independence of this sector is enshrined in law and there is no earthly reason why that should ever change.
- The only basis on which any Group Water Scheme can be brought under Irish Water is where the membership of that scheme decides that it wants to hand over its assets and give up on managing its own water supply. Given the vibrancy of the privately sourced GWS sector in this country, we can be quite certain that such a hand-over will not happen for the foreseeable future.
- The scheme has adapted the ICOS rules and operating regulations for group water schemes meaning we have our own Co-Op rules and operating regulations to which our members must abide. These include the ability to withdraw supply from any member who refuses to pay their water charges owed to the scheme.
- The scheme is not effected by the water tariffs set by the regulator that Irish Water must follow. We are free to set our own charges to meet our financial commitments on an annual basis. We are not allowed to charge a fixed standing charge for water supply but we can charge to meet costs associated with infra-structural projects. Of course like Irish Water we do receive government funding to help meet operational and water treatment costs. The level of funding although reduced this year since has been fixed for the next 5 years.

Arrears Management Policy Ratified.

Unpaid water charges continue to be a headache for the board with some shareholders continuing to ignore invoices and statements. A arrears management policy has been adapted by the board and will be the basis for dealing with people in arrears from now on. The rules of the scheme allow the board to limit or withhold supply completely from members who refuse to pay the charges set out by the committee. This is an unfortunate and unpleasant process for all concerned but the financial stability of the scheme depends upon each member paying their fair share of water charges.

Any one in financial difficulty is urged to contact the scheme manager in strict confidence where a weekly or monthly direct debit arrangement can be set up to clear arrears.

The process is outlined as follows.

1. **Select accounts with arrears for 4 mths +**
2. **Issue 'Notification of Arrears letter'**
3. **Issue 'Final Notification' at 7 mths +**
4. **Allow member 10 days to respond in writing.**
5. **If no response/payment issue seven day notice of intent to disconnect supply via registered letter**
6. **If no response/payment issue Notice of cancellation of membership & Disconnection Notice**
7. **Implement Disconnection Procedure**
8. **Decide if pursuit of arrears through the courts is worth while.**

Note. Reconnection charge of €500 will apply.

Quality Assurance 2014– 100% compliance.

The scheme continues to comply with the National Federation of Group Water Scheme's quality Assurance program for water quality. Water quality has been excellent through out 2014 with 100% compliance for bacterial and chemical analysis from all internal testing as well external testing carried out by both Clare County Council and the HSE. Continuous Chlorine monitoring throughout the scheme is ongoing by scheme management as the presence of chlorine in drinking water is an EU Drinking water regulation requirement. Daily testing is carried out by EPS at the treatment plant while monthly samples are sent to external laboratories for analysis. Clare County Council in their role as water supervisory authority test a set number of samples throughout the year. The HSE is also involved in taking samples on an ongoing basis.

Fluoride Queries.

Of late we have received a number of queries in relation to fluoride dosing to our water supply for dental purposes. **We do not add fluoride to our drinking water as we are not required to do so under current drinking water regulations.** Public water supply authorities are required by regulation to add fluoride to drinking water supplies however private group water schemes do not fall under this requirement therefore we do not add fluoride to our water as part of our water treatment process.

Not Checking for water leakage may cost you €1000's.

You must get into the habit of regularly checking your own water meter readings. This is the only indication that you could have a water leak on your connection. An undetected leak can lead to a water bill of hundreds if not thousands of euro in a 12 month period. **Reading your meter costs nothing not reading may cost you a lot.**

Members with a domestic connection currently receive a free allowance of 100m³ of water per year. This will reduce going forward. It is still well above the normal use by a family of four - 90m³ and significantly higher than the allowance on other group schemes. **If you stay within this free allowance you pay nothing.**

Text Alert System

Our mobile text facility is working very well allowing members to receive urgent information by mobile phone. We have 900 members on the system so there are still 1950 members who have not supplied information to us. It would be beneficial if shareholders would supply their mobile phone numbers to facilitate this process. Text your name, address and mobile number to **0872836118** if you have not already signed up.

How to check a water meter

- The red dials on the meter are litres. White dials are m³ (1000 litres)
- Ensure at time of reading there is no usage going on for example the washing machine on .
- If the furthest red dial on the right is moving water is going through your distribution system This must be investigated further to identify if you have a leak.
- Note the meter reading so you can produce a usage pattern over time.
- Use your water supply in the knowledge that every litre used or leaked has a production cost associated with it.



Upgrade Works for 2015.

Funding has been applied to Clare County Council for the replacement of 700m of problematic 8 inch mains at Regagisha. Replacement of 8 inch main at the crossroads in Inagh Village to Maghara and Ennistymon. Some mains replacement is also required at Knocknacilla and Cragleigh, Routine maintenance of our water infrastructure continues. Some older water meters are being replaced as required with new meters.

March 25th 2015 date set for Annual General Meeting.

Our AGM will take place at Inagh Community Centre on March 25th at 8pm.

All our members are welcome to attend. We always welcome new committee members. We would encourage members to put themselves forward and get involved in the committee.

Retirement

In accordance with the rules of the society, one third of the board shall retire each year but are eligible for re-election

without nomination. This year Tom Keane, Pat Crowe and Adrian McMahon will retire but all 3 are offering themselves for re-election.

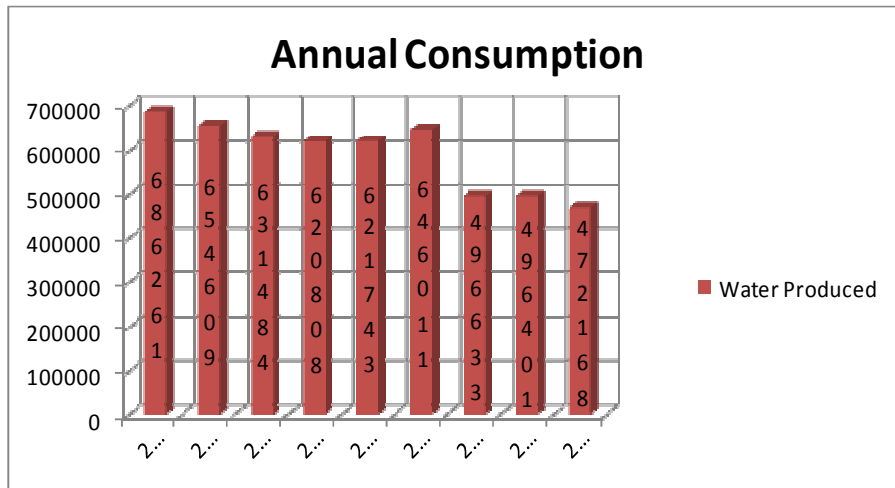
Nominations for the board, other than retiring members shall be in writing to the secretary and shall contain a statement by the member nominated of his or her willingness to be elected. Nominations should be forwarded to the secretary to arrive on or before March 24th 2015.

Secretary : Noel Carmody, Feighroe, Connolly, Ennis. Email, noel.carmody@kilmaleynaghgws.ie Tel 0872836118.

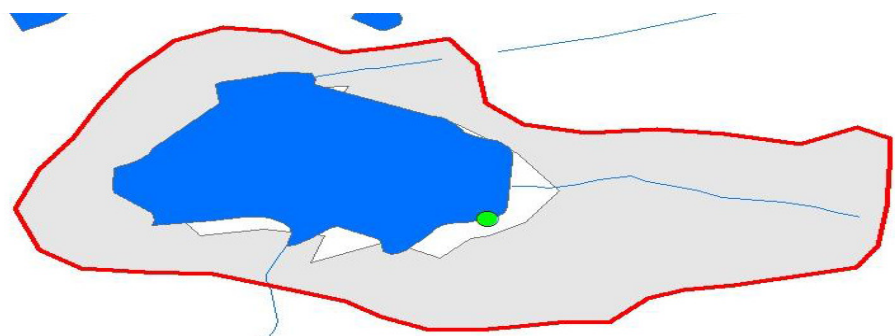
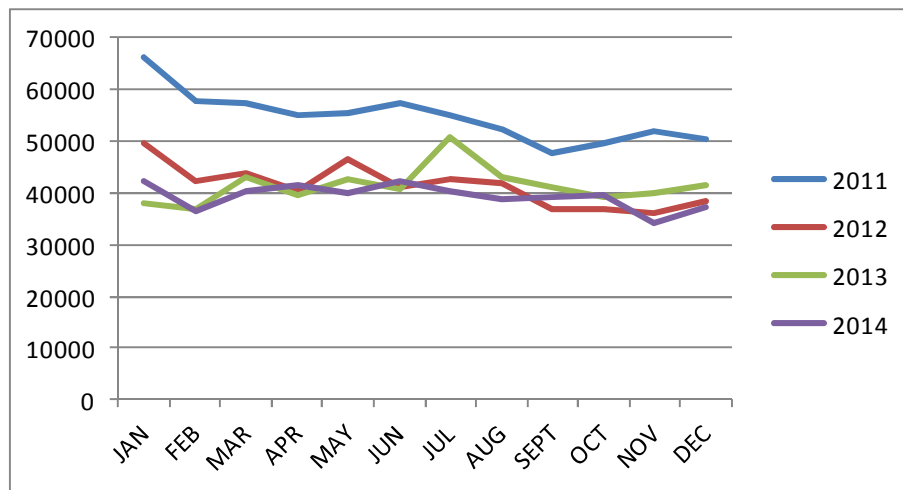
Agenda

1. Minutes of 2014 AGM.
2. Chairpersons Address.
3. Managers Report.
4. Financial Report plus Auditor's Report.
5. Appointment of Auditor.
6. Charging Structure
7. Election of Members to Committee.
8. Any other business.

Annual Consumption: The graph below shows the schemes water consumption over the last 9 years. As you can see there is a reduction in demand of 31% since 2006. This is due to a number of factors including critical mains replacement, introduction of metered billing, installation of telemetry bulk metering & alarms and reservoir repair. If you spot a water leak report it immediately to a member of the GWS staff.



Monthly Consumption: The graph below illustrates the monthly water demand in m3 (1000L) over the last 3 years. It is interesting to note the increased water demand in July 2013 as a result of the good Summer we all enjoyed. Lough Na Minna lake levels only dropped 10cm during this period of dry weather meaning our source is well capable of meeting demand during prolonged dry periods.



Surface Water Catchment Map of Lough NaMinna

Is Our Water Source Under Treat from Wind Farm Development?

Lough MaMinna was chosen as the schemes water source primarily because of its natural height and remote location with minimal activities within the lake catchment to effect raw water quality.

Under the county development plan the area around Lough NaMinna has been zoned for wind farm development. There is an 18 turbine wind farm operating adjacent Lough MaMinna for a number of years. There are plans to construct an extra 36 turbines around the area and we are concerned that the construction phase this will have a negative impact on our water source.

In 2014 a surface water report was completed for Lough NaMinna which identified the area around the lake catchment that impacts on water quality. From the report it is obvious that there is a large volume of ground water (springs) contributing to the lake's over all volume. A ground water study was commissioned to identify the areas contributing to our ground water supply.

It is critical that no development should impact on lake water quality within the ground and surface water catchment of Lough NaMinna.

The construction of roads, tree felling, blasting, possible bog slides etc can all have an adverse impact on ground water quality, giving rise to concern that our water treatment plant may not be capable of treating our raw water should an adverse change to raw water quality occur. We would all be left without a potable water supply. We hope the planning authority consider our reports and protect our water source for the generations to come.