

DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting: Celtic Interconnector Community Forum

Date: 9th September 2025

Venue: Online

Participating:

Irish Rural Link – James Claffey, Brendan Mulry

EirGrid - Michelle Walsh, Shane Cooney, Ronan Lynch, Avril Wilson

East Cork Community Representatives -

Robert Barry Knockraha Area Community Association, Marguerite Cremin Knockraha Environmental Group, Fred Whelan Curtin Imogeela Community Sports Hall, Evelyn Forde Carrigtwohill Community Council, Ann O'Neill Killeagh Inch Community Council.

Apologies: Cllr. Anthony Barry Cobh MDC, Finbarr Clohessy Youghal Fishermen Association

Minutes Compiled by Irish Rural Link

Item	Description
1.	Introduction and Agenda
	James Claffey (Chairperson) opened the formal meeting and introduced the agenda.
2.	Minutes of last Forum Meeting – 1st April 2025
	It was agreed that the Minutes of the last forum meeting be agreed at the next meeting in line with quorum requirements.

3.	Update on Celtic Interconnector Project Progress - (Presentation Attached)
	<p>Shane Cooney (EirGrid) provided an update on the Celtic Interconnector Project. Key messages included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project completion date moves out to early 2028 due to changes in cable manufacturing schedule, resulting in additional marine cable laying campaigns. Marine Cable Laying commenced this summer and will continue in the spring summer months of 2026 and 2027. ➤ As a result, phase 3 of Community Benefit Fund will now be opening in 2028. ➤ At Gogganstown, good progress made with connection to Knockraha substation. Majority of works have been completed with the focus now on finalising equipment installation. Four Transformer Bays have been constructed by ESB Networks and are ready for Transformer Delivery and Installation scheduled for November. ➤ At Ballyadam Converter Station main heavy works are now complete, Two more Transformers are to be installed in three weeks with the focus then to lie with equipment installation inside the buildings. The Converter Station should be ready for energisation early in 2026. ➤ On the roads with HVAC (Knockraha to Ballyadam) works are completed & road re-instated. ➤ Key achievement was HDD drill under railway line, which was successfully completed in June. ➤ On the roads with HVDC (Ballyadam to Youghal) cable pulling underway. Permanent Road re-instatement to commence in October ➤ Trenching and Ducting is fully complete. Cable pulling is about 30% complete. Currently working on Cable Pulling and Jointing between Killeagh and Castlemartyr. Pulling and Jointing work will continue over the next six month with localised work at the Joint Bays involving traffic and speed restrictions on the N25. From Two Mile Inn back to Carrigtwohill works will involve localised traffic management at the passing bays. ➤ At landfall, Claycastle beach, works are now completed - monitoring of natural backfilling taking place. –Ducts are installed and waiting for Submarine Cables likely to be pulled in during Summer 2027. Construction Compounds have now been removed. Some barriers remain in place to protect the vegetation as it rebeds over the next weeks and months. • Cable laying & burial campaigns at sea are underway. This will continue into Winter with a return date scheduled for April. <p>Marine Cable Works Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To Date Cable laying has been completed on seabed for first section (85km of 500km route laid in August) ○ Cable burial vessels are onsite and commencing the burial of cable 2 to 3 metres in the seabed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rock protection where the cable crosses other existing cables or where sufficient cable burial not achieved to be added once buried ○ Post lay survey of the route will be conducted before the cable route is opened to fishing again ○ Guard vessels are operating on the route over the Winter Months to advise marine users of the temporary closure of the route
Questions/Comments	Answers/Response
At the last forum meeting, roadworks in Knockraha were described as being complete. The road however has not yet been reinstated. One large pothole remains present and this has already resulted in serious damage to one vehicle. Backfill on the road verges has not been replaced. EirGrid were to have responded to forum members who raised the issue directly by email on this matter. Residents and Commuters are seriously inconvenienced and these works need to be carried out immediately. The costs of such are modest.	Apologies for any missed email. EirGrid will hold discussions again with ESB Networks about making relevant repairs. There is still some heavy construction at the site but it had been agreed that EirGrid would work with ESB Networks to ensure that that section of the road be reinstated. On the verge problems EirGrid will follow up with Cork Co. Council as these works have already been requested. Temporary Repair measures will be necessary before transformers are installed.
4.	Update on Community Benefit Fund (Presentation Attached)
	<p>Michelle Walsh (EirGrid) provided an update on the Celtic Interconnector Community Benefit Fund. Key messages included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €2.4 million fund • 70% of the fund has now been awarded equaling +€1.6 million and 82 projects. • Phase 1 fund was 40% of total – 29 projects, awarded €838,987 • Phase 2 fund was 30% of total – 53 projects, awarded €821,265.50 • Phase 2 saw an ask of €4.6 million, with double the number of applications compared to Phase 1. Awards were announced on Wednesday 3rd September. <p>Phase 2 – funding streams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Stream: €240,000 • Sustainability Stream: €236,437.50 • Biodiversity Stream: €344,828. The full fund amount for this stream was able to be awarded in contrast to the situation in Phase 1. More supports around Capacity Building in terms of One-to-one support and information evenings for community groups have proven very successful.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Project has its own particular aspects so recipients are urged to reach out to Secad and have a close relationship with them during project implementation to get as much benefit as possible from their assistance. • A reminder that Funds have to be drawn down within 12 months of award date. <p>It is heartening to see 82 projects of such variety have benefited from the fund to date. Sincere thanks to all forum members for the role they have played in the Funds reach and success.</p>	
	Questions/Comments	Answers/Response
	<p>The Offer from Secad is provisional at the moment. Is the twelve-month implementation timeframe from the Award date?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EirGrid Celtic Interconnector Community Benefit Fund, Phase 2 contracts were issued September 3rd, 2025, and the expiry date for all 53 contracts is September 8th, 2026. • This is the date by which the projects must be complete and a claim for payment issued. • Please be advised that if you have any questions, please reach out to SECAD on 021 – 461 3432 • SECAD are available throughout the project journey for advice and support.
5.	Visit of French Mayors June 2025	
	<p>Michelle Walsh (EirGrid) provided a brief update on the French Mayoral Visit.</p> <p>This meeting effectively substituted for the Forum summer meeting. Many forum members attended with their communities well represented. EirGrid are very grateful for this cooperation. Without the community input the event would not have worked out as well as it did. An output specifically from the Celtic Communities in Conversations event will be shared with members in both English and French. Ideas that came to the fore are under consideration to be built on both in Ireland and France where possible.</p>	

	Questions/Comments	Answers/Response
	The event in Midleton distillery was wonderful and collaborative.	
6.	Any Other Business	
	No issues arose.	
7.	Next Steps	
	James Claffey (Chairperson) closed the meeting, thanked members for their ongoing work on the forum. The next Community Forum meeting is provisionally scheduled for December 9th .	