

DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting: Celtic Interconnector Community Forum

Date: 9th December 2025

Venue: Online

Participating:

Irish Rural Link – James Claffey, Brendan Mulry

EirGrid - Michelle Walsh, 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, Cllr. Anthony Barry Cobh MDC

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 Three Forum Meetings
	It was agreed that the Minutes of the last three meetings (April 1 st , June 7 th & September 9 th) be agreed at the next meeting in line with quorum requirements. No comments or questions arose from forum members at this time.

3.	Update on Celtic Interconnector Project Progress - (Presentation Attached)
	Michelle Walsh (EirGrid) provided an update on the Celtic Interconnector Project. Key messages included: • Connection completed between Knockraha substation and Gogganstown. • Ballyadam Converter station is progressing very well and is substantially completed. • On the HVAC cable route (Knockraha to Ballyadam) works are completed & road re-instatement almost complete. • On the HVDC cable route (Ballyadam to Youghal) 70% of the cable pulling through the ducts is complete. • Cable jointing continues; currently 41% complete. Additional Jointing Teams will be place from January which will accelerate progress in the early part of next year. • Programme of permanent road reinstatement is underway by CCC appointed sub-contractor. Much of this work has been completed and remaining works are scheduled to be completed in February. • Programme of hedgerow re-instatement on third party lands impacted by construction commenced in December 2025. Work will continue subject to weather and seasonal constraints • Cable laying & burial campaigns at sea are stopped for Winter. 84KM of Cable has already been laid from the Irish Coast outwards. • As burial of cable is not completed 6 guard vessels are in situ for the Winter months. At the moment these are inshore sheltering from the inclement weather. ○ Cable burial vessels are onsite and commencing the burial of cable 2 to 3 metres in the seabed. ○ 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 • Overall works are proceeding well, and civil works (not withstanding any changes) are scheduled to be completed in Quarter 3 2026. • Marine Works are scheduled to recommence in March 2026. There are a total of 5 marine campaigns scheduled. • With regards the roads in Knockraha from the entrance of Gogganstown to the ESB Substation reassurances have been received that the stoning of the edges and is due for completion

	before the end of February 2026. Cork County Council have carried out some temporary filling of potholes in the area.	
	Questions/Comments	Answers/Response
	The roadway at the substation entrance is crumbling away at the sides and the residents committee are asking when the limestone will be restored at both road sides. Is there a solid commitment to have these works completed by February? Is this work the responsibility of Cork Co. Council or Nexans?	EirGrid have been given assurances that this work will be completed by February. This work is the responsibility of Cork Co. Councils subcontractor.
	Is there a video available to share online showcasing the Offshore Cable laying process? It is an incredible story that should be shared with the general public outlining the detail of this work?	EirGrid will endeavour to make something available to everybody on the Forum. This can be more widely shared by Forum members thereafter. The December Newsletter will be issued next week.
	Christmas Holiday	
	Michelle Walsh (EirGrid) provided details on the dates for Christmas Holidays • NEXANS/Sorensen roadworks will finish from evening of 19.12.2025, returning on 05.01.2026 (CIF Holidays). • Sorensen will have traffic management maintenance crew on site on a repetitive 24 hour basis to ensure effective traffic management during holidays. • Same closure dates for Siemens at Ballyadam site.	
4.	Forum Meetings 2026 – Agenda ideas?	
	To start a discussion on possible guest presenter options for community forum 2026 meetings, Michelle Walsh (EirGrid) provided details on two possible options that representatives might find beneficial. Michelle has no vested interest in either of the following suggestions. Newton Court SEC • <i>Newton Court in Grange, Douglas a residential estate of 74 houses began its journey to be a sustainable Energy Community in 2024.</i> • <i>In collaboration with SEAI it progressed plans to be a ‘Solar Meitheal.</i> • <i>It has now completed a group solar scheme on 25 houses with benefits of economies of scale to the cost of the scheme.</i> <i>This might serve as a possible guest presenter option, perhaps to include SEAI representation perhaps with a view to the next round of Community Benefit Funding.</i> French Connection?	

	<i>Morgane Quentric Bowman, Maire de Ploudiry – leading her community involvement in a reforestation project with The Collectif Forêt-Bois du Pays de Brest, (Forest Collective of Brest, France) e The aim is to accelerate the reduction of emissions and support the development of natural carbon sinks.</i> <i>This process and perceived advantages for the community might be of interest to forum members.</i> MyGUG was suggested by James Claffey IRL. This is a project in west cork which takes food waste and converts it to gas at a school or community hall level. This is a real local community run project. This is just one of many potential examples for guest presentation. There are other funding streams available for community enhancement, and it may be possible to facilitate Guest Speakers from relevant organisations and authorities Forum members are welcome to make suggestions.	
	Questions/Comments	Answers/Response
	Positive response to the two suggested ideas and good to hear about what other community forums are doing. The experience in Grange could be very useful and possibly be replicated elsewhere. The French reforestation example as part of Biodiversity efforts is also very suitable as an option. It may be possible to be replicated on a smaller scale.	
	Should these potential presentations be opened up the entire community or kept for Forum Members?	As a first step this should be for the Forum Members. It may well inspire wider community dissemination thereafter by forum members themselves.
	A lot of people are unaware of the SEAI one-stop shop benefits. Grants can be very substantial. From an EirGrid perspective it is a very suitable option for guest presentation.	
	MyGUG	
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	Will EirGrid be holding Roadshow events in 2026 in the Cork area?	These events are being planned for next year and the South Coast including Cork could well be a suitable option. Venues have not been decided yet.
	Every Local authority has a Climate Action Officer in place which may also be an option also	
	Irish Rural Link will consider if a short survey to capture specific presentation interests and priorities would be beneficial	Note: with the number of suggested topics already at 3 and the number of meetings at 4 only, it has been decided to forego any survey and revert to shared conversations during forum meetings.
5.	Dates for 2026	
	James Claffey (Chairperson) opened a discussion on possible dates for 2026. The following provisional dates were agreed with Forum Members present. 24th March 16th June	
6.	Any Other Business	
	James Claffey (Chairperson) provided a brief overview of the work of Irish Rural Link with a particular focus on work considered of interest to community forum members. An invite was issued by IRL for forum community groups to link in with the organisation in various ways. Main Points outlined. • Irish Rural Link has been involved in the space of community engagement since it's foundation in 1991. • Governed by a voluntary board and has a membership of about 600 community groups serving 25,000 members across Ireland • Core aim is to advocate and lobby for the changing needs of the people of rural Ireland. • Believing strongly that rural areas should be vibrant inclusive places there is a particular focus on advocating for the needs of marginalised or otherwise disadvantaged groups at a local, national and European Level.	

	• IRL is part of the Community and Voluntary Pillar which gives us access to government and a strong voice in the design of policies to advance rural causes. • In the past 10 years, IRL have advanced policy development through project work which supports a vision of sustainable rural communities. • Some community engagement examples include; The Digital Switchover The introduction of Eircodes Covid Outreach Programme • Managed various public consultation for agencies, semi state organisations and various government departments. This work is all about facilitating proper communication and bridging the gap between government/agency perspectives and the rural community to ensure communities are heard and involved in decision making that impacts them. • Recently, the organisation has become more involved in Environmental projects including European Innovation projects. Examples include work to Raise water levels on Farmlands, Eco Scheme design. • Biggest project at the moment is the Breeding Waders EIP Project to conserve this species. This work will involve working with 800 farmers. Fota Island is a partner in the project. • Involved in two cross border Peace Plus Projects in the area of Rural Social Enterprise and maximising community spaces. • IRL has a strong membership in Cork through the 318 member National Meals on Wheels Network which it manages. • IRL CEO, Seamus Boland has been elected the 35th President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) for the 2025–2028 term of office. He will be stepping down from his role in IRL in the new year. • More information on Irish Rural Link is updated on a regular basis on our different social media feeds and at www.irishrurallink.ie	
	Questions/Comments	Answers/Response
	Delighted to hear about the Breeding Waders Project involved of Foto Wildlife Park. Some fantastic projects have been involved.	
	Is it appropriate for IRL to play a role in Solar Farm Policy creation.	There are community challenges with both Wind and Solar Farm

		Construction across all parts of rural Ireland. IRLs position is that there is a local communication deficit which needs to be properly addressed.
	Curious about IRLs submission to the revision of Ireland's Rural Future.	One of the biggest concerns highlighted is the lack of young people and measures to include younger people involved in community groups. Rising costs of maintaining organisations with constant core supports. IRL are calling for multi-annual support. Civil society must be heart of all government policy. Happy to facilitate offline conversation with IRL policy officer Louise Lennon who can share the submission.
7.	Next Steps	
	James Claffey (Chairperson) closed the meeting, thanked members for their ongoing work on the forum under competing time pressures throughout the year and thanked AvrilMichelle for her work in particular in relation to the French mayoral visitor event in June. Best Wishes to everyone for Christmas and the new year.	