



# Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

Honorary Secretary, Gamekeeper's Cottage, Mackney, Ballinasloe

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By email to;  
Damien Redington  
Galway City Council

Dear Damien,

The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland is a voluntary all Ireland organisation made up of people who share a keen enthusiasm for inland waterways. The IWAI advocates the use, maintenance, protection, restoration and improvement of the inland waterways of Ireland. It was formed in 1954 to promote the development use and maintenance of Ireland's navigable rivers and canals. When the Shannon was almost totally undeveloped for pleasure boating, the IWAI fought the building of low bridges, thus ensuring the development of the river as a national asset. In the 1960s IWAI successfully fought plans to close the Circular Line of the Grand Canal in Dublin. Later the association campaigned for the reopening of what is now the Shannon - Erne Waterway (formerly the Ballinamore & Ballyconnell Canal), the Naas Line of the Grand Canal and more recently the Ulster Canal.

IWAI has 24 branches mainly associated with the major navigations across the island. Membership is open to all. and we have a special category for junior members. Our membership (2000+) is drawn from all walks of life and from people with a wide range of interests - boating, angling, walking, waterway conservation and restoration, wildlife and environment.

IWAI is the voice of waterways users and enthusiasts and represents the views of members to governments, Waterways Ireland and other navigation authorities, local authorities and the range of statutory and state-sponsored bodies whose activities affect the waterways in one way or another.

Work parties are organised and funds raised to improve navigations and to restore derelict ones. Current projects include the Boyne Navigation, Newry Canal, Lagan Navigation, Coalisland Canal, Ulster Canal, Coalisland Canal and the Kilbeggan and Corbally lines of the Grand Canal. A project to restore Ram's Island on Lough Neagh is also underway.

IWAI organises a range of water-based events on most of the waterways around the country. Activities range from small boat outings and cruises in company to major boat rallies. Competitions held during rallies help to raise standards of boatmanship, seaworthiness and safety afloat. Canal walks are held on a regular basis and land-based events such as film shows, discussions and lectures are organised on a range of waterways topics including, safety, vessel maintenance, first-aid and waterways heritage.

**President:** Kay Baxter **Executive:** **Vice-President:** John Fitzgerald **Past President:** Alan Kelly  
**Honorary Secretary:** Graham Bartlett **Honorary Treasurer:** Alison Maddock **Membership Sec:** Bríd Joly  
**Directors:** Denis Baker, Colin Becker, Kevin Clabby, Chris McCarney, Darragh Dolan, John Kearns, Steve Kitt

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REGISTERED CHARITY No. 20028732. CHY No 10915

REGISTERED OFFICE: 69 FITZWILLIAM SQUARE, DUBLIN 2, D02 NC03, IRELAND

The association's magazine Inland Waterways News is sent free of charge to all members four times a year. Our web-site ([www.iwai.ie](http://www.iwai.ie)) is one of the largest single reference sources for waterways related material in Ireland and a major source of referrals for waterways related businesses.

In relation to the EUI project which you presented on the zoom call the other evening, IWAI believes that (subject to seeing the final details of course) it has a lot of merit. Using existing infrastructure to generate power makes a lot of sense (although we suspect the amounts will be modest enough in today's terms). Getting the community involved, benefiting from the renewable energy, funding home retro-fitting, upskilling, job creation, eco-tourism promotion and public engagement are all worthwhile pursuits.

IWAI would however be opposed to any proposal to further interfere with the Eglington Canal in a way that would impede its future restoration to navigable status. There are many sites in Galway where micro-hydro plants could be installed without further compromising the status of the Eglington Canal. The argument that this is only a pilot project is not reassuring. Such projects have a habit of becoming permanent (either by design or neglect) and in any event some works will be required to existing structures to provide secure fixings for whatever plant is installed which would be detrimental to the heritage structures.

IWAI believes that the failure to replace the gates in the Parkavara Lock was a major missed opportunity. The installation of stop-logs to create a "Waterfall" was a seriously retrograde step and has the potential to damage the built heritage of the lock. The installation of the "Waterfall" has created turbulent flow conditions in the lock, conditions for which it was never designed and which may in time lead to failure of parts of the structure.

IWAI believes that breast and deep gates should be installed in the lock so that it can function as intended for the passage of boats. In the short to medium term, obviously these will be restricted by the available headroom but even so, an opportunity would be created for small pleasure vessels, (open boats, canoes, kayaks etc) to use the canal and pass safely from the Claddagh Basin to the lake and back. (The installation of deep gates in the sea-lock would further improve accessibility to the canal.)

IWAI believes that such a project would be of far greater benefit in terms of recreation and tourism than any micro-hydro installation.

IWAI would therefore urge you to remove the Eglington Canal from consideration for your project. If the Eglington Canal is included, IWAI will object to the grant of any planning permission for works on the canal.

Yours Sincerely

Colin Becker

Director, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

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