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An Comhchoiste um Aeráid, Comhshaol agus Fuinneamh

**Tuarascáil i dtaobh an Dul Chun Cinn atá déanta maidir le
Loch Tóchair a Athchóiriú**

Meitheamh 2026

Joint Committee on Climate, Environment and Energy

Report on Progress on Restoration of Lady's Island Lake

June 2026

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Related information

Publications

All publications for this committee are available on the [Oireachtas website](#).

Committee videos

Footage of Committee proceedings can be found on the [Committee videos page](#).

Committee debates

Transcripts of Committee debates can be found on the [Committee debates page](#).

Contact details

The contact details for the Committee can be found on the [Committee page](#).

Orders of reference

Read the [Orders of reference](#) for the Committee.

Committee Membership

Cathaoirleach

[Naoise Ó Muirí](#), Fine Gael

Leas-Chathaoirleach

[Lorraine Clifford- Lee](#), Fianna Fáil

Members

[Ciarán Ahern](#), Labour Party

[Malcolm Byrne](#), Fianna Fáil

[John Clendennen](#), Fine Gael

[Réada Cronin](#), Sinn Féin

[Pa Daly](#), Sinn Féin

[Barry Heneghan](#), Independent

[Jennifer Whitmore](#), Social Democrats

[Naoise Ó Cearúil](#), Fianna Fáil

[Mark Duffy](#), Fine Gael

[Alice- Mary Higgins](#), Independent

[Malcolm Noonan](#), Green Party

[Noel O'Donovan](#), Fine Gael

Cathaoirleach's Foreword

When this Committee was established in May 2025, members made the longstanding decline of Lady's Island Lake their very first topic of consideration. As one of Ireland's largest saline lagoons, a designated Special Area of Conservation and an area of deep religious and cultural significance, the lake's ongoing deterioration is unacceptable. Having examined the EPA-commissioned CLEAR report, which comprehensively established the cause of the problem, we committed to doing everything we can to support restoration efforts.

At our initial meeting, a lack of coordination among the many stakeholders involved was identified as a key barrier to progress. In response, the Committee recommended that Wexford County Council take on a central coordinating role. The Council's willingness to lead has already begun to make a difference, with initial Government support of €700,000 signalling a renewed and more joined-up approach to restoring the lake.

To support this momentum, I was delighted to chair our recent meeting in Wexford County Hall during which we engaged with the new Strategic Oversight Group. Members were also encouraged by the dedication of community-based restoration groups, whose sustained efforts have kept hope alive throughout years of neglect. The subsequent visit to the Lake and our warm reception by the Rosslare Municipal District and members of the local community was also greatly appreciated.

This report builds on the progress made to date and sets out 11 recommendations which the Committee believes are important to sustain momentum. We look forward to continuing our engagement with all stakeholders to secure a lasting and positive future for Lady's Island Lake.



Naoise Ó Muirí TD, Cathaoirleach

June 2026

1.Introduction

In July 2025, the Committee published its first report¹ on the crisis at Lady's Island Lake, where the prolonged over-enrichment of surface waters has severely degraded the lake's ecosystem. The report highlighted a cultural issue in public administration, where a lack of clear leadership had exacerbated the problem. In turn, the Committee recommended that Wexford County Council leads the long-term restoration of the lake with the full support of the multiple state agencies/bodies involved.

In November 2025, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage announced €700,000 in funding to Wexford County Council for their coordinating role in restoring the lake. More specifically, the funding will support the development of a Water Quality Management Plan and help to foster a holistic approach to improve the Lake's ecological condition.²

In May 2026, the Committee held its first meeting off the Leinster House Campus in Wexford County Council Chambers. This meeting centred on an engagement with the Council Executive and community stakeholders in order to assess progress.

The meeting was also attended by non-Committee members representing Wexford including Johnny Mythen T.D, George Lawlor T.D and Senator Cathal Byrne.

2. The Meeting

Mr Eamonn Hore, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Director of Services at Wexford County Council, advised members that, as the Committee recommended, the Council now heads up a 'Strategic Oversight Group' made up of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO), Teagasc, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), the Agricultural Sustainability

¹ [CTTE Report on CLEAR Report LIL](#)

² [Ministers Browne and O'Sullivan announce package of €700,000 to coordinate response at Lady's Island Lake](#)

Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP) and the Farming for Water EIP. In terms of initial outputs, members were advised of the ongoing sampling of 13 feeder streams and a completed phase 1 hydrogeological assessment of the lake. This is concurrent with ongoing inspections of agricultural and domestic wastewater systems within the catchment and will form the basis of initial remedial actions within 12 months.

Members also met with representatives from the Lady's Island Drainage Committee and the Save Lady's Island Lake Campaign Group to examine how the local community can be consulted with and integrated into the restoration process.

The Committee wishes to extend sincere gratitude to Wexford County Council and Rosslare Municipal District for facilitating the subsequent visit to the lake. There follows a series of recommendations that the Committee believes will help to enhance the lake's long-term restoration.

3. Recommendations

1. The Committee recommends that, in order to gauge the effectiveness of measures taken so far and as soon as practically possible, Wexford County Council publishes regular data showing levels of key nutrients within Lady's Island Lake.
2. The Committee recommends that the Strategic Oversight Group establishes a clear and settled priority across the various overlapping and sometimes conflicting aspects of the lake's existence including levels of salinity, drainage, tern nesting, overall ecology and sustainable agricultural practices. This should then drive restoration.
3. The Committee recommends that Wexford County Council launches a website where all information relating to the lake's restoration is centralised and categorised. The site should spearhead engagement and interaction between all stakeholders to ensure that actions to restore the lake are as accessible and transparent as possible.
4. The Committee recommends the use of awareness days and wider campaigns such as National Biodiversity Week to highlight the lake's condition and restoration, thereby raising awareness and providing educational opportunities.
5. The Committee recommends that Wexford County Council holds a public consultation on the restoration process to harness relevant knowledge from the locality and further afield. The Committee recommends that the Strategic Oversight Group engages with the Lady's Island Drainage Committee and the Save Lady's Island Lake Campaign group on an

ongoing basis and develops a long-term public participation and communication process to keep broader public interest in the project.

- 6.** The Committee recommends that the Strategic Oversight Group ensures that environmental and ecological expertise and perspectives are to the forefront of decision-making and implementation of measures throughout the restoration process. The Committee recommends that an ecologist is employed to work with the project team on the same basis as the agricultural scientist.
- 7.** The Committee recommends capital allocation for the carrying out of measures not included in the Farming for Water EIP³ but which were outlined in the CLEAR Report, such as the potential construction of wetlands up to 5ha.
- 8.** The Committee recommends that the Strategic Oversight Group engages and coordinates with the LIFE Strategic Nature⁴ programme which, as part of its National Coastal Lagoons restoration strategy, is focusing initial efforts on the Lady's Island and Tacumshin lagoons.
- 9.** The Committee notes that the LIFE Strategic Nature programme further underlines the importance of the maintaining the EU LIFE Programme as a ringfenced fund for environment and biodiversity actions.⁵
- 10.** The Committee recommends reviewing the Domestic Waste Water Treatment System (Septic Tank) Grant, including the potential increase, front-loading or a group scheme in order to enhance the restoration of

³ [Farming for Water European Innovation Partnership - Farming for Water EIP](#)

⁴ [Home - LIFE Strategic Nature](#)

⁵ [CTTE Report on EU LIFE Programme](#)

Lady's Island Lake and other degraded water bodies, particularly in Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

- 11.** The Committee recommends that the Strategic Oversight Group develop a strategy to address sediment accumulation in Lady's Island Lake.

4. Bibliography

[CTTE Report on CLEAR Report LIL](#), Committee on Climate, Environment and Energy

[Farming for Water European Innovation Partnership - Farming for Water EIP](#), Local Authority Waters Programme

[Ministers Browne and O'Sullivan announce package of €700,000 to coordinate response at Lady's Island Lake](#), Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

[Home - LIFE Strategic Nature](#), Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

[CTTE Report on EU LIFE Programme](#), Committee on Climate, Environment and Energy

Appendix 1 – Meeting Transcript and Opening Statements

Meeting Transcript

Date	Link to Submission
15 May 2026	main.pdf

Opening Statements

Date	Witnesses	Link to Submission
15 May 2026	Strategic Oversight Group	2026-05-15_opening-statement-eamonn-hore-deputy-chief-executive-strategic-oversight-group-for-lady-s-island-lake_en.pdf
15 May 2026	Save Lady's Island Lake Campaign Group	Opening Statement Draft
15 May 2026	Lady's Island Lake Drainage Committee	2026-05-15_opening-statement-ger-carthy-cathaoirleach-of-the-rosslare-municipal-district-lady-s-island-drainage-committee_en.pdf
