

**25th MEETING OF THE FOYLE CARLINGFORD AND IRISH LIGHTS
COMMISSION**

**held on
WEDNESDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2004
at
LOUGHS AGENCY HQ PREHEN**

Present

Board

Peter Savage (Chairperson)
Lord Cooke of Islandreagh (Vice Chair)
Tarlach O'Crosain
Joseph Martin
Jack Allen
Andrew Ward
Pat Griffin
Dick Blakiston-Houston
Siobhan Logue
Jacqui McConville
Keith Anderson

Loughs Agency

Derick Anderson (CE)
Paddy Boylan
John Pollock
Stanley Thorpe

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes were agreed.

Proposed	Tarlach O'Crosain
Seconded	Jackie McConville

3. Reserved Minutes

There are no reserved minutes full minutes to be published.

4. Matters Arising

Dr Summers letter is awaited and will be reported on at the next Board Meeting.

5. CE Report

5.1 Riverwatch

CEO reported that “Riverwatch” and the Agency’s outreach programmes continue to develop and we have welcomed our 10,000th visitor. A report was also provided detailing visitor numbers, current and planned activities for 2005.

5.2 Omagh Fish Kill

Meetings ongoing with EHS and Water Service. They have agreed to meet with the fishery owners together with the Loughs Agency and the Board will be kept informed on progress.

5.3 Staffing

CEO reported on several staffing issues.

A, Ann McPherson will be absent from work for approx 3 months. The Agency has approached both sponsor Depts but they are unable to provide cover. We have contacted the Agency’s accountants HELM with a view to them providing cover for 2-3 days per week.

B, Staffing review is still ongoing with an IP Paper to be progressed seeking Ministers approval for the posts already approved.

C, Grading review is causing concern with the staff and this issue will be raised at the forthcoming facilitation meeting with the sponsor Depts and NSMC Secretariat.

D, NS Pension Scheme the Agency is currently working on a business case outlining different options and recommending that a new scheme for the FCILC be drawn up which would mirror the new cross border scheme but removing the problems associated with North/South Pay.

E, North South Pay arrangements this issue is still causing the Agency concern and is linked to the problems associated with the new pension. This will be raised at the Facilitation meeting.

F, CEO contract is still being drafted by the Department of Finance solicitor and it is hoped that the Board will have sight of this shortly.

5.4 Implementation Plan

CEO tabled a letter from the Sponsor Departments regarding the Implementation Plan and was instructed to follow up on various issues with the Departments and report back at the next Board meeting.

5.5 Economic Benefits Paper

CEO reported he was still awaiting a response from the Sponsor Departments.

5.6 Interreg Application

A, Angling Development CEO advised the Board that this application was now being transferred to DARD Rural Development and a new application will have to be submitted under priority 1 measure 4 Rural Initiative.

B, Omagh Counter work is underway although high water conditions have hindered the construction.

C, Carlingford Rib 80% of the rib will be complete by the end of November with final delivery and trials targeted for the end of January 2005.

D, Wetlands this project has been withdrawn due to the tight timeframe and difficulty receiving planning permission.

E, Auto telemetry Buoys 4 additional buoys have been ordered with deliver guaranteed by the end of November.

F, Coded wire tagging and detection units an order has been placed and delivery expected by end of November.

6. Finance Update

It was reported that a total of £1.2m was surrendered to the Sponsor Departments from the original budget of £3.2m for 2004 this is mainly due to the delay with progressing the revised Foyle Bill and the Agency not able to roll out fully its responsibilities for Aquaculture. The Board were also provided with a detailed breakdown of overall income and expenditure and by budget head.

7. Financial Memorandum

The Board gave its approval to the final draft of the Financial Memorandum and to proceed with the sign off.

Proposed Andrew Ward
Seconded Pat Griffin

8. Business Plan Report on 2004

The Board were provided with a report detailing the Agency's 2004 business targets and noted the progress to date. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.

9. Corporate and Business Plan

The Board were informed that the Corporate Plan for 2005-7 and 2005 Business Plan were approved by both Ministers and also they had approved the budget of £3.67m for 2005.

They were also advised that the Corporate & Business Plan would now go to print and copies will be available by the end of the year.

10. Angling Events 2005

The Board were provided with a detailed schedule of angling events and estimated costs for 2005 which included Angling Fair 5th & 6th March, Bass/Saltwater Festival 20th & 21st August. The Board gave its approval to proceed with expenditure up to £20k.

Proposed Jack Allen
Seconded Pat Griffin

11. Legislation

The CEO reported that he was encouraged with the progress to date on Foyle Bill. Regular meetings between the Agency, DARD and DCMNR were being held and the Board were provided with a report from DCMNR on outstanding issues and their current status. He also advised that DARD would be meeting shortly with Crown Estates Commissioners and hoped that an agreement would be forthcoming shortly.

12. Counter Validation Paper

The board were provided with a paper with proposals for an independent review of the Agency's Aquatic Fish Counters and validate their accuracy. This would be carried out by a group that would include staff from the GB Environment Agency and Scottish Fishery Protection Agency and representatives from the Foyle and Carlingford Area Advisory Forum. The overall cost would be mainly travel and accommodation costs of approximately £5k and the Scottish FPA would also have a contract charge for staff time and travel & subsistence. Total cost not to exceed £10k. The Board gave its approval to proceed on this basis.

Proposed Andrew Ward
Seconded Siobhan Logue

13. Accommodation

The Board were advised that they had previously approved £50k for the additional accommodation following discussions with DFP Construction Service and their initial surveys the estimated cost is approximately £75k. The Board gave its approval to proceed with this expenditure but asked that architect for the HQ be consulted and advised of the proposed temporary accommodation.

Proposed Jackie McConville
Seconded Dick Blakiston - Houston

14. Shellfish Presentation

This presentation was cancelled and will be provided to the Board at another meeting.

15. Digital Aerial Photography – Presentation

Paddy Boylan gave a presentation on the aerial digital photography and the results on the River Finn catchment. This new technology complements the existing field work carried out by agency staff and is useful for identifying areas most in need of habitat restoration. The Board gave its approval to proceed with the preparation of a business case for submission to the sponsor Departments and run a tendering competition through the EU Journal.

Proposed Siobhan Logue
Seconded Andrew Ward

16. Genetics – Presentation

A presentation was given to the Board by Dr Walter Crozier DARD/QUB on the results of the Genetic survey of the Foyle System. The Board were also provided with a summary of conclusions and recommendations.

17. Marine Tourism Study

The Board were advised of a final draft of the Marine Tourism Study and agreed to delegate its consideration to the Marine Tourism Sub Committee. A meeting would be arranged shortly and the Board will receive feed back at their next meeting.

18. AOB

A, Keith Anderson advised the Board that he wished to tender his resignation. He felt he was unable to fulfil his duties due to business commitments. The Board thanked him for his service to the Board and Agency and wished him all the best for the future.

B, The Board were asked to note the letter of thanks from the Carlingford Sailing Club for the Agency's assistance with the recent J24 competition. A selection of photographs was also provided which would be used for press releases.

C, The Board were advised of the DARD interest circular detailing forthcoming positions on a new advisory body on Education, Research & Development and Technology Transfer if any Board Members are interested contact John Pollock.

19. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

Armagh 15th December 2004 to be confirmed.