

Reserved

**17th Meeting of the Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights
Commission**

held on

Wednesday 21st May 2003

At

Loughs Agency Headquarters Prehen

1. Present

Board

Peter Savage (Chairperson)
Lord Cooke of Islandreagh
Dick Blakiston Houston
Jack Allen
Siobhan Logue
Jacquie McConville
Tarlach O'Crosain
Andrew Ward
Pat Griffin
Joseph Martin

Loughs Agency

Derick Anderson (CE)
John Pollock
Stanley Thorpe
Paddy Boylan

2. Apologies

Keith Anderson, Frank Feely

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

All matters arising to be discussed as separate agenda items.

5. CE Report.

5.1 *Salmon*

River Faughan is now open with 2 fish caught on the opening day (5lb & 10lb) with 24 up counts registered past the counter.

By the end of April the River Roe counter had registered 124 while the Finn which is an early river has registered nearly 700. The counter at Sion Mills is on target with over 700 registered to date.

5.2 *Smolts*

The micro tagging of smolts for this year is now complete with 3020 Finn smolts tagged and for the first year 2113 Faughan smolts tagged. It was also reported that the annual 6 week closure of Herdsman's Hydro at Sion Mills commenced on 28th April.

5.3 *Seizures*

A table of illegal activity was provided which detailed an increase in activity around March & April possible reason for this was the high market price of fresh salmon in those months. These seizures have resulted in some prosecutions and the Board will be kept informed on their progress.

5.4 *Mussel Licences*

There is still some work to finalise this issue by the Departments DARD and DCMNR but it is hoped that licences will be issued shortly.

5.5 *Mussel Seed*

The Shellfish sub committee are asked to consider Board Paper 4A - Joint arrangements for the management of seed mussel stocks in relation to Irish and Northern Ireland Vessels. Any comments should be forwarded to the CE as soon as possible.

5.6 *Auto Telemetry Buoys*

The Auto telemetry buoys have been ordered and will be deployed in both Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough by the end of August. These will provide baseline data for the Agency to develop a management system.

5.7 *Marine Tourism Audit*

The Departments have still concerns that this audit goes beyond "care and maintenance" however a meeting is planned with the Departments and NSMC secretariat and it is hoped that they will agree a paper should be prepared for consideration under the "Interim Procedures" mechanism.

5.8 *Angling Development*

The Board was informed of the appointment of the Agency's new Angling Manager John Todd and were provided with a copy of his weekly report.

The Angling Manager's role includes building contacts with TV and Radio and Angling Journalists (game, coarse and sea) from all the main publications. It is necessary to invite them over to look, sample and report back on the potential of the Foyle and Carlingford Catchments however the Agency would be required to meet any travel and accommodation costs. The Board approved expenditure up to £1,000 for each visit and if the estimated cost would exceed this it would require further approval from the Chair of the Audit and Finance Sub Committee.

5.9 *Audit/Accounts*

2000 is nearly complete and will be signed off shortly.

2001 is currently being audited and it is hoped it will be signed off by the end of June.

2002 to be audited in June and is on target for completion by the end of July.

The annual joint Internal Audit (DCMNR and DARD) has commenced and the Audit and Finance Sub Committee will be provided with their findings as soon as they are available.

5.10 *Tunes Plateau Wind Farm Proposal*

Nothing further to report the Board is asked to note correspondence from Cecilia Keaveney TD (4B & C)

5.11 *Joint Declaration*

The Board is asked to note document 4D Joint Declaration by the British and Irish Governments and the Interim Procedures that are currently in place.

5.12 *Corporate Governance*

CE reported on the corporate governance seminar that was held in Armagh on 1st April. The Board was asked to note Paper 4E summary of proceedings and in particular page 5 Action Points.

6. Board Matters

6.1 *On-Board Training*

CIPFA's timetable is very full and the Agency is having difficulty in arranging the On-Board training. Board members will be advised when a date has been arranged.

6.2 *Sub committee*

Terms of reference were provided for the sub committees (Paper 5B) and also the Audit and Finance Committee was asked to consider the draft TOR as provided by Internal Audit.

7. Staff Issues - Restricted

8. CE Contract of Employment - Restricted

9. Advisory Forum

Further to the Advisory forums request for the Board minutes to be made public it was agreed that a reserved copy would be provided. These reserved minutes would be prepared and approved for publication at the following Board meeting (copies will also be made on the Agency's web site.

10. Audit of Fisheries Based recreation and Leisure – Next Steps

Following the recent tender for a consultancy to prepare a development plan the Marine Tourism Sub Committee recommended to the Board Lestas Consulting. The Board gave its approval and asked that the CE meet with them and initiate work on the plan as soon as possible.

11. Netting Sub Committee

A recent meeting of the netting sub committee which included representatives from the Drift and Draft netsmen's associations was held and netting applications and licence allocations were discussed. There was only one disputed sea licence application

under dispute where both applicants had the same number of points this was resolved following a draw.

The Drift Net Association were reminded that there were 3 places on the advisory forum that they had not taken up and were invited to do so as their contribution to the discussions would be valuable. They declined but said that they would give the matter further consideration after discussing it with their members.

12. Workshops Update

The proceedings of the Seal/Salmon Interaction Workshop is now with the printers.

The shellfish workshop “management for sustainability” to be held on Friday 30th May in Newry has received a good response to date. Transport has been provided for those wishing to travel from the Foyle Area. The programme will include speakers from USA, New Zealand, UK and Holland.

13. Interpretive Centre Update

An update to date was provided (Paper 12) with over 1400 visitors through the doors since it opened with excellent reviews. However because of the restrictions on advertising and marketing the 1st years target will not be reached.

14. Meeting DCMNR and DARD

The Board welcomed Peter O'Neill and Noel Cornick who gave an update on the current position with regard to the Primary Legislation. Mr Cornick indicated that his Department were exploring the possibility of progressing the Bill by Order in Council as an alternative to the Assembly route. Mr O'Neill indicated that discussions were ongoing with regard to the jurisdictional issue but they both hoped the Bill would be enacted by May 2004 and gave the Board their assurances that they would do everything in their power to deliver this aspiration.

15. DNA Presentation

The Board received a progress report from Dr Walter Crozier and Mr David Booth on the research into the genetic diversity of the Foyle salmon stocks. The Board were pleased to note that the research when completed would provide new and extremely

valuable information on those issues which are currently raising concerns with salmon stocks:

- The impact of hatcheries.
- The impact of commercial exploitation on multi stock fisheries.
- The sea survival of salmon.

16. AOB

16.1 Jack Allen reported that he is part of the commercial Salmon Licence Review team which is following up on the recent review of recreational licences.

16.2 The Board was provided with a copy of the proposed FCB angling licence charges for 2004 which have been raised by 3%. They agreed that the Agency should maintain parity and asked that a regulation be drafted and brought forward in time for the opening of the 2004 season.

17. Date of Next Meeting

July at Agency HQ Prehen final date to be agreed.