

RESERVED
22nd MEETING OF THE FOYLE CARLINGFORD AND IRISH LIGHTS
COMMISSION
held on
WEDNESDAY 24th March 2004
at
LOUGHS AGENCY HQ PREHEN

Present

Board

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

Loughs Agency

Derick Anderson (CE)
Stanley Thorpe
John Pollock
Ann McPherson

1. Apologies

Keith Anderson, Jacqui McConville

2. Minutes of the 20th Meeting

The minutes were agreed.

Proposed Jack Allen

Seconded Tarlach O'Crosain

3. Reserved Minutes

The reserved minutes were agreed and would be made available to the public through the Agency's web site.

Proposed Jack Allen

Seconded Tarlach O'Crosain

4. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

5. CE Report

5.1 Bonus Scheme

RESERVED

5.2 Meeting with Sponsor Departments

CE advised that a meeting had been arranged with DARD's Permanent Secretary for Monday 29th March 2004 with the view to clarifying some areas of difficulty in particular the Agency's responsibilities for shellfish and aquaculture, the Warrenpoint Harbour Interreg application and the delays with the revised Foyle Bill (Derick Anderson, Peter Savage, Lord Cooke of Islandreagh and John Pollock to attend). A similar meeting has also been sought with DCMNR but to date no response has been received.

5.3 Biologist's PhD

CE reported that Paddy Boylan the Agency's Biologist has completed his PhD and has submitted a thesis for assessment. Out of this he plans to publish 2 papers and the Board gave their approval to proceed on this basis.

5.4 Salmon Counts 2004

CE reported that to date the counter at Sion Mills (River Mourne) had registered over 70 and the counter at Killygordon (River Finn) had registered over 80.

5.5 Enforcement

CE reported that poaching on the Foyle system was quiet with 22 nets being recovered however some of these were a carryover from 2003 and had just been handed in by the Strabane and Lifford Anglers.

5.6 Angling Update

The season commenced on 1st March with a slow start due to the long dry spell. The latest version of John Todd's (Angling Manager) weekly angling report was provided and the Board were advised that this was available by Email and on the Agency's Web site.

5.7 Shellfisheries

Harvesting of mussels is continuing with 29% meat yields reported. Some movement of mussel seed reported into the Foyle Area from Belfast Lough however the Agency is unable to control this due to the lack of primary legislation. Survey work is continuing with the Lough Bradan assisting DARD with survey work in Belfast Lough.

5.8 Angling Fair

CE reported an excellent response to the Agency's first Angling Fair with over 2,000 visitors. The Board asked that all staff be commended for all their hard work in making the fair such a success. They also gave their approval for a Carlingford Fair to be held and also a further fair at Prehen to be arranged for 2005.

5.9 Riverwatch

The Board were referred to the update paper provided by Gillian Simpson giving an update on 2003 and setting out the programme of events for 2004. Further items relating to "Riverwatch" for discussion are at agenda No.s 20 and 22.

6. CE Contract & Review

It was agreed that the Audit and Finance and Personnel Sub Committee would be delegated the authority to deal with these matters on the boards behalf.

7. Staffing and Pensions

The Board expressed their concern with the delays in the resolution with regard to North/South pay and the consequences for impact on the new North/South Pension Scheme. They instructed the CE to follow up on these issues with NSMC secretariat and DFP.

8. Finance Update

Ann McPherson advised the Board on the current balance in the Agency's accounts and gave an explanation of the recent draw down request of grant aid from both Sponsor Departments. She also provided a detailed breakdown of income and expenditure by cost centre and also advised the Board that the draft 2003 accounts were on schedule and would be submitted for audit by the target date 31st March.

9. Audit and Finance Sub Committee

It was agreed to hold an Audit and Finance sub committee meeting before the end of April CE to confirm date and venue with Jack Allen Sub Committee Chairman.

10. Business Plan Report on 2004

John Pollock provided a table of 2004 Business targets and progress to date. The Board agreed the format and requested that an updated version be presented at all future Board meetings.

11. Financial Memorandum

The Board were advised that although the Financial Memorandum had been agreed by both Sponsor Departments DARD's Finance Division had requested further amendments a copy of the revised version was provided and the Board gave their approval to proceed.

Proposed Pat Griffin
Seconded Dick Blakiston-Houston

12. Risk Register

The Board were provided with the latest draft version of the Risk Register which now includes target dates and named persons responsible for the specific actions. They gave their approval to proceed subject to a few minor amendments.

Proposed Jack Allen
Seconded Tarlach O'Crosain

13. Interreg Application

CE advised that the Agency was currently preparing an Interreg Application, which was due to be submitted on 31st March. The Application was a follow on from the development plan and would include infrastructure for example car parks, access, groynes, styles and signage to promote angling in the Foyle and Carlingford Area. The Board also gave their approval for the Agency to retain Lestas Consulting to finalise the application due to the short time frame and also the recent absence of the CE. The estimated cost would be in the region of £2,000.

Proposed Andrew Ward
Seconded Siobhan Logue

14. Louth County Council Correspondence

The Board were advised of the request from Louth County Council for assistance with the repair to the crane at Carlingford Harbour which is used by the Carlingford Shellfishermen's co-op. Legal advice was also provided which confirmed that the British Irish Agreement provides the Loughs Agency with the legal basis to assist with such requests. The Board gave its approval to proceed on this basis and agreed to make a contribution to the repair totalling €4,000.

15. FCB Correspondence

The Board considered the correspondence from the Fisheries Conservancy Board (NI) and agreed a response.

16. Pre Fisheries Abundance (PFA)

The Board considered the proposal paper for a research project to study conservation limits, pre fishery abundance and management of the Foyle salmon fishery. This will be carried out in partnership with Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Marine Institute and Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (France) and the University of Glasgow. The duration will be over a 3 year period with an estimated cost is £125k. The Board gave their approval to proceed with the submission of a business case to both Sponsor Departments.

17. Legislation

The Board were advised that the proposed Greenbraes Regulation was still in draft form and being amended following comment from the Departmental Solicitors.

The Board were advised that the Angling Regulation which introduced a reduced bag limit of one salmonid for the period 1st March to 31st May was signed on 1st April.

The Board were advised that the Control of Drift and Draft Net Regulation was being proceeded through the Interim Procedures mechanism and would be signed within the next few weeks.

18. Advisory Forum Minutes

The Board noted the contents of the minutes.

19. Marine Tourism Study Tender

The Board were advised that the recent tender for consultants was now complete and an assessment had been carried out by John Pollock, Peter Savage and Barney O'Hagan (NWRCBG). They have recommended that Tourism Development International be awarded the project and the Board gave its approval to proceed on this basis and asked that the study commence as soon as possible.

Proposed Andrew Ward
Seconded Siobhan Logue

20. Proposal from Channel 9 TV

The Board considered the proposal from Channel 9 TV to make a 15 minute programme and DVD to promote the Loughs Agency and Riverwatch through the eyes of schoolchildren. The estimated cost is £3,500 with an additional charge per DVD unit dependent on the numbers ordered. The footage will also be available for use on the Agency's web site. The Board gave their approval to proceed on this basis.

Proposed Dick Blakiston Houston
Seconded Frank Feely

21. Web Site

The Board considered the 3 tenders submitted by web design companies and gave their approval to proceed with the tender submitted by Streamon.net. Work to commence on the web design as soon as possible with a view to a re-launch of the Agency's web site in September.

Proposed Jack Allen
Seconded Pat Griffin

22. AOB

22.1 Youth Angling Festival

The Board considered the Business Case for the proposed Junior Angling Festival and the different options. It was agreed that to hold such a Festival would help in the achievement of the Loughs Agency's Objectives and the Board approved Option 3 with expenditure up to a maximum of £11k.

Proposed Jack Allen
Seconded Tarlach O'Crosain

22.2 Salmon/Seal Interaction Workshop Papers

The Board were provided with the published version of the proceedings from the Salmon and Seal Interaction Workshop.

22.3 Board of CBAIT

The CE advised the Board that he had been invited to join the Board of the Cross Border Aquaculture Initiative Team. The Board approved his acceptance of this invitation.

22.4 NSMC Corporate Governance Seminar

The Board were advised of the forthcoming seminar at the Armagh City Hotel on Friday 26th March. Anyone interested in attending should contact John Pollock

23. Date of Next Meeting

Date and venue to be advised.