

Reserved

**38th MEETING OF THE FOYLE CARLINGFORD AND IRISH LIGHTS
COMMISSION**

Wednesday 8th November 2006 @ 11am

At

Loughs Agency HQ Prehen

Present

Board

Jack Allen (acting chair)

Tarlach O'Crosain

Pat Griffin

Andrew Ward

Joseph Martin

Siobhan Logue

Frank Feely

Jacqui McConville

Dick Blakiston-Houston

Loughs Agency

Derick Anderson CEO

John Pollock

Barry Fox

Stanley Thorpe

1. Apologies

Peter Savage

Jack Allen nominated as acting chair

Proposed Tarlach O'Crosain

Seconded Andrew Ward

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes were agreed

Proposed Jacqui McConville

Seconded Pat Griffin

3. Reserved Minutes

The reserved minutes were agreed

Proposed Jacqui McConville

Seconded Pat Griffin

4. Matters Arising

None

5. CEO Report

CE reported that the salmon runs were an average year slightly down on 2005. Illegal activity continued with the protection crews achieving successful prosecutions. Three cars were also seized for transporting illegally caught fish.

Barry Fox gave an overview of the aquaculture season in 2006 which was disappointing for most fishermen although the market price for mussels were at a record high with prices exceeding €3,500 per tonne. Some operators having received a fixed seasonal price of €2,500 to €2,750 per tonne. Estimated turnover for Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough this season €6m and €9.5m respectively. In Lough Foyle there were several reports of poaching on other operator's areas this has been raised with the department however no action has been taken.

6. Staffing/Recruitment

The Board were advised that the recruitment process for the Director posts was well underway. John Pollock has been appointed Director of Corporate Services and the 3 other positions will be filled by the end of December as they have notice to give etc. The interviews for the PA post will commence next week. They were also advised that there were no suitable candidates for the Corporate Services Manager and it was agreed that as the Departments were unable to provide secondees that the competition should be rerun again. Also the Board asked for consistency in approach Clarendon Executive recruitment should be asked to manage the process again. John Pollock to obtain quote.

7. Foyle and Carlingford Fisheries Bill

The Board were advised that the Northern Bill would be published on Friday with an 8 week public consultation process. The Board will be provided with consultation documents by DARD and a briefing by the sponsor departments would be arranged as soon as possible. The Board again expressed their concerns that wild shellfisheries had been removed from the Bill and they would be making representations to their political parties. CEO agreed to write to the Depts outlining their thinking however he advised any major change to the Bill at this stage could jeopardise the progress of the Bill and he would be seeking a commitment that this omission would be rectified as soon as possible.

8. Staffing Review & Retrospection

CEO advised that he had briefed the Audit Committee on the position. He has also had some discussion on the matter with the new DARD Assistant Secretary and a meeting has been arranged with Fisheries Division to discuss the matter in more detail. The Board will be kept informed on progress.

9. Pension Update

CEO gave an update on the Pension issue. A draft IP is currently being prepared with the help of DoF to regularise the current pension scheme and confirm that new staff employed since 1999 will benefit from the scheme as those FFC staff that were transferred to the Loughs Agency. Work will then commence on the harmonising of the Agency scheme with that x border scheme for the other bodies.

10. Finance Update

The Board were provided with an update on the current financial position, income and expenditure and variances. Detailed papers were provided. They were also advised that a further £500,000 had been surrendered out of the 2006 budget allocation and it may also be necessary to surrender a further £300,000 if the Carlingford Office EA is not approved until 2007. They were also advised that the sign off of the 2005 accounts was imminent with no major issues to be raised by the C&As. The 2005 Annual report was also complete and as soon as the Accounts are signed off an IP will be drafted for approval to go to publication.

11. Carlingford Office Economic Appraisal Update

The Board were provided with an update on the EA progress. Currently with DARD Economist who has raised some further queries and these have been forwarded onto Deloitte.

12. Survey Vessel Economic Appraisal Update

The Board were provided with an update on the EA progress and again with both Sponsor Departments for comment. It is anticipated the tender process will commence early in 2007.

13. Cloghan Lodge River Finn

The Board were advised of the concerns in the number of salmon being taken from the sanctuary area at Cloghan Lodge on the River Finn and if the numbers published are accurate this is having a detrimental effect on the escapement targets. This river is an SAC and the Agency has had discussion with EPA and they are keen to act. The Agency will be writing to the owners of the fishery and will keep the Board updated on progress.

14. Baseline Survey Lough Foyle

The Board were advised that the final draft of the report was now available (copies provided) and Ciaran McGonigle will make a presentation of its findings to the Shellfish Sub Committee. The Board congratulated on the comprehensive content and stated that it would be very useful tool for the roll out of aquaculture.

15. Interceptory Salmon Fisheries

The Board were provided with the report of the salmon advisory committee and the need to cease interceptory fishing through Ireland in any areas that are intercepting fish from rivers that are not meeting their conservation limits. In the case of the Foyle area any nets seaward of Lough Foyle have been deemed as intercepting fish from the Bush and Bann who are not meeting their limits. As a result these nets will have to cease. Also the numbers of nets within the Lough will have to be greatly reduced. The Agency has commenced work on the necessary regulations to manage this and it will also be necessary to amend the regulations for angling. Draft regulations to be brought forward for approval asap. The Hardship fund recommended for the RoI does not apply to the Foyle Area however the

Agency is currently investigating a mechanism for funding a similar scheme through the Sponsor Departments.

16. Reserved

17. Angling Fair

The board gave their approval to hold a further Angling Fair in 2007 (10th & 11th March) and gave their approval for funding up to £35k similar to the expenditure of the 2006 fair.

Proposed Siobhan Logue
Seconded Tarlach O'Crosain

18. AOB

A, DVD – The Board were provided with copies of the promotional DVD recorded by Channel 9 TV. They congratulated all staff that participated in its production.

B, Riverview Residents Assn Proposal – The Board considered the proposal from the association regarding the cross community art proposal along the banks of the Foyle and agreed that it fitted in well both the history of salmon fishing in the area and its role in the promotion of Marine Tourism. They gave their approval to fund £3k up to a shortfall maximum of £6k. The Board also agreed to offer the Agency HQ for the official launch and provide catering if required.

Proposed Andrew ward
Seconded Siobhan Logue

C, Business Plan Update – The Board were provided with the latest outturn against targets and were advised that most of the targets were on target some would be missed due to the delays with the approval of the staffing and ongoing recruitment and also the delays with the publication of the revised Bill.

20. Date of next Meeting

Thursday 7th December 2006 in Dublin