

57th MEETING OF THE FOYLE CARLINGFORD AND IRISH LIGHTS COMMISSION

Wednesday 8th July 2009 @ 11am

Loughs Agency Offices, Carlingford

Attendees

Present

Tarlach O'Crosain (Chairman)
Thomas Sloan
Joe Miller
Denis Haughey
John Byrne
Winston Patterson
Enda Bonner

In Attendance - Loughs Agency

Derick Anderson – CEO
John McCartney – Director of Conservation and Protection
Barry Fox – Director of Aquaculture and Shellfisheries
John Pollock – Director of Corporate Services
Gerard Mills – Director of Development
Laura French (Minutes)

1. Apologies

Jacqui McConville (Vice Chair)
Brendan Byrne
Alan McCulla
Jim Wilson
John Mulcahy

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Proposed Thomas Sloan
Seconded Denis Haughey

3. Reserved Minutes

The proposed reserved minutes were approved.

Proposed Thomas Sloan
Seconded Denis Haughey

4. Matters Arising

None

5. CEO Report

RESERVED

CEO reported to the Board that the Agency had received the letter from the European Union that they were waiting on to proceed with the final payment of the Hardship Scheme this morning. He added that the Agency would now request the funds from both Sponsoring Departments, pay out the final tranche and get the final sign off on our accounts.

CEO provided the Board with a copy of the Joint Communiqué from the 8th Plenary Meeting of the North South Ministerial Council. He advised there was still no resolution on efficiency savings and this would be probably be announced at the next meeting in November / December 2009.

CEO reported to the Board that in February 2009 John McCartney, Gerard Mills and himself gave a presentation to the Joint Committee of the Oireachtas and at this meeting they had invited the Committee to visit Lough Agency Headquarters. The Committee had now contacted the Agency and 5 members of the Committee will visit Headquarters on the 15th July 2009. CEO invited members of the Board to attend to meet the Committee.

RESERVED

6. Directors Report

The Board were provided with updates from the Senior Management Team each giving a brief overview on their respective areas.

Corporate Services

John Pollock, Director of Corporate Services provided the Board with the following short report;

Finance

The 2nd quarter of grant in aid drawdown is complete and the 3rd quarter request is being prepared. Expenditure is on target however impact of proposed efficiency cuts are not known and budget profile may have to be revisited when guidance from the Departments of Finance is received. The Hardship Package 3rd and final tranche was due in April 2009 (awaiting clearance from Northern Ireland Audit Office to make final payments).

Audit

2007 Financial Statements (end 31st Dec 07) still awaiting sign off by C&Ags (North and South). Audit Committee Meetings held on 27th March and 22nd April 2009. Meeting held 22nd April 2009 with Internal Audit North and South re 3 year Audit strategy. Next Internal Audit planned for August 2009. NIAO and C&AG Dublin Audit on 2008 accounts commenced on 20th April 2009. Their findings will be tabled for discussion by the Board and audit subcommittee later in the year. Further training to be sourced for the audit committee members

Corporate Governance

Risk Management workshop held in February 2009 and Risk Register and profile updated.

NSMC

NSMC Sectoral meeting 20th July 2009 venue of next meeting to be agreed. Possibly July in Omagh Area.

Staffing Recruitment / Vacancies

Staffing loading review commenced all staff scheduled for interview. 1 Riverwatcher vacancy, 1 storeman vacancy. Recruitment of temporary Assistant Information Services Officer commenced to cover career break.

Annual Report

Final NSMC clearance of the 2007 Annual Report on hold until the 2007 accounts are signed off by the C & Ags.

Business Plan 2009

Draft complete awaiting comment from Sponsoring Departments and Departments of Finance on efficiency savings but Plan was considered at the April NSMC but it is proposed to seek final approval by NSMC at July Sectoral Meeting.

Pensions

Discussion ongoing with Department of Finance. Meeting to be arranged with HM Cabinet Office

Equality

Nothing to report – progress report on 2008 being complied will be reported on to the Board later in the year.

Accommodation

Work on the redesign of reception area is now complete. Greencastle accommodation partnership with community association still being considered.

Advisory Forum

Currently reviewing membership / poor attendees – 8 resignations and write to all on the reserve list to confirm they are still available.

Conservation and Protection

John McCartney, Director of Conservation and Protection provided the Board with the following report;

The 2009 commercial season has started poorly with few fish caught in either the drift or draft net fishery. The water conditions have been poor, but more suitable than the 2008 season. The commercial fishermen are at this point quite disappointed.

Angling catches on the other hand seem to be improved on the Finn and Mourne systems, but remain limited on the Faughan and Roe catchments. Early pre season success against illegal fishing appear to have slowed the net poaching effort, however this is likely to rise again once the main grilse runs appear. It is pleasing to note that the effort against illegal angling over the last few years appears to be working with a significant decrease in the number of people angling without licences.

As requested at the last Board meeting I have prepared a short summary on the commercial nets for the attention of the Board members.

Consultations

The angling amendment Regulation with the Foyle and Finn catch and release in its schedule, and the Regulations for non catch species and specifically species of Shad, Smelt and Lamprey have been launched for public consultation.

The Regulations to protect Eels and the closure of areas above and below fish passes have been approved by the DARD legislative committee and hopefully with DSO clearance will be ready for the next NSMC.

Other Regulations particularly those affecting the Greenbraes, Tope, Bass and Coarse fish have been held up for various reasons.

Health and Safety

There were no accidents reported since the last Board meeting. However the sympathies of the Directorate go to the young angler who drowned adjacent to Sion Mills weir. This event has had a very marked effect on the staff in highlighting that an area we all regularly work in has had such terrible consequences.

Fish Counters

The independent review and validation project for the Agency counters has reached a point where a draft report is available to Board members and is attached. Comments on its content would be appreciated.

Comparative Summary fish counter data

	2005 January to May	2006 January to May	2007 January to May	2008 January to May	2009 January to May
Faughan	136	60	193	341	-31
Finn	931	872	1545	226	345
Sion Mills	67	1398	1405	124	1106
Roe	65	372	814	287	35
Corrick	14	0	173	74	4
Newry	Not available	Not available	Not available	106	12
Omagh	Not available	Not available	Not available	62	49

Enforcement Actions

In 2009 so far, Agency staff have dealt with 54 rod related offences, and seizures. Agency protection staff have also seized 53 illegal nets, including 1 full drift net, 2 vehicles, 2 boats and 4 bags of Oysters as well as various other items.

NASCO

The Agency was represented at the last NASCO conference, and I have attached the agreed press release for the Boards information.

It is of interest to note that attempts to halt fisheries off the French Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon (off the west coast of Newfoundland) and off Labrador failed.

There continues to be an internal subsistence fishery off West Greenland taking about 8,000 fish (25 tonnes). However the overall view of the broad Irish and Loughs Agency management of salmon stocks continues to be well received.

Aquaculture and Shellfisheries

Barry Fox, Director of Aquaculture and Shellfisheries provided the Board with the following short report;

Foyle Area (Control of Oyster Fishing) (Amendment) Regulations 2009

The above amendment was before the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee on the 23rd June 2009. The Committee Chairman indicated that he was not convinced that this amendment was necessary due to the comments received during the consultation. He has requested that the objectors attend the committee to voice their concerns so that the committee can make an informed decision on the matter.

Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Aquaculture Licensing) Regulations 2009

The above Regulations were before the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee on the 23rd June 2009. The Committee Chairman indicated that he was not convinced that these Regulations were necessary due to the comments received during the consultation. He has requested that the objectors attend the committee to voice their concerns so that the committee can make an informed decision on the matter.

SEA

Faber Maunsell AECOM have begun making contact with stakeholders in both catchment areas. A letter has been sent out to inform people of the Agency's intention to publish a Strategic implementation plan and to carry out the public information days relating to the SEA. I have attached a copy of the letter for your information.

Monitoring Vessel

The monitoring vessel is currently undergoing repairs at McDuff Shipyard. There are some additional items the Agency intends to

have completed while the vessel is at the shipyard. I will report on these at the Board meeting.

Development

Gerard Mills, Director of Development sent apologies but CEO provided the Board with the following report;

Interreg bids

We still await letter of offer under tourism.

2 Environmental bids have been made and submitted to SEUPB by 10th of July 2009. One is research based, the other is community outreach based in Carlingford. Outcome is likely to be announced by Early 2010.

Angling Academy

Tenders have been sent to pilot the scheme to provide alternative summer/diversionary activities for young people during the summer months and weekends. We also seek to grow angling by developing the activity with young people.

2008 Sustainable Development Projects Update

A hiatus has been hit in respect of progressing these Letters of Offer as Sponsor Departments feel that the necessary approvals have not been sought. To stress, the Agency followed the advice given in 2007 to the letter but it is believed that finance Ministers' approval should have been sought separately (Board are asked to note that the funds used are part of the Agency's block funding from Sponsor Departments and as such are approved annually by Ministers of Finance).

Training

Training has taken place for temporary staff on the 29th of May and 5th of June 2009.

Awaiting final numbers for training in

- Risk assessment
- IOSH
- Fire Risk Assessment and warden training
- Engine maintenance
- Crane operations for the new boat
- 4x4 training
- RYA

Communication Strategy

Members of Deloitte will be carrying out interviews, internally and externally, shortly to establish the Agency's baseline communications assessment.

Summer Marketing Campaign

Draft Marketing Plan for Riverwatch – Summer/Tourist Season
2009

No	Activity	Effective from	Cost	Comments
1	Banner at front gate	All year round	Nil	Done
2	First distribution of Riverwatch leaflets (3,500)		£1000 for printing	
3	Letter to TIC Managers re: Saturday opening and 3pm feeding times. Also offer of Fam visit	15/06/09	Nil	
3	E-mail to youth summer schemes Derry: clare_mceleney@welbni.org x 29 Limavady: tina_mccloskey@welbni.org x 20 Strabane/Omagh: jo_brogan@welbni.org x 16 E-mail to school summer schemes	15/06/09 15/06/09	Nil	
4	Inclusion of centre in Angling Report	w/c 15 th June	Nil	
5	Launch of summer programme to angling database	w/c 15 th June	Nil	
6	Strap line on all outgoing email.	w/c 15 th June	Nil	

No	Activity	Effective from	Cost	Comments
7	Front page and high profile on Agency website. (Idea - Photo's of visiting groups)	w/c 6th July	£400 per day	
8	Sentinel Tel: 02871348889 Claire McCready Tel: (028) 7134 8889 Email: claire.mccready@jpress.co.uk Web: www.Londonderrytoday.co.uk	Starts 3 rd July	£450	
9	Derry Journal Kerri McLaughlin Senior Advertising Sales Derry Journal Group Tel: 02871 272235 Fax: 02871 272225 www.derryjournal.com 1/4 page tabloid Friday & Tuesday Journals - £705 Friday Journal only - £489 Tuesday Journal only - £481	Starts 3 rd July	£489	
10	NW Telegraph Leslie 71348000 Wednesday nights – deadline Friday before. 16/8 ½ page free editorial 16cm high 27cm wide 2 nights nwt@belfasttelegraph.co.uk	Starts 3 rd July	£150	
11	Inish Independent– (¼ page) Inishowen Independent 66 Mill Brae Buncrana Co. Donegal TEL: 074 93 21510	Starts 3 rd July	€180	

No	Activity	Effective from	Cost	Comments
	FAX: 074 93 21751 EMAIL: annette@inishowenindo.ie			
12	Bus Advertising Appt with CBS outdoor TBA 4 week long campaign	Starts 6 th July	£3000 (min)	
13	Press release to all regional papers	Starts 6 th July	Nil	
14	Press release to radio stations	Starts 6 th July	Nil	
15	Press release to TV stations	Starts 6 th July	Nil	
16	Outreach stories in regional papers	Starts 6 th July	Nil	
17	Staff newsletter	Starts 6 th July	Nil	
18	DVCB Cultural Trail. Content to be sent	From early July	Nil	
19	Derry and Donegal Visitor Guide Content sent (April)	From early July	£195	20,000 copies
20	NI4Kids	July and August	£400	45,000 copes
21	NI4Families	July and August	£500	
22	NI Holiday News Paul Tel: 07790386787 ¼ advert in Derry Section of publication	July and August	£500	
23	NI Visitors Journal 30,000 copies Inc editorial & pictures	August through to November	£300	

No	Activity	Effective from	Cost	Comments
24	Second distribution of Riverwatch Leaflets	Mid July	Postage	
25	Billboard Advertising on 5 panels for 2 weeks JC Decaux 5 48 sheets £600 Locations: Spencer Road, Culmore Road, Craigavon Bridge, Dales Corner, John Street. Waiting on availability from company	3 rd August	Approx £2500	
26	Radio coverage – feeding time	July / August	Nil	
27	Promotion of centre at events	July & August	Nil	

* prices exclude VAT

Key messages

Riverwatch Aquarium and Visitor Centre

- Located just outside Derry City centre (opposite the Everglades Hotel)
- FREE admission and parking
- Must do for families and visitors
- Summer schemes and groups must be booked in advance
- Free activity packs to keep the kids entertained.
- Aquarium tanks have lobster, crabs, starfish and lots of other marine and freshwater fish and shellfish.
- Feeding times during the summer (July and August) every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday at 3pm.
- All indoors, it's a great wet weather option too!

Open Monday – Saturday 10am – 4pm during July and August.

www.loughs-agency.org

Tel: 02871 342100

7. Agreement for the Provision of Internal Audit Services

Covered in Director of Corporate Service's report.

8. NITB Meet the Buyer

Gerard Mills, Director of Development provided the Board with an evaluation from the above attended by Lionel Knobbs and Andrew Sides for their information.

9. Riverwatch Cost Per Visitor 2008

Gerard Mills, Director of Development provided the Board with a copy of the above produced by Peter O'Donnell for their information. The cost per visitor to the Riverwatch Centre was £2.29.

10. Sustainable Development Fund

Gerard Mills advised the Board that as they were aware a number of projects had been approved under Sustainable Development Fund but these have been held up due to awaiting Ministers of Finance approval to the policy. He added that an event, Foyle Days, which took place a few weeks back had been offered money in partnership with Derry City Council. This event was 100% funded. CEO made the decision to go ahead with the funding on the basis that it was in conjunction with Derry City Council. Gerard asked for approval from the Board to approve 5 other events that were jointly funded by County Councils or District Councils.

Proposed Joe Miller
Seconded Winston Patterson

11. Career Break

Gerard Mills provided the Board with a copy of the Agency's career break policy, he advised that this was taken from the Northern Ireland Civil Service Handbook. Gerard added that the Assistant Information Officer, Peter O'Donnell, was going on a career break and the recruitment process had already begun for his replacement.

12. Foyle Days

Covered in Director of Development's report but Gerard Mills asked for approval for the spend involved as detailed for the Board.

Proposed Denis Haughey
Seconded Joe Miller

13. Tweed Evaluation

Gerard Mills provided the Board with the above which was attended by Lionel Knobbs and Andrew Sides.

14. SEUPB Letter of Offer

Covered in Director of Development's report.

15. Londonderry Port and Harbour Letter of Offer

Gerard Mills provided the Board with information on the above. He added that the Board had approved technical assistance via Agency funds and the Agency were now in the position to reclaim the amount of money spent if eligible.

16. Interreg IV – Londonderry Port and Harbour

This was covered in item 15.

Proposed Denis Haughey
Seconded Joe Miller

17. Formal Board Approval SCENE, CMAR etc.

Gerard Mills advised the Board that he needed their formal approval to complete and submit these Interreg IV applications.

Proposed Denis Haughey
Seconded Winston Patterson

18. Request for Support / Sponsorship for Irish Coarse Angling Team

Gerard Mills provided the Board with a letter from Oliver McGauley from the Irish Coarse Angling Team requesting funds for them to take part in the world championships in Holland. Gerard added that he been in contact with Mr McGauley and advised that if the Agency were to make a donation towards the trip it would be for key cost on a receipted actual basis, e.g. travel, accommodation. CEO added that they would also be wearing Loughs Agency fleeces therefore promoting the Agency. Joe Miller suggested that the Agency contact Auditors to advise them of this in case a number of other organisations approached the Agency for the same funding. CEO agreed to do this and added that it was for

circa €4,000. Gerard Mills advised that as part of the funding he would be asking the club to provide the Agency with an evaluation. CEO also added that we could ask for a commitment from the Angling Team to provide a service at one of our angling academy's to stimulate interest.

Proposed Denis Haughey
Seconded John Byrne

19. Angling in Ireland Website

Gerard Mills asked for Board approval to spend £5,000 to translate the online brochures into French and German with Central Fisheries Board.

Proposed Winston Paterson
Seconded Denis Haughey

20. A.O.B

None

21. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 16th September 2009 at Loughs Agency Headquarters, Prehen.