

110th MEETING OF THE FOYLE CARLINGFORD AND IRISH LIGHTS COMMISSION

Wednesday 27th June 2018 at 11am

Waterways Ireland, Enniskillen

Attendees

Present

Andrew Duncan (Vice Chairman)
Alastair Patterson
Allan Ewart
Fiona Walsh
Heather Mackey
Ian McCrea
Patrick Gibbons
Terry McWilliams

In Attendance - Loughs Agency

Sharon McMahon – Designated Officer
John McCartney – Director of Conservation and Protection
JP O’Doherty – Interim Director of Corporate Services
Barry Fox – Director of Aquaculture and Shellfisheries
Laura McCready (Minutes)

1. Apologies

Michael McCormick
Phil Mahon
Mick Murphy
Kevin Wilson – Director of Development

2. Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest with any agenda items.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

Proposed Vice Chairman
Seconded Fiona Walsh

4. Reserved Minutes

The reserved minutes from the previous meeting were agreed by all.

Proposed Vice Chairman
Seconded Fiona Walsh

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

6. CEO Report

Minister Kyne Visit

Designated Officer reported that Minister of State Séan Kyne visited Loughs Agency on 1st June 2018, accompanied by Denis Maher from the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) and Ciaran Byrne, Inland Fisheries Ireland CEO. She added that Minister Kyne confirmed that the Agency had been successful in its capital bid for the redevelopment of its offices in Omagh.

Dinner Events hosted by the Taoiseach

Designated Officer reported that she had attended an event, together with the Chief Executives of the other Cross Border Bodies, hosted by the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar in Newry on 8th June 2018. She added that the CEO's gave the Taoiseach a brief update on issues currently effecting their organisation and the potential impacts of Brexit. Designated Officer advised that the Taoiseach was particularly interested in the unregulated oyster trestles on Lough Foyle and the Management Agreement.

Designated Officer advised that she had attended an event in honour of H.E. Mr Jean-Claude Juncker in Dublin Castle on 21st June 2018, hosted by the Taoiseach. She added that this had been a great opportunity to network and raise the profile of Loughs Agency.

Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

Designated Officer advised that she had been called before the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on 14th June 2018. She added that she was asked to provide oral evidence to the Committee regarding an inquiry on the implications of Brexit for the fishing industry in Northern Ireland.

Prince's Trust

Designated Officer advised that the Prince's Trust Director for Northern Ireland had visited Loughs Agency on 13th June 2018. She added that the Trust is interested in exploring options for working in partnerships, particularly in the cross border context. She stated that this would be a great opportunity for the Agency and that she would continue to inform the Board of any positive developments.

North South Fisheries Liaison Committee

Designated Officer advised that Loughs Agency hosted the latest meeting of the above Committee. She added that 2019 is the International Year of the Salmon and the Committee agreed to work in partnership on a single project, which will aim to create awareness of the issues facing salmon and their impact on the communities that benefit from the resource.

Rainbow Trout Escape

Designated Officer advised that the situation regarding the escaped rainbow trout had eased since the update provided at the last Board Meeting. She added that fish continued to be caught in the tidal waters, however, in much lesser quantities. She reported that Conservation and Protection crews continue to monitor the situation and a further update would be provided by John McCartney in his report.

Foyle Maritime Festival

Designated Officer advised that the Foyle Maritime Festival was taking place in Derry~Londonderry from 14th to 22nd July 2018. She added that Loughs Agency was working in partnership with Derry City and Strabane District Council to sponsor on-water activities.

Foyle River Gardens

Designated Officer advised that she attended an information session on the above project on 8th June 2018. She advised that this was an Eden Project type venture hosted by Sir Tim Smit, founder of the Eden Project. Designated Officer reported that the

representatives were very interested in the Agency's broodstock enhancement project.

7. Directors' Reports

The Vice Chairman advised the Board that Members had been provided with the Directors' Reports and asked if Members had any questions, or issues, they wished to raise with the Directors.

Aquaculture and Shellfisheries

Barry Fox, Director of Aquaculture and Shellfisheries asked if there were any questions in relation to his report.

RESERVED

Barry Fox advised the Board that planning permission had been received in relation to the broodstock enhancement project. He added that due to other delays associated with the site, a decision had been made to reallocate the capital funds and commence the project in early 2019.

There were no further questions / comments in relation to this report.

Corporate Services

JP O'Doherty, Interim Director of Corporate Services, asked if there were any questions in relation to his report.

Fiona Walsh highlighted that at this time the Agency has spent 5% of its capital budget, compared to this time last year, where it had spent 25% of its budget. JP O'Doherty advised that a number of the Agency's capital projects had commenced, however as most were being completed through Central Procurement Directorate, invoices would not be received until works had been completed.

Fiona asked if this had been planned from the beginning of the year. JP advised that due to the nature of the Agency's work, a lot of work is weather dependent habitat works, which would take place late in the year.

There were no further questions/comments in relation to this report.

Conservation and Protection

John McCartney, Director of Conservation and Protection, asked if there were any questions in relation to his report.

Vice Chairman asked for a further update regarding the rainbow trout escape. John McCartney advised that the Agency continues to monitor the situation. He added that the trout seem to have moved into the estuary and remain to be caught, however, not in the quantities that they were being captured earlier in the year.

John advised that he continues to liaise with colleagues in the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) who have proposed to work with Queens University Belfast, regarding a PhD on the long-term effects of the escape on the catchment.

Alastair Patterson advised that he had been in contact with local stakeholders regarding the escape. He added that stakeholders had praised the work of the Loughs Agency, however, they were concerned about the long-term effects on the local rivers.

Vice Chairman highlighted the warm weather and low water conditions increasing the risk of fish kills. John advised that currently salmon are holding in pools throughout the catchment, which encourages poaching activity and is of concern to the Agency. He added that Conservation and Protection crews were working continuously to try and alleviate this problem.

There were no further questions / comments in relation to this report.

Development

Kevin Wilson, Director of Development, was unable to attend the meeting and sent apologies. Designated Officer asked if there were any questions in relation to his report.

There were no questions / comments in relation to this report.

8. Finance Update

The Board was provided with a financial outturn report up to mid-June 2018. Patrick Gibbons commended JP O'Doherty on the re-

profiling of funds from replacement vehicles to E Licensing following the last Internal Audit report.

Patrick noted from the report that the Agency may require additional funding in quarter 4, and asked if the Agency had contacted Sponsor Departments in relation to same. JP advised that the Agency had been liaising with Sponsor Departments regarding its salaries budget, for some time. He added that the Agency currently do not have a full complement of staff, this therefore has alleviated budgetary pressure somewhat. JP added that the Agency are monitoring the situation daily, and will submit a bid for salary costs to Sponsor Departments in the October monitoring round.

9. Risk Register Update

Board Members were provided with copies of the most up to date Risk Registers for their information. JP O'Doherty advised the Board that he and the Designated Officer had met with Members of the Audit and Risk Committee the previous evening, to discuss the review of the Risk Register. Fiona Walsh complimented the Designated Officer and JP on the vast amount of work that had been completed on the new Register, she added that great progress had been made to date.

10. Outturn Against Targets

Board Members were provided with copies of the most up to date Outturn Against Targets for their information.

JP O'Doherty advised that the Agency was operating against targets provided to Sponsor Departments in November 2017. He added that recently Sponsor Departments had suggested changes to these targets. JP reported that the Agency will continue to operate on current targets until further discussions take place with Sponsor Departments.

11. Audit and Risk Committee Update

The Board was provided with a copy of the draft minutes of the 16th May 2018 Audit and Risk Committee meeting for information.

RESERVED

Fiona Walsh advised the Board that Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) had completed its audit, and had provided the Committee with its 2017 Draft Report to Those Charged with Governance. She added that whilst NIAO was awaiting feedback from the Comptroller and Auditor General in Dublin, the draft report had an unqualified opinion with no audit adjustments and no report on the accounts. Fiona complimented the Agency as all recommendations from the previous year had been completed, and there was no recommendations from the 2017 Report.

Fiona advised the Board that the Committee expected to be furnished with a copy of the 2017 Internal Audit report, when jointly agreed by both Sponsor Departments Internal Audit Departments. She added that Internal Audit were currently agreeing final adjustments and would then update the Implementation Plan when agreed.

Terry McWilliams advised the meeting that due to other work commitments that he would need to step down from the Audit and Risk Committee. Designated Officer thanked Terry for his contribution, and advised Members that the Agency would require another Board Member to sit on this Committee. The Board agreed that Alastair Patterson should sit on the Committee.

Proposed Ian McCrea
Seconded Allan Ewart

12. Strule Trust Update

Designated Officer advised that there had been no meeting of the Strule Trust since the last Board Meeting. She added that she hoped to have an update for the Board at its next meeting.

13. DAERA Flood Damage Project Update

Barry Fox informed the Board that all survey work had been completed on the flood damaged areas. He added that the Agency was currently sourcing land ownership from Land and Property Services, to proceed with works in the affected areas. Barry reported that following its survey the Agency estimated that 30% of the required work could be completed with the current budget. He added that this work would include fencing, bank stabilisation and revetment work.

Alastair Patterson asked if DAERA would provide the Agency with additional funding if only 30% of the works to be completed. Barry advised that there had been no indication of additional funds at this time.

14. EU Projects and Partnerships Update

The Board was provided with a paper prior to the meeting regarding the SWELL, SeaMonitor and CatchmentCARE Projects.

JP O'Doherty advised the Board that he is on the Steering Committee of the CatchmentCARE Project. He added that he attended a meeting of the Committee on 28th June 2018 where information was provided from scientists regarding the scoping process and permit requirements, which would take approximately 18 months. JP advised that the Agency had recruited one member of staff for this project and was currently in the process of recruiting a second.

15. AOB

Meeting Attendance

Fiona Walsh suggested that going forward the Agency hold meetings in a venue with a conference call facility. She added that, especially during winter, it may be more appropriate for Members to use this facility, when travelling may not be possible.

16. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 5th September 2018 at 11am in NSMC Offices, Armagh.