

# **116<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE FOYLE CARLINGFORD AND IRISH LIGHTS COMMISSION**

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 11am**

**NSMC Offices, Armagh**

## **Attendees**

### **Present**

Andrew Duncan (Vice Chairman)  
Allan Ewart  
Alastair Patterson  
Fiona Walsh  
Heather Mackey  
Michael McCormick  
Patrick Gibbons  
Phil Mahon  
Terry McWilliams

### **In Attendance - Loughs Agency**

Sharon McMahon – Designated Officer  
Laura McCready (Minutes)

### Private Time for Board Members

The Board did not avail of private time before the Board Meeting commenced.

### **1. Apologies**

Ian McCrea

### **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 Patrick Gibbons  
Seconded Fiona Walsh

#### **4. Reserved Minutes**

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

Proposed Patrick Gibbons  
Seconded Fiona Walsh

#### **5. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

#### **6. CEO Report**

##### Sponsorship Arrangement

Designated Officer advised the Board that the Agency will have a new sponsorship arrangement within DAERA, beginning in December 2019. She added that services have been centralised within DAERA, with the Agency moving from Inland Fisheries to Corporate Services. Designated Officer further advised that the Agency's contacts within DAERA will be Lisa Reid and Lynne O'Neill, who will attend the next Audit and Risk Committee Meeting as an introduction.

Designated Officer wished to thank Colette Connor, Donna Lyons and their wider team, whose expertise and advice have been invaluable to the Agency over a number of years.

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##### Moville / Greencastle Waste Water Treatment

Michael McCormick asked if the Agency has received any objections in relation to the sewage outfall planned for Moville, Co Donegal. Designated Officer advised that John McCartney met with Irish Water in relation to the above issue on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019, however she has not received an update from the meeting at this time. She added that a briefing paper will be available for the next Board Meeting.

Designated Officer reported that the Agency is working in partnership with Irish Water, NI Water, AFBI and East Border Region on the SWELL Project, which aims to improve water quality within the shared waters of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough.

### DAERA Board Meeting

Designated Officer advised the Board that the Agency has received direction in relation to the forthcoming DAERA Board Meeting, scheduled to take place on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Following discussions Board Members requested a separate meeting to be scheduled prior to the DAERA Board Meeting, to allow Members time to prepare. Laura McCready to arrange a Board Meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

### Engagements

Designated Officer advised the Board that she recently attended the Thomas D'Arcy McGee Summer School as a guest speaker, speaking on the subject of "Cross Border Co-Operation since 1998 – a Quiet Success Story of the Good Friday Agreement." She added that the panel included Tim O'Connor former Joint Secretary NSMC, Mary Madden former Joint Secretary NSMC, Sighle FitzGerald Joint Secretary NSMC and Michael D'Arcy Co-Editor of Border Crossing.

### Corporate Plan

Designated Officer advised the Board that the Senior Management Team recently attended a 2 day Corporate Planning event, where they presented their proposed plans for 2020 and beyond. She added that once these are agreed Directors will be invited to Board to present their projects.

### Ambassadors Programme

Designated Officer advised the Board that following successful Foyle and Carlingford Ambassadors Programmes, graduation ceremonies are being scheduled for the coming weeks. She added that once dates and venues have been agreed the Board will be advised of same.

### Salmon Conference

Designated Officer advised the Board that the Agency is hosting a Salmon Conference, in conjunction with the Foyle Association of Salmon and Trout Anglers (FASTA), Our Foyle Salmon – The Upstream Battle, on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019. She added that the conference will be chaired by the Board's Vice Chairman Andrew Duncan, with guest speakers including John McCartney of Loughs Agency, Dr Cathal Gallagher of Inland Fisheries Ireland, Professor Ken Whelan of Atlantic Salmon Trust and Dr Robert Rosell of Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute. Board Members are invited to

attend the conference, and should advise Laura McCready if they would like to register their attendance.

## **7. Strategic Plan**

At the 115<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting Board Members were provided with the Draft Strategic Plan, and had asked that this item be discussed further at the next Board Meeting.

Designated Officer thanked Fiona Walsh for the valuable feedback that she provided in relation to the Draft Plan to date. Following discussions Designated Officer asked Board Members to send their comments through to her, she will then collate the information and provide a further draft version to Members.

Board Members agreed to meet on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019 to further discuss the Strategic Plan, prior to it being presented to staff.

Fiona Walsh advised that the Agency has a duty of care to its staff, stakeholders and to the fish of the Foyle and Carlingford areas. She added that from reviewing the Strategic Plan she notes that fish habitat improvement seems to have slipped a little out of vision, and she feels that the Plan should refocus on this area.

## **8. Directors' Reports**

Vice Chairman advised the Board that Members were provided with the Directors' Reports, and asked if Members have any questions, or issues, they wish to raise with the Designated Officer.

### Corporate Services

Patrick Gibbons asked that going forward the Director of Corporate Services provide comparison figures in relation to staff sickness from the same time in the previous year. He added that this will allow Board Members to compare days lost to sickness, to establish if the sick rate is increasing or decreasing, or if there is a pattern forming.

## **9. Finance Update**

Board Members were provided with a Budget Report and an update on Capital Projects up to the end of August 2019, prior to the Board Meeting.

Designated Officer apologised for the delay in submission of the second Finance Report, however advised that the Agency's financial system reports at the end of each month, therefore this was not received from Finance until the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019. She added that the Agency intends to procure Business Intelligence reporting, allowing reports to be produced at any stage during the year, not just month end.

Patrick Gibbons highlighted the Capital Projects update and asked that going forward Directors explain briefly in their update what mechanism they use to identify habitat or access improvement schemes.

## **10. Risk Register Update**

Board Members were provided with the Corporate Risk Register and the individual Director's Operational Risk Registers for information. Designated Officer advised that the Risk Management Meeting was held the previous week, however Board papers were issued before the meeting, therefore the minutes of same are not included in the papers.

Patrick Gibbons asked that going forward a tracked changed version of the Risk Registers are provided to Board Members for ease of reference.

## **11. Outturn Against Targets**

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

## **12. Audit and Risk Committee Update**

Patrick Gibbons, Chairman of the Audit and Risk Committee advised Members that the next Audit and Risk Committee Meeting is scheduled to take place on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2019. He added that following the meeting he is scheduled to meet with Alan McKee, DAERA Head of Internal Audit.

## **13. Monitoring Vessel**

Board Members were provided with a sample work plan and estimated running costs per annum for a replacement vessel,

provided by Barry Fox, which was requested at the 115<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting.

Designated Officer explained that the running costs per year for a vessel were updated to include staff and insurance costs. She added that the maintenance costs were estimated using actual maintenance costs from the MMV Ostrea, however costs may reduce due to a new vessel being more economical with regard to fuel costs and lower maintenance costs.

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Fiona Walsh welcomed the sample work plan, however asked that the plan be amended to separate the work required within the Agency's remit, and the additional work that can be carried out if a vessel is to be purchased. She also asked that the days per activity be established and presented. Vice Chairman agreed and asked that the essential work be highlighted more clearly for the Board.

Vice Chairman asked the Designated Officer to establish the rise in the Agency's insurance costs, following the insurance claim for the MMV Ostrea. Patrick Gibbons advised that although the Agency has written to Sponsor Departments on a number of occasions, he would suggest that a further letter be submitted advising of the increase in the Agency's insurance premium. He added that the Agency should request that this increase in premium be provided to the Agency on an annual basis by Sponsor Departments, taken from the insurance settlement.

Michael McCormick suggested that the Agency request to drawdown the insurance money from both Sponsor Departments over a number of years, to compensate the payment for vessel hire, if a replacement vessel is not to be approved.

Designated Officer advised that Board Members will be provided with the revised table at the next Board Meeting.

#### **14. Strule Trust**

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## **15. External Funding Update**

The Board was provided with an update on the CatchmentCARE, SeaMonitor, SWELL and SAFER Projects prior to the meeting for information.

Michael McCormick advised that he recently met with SeaMonitor staff currently employed by Loughs Agency on the EU funded SeaMonitor Project. He added that from these discussions he can see that SeaMonitor has great potential, and suggested that Heather Mackey get involved with the PR side of the Project. Heather advised that she has had discussions with staff from the SeaMonitor Project, and will contact them again as soon as possible.

## **16. Omagh Office**

Designated Officer advised the Board that the Agency has sought a meeting with the contractors of the above project, and awaits confirmation of same. She added that as agreed at the Extraordinary Board Meeting the Designated Officer will attend the meeting with the Vice Chairman, Alastair Patterson and JP O'Doherty.

Vice Chairman advised that as the Board is aware he wrote formally to Sponsor Departments advising of the Board's discontent with the current Public Sector Procurement Policy for Northern Ireland. He added that he is content that the Board carried out due diligence in relation to the matter, however wished Sponsor Departments to note the concerns of the Board.

## **17. Branding and Publicity Guidelines**

Board Members were provided with the above following a request at a recent Board Meeting. Heather Mackey advised that she has reviewed the guidelines, however she feels that they are very simplistic and basic. She advised that she will contact Kevin Wilson to provide feedback and suggest amendments to the guidelines.

Designated Officer advised that the Foyle Maritime Festival will be returning to Derry~Londonderry in July / August 2020. She added that the Agency intends to bid for additional funding from Sponsor Departments for this event.

Heather Mackey advised that she would like to sit on the Derry City and Strabane District Council Sub Committee for the Foyle Maritime Festival, to ensure that the Agency is recognised and has a greater presence at the 2020 event than it has had in the past.

This was supported by all Board Members who thanked Heather for her input, which is much appreciated.

## **18. Code of Conduct**

Board Members were provided with an updated version of the Loughs Agency Code of Conduct Policy for Board Members. Designated Officer advised that following a request from the Agency's southern Sponsor Department the Agency has added a section on Fiduciary Duty and Disclosure of Interests, a requirement of the Code of Practice of State Bodies.

Patrick Gibbons advised that following this additional information he feels that there should also be reference to Northern Ireland legislation. Designated Officer agreed and added that this will be added to the Policy, which will be provided at the next Board Meeting for consideration.

## **19. AOB**

There were no items of AOB.

## **20. Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019 at 11am in NSMC, Armagh.

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Expected Delivery Date</b>
6	Schedule Board Meeting to prepare for DAERA Board Meeting.	Laura McCready	07.10.19
7	Provide information on Strategic Plan.	Board Members	Prior to 07.10.19
7	Collate and draft further version of Strategic Plan.	Sharon McMahan	Prior to 07.10.19
9	Explain briefly in Capital Projects update what mechanism is used to identify habitat or access improvement schemes.	Directors	23.10.19
13	Amend replacement vessel work plan to highlight the work required within the Agency's	Barry Fox	23.10.19

	remit and additional work that can be carried out if a vessel was to be purchased.		
13	Establish the rise in the Agency's insurance costs following the insurance claim for the MMV Ostrea.	Sharon McMahon	23.10.19
17	Contact Kevin Wilson to provide feedback and suggest amendments to Branding and Publicity Guidelines.	Heather Mackey	Prior to 23.10.19
18	Comparative legislation to be provided for in the Code of Conduct Policy.	JP O'Doherty	23.10.19