

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

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019 at 11am**

**NSMC Offices, Armagh**

**Attendees**

**Present**

Andrew Duncan (Vice Chairman)  
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**

Allan Ewart  
Alastair Patterson  
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 Phil Mahon  
Seconded Terry McWilliams

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

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

Proposed Phil Mahon  
Seconded Terry McWilliams

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

RESERVED

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

##### DAERA Board Meeting

Designated Officer advised that as the Board are aware the joint Loughs Agency / DAERA Board Meeting took place on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019. She thanked both Board's for their attendance and input at the Meeting.

##### Ambassadors Programme

Designated Officer advised the Board that following successful Foyle and Carlingford Ambassadors Programmes, graduation ceremonies were held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October respectively, with 70 graduates in Foyle and 19 in Carlingford. Designated Officer thanked Phil Mahon for her attendance and participation at the Foyle Ambassadors graduation.

##### Salmon Conference

Designated Officer advised the Board that the Agency hosted 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 was chaired by the Board's Vice Chairman Andrew Duncan, and thanked the Vice Chair for his input. She added that there were approx. 150 anglers in attendance, and the conference was very well received.

Vice Chairman advised that the conference was very positive, and thanked the staff of the Agency for their efforts in the lead up to, and on the evening of the event.

## **7. Directors' Reports**

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

### Corporate Services

Heather Mackey raised concern in relation to the increase in sick days in July and August 2019, in comparison to the same period in 2018. A discussion followed regarding the reporting of sick absence related data. Designated Officer advised that in order to provide a more accurate report on the number of sick days during the period, going forward the number of staff absent during the period will also be included for clarity.

Board Members noted concerns regarding the rise in sick days, and will continue to monitor sick leave going forward.

### Development

Heather Mackey advised that she is pleased to note the steady growth in the Agency's social media presence, however she asked that going forward more information regarding media coverage at events be included in the report.

Heather raised concern regarding the lack of a press release or a report following the recent salmon conference and graduation events. Vice Chairman echoed these concerns. Michael McCormick advised that he has highlighted the Agency's lack of ability to promote itself for a number of years. He added that there is some fantastic work being carried out by the Agency, however the public is not being made aware of this work.

Fiona Walsh advised that targets for press releases etc. should appear in the Agency's Communications Plan. Following discussion Board Members asked that the Agency's Communications Plan be brought to the next Board Meeting for review. Vice Chairman asked that Heather Mackey meet with the Director of Development to provide expertise on this area following the Board's disappointment in relation to the above.

Heather advised that she is scheduled to meet with the Designated Officer and the Director of Development on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019, to

discuss the Foyle Maritime Festival 2020 and will highlight this issue at the meeting.

Vice Chairman asked that press releases be placed on the agenda as a standing items going forward.

## **8. Finance Update**

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

Patrick Gibbons highlighted an overspend in overheads and asked for an explanation in relation to same. Designated Officer advised that the Agency's overheads budget has been reduced from £1.2m to £732,000 over the past 5 years, and with the increase in electricity, gas etc. this is not sustainable. She informed the meeting that the Agency has agreed a budget re-profiling exercise for this year with Sponsor Departments.

Fiona Walsh advised that from the report provided she cannot tell if the Agency will breakeven at the end of the year. She added that going forward she would like the report to be clearer and to have forecast figures to the end of the year.

Fiona Walsh raised concern regarding the number of outstanding capital project so late in the year, as was the case in 2018. Designated Officer advised that a number of projects could not begin until later in the year as they were mainly river habitat works, she added that other projects have been procured through Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD), the timing of which are outside of the Agency's control.

## **9. Risk Register Update**

Board Members were provided with the individual Director's Operational Risk Registers for information. Fiona Walsh asked that going forward the Corporate Risk Register also be provided at each Board Meeting.

A discussion followed regarding risk and the Designated Officer advised that Risk Management training is scheduled to take place before the end of the year. She added that recently 3 of the Directors

also attended Public Accountability and Governance Training for Senior Managers.

## **10. Outturn Against Targets**

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

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

Board Members were provided with the draft minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Meeting of the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019 for their information.

Patrick Gibbons, Chairman of the ARC advised Members that following the recent ARC Meeting he met with Alan McKee, DAERA Head of Internal Audit, this is a routine meeting that takes place once per year.

Patrick also reported that he recently met with Sharon McCue, Chair of DAERA ARC to discuss the operation of the respective Audit Committees, with a view to enhance the links between them and to work together in our respective roles.

Patrick advised that a discussion took place at the recent ARC Meeting regarding scheduling both Board and ARC Meetings on the same day. He advised that this was endorsed by both Sponsor Departments. Patrick asked that a schedule of meetings for 2020 be provided at the next Board Meeting.

The next Audit and Risk Committee Meeting is scheduled to take place on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

## **12. Strategic Plan**

Designated Officer advised that the staff of the Agency were presented with the Strategic Plan on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019, where each goal was discussed in detail and potential projects were discussed for 2020.

Following discussion it was agreed that the second objective of the first goal should read develop, enhance, deliver and embed.

### **13. Monitoring Vessel**

Designated Officer advised that a paper on the Monitoring Vessel was to be presented to the Board today, however she would like to discuss this issue further with the Senior Management Team.

Designated Officer reported that following the joint Loughs Agency / DAERA Board Meeting the Agency has been advised to use the services of the Strategic Investment Board. She added that as the Agency does not have the capabilities in house, this option will be explored.

### **14. Strule Trust**

Designated Officer advised that the Agency has provided the agreed Partnership Agreement to the Strule Trust and awaits the return of the signed document. She added that she hopes to have this before the next Board Meeting.

### **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.

### **16. Omagh Office**

Designated Officer advised that the Interim Director of Corporate Services continues to liaise with Doran Consulting in relation to the Omagh Office.

### **17. Code of Conduct**

Board Members were provided with an updated version of the Loughs Agency Code of Conduct Policy for Board Members. The Board approved this Policy.

Proposed Patrick Gibbons  
Seconded Terry McWilliams

## 18. Native Oyster Fishery Policy and Procedures

Board Members were provided with the following documents prior to the Board Meeting, and were asked to review and approve if content:

- Application Process Native Oyster Fishery.
- Appeals Procedure for Oyster Fishing Licence – Internal Procedure.
- Appeals Procedure for Oyster Fishing Licence – External Procedure.

Proposed Heather Mackey  
Seconded Terry McWilliams

## 19. AOB

RESERVED

## 20. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019 in NSMC Offices, Armagh.

Item No	Action	Responsible	Expected Delivery Date
5	Provide Board Members with a timeline, detailing the expected timeframe of delivery for the review of legislation and the environmental study, and an update on discussion with Claire Vincent.	Designated Officer	11.12.19
5	RESERVED	John McCartney	11.12.19
7	Amend sick report to include number of staff absent.	JP O'Doherty	11.12.19
7	Provide more information regarding media coverage at events in Directors update.	Kevin Wilson	11.12.19
7	Communication Plan to be presented to the Board at next Board Meeting.	Kevin Wilson	11.12.19
7	Highlight issue regarding the Agency's PR at forthcoming meeting.	Heather Mackey	30.10.19
7	Press Releases to be placed on Board agenda as a standing item.	Laura McCreedy	Ongoing
8	Ensure budget report is clearer and provides forecast figures to the end of the year.	JP O'Doherty	11.12.19
9	Corporate Risk Register to be provided to Board Members at each Board Meeting.	Laura McCreedy	Ongoing
11	Schedule of Board and Audit and Risk Committee Meetings to be provided.	Laura McCreedy	11.12.19

12	Strategic Plan - second objective of the first goal should read develop, enhance, deliver and embed.	Designated Officer	ASAP
19	RESERVED	John McCartney	11.12.19
19	RESERVED	Designated Officer	11.12.19