

**130th MEETING OF THE FOYLE CARLINGFORD AND IRISH
LIGHTS COMMISSION**

Wednesday 13th April 2022 at 9.30am

Via Teleconference

Attendees

Present

Heather Mackey (Chair)
Conor Corr
Danny Kennedy
Declan Little
Frances Lucy
Jack Keyes
Laurence Arbuckle
Niall Greene

In Attendance - Loughs Agency

Sharon McMahon – Designated Officer
Laura McCready (Minutes)

Non Attendance

Fiona Walsh
Terry McWilliams

Private Time for Board Members

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

1. Apologies

None

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 Jack Keyes
Seconded Conor Corr

3.1 Reserved Minutes

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

Proposed Frances Lucy
Seconded Jack Keyes

3.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

4. CEO Progress Report

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with a comprehensive overview of current significant issues, strategic updates and governance and accountability updates from the Designated Officer.

Chair asked the Designated Officer if there is anything that is not contained within her report that she would like to highlight, or if there are any items within her report that she would like to elaborate on further.

RESERVED

RESERVED

COVID-19

Designated Officer advised that currently the Agency has a number of positive cases, however the staff effected are currently working from home. She added that the Agency intends to bring staff back to the office from Monday 6th June 2022 for one day per week initially. Designated Officer confirmed that the advice in Northern Ireland remains to work from home where possible, therefore at the minute 1 day is proposed with a view to moving to 2-3 days per week when further guidance is received from government.

Niall Greene asked if the Agency intends to introduce a long-term Hybrid Working Strategy. Designated Officer confirmed this. She advised that the Agency is currently working on a Hybrid Working Policy which will be brought to the Board once complete.

4.1 Court Case Update

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with an update of the Agency's active legal cases. Chair advised that there is a vast amount of information contained within the report and asked the Designated Officer to explain to the Board the reason that they are provided with this report.

Designated Officer provided the Board with a background to the report.

Designated Officer confirmed that following a review of processes regarding court cases a Legal and Enforcement Oversight Committee was established which includes 4 members of the SMT, the Legislative and Data Protection Officer and Scientific Advisors where required. She added that the purpose of the Committee is to provide effective governance and support accountability for Loughs Agency's enforcement functions and related legal decision-making.

Chair thanked the Designated Officer for the overview and asked that going forward that only cases considered of great importance to the Agency or those which may affect its prosecution powers are reported to the Board. She asked that a short update on each case should be provided. The Board agreed with this approach.

4.2 Legal Cases

RESERVED

5. Senior Management Team Updates

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with the above for their information. Chair asked the Board for any comments / questions in relation to same.

RESERVED

5.1 Meenbog Update

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with an update paper from the Director of Conservation and Protection in relation to the above.

Designated Officer provided an update on the hearing held on 5th April 2022. Designated Officer confirmed that the case has been relisted for hearing on 7th June 2022.

6. Finance Update

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with a Budget Report up to the end of March 2022. Chair asked that a one page cover sheet or summary be provided alongside the report going forward.

Laurence Arbuckle agreed. He advised that he has raised this issue before and would find it beneficial to have someone attend Board to draw out the highlights / concerns regarding the Agency's finances.

Frances Lucy advised that she feels that concise narrative and someone presenting the report would be very useful.

Conor Corr advised that he is content as such, however suggested that a summary paragraph before the financial tables would be beneficial.

Designated Officer advised that she will ask that the above be actioned for the next Board Meeting.

7. Risk Register Update

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with Corporate Risk Register for information. Designated Officer advised that currently the biggest risks for the Agency as highlighted in the Corporate Risk Register, is lack of a sustainable budget and an organisational review.

There were no questions / comments in relation to risk.

8. Audit and Risk Committee Update

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with a copy of the draft minutes of the ARC Meeting of 29th March 2022. Frances Lucy, Chair of the ARC provided Board Members with an overview of the meeting, detailing the main points of discussion.

Frances advised that one of the action items from the meeting was that she seek the approval of the Board to co-opt an independent Accountant onto the ARC, to provide assurance to the Committee and to challenge any financial issues that may arise. All agreed with this action.

Proposed Niall Greene
Seconded Conor Corr

8.1 Audit and Risk Committee 2021 Annual Report

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with a copy of the above. Frances Lucy advised that ordinarily the Chair of the ARC produces the above report, however as the former Chair of the ARC resigned before the end of his term, the 2021 Annual Report was produced by the Agency.

Frances asked for Board approval if content.

Proposed Jack Keyes
Seconded Laurence Arbuckle

8.2 Internal Audit Report 2021/22

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with a copy of the above, provided by DAERA Internal Audit. Frances Lucy asked for Board approval if content.

Proposed Jack Keyes
Seconded Laurence Arbuckle

8.3 Draft Internal Audit Plan 202/23

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with a copy of the above, provided by DAERA Internal Audit. Frances Lucy asked for Board approval if content.

Proposed Jack Keyes
Seconded Laurence Arbuckle

9. 2021 Annual Report and Accounts

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with a copy of the above for their review and approval if content.

Niall Greene advised that the above report has for some time been approved by the ARC as a subcommittee of the Board, however the newly formed ARC didn't feel that this constituted effective governance and therefore asked that this be brought to the Board for approval.

Proposed Danny Kennedy
Seconded Chair

10. Review of Angling and Fisheries Development

Chair welcomed Barry Fox, Director of Aquaculture and Shellfisheries and Ciarán McGonigle, Angling and Fisheries Development Manager to the meeting.

The Director provided the meeting with an overview of the recent Review of Angling and Fisheries Development, which was followed by a comprehensive presentation by the Angling and Fisheries Development Manager.

Following the presentation there was a questions and answers session.

Chair thanked both gentlemen for their presentation and asked Barry Fox to return to the next Board meeting to present his Directors report to the Board due to time constraints.

11. Communications

Prior to the Board Meeting Board Members were provided with a Communications Report for March 2022. Chair advised that she recently met with Gray's Communications and discussed 2 items that were discussed at the previous Board Meeting, namely podcasts and the promotion of Conservation and Protection projects. She added that the report highlights the excellent engagement that the Agency is receiving from its managed service.

Designated Officer advised that the Agency hosted the annual meeting of the European Tracking Network (ETN) from 5-7th April 2022 which featured a mini symposium on marine research projects from across Europe, including the Agency's SeaMonitor Project. She added that the event was a huge success and provided the Board with an overview of same.

Designated Officer advised that the Agency continues to work on 2 funding applications with ETN and other partners, to ensure that it maintains the very valuable connectivity between these partners.

Niall Greene advised that he would fully support the telemetry application as it is a rapidly developing tool in conservation, not only for salmon but for a number of migratory species.

Niall advised that although the communications report is extensive, he is unsure of what image of the Agency that the service is trying to convey. He added that he would be interested in viewing the strategy that the managed service are working to as the remit seems very wide and varied.

Chair advised that she has been involved in the Review of Communications from its initiation and the appointment of the managed service and disagrees with Niall's view of same. She added that for a number of years the Agency has not been promoted correctly and this has been raised on numerous occasions by the previous Board, however since the managed service was appointed this has changed significantly.

12. AOB

There were no items of AOB.

13. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next Board Meeting will take place on Thursday 16th June 2022.

Chair advised that the next meeting should be scheduled for 2hrs 30mins, to allow Members enough time in their schedule in the event that the meeting runs over. She also suggested that the meeting take place in person, however if some Members cannot attend in person an online option will be made available.

Chair asked that going forward private time is scheduled at the end of the meeting rather than at the beginning, to allow any issues that may arise during the meeting to be discussed by the Board at the end of business.

| Item No | Action | Responsible | Expected Delivery Date |
|----------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| 4 | RESERVED | Chair | Prior to 16 th June 2022 |
| 4.1 | Amend court case update to report only high level cases. | Director of Conservation and Protection | Prior to 16 th June 2022 |
| 4.2 | RESERVED | Chair | Prior to 16 th June 2022 |
| 5 | RESERVED | Designated Officer | ASAP |
| 6 | Amend finance report to include narrative / summary. | Director of Corporate Services | Prior to 16 th June 2022 |