

Minutes of the Eighth Meeting of the Coastal and Marine Forum held on Wednesday 24th September 2008 at 2.00pm in the Strangford Lough Management Advisory Committee Offices, The Strand Portaferry.

In Attendance:

Prof. Andrew Cooper, University of Ulster. (Chairman)
John Anderson, Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside
Peter Archdale, The Loughs Agency
Maeve Bell, Royal Yachting Association
Melanie Gomes, Marine Task Force
David Knott, Belfast Harbours Commissioners
Caroline Nolan, Strangford Lough Management Advisory Committee
Alan Hamilton, CMF Officer

Apologies:

Gordon Best, Quarry Products Association NI
Ken Bradley, Planning and Natural Resources Division, DOE
Kathryn Callaghan, Countryside Access and Activities Network
Val Cummins, Coastal and Marine Resources Centre, University College Cork
Phil Davidson, The National Trust
Liam Flanigan, Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Joanne Gaffney, Cross-Border Aquaculture Initiative Team
Dick James, Northern Ireland Fish Producers Organisation Ltd
Alan McCulla, Anglo North Irish Fish Producers Organisation Ltd
Helen Noble, Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust
Campbell Tweed, Ulster Farmer's Union

1. Welcome

1.1. Prof. Cooper welcomed those present to the eighth meeting, especially David Henderson and Stephen Lancashire, Rivers Agency, DARD and John Davison, Planning and Natural Resources Division all of whom would be giving presentations later.

1.2. He went on to thank Caroline Nolan, Strangford Lough Officer, for offering the use of the Strangford Lough Management Advisory Committee premises for the meeting and the kind hospitality the members received.

2. Minutes

2.1. The minutes of the meeting of 25th June 2008 were approved as presented.

3. Matters Arising

Item 3.1. Illegal Sand Extraction Ballintoy Harbour

3.1. The CMF Officer informed those present that Planning Service had advised him that there was no change since its last update. The CMF Officer went on to add that Moyle District Council's minutes of 9th June 2008 recorded that the Council's Solicitor had been informed by the party's solicitor that "their client would be willing to surrender any establish rights of sand extraction and sell the lane way to Sandy Port." In addition it was also recorded the Council's Solicitor had received a further report from the Party's solicitor "stating that their client had erected a barrier preventing access to the Sandy Port and foreshore which was in ownership of the Council. The Council Solicitor had now advised that if the Council wished to secure access it would need to take County Court proceedings. After discussion, it was agreed to take County Court proceedings regarding the Sandy Port, Ballintoy."

3.2. In the meantime Members to be kept updated on progress with regard to the situation at Sandy Port.

Action: CMF Officer to keep Members updated on progress with regard to the situation at Sandy Port. [CMF Officer]

Item 3.4. Letter to Coastal Councils

3.3. The Chairman said that he had yet to write to the various coastal councils outlining the Forums concerns about illegal sand extraction and dumping of waste material on beaches and reiterating Council's duties regarding such matters in those cases where Council's are the custodians of the beaches where such instances occur.

Action: Chairman to write to the various coastal councils outlining the Forums concerns about illegal sand extraction and dumping of waste material on beaches and reiterating Council's duties regarding such matters in those cases where Council's are the custodians of the beaches where such instances occur. [Chairman]

Item 3.5. Rathlin Island ICZM Project

3.4. The CMF Officer informed those present that initial contact has been made the previous week with Richard Green, Chairman of the Rathlin Development Community Association about the possibility of setting up a meeting with the Islanders to assess their support for an ICZM project on the Island. Arrangements have yet to be confirmed.

3.5. With regard to taking forward an ICZM pilot project in the Down and Newry and Mourne area such as upgrading of current paths, signage or provision of viewing points to name but a few. Discussions are still very much in their infancy but the Trust is currently working closely with the National Trust on a possible project details of which are to be forwarded to Ken Bradley shortly for consideration.

3.6. Members to be kept updated of progress on both these projects.

Action: CMF Officer to keep Members updated on progress on ICZM Rathlin Island Project and any project that may emerge from discussions with the Mourne Heritage Trust. [CMF Officer]

Item 3.10. NICMF Maritime Archaeology leaflet

3.7. The CMF Officer circulated hard copies of the Maritime Archaeology in Northern Ireland Leaflet to members for circulation to interested groups.

Item 3.12 Data Collection and Storage

3.8. The CMF Officer said that he had spoken to Andrew Bradbury, the Director of the Channel Coast Observatory, and he would be delighted to come across and talk to the Forum and other interest groups about coastal data collection, storage and dissemination. He went on to explain that he was working closely with Joe Breen, NIEA on the possibility of setting up a ½ or 1 day workshop but there are still some quite complicated discussions to take place. However he hopes to be able to report soon on the matter.

3.9. CMF Officer would keep Members updated on progress.

Action: CMF Officer to keep Members updated on progress. [CMF Officer]

Item 5.1. PPS 20 – The Coast

3.10. The Chairman apologised for not being able to take any action over the summer with regard to drafting a letter to the Minister outlining the Forum's concerns about PPS20. He confirmed that as agreed at the June meeting he would consult with members prior to finalising the letter to the Minister. He also said that he would send members a copy of his notes when he met some Members to discuss PPS 20 prior to meeting Maggie Smith. He added that he still has to finalise the Position Paper on Coastal Development.

Action: Chairman to send Members copy of draft letter to the Minister prior to finalising it and also a copy of his notes on PPS 20 meetings with Members.

[Chairman]

Item 6.1. Work Programme

3.11. The CMF Officer confirmed that the first meeting of the Geo-science Trail Sub Group is scheduled for Monday 13th October 2008 in River House, Belfast. CMF Officer to keep Members updated on progress.

Action: CMF Officer to keep Members updated on progress. [CMF Officer]

Item 7.4. Strangford Lough Management Committee/ NICMF Conference

3.12. Caroline Nolan gave a brief update on how work is progressing regarding organising the conference and thanked the members for offering the Forum's support. Caroline confirmed that the title of the conference is "The Coast – Are we Managing?" with the venue Castle Ward. A number of speakers, from USA, Wales and Ireland, on a wide range of topics have been signed up, including the Forum's chairman. Once the programme is finalised it was agreed that the CMF Officer send a copy to the Members.

3.13. Caroline went on to say that the speaker from the USA Dr Glenn Haas, who is kindly being sponsored by Judith Annett, Countryside Consultancy, will be facilitating a workshop "Water Recreation Opportunities Spectrum" on Wednesday 26th November and Members would be welcome to attend if they wish to do so. However places are limited. Further details are available through the Strangford Lough Management Advisory Committee offices.

Action: CMF Officer to send a copy of finalised programme to Members. [CMF Officer]

4. Presentation: The EU Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks – David Henderson, Rivers Agency, DARD

4.1. David Henderson thanked the Chairman for his kind words and then gave a short but very interesting and in-depth account on the EU Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks or the "Floods Directive" as it is better known as.

4.2. David explained that the objectives of the presentation were to give a brief introduction to the Floods Directive, highlight some of the key issues and give an indication of the progress to date. He went on to say that DARD is the competent authority for the implementation of the Directive in Northern Ireland.

4.3. He outlined the key objectives and targets for delivery of the Directive as follows:
Transposition - 26th November 2009
Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment - 22nd December 2011
Floods Hazard and Risk Maps - 22nd December 2013
Floods Risk Management Plans - 22nd December 2015

4.4. David went on to say that the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment enables areas of potential Significant Flood Risk to be determined and then Floods Hazard and Flood Risk Maps and Flood Risk Management Plans are prepared to cover these areas. It is proposed to use the same river basins as the Water Framework Directive for consistency and because of the transnational boundary. Co-ordination of mapping and planning and other interface issues are considered jointly by Rivers Agency and the Office of Public Works in the ROI. Consultation by Rivers Agency with interested parties and the general public, for example, regarding Significant Flood Risk and Flood Risk

Management Plans, is a requirement of the Directive. Under the implementation strategy Rivers Agency undertakes ongoing liaison with other organisations such as the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. Implementation will also involve competent bodies such as NI Water and Roads Service.

4.5. In addition a Steering Group has been set up and Rivers Agency has commenced the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment and scoping the Flood Management Study for Belfast in view of the flood risk.

4.6. Some of the topics raised by Members and dealt with in the course of

the presentation included:

- Rivers Agency role in relation to PPS15.
- Is Climate Change taken into consideration when producing Maps and Plans?

4.7. The Chairman thanked David for his presentation.

5. Presentation: Planning and Flood Risk - John Davison, Planning and Natural Resources Division, DOE

5.1. The Chairman introduced John Davison, Planning and Natural Resources Division.

5.2. John gave a short presentation on the development of the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Statement (PPS15) on Planning and Flood Risk explaining the process behind policy development in this area.

5.3. He went on to say that it embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and the conservation of biodiversity, takes account of climate change and promotes an approach to development that supports the wellbeing and safety of people. It also confirms the precautionary approach to development where flood risk is an issue and will help protect individuals and communities from the personal suffering and damage that flooding can bring.

5.4. John touched upon the key drivers of climate change and sustainable development and explained how achieving a co-ordinated approach to protecting new development from the risk of flood from both rivers and the coast required close co-operation across government.

5.5. The presentation outlined the sort of problems that unregulated development can pose, the difficulties of adequately dealing with the uncertainties inherent in flood risk and the role of the planning system in seeking to protect people and the environment from these risks.

5.6. The Chairman thanked John for his presentation.

6. Tourism Representation on the NICMF

6.1. The Chairman said that concerns that the economic elements are under-represented had been raised again in an e –mail from J J Kennedy, Sandycove Holiday Homes Ltd, Ballywalter.

6.2. The Chairman went on to say that in his email Mr Kennedy states that “According to the minutes Claire Donnelly has only attended the inaugural November 2006 meeting, one out of the six meetings that have taken place. This cannot be seen as representing an industry especially when the forum is formulating a position paper on development on the coast.

6.3. I notice that my concerns about Tourism Representation were raised in November 2007 and I thank you for that. However the situation has not changed and the forum seems to be progressing without a qualified voice to champion the economic impact that private sector tourism has. The forum may not be aware that NITIC has never represented the Holiday Park Sector and would not be in a position to give accurate information. This sector accounts for 42% of all accommodation used in the Armagh and Down region according to 2007 survey results.

6.4. I am disappointed that no progress has been made to balance the environmental, social and economic concerns. Rather than 'Striking a Balance' as described on page 5 of the CMF Brochure, the forum seems to be working against ICZM principle of establishing "sustainable levels of economic and social activity in our coastal areas while protecting the coastal environment" and seeking "to "join up" the different policies that have an effect on the coast whilst bringing together stakeholders to inform, support and implement these policies. This means that actions will be considered from the perspective of all of their potential impacts."

6.5. At present indications given by the forum suggest, actions have not and will not be considered from the perspective of the private sector tourism industry and the economic impact they make.”

6.6. The Chairman went on to explain that following enquiries it was confirmed that Claire went on maternity last year (2007) and did not return to NI Tourist Industry Confederation (NITIC). It was also confirmed that NITIC went into 'cold storage' earlier this year.

6.7. The Chairman added that as a consequence nominations for a replacement Tourism Representative were sought from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI). Both parties said that it would be difficult to nominate a person to replace Claire Donnelly to cover all aspects of tourism. Claire represented the NI Tourist Industry Confederation, a body which sought to represent the

wide range of tourism interests. It was also felt that it isn't possible to identify a person who would have the same scope.

6.8. Having said that the DETI pointed out “that a wide range of tourism interests are already represented on the Forum as follows:

Helen Noble, Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust
Cllr William Burns, Mourne Heritage Trust
Phil Davidson, The National Trust
Kathryn Callaghan, Countryside Access and Activities Network

6.9. In addition, Liam Flanigan, CEO Limavady BC represents NILGA and as such can speak for those Councils which own/maintain promenades, beaches etc.

6.10. Given the above existing representation we would suggest that the current representation is sufficient.”

6.11. Following discussion Members felt that tourism was covered within the Forum Membership and that organisations/individuals still have the right to contact any Member of the Forum with any concerns they might have.

6.12. The Chairman said he would write to Mr Kennedy outlining the Forum’s decision on Tourism representation on the Forum.

Action: Chairman to write to Mr Kennedy outlining Forum’s decision on Tourism representation on Forum. [Chairman]

7. Any other Business

Coastal Councils ICZM Awareness Raising Road show

7.1. The Chairman informed those present that he met with Jim Allen of Coleraine council on the issue of ICZM at the council level post-RPA. He said that Jim is keen to promote a specific coastal unit to build on their current inter-departmental group- and was keen to explore ways to take this forward.

7.2. The Chairman went on to say that he thought there is probably an opportunity for the Forum to advocate ICZM structures within the new councils at an operational level that would complement any developments at the strategic level such as PPS or regional plans.

7.3. He said that he would like to bring this up at the next meeting with the idea that the Forum could put on an event in each of the new Super Council areas to promote their setting up of coastal management units within their new structures. If we agreed to take it forward we could put on a sort of road show aimed at councillors and council officials in the new council areas to promote ICZM. In the meantime he wanted to discuss the idea further with Ken Bradley.

7.4. The CMF Officer pointed out that Objective INT. 2.4. of the strategy relates to raising awareness of ICZM issues, what it means and why it is important and to the targeting of key stakeholders such as Coastal Councils involved in the delivery of ICZM. He also confirmed that under the proposed Super Council scenario there would be 7 Coastal Councils.

7.5. Members were in agreement that it would be worthwhile pursuing this idea further.

Action: Chairman to contact Ken Bradley to discuss the idea of a Coastal Councils ICZM Awareness Raising Road show. [Chairman]

8. Date/Venue of next meeting.

8.1. Wednesday, 26th November 2008 – Provisional Venue – Innovation Centre, Titanic Quarter, Belfast. Venue/time to be confirmed.

**Action: To confirm venue/time of November meeting of the Forum. [CMF Officer]
Alan Hamilton
September 2008**