

**Minutes of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Coastal and Marine Forum held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2010 at 11.00 am in Richard Branson Centre, Rathlin Island.**

**In Attendance:**

**Prof. Andrew Cooper, University of Ulster. (Chairman)**  
**Judith Annett, (Vice Chairperson)**  
**Ken Bradley, Planning and Natural Resources Division, DOE**  
**Diane Ruddock, The National Trust**  
**Maxime Sizaret, Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust**  
**Campbell Tweed, Ulster Farmers' Union**  
**Jo Whatmough, Mourne Heritage Trust**  
**Alan Hamilton, CMF Officer**

**In Attendance:**

**Maggie Smith, Director Planning and Natural Resources Division, DOE**  
**David Quinney Mee, Rathlin Development and Community Association**  
**Joe Breen, Northern Ireland Environment Agency**

**Apologies:**

**John Anderson, Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside**  
**Peter Archdale, The Loughs Agency**  
**Maeve Bell, Royal Yachting Association**  
**Gordon Best, Quarry Products Association**  
**Kathryn Callaghan, Countryside Access and Activities Network**  
**Phil Davidson, The National Trust**  
**Liam Flanigan, Northern Ireland Local Government Association**  
**Dick James, Northern Ireland Fish Producers Organisation Ltd**  
**David Knott, Belfast Harbours Commissioners**  
**Alan McCulla, Anglo North Irish Fish Producers Organisation Ltd**  
**Helen Noble, Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust**  
**Caroline Nolan, Strangford Lough Management Advisory Committee**

**1. Welcome**

- 1.1. Prof. Cooper welcomed those present to the fifteenth meeting, especially Maggie Smith, Director of Planning and Natural Resources Division, DOE and David Quinney Mee, Community Development Officer, Rathlin Island.
- 1.2. He went on to thank Rathlin Development and Community Association, through David Quinney Mee, for offering the use of the Richard Branson Centre for the meeting and the kind hospitality the Members received. He also thanked David for the very informative talk he gave to Members prior to the meeting about his work and life in general on Rathlin Island.

**2. Minutes**

2.1. The minutes of the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> February 2010 were approved as presented.

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **Item 3.5. Rathlin Island and Mourne Coastal Route ICZM Projects**

3.1. Ken Bradley informed those present that Moyle District Council had withdrawn the application to the North East Region Rural Development Partnership regarding the Rathlin project and that the RDCA was now looking at taking forward a new project with other bodies with interests on the Island.

3.2. With regard to the Mourne Coastal Route project this has also been put on hold because of the withdrawal of match funding.

#### **Item 3.8. Geo-science Trail**

3.3. The Chairman informed those present that at a meeting of the Geo-science Trail sub group on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2010 it was agreed that the Northern Ireland Tourist Board would liaise with Geological Survey of Northern Ireland with regard to the geological content of the interpretation panels which are to be erected at various sites along the entire coast of Northern Ireland as part of the NITB Signature Projects initiative.

3.4. The Chairman went on to say that further meeting of the sub group will take place in the autumn.

3.5. Members will be kept updated on progress.

**Action: Chairman to keep Members updated on progress. [Chairman]**

#### **Item 3.9. Coastal Councils ICZM Awareness Raising Road Show**

3.6. The Chairman said now that the creation of Northern Ireland's super councils in the immediate future was looking doubtful he would suggest dropping this item from future agendas until the way ahead became clearer. This was agreed.

#### **Item 3.11. Indicators of Sustainable Development of the Coastal Zone**

3.7. The Chairman referred to Frances Curran's, (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency) updated paper which had been circulated to Members for consideration. He said that he was now looking to Members to approve the paper which would allow Frances to proceed to the next stage in the process.

3.8. The Chairman expressed some reservations about the existing data on the classification of shore defences. This is, however, the best available data and should be used with a caveat to the effect that the data require further investigation. He noted that he has an intern working on the data but the

work will not be completed in time for the report by NISRA. It was agreed that data on the River Bush should also be included

3.9. After short discussion Members agreed to accept the paper subject to two minor amendments, addition of data on Seaside Awards, and inclusion of seal data from Carlingford Lough.

3.10. The Chairman said he would write to Frances confirming the Forum's approval to proceed subject to the minor amendments agreed.

**Action: Chairman to write to Frances confirming the Forum's approval to proceed subject to the minor amendments agreed. [Chairman]**

### **Item 3.16. Planning and Coastal Erosion**

3.11. The Chairman circulated a copy of the response he had received from Downpatrick Divisional Planning Office. He said that he was somewhat concerned about the statement in the letter that there was "no apparent evidence that the area was known to be at risk of serious erosion or stability". He went on to say that having visited the site the adjacent church graveyard which extends to the beach has rock armour protection as do several other properties close by. Indeed the proposed site has been infilled, probably because of previous erosion and to extend the site and allow building to take place will require rock armour protection which is clearly evidence of an erosion issue.

3.12. The Chairman added that his concerns were not directed specifically at the individual development it raised concerns over the interpretation of the existing policy guidance. He wondered in addition, if there was perhaps a 'skills gap'.

3.13. Following discussion, during which it was pointed out that some 40-50% of the Northern Ireland coastline already has some form of armour protection, it was agreed that the Chairman should write to Cynthia Smith seeking a meeting and perhaps offering Planning staff a presentation on planning aspects of coastal erosion.

3.14. The Chairman said that he will keep Members updated on developments.

**Action: Chairman to write to Cynthia Smith, Planning Service seeking a meeting. [Chairman]  
Chairman to keep Members updated on developments. [Chairman]**

## **4. NICMF First Report**

- 4.1. The Chairman and Vice- Chairperson circulated copies of their most recent draft of the report along with a list of all the objectives and measures contained in the strategy with progress highlighted in red, orange and green.
- 4.2. Those present were content with the overall trust and following a short discussion it was agreed that the report should also include some additional reference to PPS20 and possible links between Area Plans and the NI Marine Bill.
- 4.3. It was also felt that the report should contain a caveat that this was the Forum's assessment with regard to the degree of progress against targets and objectives.
- 4.4. The Chairman noted the Members comments and said he would take them into account when preparing what would hopefully be the final draft prior to publishing and sending to the Minister.

**Action: Chairman to circulate Members with final draft of Report for consideration prior to publication. [Chairman]**

## **5. NI Marine Bill**

- 5.1. At the Chairman's request the Vice- Chairperson went through the various questions outlined in the Northern Ireland Marine Bill consultation document along with suggested responses. While there was overall support for the proposals several areas of concern were raised such as the need for a clearer vision on what the Bill was trying to achieve; lack of recognition to biodiversity; little reference to marine archaeology; rather than have a separate section on marine nature conservation it should underpin all aspects of the Bill; the need for Fisheries and Aquaculture to be taken into consideration; the need for as many activities as possible to be licensed; and the need for terrestrial plans and the proposed marine plan to be integrated.
- 5.2. Members also took the opportunity to question Maggie Smith, Director of Planning and Natural Resources about the Marine Policy Statement.
- 5.3. Maggie advised those present that consultation on the Marine Policy Statement (MPS) was due shortly and that the Forum would have an opportunity to comment.
- 5.4. The MPS will be the first step in new systems of marine planning being introduced around the UK. It will provide the high level policy context within which Marine Plans will be developed, and set the direction for marine licensing and other authorisation systems.
- 5.5. Maggie went on to explain that the UK-wide MPS will set the key policy priorities for the marine environment and its management. The UK Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 already makes clear that the policies in that MPS should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK marine area.

5.6. It is the first step in new systems of marine planning being introduced around the UK and that the aim is to create a strategic marine planning system that improves regulation and provides for sustainable development of the marine environment so that the multiple, cumulative and potentially conflicting uses of the sea are addressed.

5.7. Maggie pointed out that the MPS is expected to be in place by November 2011, 2 years after Royal Assent of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Marine plans would then be developed in accordance with the MPS and there will be every opportunity for stakeholder engagement before the Plan is formally adopted – in the case of Northern Ireland 2014. The marine Plan will be binding on everyone.

5.8. In response to questions on marine licensing Maggie confirmed that this must be in line with the Plan.

5.9. It was finally agreed that the Vice-Chairperson would draft the Forum's response to the NI Marine Bill which was due by 9 July 2010 and this would be copied to Members.

**Action: Vice - Chairperson to draft Forum response to NI Marine Bill which would be copied to Members. [Vice - Chairman]**

## **6. Any Other Business**

6.1. No other business was put forward.

## **7. Date/Venue of next meeting.**

7.1. Date of next meeting confirmed as Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2010 – Venue to be confirmed.

**Action: To confirm venue of next meeting of the Forum.  
[CMF Officer]**

**Alan Hamilton**

**June 2010**