

# Minutes

25 November 2010

## Venue: Lagan Lookout, Donegall Quay, Belfast

### Attendees:

- |     |                   |  |
|-----|-------------------|--|
| 1.  | Dave Foster       | Head Environmental Protection, NIEA (Chair)                |
| 2.  | Wendy Langham     | Project Manager, Connswater Community Greenway (Presenter) |
| 3.  | David Miller      | Senior Water Quality Inspector, NIEA (Presenter)           |
| 4.  | Helen Nutt        | North Eastern Catchment Officer, NIEA (Presenter)          |
| 5.  | Jo Campbell       | Water Management Unit, NIEA (Note-taker)                   |
| 6.  | Judith Bankhead   | Conservation Officer, Rivers Agency                        |
| 7.  | Jim Bradley       | Belfast Hills Partnership                                  |
| 8.  | George Butler     | Director of Asset Management, Northern Ireland Water       |
| 9.  | Daniel Clarke     | Lagan Valley Regional Park                                 |
| 10. | Tom Cowan         |  |
| 11. | Peter Gallagher   | Lagan River Manager, DSD                                   |
| 12. | Jim Hayes         | DCAL   |
| 13. | Gary Houston      | Iveagh Angling Club  |
| 14. | Uel Irwin         | AES Kilroot Power Station                                  |
| 15. | Samuel Jackson    | Iveagh Angling Club  |
| 16. | Brendan Kerr      | Natural Living Assets                                      |
| 17. | Jonathan Kerr     | Iveagh Angling Club  |
| 18. | David Knott       |  |
| 19. | Robbie Marshall   | Ulster Angling Federation                                  |
| 20. | Heather Mawhinney | AES Kilroot Power Station                                  |
| 21. | David McCullough  | Northern Ireland Water                                     |
| 22. | Leo McGlinchey    | Water Quality Inspector, NIEA                              |
| 23. | Philip McMurray   | Environmental Policy Division, DoE                         |
| 24. | Gabriel Nelson    | Acting Head Water Management Unit, NIEA                    |
| 25. | Trevor Ogborn     | Dunmurry Community Association                             |
| 26. | Ronald Surgenor   | Lagan Weir Boat Operative                                  |

### 1. Welcome and introductions

Dave Foster opened the meeting and welcomed all to the 7th meeting of the Belfast Lough & Lagan Catchment Stakeholder Group (CSG). Those in attendance were invited to introduce themselves to the group. Round room introductions.

### 2. Welcome & review of actions from the last meeting.

*Presentation from Helen Nutt, North East Catchment Officer, NIEA; "Update on action points from the last meeting"*

- 2.1 Helen said that all parties who were present at the last meeting, or those who had requested to be corresponding members, should have received a copy of the note of the meeting by email or post. Some of the meeting attendees indicated that they had not received a hard copy of this document.

**ACTION: Helen Nutt to reissue the note of the Belfast Lough & Lagan CSG meeting held on 5 May 2010 for feedback and add the agreed note of the meeting to the website.**

- 2.2 Helen Nutt gave a brief presentation detailing the updates and action points raised from the last Belfast Lough & Lagan CSG meeting held on 5 May 2010 in the Island Civic Centre, Lisburn.

A copy of the presentation can be found on the Belfast Lough and Lagan website:  
[www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public\\_partic/catchment\\_stakeholder\\_groups/belfast\\_lough\\_and\\_lagan.htm](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public_partic/catchment_stakeholder_groups/belfast_lough_and_lagan.htm)

### Summary of actions from the last meeting

Ref.	Action	Update
2.1	Helen Nutt to add agreed minutes from the meeting held on 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2010, to the Belfast Lough and Lagan CSG website.	Belfast Lough and Lagan CSG website has been updated. Available at: <a href="http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/water-home/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/belfast_lough_and_lagan.htm">http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/water-home/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/belfast_lough_and_lagan.htm</a>
3.3	Helen Nutt to find out about the availability of anti-poaching awareness material and whether or not there is information available in minority languages	DCAL intend to produce an information leaflet highlighting method & catch restrictions & legal documents required when angling. It is intended that this will be translated into the main minority languages.
5.2	All to provide feedback for input to the Local Management Area Action Plans and the format of meetings to Helen Nutt.	Thank you – Ongoing.

Floor opened for questions/comments.

- 2.3 Regarding the availability of anti-poaching material in minority languages, Gary Houston asked if a timescale for delivery had been agreed.

**ACTION: Helen Nutt to find out the timescales for the delivery of the anti-poaching awareness leaflets in minority languages.**

- 3 What's happening in the Belfast Lough & Lagan area? - The Connswater Community Greenway (CCG) / Flood Alleviation Scheme**  
*Presentation from Wendy Langham, Programme Manager, Connswater Community Greenway (CCG); "Connswater Community Greenway / Flood Alleviation Scheme"*

A copy of the presentation can be found on the Belfast Lough and Lagan website:  
[www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public\\_partic/catchment\\_stakeholder\\_groups/belfast\\_lough\\_and\\_lagan.htm](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public_partic/catchment_stakeholder_groups/belfast_lough_and_lagan.htm)

- 3.1 Wendy Langham gave a presentation on the development of the Connswater Community Greenway (CCG) Project and the associated Flood Alleviation Scheme. The project has been developed by the East Belfast Partnership and the initial idea was to develop a mini Laganside Project, running from the Castlereagh Hills down to Belfast Lough. In 2005/06 the Team put forward a bid for funding and £32 million was secured to deliver the project with construction due to start in January 2011.
- 3.2 The Project uses the Connswater, Knock and Loop rivers as a catalyst for the project. It is a community driven project which aims to clean up 5km of rivers and improve the quality of life in the surrounding area. £23.5 million of the funding was secured from the Lottery to improve health and well being and the project aims to do this and to build links for local communities with the introduction of paths, cycle paths, bridges and observation points etc. The Project also looks at the provision of natural multi use play areas and community gardens. Belfast City Council has agreed to provide £4.2 million to manage and maintain the Greenway and DSD has agreed a contribution of £3.2 million towards the project.
- 3.3 Wendy described the history of flooding in East Belfast, with significant flood events having taken place in 2007 & 2008. As a result of this, the Rivers Agency has been looking at ways of reducing the potential flood risk from the Loop, Knock and Connswater Rivers. They are now working in partnership with the East Belfast Partnership to ensure an integrated design of any flood alleviation measures with the CCG Project. Wendy emphasised the importance of working with various partners.

- 3.4 Wendy explained that as there is no support for the inclusion of impoundments and weirs along the rivers, alternative solutions have had to be found. To come up with alternative viable ideas they have consulted with the River Restoration Centre.
- 3.5 Wendy also stated that lack of investment in the waste water infrastructure in East Belfast was one of the biggest problems facing the river system. She said that after a considerable amount of lobbying that NIW have currently agreed to put in two screens in the catchment to prevent waste entering the river from the numerous Combined Storm Overflows (CSOs) which enter the river.
- 3.6 Dave Foster thanked Wendy Langham for her informative presentation and the floor was opened for questions/comments. Dave McCullough, said that there was a linkage with the Connswater Community Greenway and the Comber Greenway. Wendy said that the 8km stretch from Dee Street to Comber via the old railway line linked at the Hollywood Arches and highlighted that the two Greenway projects were working with Sustrans to develop the local cycle network.
- 3.7 Robbie Marshall said that the natural progression following the restoration of the habitat and water quality would be to introduce fish such as salmon and sea trout, as they are a true indicator of water quality. Wendy Langham agreed and said that they were keen to see the introduction of fish. She said that they were pushing for the improvement in water quality but were still looking for advice on the introduction of fish. Robbie Marshall mentioned the Salmon in the Classroom initiative, where the Loughs' Agency and DCAL were working together to provide primary schools with salmon eggs. The schoolchildren looked after the eggs until they hatched and then released them into the river. He felt the children gained a better appreciation of the river and were more inclined to show an interest in looking after it.
- 3.8 Trevor Ogborn commented that it was a good project but was concerned that the money used to fund the project would be lost from NIEA, DCAL and NIW budgets and asked what impact this might have on other work which would affect water quality. Wendy Langham stated that the main bulk of the funding was 'New Money' as it was coming from the Lottery and that no money was being provided by NIEA, DCAL or NIW. £3.2 million was obtained from DSD for the improvements to bridges, paths, cycle paths etc. in disadvantaged areas. The work being carried out by the Rivers Agency to reduce the impact of floods in the area is work that was already on their list of priorities. The Rivers Agency, need £7 million to carry out this work and this money was coming through DARD and not DOE. Wendy said that working in partnership with the Connswater Community Greenway would represent a saving to the Rivers Agency.
- 3.9 Wendy was asked about the extent of the project and what was happening at East Belfast Yacht Club given the proposed runway extension at Belfast City Airport. Wendy Langham said that the Connswater Community Greenway had no plan to work in this area.
- 3.10 Gary Houston talked about the introduction of spawning beds and trying to retain natural trout. He offered to provide advice on restocking to the CCG project when it reached that stage. Robbie Marshall mentioned a Newcastle Upon-Tyne Project which brought about the successful re-introduction of Salmon against all odds.
- 3.11 Uel Irwin said that at the recent CSG meeting in Armoy, there was mention made of the Rivers Agency working with a local angling club. He also said that it was vitally important to get water quality right before any attempt was made at restocking with fish. Wendy Langham mentioned that they had an ecological management plan to ensure that the construction phase does not impact negatively on the river and agreed that improving water quality was key to the success of the project.

#### **4 NIEA Regional Manager's Update Presentation from David Miller, Senior Water Quality Inspector; "Regional Manager's Update"**

*A copy of the presentation can be found on the Belfast Lough and Lagan website:*

[www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public\\_partic/catchment\\_stakeholder\\_groups/belfast\\_lough\\_and\\_lagan.htm](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public_partic/catchment_stakeholder_groups/belfast_lough_and_lagan.htm)

- 4.1 David Miller gave a presentation on the Pollution incidents/Prosecutions from 5/5/2010 to 25/11/2010, giving a breakdown of their severity, source and the outcomes of recent cases. He stated that the source breakdown was similar to previous years.
- 4.2 David highlighted some notable incidents including the location and resolution of a major sewer fault in the Beechmount area of West Belfast, which had resulted in a dramatic improvement in the water quality of the Clowney River. He also talked about the unusual case of a fish kill in Dunmurry being linked to a natural blue coloured toxin found in horse chestnuts. The toxin was released into the river during the removal of a felled tree. David reported that a fish kill in Crawfordsburn River in October 2010, had been linked to a slurry discharge. He also noted that fish had surprisingly been seen in the Blackstaff River despite historic water quality problems in this waterway.
- 4.3 David said that a large amount of money had been spent on improvements to the sewage infrastructure in the Lagan & Belfast Lough. He outlined where these improvements had been made and stated that a change in industry and industry practice had helped to improve the environment.
- 4.4 In relation to a question from Gary Houston, David Miller said that waste water from Maze Hooks Corner is now to be pumped to New Holland and Magheralin waste is now pumped to Lurgan.
- 4.5 Peter Gallagher said that as River Manager and Chairman of the Lagan Users Water Forum there were a couple of issues which he wished to raise. He said that with the amount of money that had been spent on the Lagan catchment that he would have expected a big improvement in water quality. He said that although £2 million had been invested in the Lagan Weir and improvements in the water quality had been expected on completion of the Tunnel, high levels of coliforms were still present in the discharge from the Blackstaff in dry weather conditions. He also noted that discharge had been observed from the Oxford Street Pumping Station late at night. He said that a significant decrease in the pollution load into the Lagan of 85% was being stated by NIW but asked how they were going to measure this as water quality wasn't appearing to reflect this reduction in pollution load. [David pointed out that the ongoing problems were due to a fault at a sewer overflow at Glenmachan Street which had been rectified, and a long term problem with the sewers at Ormeau Avenue was being addressed but would require significant investment over the next couple of years.](#)
- 4.6 George Butler said that the Belfast Tunnel is working effectively as a wet weather system. He said that this is only one example of where there is a lot more work to do to upgrade the waste water infrastructure. He said that there is a huge legacy from the lack of investment and that there is still a lot more to do.
- 4.7 Robbie Marshall asked if a better breakdown in the pollution incidents could be provided. He would also like to be provided with information on what happened to the low and medium severity incidents. Robbie Marshall stated that warning letters and fines were not strong enough deterrents. He wanted to know when NIEA would start to take the cost of restoration from the polluter. He felt that many polluters had a poor attitude to polluting as fines were not large enough to be of a deterrent.  
**ACTION: Dave Foster to provide feedback to Robbie Marshall on NIEA's progress in applying restoration cost fines to identified polluters.**
- 4.8 Robbie Marshall questioned the lack of cohesion between NIEA and Planning Service in relation to the issuing of discharge to consents. Dave Foster said that NIEA and Planning Service were to meet up at Board Level to discuss how they could best link up when dealing with discharge consents.
- 4.9 Uel Irwin led a discussion about sustainable water usage including the use of "hippos" and other water saving devices.
- 4.10 Gary Houston questioned the reported compliance of a number of WWTWs. He said that there were a number of WWTWs pumping raw sewage into the Lagan outside of the scheduled sampling dates. He said that although a number of pollution incidents had been reported and could be attributed to particular WWTWs, this did not affect the compliance as the discharge had not occurred during one of the scheduled sample dates.
- 4.11 Trevor Ogborn questioned the practice of pumping out of sewage to other stations specifically New Holland. He said that he'd seen tankers operating in and out of Dunmurry. David McCullough

assured him that no tankers were used to pump out sewage. Sometime 'seed' sewage was required and in this instance a tanker would be used to transport the 'seed' sewage in. Trevor queried NIW's flood risk assessment methods. George Butler said that Dunmurry WWTW is being upgraded that it has been designed for the projected population in 2030 of 62,500 pe.

- 4.12 Peter Gallagher asked if the number of calls to the pollution hotline was used as an indicator of the severity of the incident. David Miller assured him that each pollution incident was investigated and that the severity of each incident was not based on the number of calls received.
- 4.13 Dave Foster introduced Helen Nutt saying that this was to be her final Catchment Stakeholder Group meeting before moving abroad.

**5 Update on progress on developing local plans to improve the water environment.**  
**Presentation from Helen Nutt, NIEA Catchment Management Officer**  
**Presentation from Helen Nutt, Belfast Lough & Lagan Catchment Management Officer: 'The Lagan Local Management Area'**

*A copy of the presentation can be found on the Belfast Lough and Lagan website:*

[www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public\\_partic/catchment\\_stakeholder\\_groups/belfast\\_lough\\_and\\_lagan.htm](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public_partic/catchment_stakeholder_groups/belfast_lough_and_lagan.htm)

- 5.1 Helen Nutt gave a presentation on the development of local plans to improve the water environment and indicated their progress to date. Helen highlighted how stakeholders have influenced the plan. She thanked their contribution to date and welcomed continued support. Helen introduced the Lagan Local Management Area Action Plan, describing its content and talked through the actions for three of the water bodies. She described how the plan would be implemented.
- 5.2 In the current financial climate Helen stated that although NIEA would not be in a position to provide a lot of financial support to projects that they would still be able to provide for example, letters of support to organisations who were applying for funding from other bodies.
- 5.3 Helen detailed the introduction of the Local Management Area e-newsletter and encouraged feedback and suggestions for future content. She also explained that the e-newsletter could be used by local groups to publicise their own websites and events and that she could be contacted if a group was interested in using the e-newsletter. Helen promoted the £1000 NIEA Water Environment Award and described it as an opportunity for local groups to win additional funding for their project.
- 5.4 Helen displayed one of the new Water Pollution signs and explained that a limited number of these were initially being produced to be located in the catchments. She welcomed suggestions for suitable locations from the group. Helen also encouraged those present to provide her with information on problem areas within the catchment. A member of the meeting asked that Angling Clubs should be asked for suggestion of suitable positions for the signs as they would know where the greatest footfall would be. Other attendees at the meeting from Lagan Valley Regional Park and the Lagan Lookout asked that they would also like to be consulted on the location of signs. Robbie Marshall asked how the signs were to be attached. The meeting discussed benefits and problems of different attachment methods. One member of the meeting raised an objection to the positioning of the signs as he believed they would spoil the visual appeal of the river and reduce photo opportunities. He also felt that the signs should be made from more natural materials. Gabriel Nelson said there were to be discussions with Planning Service over issues with sighting. It was suggested from the floor that the graphics for the signs should also be used to produce posters and stickers that could be displayed and used by various groups, including Angling Clubs.

**ACTION: NIEA to consult CSG attendees on the locating of Water Pollution Hotline signs.**

- 5.5 Robbie Marshall stated that the NIEA website was difficult to navigate and was not user friendly. He felt that NIEA should arrange to get LMA Action Plans out to Angling Clubs either by hard copy or email. He also thought that NIEA had missed an opportunity to get clubs involved as there was no mention in the plans of angling clubs carrying out any actions, for example kick sampling. He felt that greater use should be made of non Government bodies in the current economic climate. Gabriel

Nelson said that NIEA were looking to develop partnerships with various Groups, e.g. angling groups, during the implementation phase and said that NIEA was currently trialing the Anglers Monitoring Initiative.

- 5.6 The meeting was asked if there was any further feedback on the Action Plans and were encourage to provide feedback on the forms available. Judith Bankhead asked if it would be possible to add an additional column to the Action Plan which could reflect partners working on action points.

**ACTION: NIEA to consider all feedback on LMA Action Plans.**

- 5.7 With no further comments arising from the floor, Trevor Ogborn thanked Helen Nutt for all her hard work, dedication and thanked her for being a very pleasant contact in her role as Catchment Officer. On behalf of the group, he wished her well in the future.

## 6 Close

Dave Foster thanked those who had presented, once again reminded all in attendance of the Water Environment Awards and thanked all for attending.

### Summary of actions from the meeting:

Ref.	Action
2.1	<b>Helen Nutt to reissue the note of the Belfast Lough &amp; Lagan CSG meeting held on 5 May 2010 for feedback and add the agreed note of the meeting to the website.</b>
2.3	<b>Helen Nutt to find out the timescales for the delivery of the anti-poaching awareness leaflets in minority languages.</b>
4.7	<b>Dave Foster to provide feedback to Robbie Marshall on NIEA's progress in applying restoration cost fines to identified polluters.</b>
5.4	<b>NIEA to consult CSG attendees on the locating of Water Pollution Hotline signs.</b>
5.6	<b>NIEA to consider all feedback on LMA Action Plans.</b>

Northern Ireland **Environment** Agency  
Water Management Unit  
17 Antrim Road  
Lisburn  
BT28 3AL  
Tel: 028 92623006  
Email: [info@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:info@doeni.gov.uk)

[www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk)