

Minutes of the

Lower Neagh Bann Catchment Stakeholder Group Meeting

29 April 2009, Ballymoney Town Hall.



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Attendees:

Paul Apperly, PA, Agivey Anglers

Laverne Bell, LB, Quarry Products Association

Roda Campbell, RC, Ringsend resident

Mary Connacher, MC, NIEA, Regional Operations

Denzyl Dinsmore, DD, Royal Yaughting Association

Paul Erwin, PE, Antrim & District Angling Association

Gareth Greer, GG, DARD, Rivers Agency

Pauline High, PH, Glenavy Conservation and District Angling Club

Michael High, MH, Glenavy Conservation and District Angling Club

Brendan Kerr, BK, Natural Living Assets

Mark Livingstone, ML, (Chair) NIEA, Water Management Unit

Bridgeen Magorrian, BM, NIEA, River Basin Planning

Eileen Mallon, EM, (Minutes) NIEA, Water Management Unit

Caroline Marshall, CM, Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Advisory Committees

Dave McCrum, DMcC, NI Water

Richard McFaul, RMcF, NIEA, Water Management Unit

Gerry McLaughlin, GMcLa, Coleraine Borough Council

Gary McLoughlin, GMcL, NIEA, Water Management Unit

Alex McQuillan, AMcQ, NI Water

Alan Morrow, AM, DARD, Countryside Management Branch

Maurice Parkinson, MP, Antrim & District Angling Association

Richard Rowe, RR, Clady & District Angling Club

Daryl Shannon, DS, Ringsend resident

Tom Simpson, TS, Maine Angling Club

Kieran Tully, KT, Agivey Anglers Association

Ruth Wilson, RW, Antrim Borough Council



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Welcome and Outline of Agenda	ACTIONS
ML opened the meeting and welcomed all. ML outlined the agenda and asked anyone with any comments on the draft minutes to contact EM to enable the minutes to be finalised.	ACTION 21: All to contact EM with amendments to the minutes of the 9th Oct 2008 meeting.
Actions from the previous meeting- Eileen Mallon (Presentation 1)	
<p>The actions from the previous meeting and the responses provided were presented by EM and discussed by the group.</p> <p>A discussion took place regarding development on floodplains. PE informed the group of a development in the Doagh area which demonstrated poor application of PPS15. EM stated that she welcomed stakeholder examples of good and poor development on floodplains. These examples may be used at a proposed meeting with Planning Service, Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Advisory Committees, Rivers Agency and other bodies. ML stated that providing consultation responses on policies was one of the best ways to change practices. NIEA are currently developing an internal paper focusing on managing Major Construction Projects from an environmental perspective. Early involvement to enable views to be heard is important.</p> <p>ML then outlined the role of Rivers Trusts and its development in NI. He suggested that the next Rivers trust to be established in NI may be the Six Mile Water and he invited other interested groups to consider Rivers Trusts and referred the group to the Association of River Trusts website www.associationofrivertrusts.org.uk</p> <p>KT outlined concern of the effect of the Craigmore landfill on the Agivey River and its tributaries. The Agivey Anglers had spent a considerable amount of EU Peace money on work to improve the river. All this good work could be totally wiped out with one incident/leak from the landfill. ML stated that new landfills required an EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment). A discussion took place regarding the impact of landfills, their accumulative effects and the frequency and positioning of monitoring. It was agreed that the most appropriate way to address the concerns regarding Craigmore was to arrange a meeting for all interested parties.</p>	<p>ACTION 22: Examples of poor or good practice of floodplain development to be forwarded to EM.</p> <p>ACTION: EM to contact PE for details of Doagh example.</p> <p>ACTION 23: EM to provide KT with reasoning for the current positioning of monitoring points on the Agivey</p> <p>ACTION 24: EM to arrange a meeting between local stakeholders, Water Management Unit and Land Resource Management to address local concerns.</p>
Regional Pollution Update – Mary Connacher (Presentation 2)	
MC outlined the work completed in the past 6 months in Area 2 & 3 which included; completing 358 domestic consents, 64 substantiated pollution incidents involving 3 statutory samples being taken with a view to prosecution.	
Discussion	
CM voiced concern regarding the relatively high number of domestic consents presented given the poor performance of septic tanks in NI. MC explained that the numbers of consents presented were a mix of consents for existing and new tanks. New systems had to meet modernised consent standards. A discussion took place regarding the high number of pollution incidents involving oil. MC clarified that oil related incidents were usually highest around the start of winter, as tanks were filled to capacity, and any small weakness in the tank resulted in a cracks and subsequent leakage. MC advised that householders check their tanks	

	<p>at the start of winter. A brief discussion took place regarding the levels and types of pollution incidents reported. ML informed the meeting that around 2000 to 2500 pollution incidents are reported every year. The NIEA report containing details and statistics is available at www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/waterpollution/pol_respon.htm</p> <p>NIEA use a Pollution Risk Assessment (PRA) model in industrial estates such as Mallusk and this has proved to be effective. GMcLa suggested that the level of agricultural pollution incidents should have decreased due to the Nitrates Directive, increased tank capacity, and the closed period. ML commented that factors such as the Farm Nutrient Management Scheme and the Nitrates Action Programme had proved to be beneficial.</p> <p>RC asked if there were plans to increase the severity of punishment for pollution offenders. ML replied that the judiciary were responsible for deciding the level of fines imposed and that NIEA had a number of cases where substantial fines were levied against polluters. RC asked if NIEA had the ability to overturn old consents. ML replied that NIEA review consents on a 4year cycle. If monitoring proves performance is poor then NIEA can revoke the consent or tighten the conditions. NIEA can reassess if consents if there is a risk or a problem. PE enquired if NIEA had ever revoked a consent. ML replied yes. GMcLa asked if anyone was employed to police the rivers. ML replied that NIEA had various ways of policing the river including; investigating reported pollution incidents, issuing and monitoring consents to discharge, gathering evidence and preparing cases for prosecution etc. GMcLa commented that he felt building too close to rivers was wrong as these areas were important for wildlife. ML suggested remarks like these should be fed into the draft River Basin Plans.</p>	
	<p>Draft River Basin Management Plans - Bridgeen Magorrian (Presentation 3)</p>	
	<p>BM explained that the draft plans are available for consultation until the 22nd of June. NIEA have proactively promoted the plans through a series of information days, the NIEA website and various meetings and publications. The plans are part of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) which in its simplest form involves a 6 year cycle of the classification of rivers, setting of targets and actions to achieve the targets. The plans consist of the draft RBMP document, an interactive web mapping tool and comparative documents for the international river basin districts. NIEA welcomed feedback on the draft plans through, email, phone, in writing and in other formats such as the breakout session in this meeting.</p>	<p>ACTION 25: All to provide feedback on the draft River Basin Management Plans</p>
	<p>dRBMP's Feedback session - discussion comments</p>	
	<p>The group was asked to provide comment on the dRBMP consultation questions – the feedback is summarised below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you agree with the objectives and level of improvement set for Northern Ireland's water environment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Ireland has a relatively smaller population, a lower level of industry than other countries, therefore the target is not high enough. • Are the targets too high? Especially when compared to 	

	<p>England, Scotland and Wales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should socio-economic factors be taken into account? For example, salmon fishery areas, tourism etc. • Local knowledge is a key issue. • Concerns of costs to reach targets. • Costs – Developers should pay for sewage facilities required. <p>2. Have we identified the most significant pressures affecting the water environment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning (Building and development control) • Accumulative effects e.g. Landfills. • Types of hydroelectric power and their effect on fish populations. • More research into fish population behaviour is required. • Relationship between other government department objectives. • Litter in waterways. • Cross compliance measures for industry. • Septic tanks – monitoring, identification and upgrading. <p>3. Have we identified all the important existing measures that are being used to address these issues? Please identify any important existing measures we have missed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments made <p>4. Can you identify new or existing measures or initiatives, at a regional or local level that you or your organisation can help deliver?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six-Mile Water River trust • MEP (moderate ecological potential) • Salmon in the classroom project <p>5. What suggestions do you have to improve the linkages this plan has with other relevant plans and programmes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meeting with environmental companies with regards to the plans. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countryside Management Scheme – River corridor options in stream works. • Recognition of river corridors in area plans. Reinforce this idea to planners. • SEPA funding – River restoration. <p>6. Do you have any suggestions to further develop and enhance arrangements for all interested parties to work together on the implementation of the plan?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation with regards to the relocation of monitoring stations. • Planners and industry representatives need to be present and actively participate in CSG meetings. Produce an annual report to get these parties involved. • More support is needed for the promotion of the River Trust model. • New Green Deals – environmentally related jobs. • Adult and community education and environmental employment. • Rural Community Network facilitation with local environmental groups. <p>7. Have you have any other issues regarding the wider environment which may be impacted by the River Basin Management Plans?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Peat cutting which causes air and water pollution. • Effect of Environment Liability Directive. • The “act of God” section within the directive should not be used as a get out clause. • Coordinate a meeting of NIW, NIEA, all stakeholders and councils. • Better consultations required. For example: between Rivers Agency and Angling clubs; between NIEA and Roads Service etc 	
	Close	
	ML thanked those who attended, and informed the meeting that minutes and action points reported on during this meeting would be circulated. The next CSG meeting would be held in 6 months time.	

