

Note of Meeting

10 November 2009

Venue: The Coastal Zone, Portrush

Attendees:

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| 1. Claire Vincent | Head of Marine Assessment and Licensing Team, NIEA (Chair) |
| 2. Brian Luke | Regional Manager, NIEA (Presenter) |
| 3. Diane Arthur | River Basin Planning Team, NIEA (Presenter) |
| 4. Helen Nutt | North Eastern Catchment Officer, NIEA (Presenter & Note-taker) |
| 5. John Anderson | Friends of Larne Lough & CNCC |
| 6. Judith Bankhead | Rivers Agency |
| 7. Roy Carton | North Antrim Angling Association |
| 8. Perry Donaldson | |
| 9. Raymond Dougal | Dougold Mussels Ltd |
| 10. John Hill | Regional Manager, NIEA |
| 11. Uel Irwin | AES Kilroot |
| 12. Paul Johnston | Paul Johnston Associates |
| 13. Peter Johnston | |
| 14. Brendan Kerr | Natural Living Assets & Ballycastle District Angling Club |
| 15. Tom Lavelle | Glens Angling Club / Ulster Angling Federation |
| 16. Larry McCann | Glens Angling Club |
| 17. Hugo McCormick | Glens Angling Club |
| 18. Gregg McNabney | River Basin Planning Team, NIEA |
| 19. Richard McFaul | Water Quality Inspector, NIEA |
| 20. Alan Morrow | Countryside Management Branch, DARD |
| 21. Sharon Morrow | Friends of Larne Lough |
| 22. Garry O'Neill | Inland Fisheries, DCAL |
| 23. Claire Savage | Coleraine Chronicle |
| 24. Teddy Roughan | Inland Fisheries, DCAL |
| 25. Daniel Simpson | North Antrim Angling Association |
| 26. Donald Walker | North Antrim Angling Association |

1. Welcome, outline of agenda and introductions

Claire Vincent opened the meeting and welcomed all. Those in attendance were invited to introduce themselves to the group.

- 1.1 Claire suggested that to make the best use of the Catchment Officer's time that notes of the meeting would be taken in the future rather than a full set of minutes as had been produced in previous meetings. She said that this would free up more of Helen Nutt's time for on the ground work. The meeting agreed with this suggestion. Helen Nutt apologised for the delay in issuing the last set of minutes.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting and update on progress made in addressing the issues raised at the last meeting.**

Helen Nutt gave a brief update on the actions raised at the last meeting on 5 May Glens Hotel, Cushendall.

Ref	Action	Update
2.1	Helen Nutt to forward a copy of the minutes from the April 2008 Bush and Glens CSG meeting to Sharon Morrow for comment, make relevant amendments if required and add agreed minutes and presentations to the CSG website.	A copy of the minutes was issued to Sharon Morrow, a point was amended for accuracy and the Bush and Glens CSG website has now been updated with presentations from the Spring 2009 round of meetings. http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/bush_and_glens.htm
3.1	Helen Nutt to forward log of dates when foam had been reported to NIEA through the NIEA Water Pollution Hotline to Sharon Morrow for circulation to Friends of Larne Lough.	Helen Nutt has forwarded this information to Sharon Morrow.
3.2	Helen Nutt to relay the recommendation of the inclusion of the "cost to the public purse" in press releases regarding water pollution enforcement.	This recommendation has been relayed to the NIEA Regional Operations Enforcement Team for consideration.
3.4	NIEA to highlight process and steps taken in bringing a pollution case to enforcement at a future meeting.	Regional Manager to present this process at the Autumn 2009 meeting.
5.1	Helen Nutt to ensure that feedback to the dRBMP Consultation questions is recorded as an official response from the Bush and Glens Catchment Stakeholder Group and circulate to group attendees.	Feedback has been issued as an official response and summary of points raised have been circulated with the minutes of the meeting.
6.1	A presentation on Catchment priorities to be proposed for the agenda of the next Bush and Glens CSG meeting.	A presentation on Local Management Area Plans will be given at the Autumn 2009 round of CSG meetings.

3. **Regional Manager's update on notable pollution incidents and investigations since the last meeting.**

Presentation from Brian Luke, Regional Manager, NIEA.

Brian Luke gave an update of local issues dealt with by NIEA Regional Operations since the last meeting. He gave a break down of the number, source and severity of water pollution incidents reported through the NIEA Water Pollution Hotline (0800 807060). He highlighted the range of work that his team was involved in; from pollution investigation and prevention to Bathing Water sampling. Brian highlighted the process and steps taken in bringing a pollution case to enforcement.

- 3.1 There was a discussion about NIEA's response to reported pollution incidents. NIEA was asked to confirm the average response time for reaction to pollution incidents.

ACTION: Helen Nutt to confirm average response times to pollution incidents reported through the Water Pollution Hotline.

- 3.2 There were queries about the number of monitoring sites on the River Bush catchment and the availability of maps and Geographical Information System (GIS) data for the area. Brian Luke and Claire Vincent said that NIEA had a comprehensive GIS system and that there were many data sharing arrangements in place with other Government Departments and organisations. These agreements have helped to ensure that assets and issues of importance are highlighted and considered in River Basin Management Plans, pollution response etc. Helen Nutt referred the group to the minutes from the meeting of November 2008 where maps and tables had been provided giving details of NIEA's monitoring programme in the River Bush area. Helen said that NIEA's web-map viewer provided a lot of information on monitoring and results for the whole of Northern Ireland in a basic GIS format.

Maps of the catchment and local information on monitoring can be found at:

<http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/bg-csg-mins18november08.pdf>

<http://maps.ehsni.gov.uk/wmuvviewer/>

- 3.3 NIEA was asked to make sure that reporters of pollution incident get feedback on the problems they have raised. Brian Luke said that it was procedure that field staff should do this and apologised if it had not always occurred. He said that it was often difficult for staff to make sure that this happened especially where there were a number of ongoing incidents. He said he would remind staff of the importance of feedback and ask that it be followed up in future.

ACTION: Brian Luke to raise issue of importance of feedback to the reporters of incidents of pollution with staff.

4. **Local Management Area Plans**

Presentation from Diane Arthur River Basin Planning Group, NIEA

Diane Arthur gave a presentation which detailed the rationale for working at a Local Management Area level. She gave an overview of the ecological risk based process that had been adopted to target the local implementation of the Water Framework Directive across Northern Ireland through Local Management Area Plans. She detailed how the

whole country would be covered in a three year rolling programme with the Bush being the primary focus in 2010, Glens and Rathlin 2011 and Larne Lough 2012. The current state of water bodies in the Bush and Glens Catchment Stakeholder Group area was discussed and the targets for improvement were outlined.

- 4.1 The meeting discussed the example of Copeland Water, a very small catchment which is heavily culverted. The importance of highlighting the different sizes of rivers and streams and the range of pressures affecting individual waterbodies was discussed.
- 4.2 The meeting discussed the rationale for the Local Management Area (LMA) plans timetable that NIEA proposed. NIEA were asked how they would gather information on the ground to support the drafting and implementation of the plans. Helen Nutt said that there would be more focused on the ground work with river walks and more targeted monitoring. She said that NIEA planned to work more closely with established contacts and local catchment working groups and that increasing the frequency of such meetings would provide additional opportunities outside of the Catchment Stakeholder Group meetings to ensure that local issues were included in the action plans.
- 4.3 The spread of monitoring and the proposed LMA priority timetable was discussed. Claire Vincent said that there was a lot of data behind the ecological scores that had been presented by Diane Arthur. She said that the timetable had been drawn up in a pragmatic way making sure that there was a geographical spread by Catchment Stakeholder Group of the Local Management Areas with the ecological scores most at need of improvement. She said that Water Management Unit, NIEA planned to align all team work priorities to this timetable to make maximum impact at a local level.
- 4.4 NIEA was asked how quickly improvements would be seen on the ground, particular in marine areas at the bottom of the catchments. Claire Vincent said that whilst some of the proposed measures for improvement would take a long time for any change to be seen, others could occur relatively quickly. She gave the example of Belfast Lough where dramatic reductions in nutrient inputs with the closure of Richardson's Fertilisers and improvements in sewage treatment had shown a marked improvement in water quality over the last 10 years.
- 4.5 There was a discussion about the catchment trial which is being proposed in Stranocum to look into the management of weed growing in the river. Various views on the level of success of clearance of the weed were expressed.

ACTION: Helen Nutt to hold a meeting with North Antrim Angling Association, DCAL and Rivers Agency to discuss the Bush Local Management Area plans and weed management trial in spring 2010.

5. Discussion on the way forward for the CSG meetings

The group discussed the affects of budget cuts and lack of funding on the success of implementation of the River Basin Management Plans. Claire Vincent said that DoE, DCAL, DRD and DARD had put in a joint cross-departmental bid for funding to implement the Water Framework Directive and that a response on this would be eagerly

awaited. A member of the group said that it was important that meeting attendees make their local politicians aware of the importance of the catchment improvement work and ask them to support the funding of on the ground Water Framework Directive projects and initiatives.

6. Close

Claire Vincent thanked all for attending and for their input to the discussion.

Summary of actions from the meeting:

Ref	Action
3.1	Helen Nutt to confirm average response times to pollution incidents reported through the Water Pollution Hotline.
3.3	Brian Luke to raise issue of importance of feedback to the reporters of incidents of pollution with staff.
4.5	Helen Nutt to hold a meeting with North Antrim Angling Association, DCAL and Rivers Agency to discuss the Bush Local Management Area plans and weed management trial in spring 2010.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

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