

Upper Foyle Catchment Stakeholder Group

Minutes

16 April 2008



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**Minutes of the meeting of the
Upper Foyle Catchment Stakeholder Group (CSG)
16 April 2008**

A meeting of the above group was held at Omagh District Council Offices, on Wednesday 16 April 2008 at 7.00pm.

Present:

Peter Archdale (Chairman) – Environmental interest.
Mark Livingstone – EHS Water Management Unit
Michael Spillane – EHS Water Management Unit
Joanne Livingstone – Catchment Officer
John Kane – DCAL, Inland Fisheries
Art Niven – Loughs Agency
Seamus Cullinan – Loughs Agency
Peter Close – EHS, Water Management Unit
Paddy McCrudden – Rivers Agency
Rachel Brown – Planning Service
Norman Henderson – EHS
Lucinda Blakiston-Houston – Environmental interest
David Porter – Rivers Agency
Angela Halpenny – Northern Ireland Water (NIW)
Michael McAlary – NIW
Norman Gilfillian – Thomas Kane & Sons
Peter Glass – Omagh Anglers
Jackie Hamilton - Omagh Anglers
Mary Baillie – EHS, Water Management Unit
Keith Johnston – DARD
Brian Johnston – Rocks Lodge Fish Farm
Alan Morrow – DARD Countryside Management Branch
Cllr Bert Wilson – Councillor and Farmer
Gavin Turner – EHS Water Management Unit
Sam McCracken – EHS Water Management Unit
Stephen Annesley – EHS Water Management Unit
John McCartney – Loughs Agency
Malachy McClements – Loughmacrory Community and Development Association
Brian Montaghuge - EHS Water Management Unit
Danny McSorley – Omagh DC

Apologies:

Gerry Breslin – EHS, Water Management Unit
Max Bryant – Sperrins Tourism Ltd.
Julie Farrell – UWT/Omagh District Council
Terry Smithson - Omagh Anglers Association
Cllr Seamus Shields - Omagh District Council

1. Welcome and Introduction

Mark Livingstone opened the meeting as outgoing chairman. Welcomed everyone and gave update on SWMI process. He proposed Peter Archdale as chairman for the coming year and the Group agreed. Peter outlined his role as chairman for coming year and asked all those present to state their role in the group.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

These were agreed to be an accurate account.

3. Matters arising

Peter Archdale proposed a review of Terms of Reference for next meeting. It was noted that DRD Roads Service were not present and agreed that there would be another attempt to encourage future attendance. MOU between EHS and Loughs Agency - outstanding.

Action 1: Peter Archdale and Joanne Livingstone to review the TOR and circulate to members prior to next meeting.

Action 2: Joanne Livingstone to ensure Roads Service are invited to next meeting

4. Michael Spillane (MS) - Regional update on pollution incidents and investigations in Upper Foyle catchment - presentation on the local activities of Water Quality Staff. Michael detailed the number and severity of pollution incidents since the last meeting. The routine river monitoring sites and numbers of domestic Consent applications processed were presented.

4.1 Brian Johnston asked about the dissolved oxygen meter readings in terms of diurnal variations. Michael Spillane replied diurnal variation is taken into account and there have no dissolved oxygen problems in the past year.

4.2 Lucinda Blakiston-Houston referred to the spatial distribution of low pollution incidents and their cumulative affect on sensitive areas. Michael Spillane replied data on sensitive areas and water quality classification is available and agreed that it would be beneficial to show the low severity incidents mapped.

4.3 Peter Glass queried discharge consents from private pumping stations to a waterway and Lucinda Blakiston-Houston asked about consent compliance figures. Michael said consents were based on scientific modelling considering factors such as low flow and strength of effluent. He added that figures are available of consent modelling.

- 4.4 John McCartney said EHS had made a suitable drive towards cumulative modelling of consents using SIMCAT modelling. John added that an issue for Loughs Agency is number of descriptive consents. Michael McAlary said the descriptive consents for small sewage works had legacy issues but now working with EHS to focus on most polluting sewage works. John McCartney said the Loughs Agency would need to be consulted on small works are in significant salmonoid spawning grounds. Peter Archdale suggested at the next meeting a presentation by NIW detailing priorities would be useful. Michael McAlary replied that he would be giving a similar presentation to the Lough Melvin/Erne Group and one could follow on for the Upper Foyle Group.

Action 3: Michael McAlary to give a presentation to the group giving details of NI Water's priorities in the catchment area.

5. **Joanne Livingstone, North West RBD Catchment Officer – The Role of Catchment Officers.** Joanne gave a talk on her role as Catchment Officer for the North West river basin district the citing high ammonia levels in the River Derg as an example.
- 5.1 Peter Glass asked if the Loughs Agency had been involved in any studies of the Derg River. John McCartney confirmed some independent action and liaison with EHS involvement.
- 5.2 Lucinda Blakiston-Houston raised the point that the Derg system is a SAC and that the polluter should be liable for costs. John McCartney and Mark Livingstone agreed that the Environmental Liability Directive could be enforced following prosecution. Mark added a new project targeting the Derg, requiring considerable resources, had been established and EHS were committed to solving the pollution problems.
- 5.3 John Kane said he wished to see a representative from the Forestry Service to discuss forestry operations and river buffer zones. Peter Archdale said he would note this and added they have attended previous meetings. Joanne Livingstone added that she had received apologies from Forest Service and that they do normally attend and meet regularly with EHS to discuss issues. John McCartney said there had been recent engagement between the Forestry Service and the Loughs Agency on a number of issues.
- 5.4 Peter Archdale asked for the target timescale for production of the River Basin Management Plan. Mark Livingstone said a draft version will be out in towards the end of May which will be circulated to the Stakeholder Group in line with consultation timelines for Water Framework Directive. Lucinda Blakiston-Houston asked if the proposals be open to public consultation. Mary Baillie replied the Management plan will be publicly launched in December.

Action 4: Joanne Livingstone to circulate the draft RBMP to the group as soon as it becomes available.

6. Presentation by Alan Morrow, DARD Countryside Management Branch Nitrates Directive. Alan Morrow gave a presentation on the Nitrates Directive and the Nitrates Action Programme.

- 6.1 Peter Archdale asked when the closed season for spreading slurry would be applicable to everyone. Alan Morrow said from 1 January 2009 everyone would have to have sufficient slurry storage capacity on their farms to enable them to abide by the Directive. Michael Spillane added EHS enforcement did occur last year on farms already with their full storage capacity in place. Bert Wilson raised concerns on the length of the closed period and costs involved. Alan Morrow said the dates of the closed period were science based and there was a significant amount of government funding for new tanks. Peter Close said current research into natural solutions of effluent management could offer alternatives.

Bert Wilson queried the varying lengths of the closed season across Britain and it was agreed that this could be discussed further at the next meeting. Lucinda Blakiston-Houston raised the need for monitoring of the Nitrates Directive to assess effectiveness. Mark Livingstone said 1% of farms (400 farms) are to be monitored every year under cross compliance and record keeping is an inspection requirement that is to be implemented this year. He added this year a monitoring programme of nitrates on two specific catchments will take place. Peter Archdale said it would be helpful if these plans were shared at the next meeting.

- 6.2 John McCartney raised the issue of farm yard dirty water asking when it could be spread and practical issues in identifying dirty water. Alan Morrow said guidance is available on dirty water, which can be spread all year round, and storage volumes could be reduced by separation of clean and dirty water. He added that reported pollution incidents are dealt with using a joined up approach between DARD, EHS and the Loughs Agency. Peter Archdale used the example of building works on the River Strule showing pollution prevention methods. He also stressed the need for reporting of pollution incidents by anglers and the public using the phone hotline number - **0800 80 70 60**.

Action 5: Omagh Anglers to encourage members to use the EHS hotline to report pollution incidents - 0800 80 70 60.

Action 6: Alan Morrow to give an update at the next meeting on the new CMS with regard to water quality options and an update on the rationale for variations in the closed period in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

Action 7: Mark Livingstone to provide an update on the Nitrates Effectiveness Programme at the next meeting.

- 7. Danny McSorley– Chief Executive, Omagh District Council -** gave the Group a presentation on Council plans to develop access to the River Strule. Danny McSorley stated the Council objective of placing the River as a focal point for Omagh town and they were now in the final stage of Strule river walk around Arts Centre. Plan to open up a network of river access of 2.6km from Abbey Bridge to the Strathroy Link. Also OASIS project to create focus area at confluence of Drumragh and Camowen rivers. On completion these projects will substantially increase river access. Peter Archdale thanked Danny McSorley for the presentation.

- 7.1 John McCartney said the Council management of works along the Strule were an example of best environmental practice. Danny McSorley highlighted the importance

of stakeholder involvement in future plans and agreed to update this group with more details as the project progresses.

8. Any Other Business

Agenda items for next meeting - John McCartney requested representation from IPRI and Waste and Contaminated Land Unit at the next meeting.

Peter Archdale agreed to action for next meeting a presentation of their role as industrial regulators.

Action 8: Joanne Livingstone to invite someone from IPPC and Waste and Contaminated land Unit to the next meeting to give a presentation on their role as industrial regulators.

Action 9: Joanne Livingstone to send copies of the presentations to Omagh Anglers and Planning Service.

Action 10: All to forward details of projects on the 'PAIR' form to Joanne.

9. Close

Peter Archdale closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending.

Table 1: Summary of the action points from the meeting.

Ref	Action Point	Action	Update
3	1	Peter Archdale and Joanne Livingstone to review the TOR and circulate to members prior to next meeting.	Completed.
3	2	Joanne Livingstone to ensure Roads Service are invited to next meeting	Road Service invited to attend.
4.3	3	Michael McAlary to give a presentation to the group giving details of NI Water's priorities in the catchment area.	NIW presentation to follow.
5.4	4	Joanne Livingstone to circulate the draft RBMP to the group as soon as it becomes available.	Alvin Wilson to give a presentation on the draft RBMPs.
6.2	5	Omagh Anglers to encourage members to use the EHS hotline to report pollution incidents - 0800 80 70 60.	On-going.
6.2	6	Alan Morrow to give an update at the next meeting on the new CMS with regard to water quality options and an update on the rationale for variations in the closed period in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.	
6.2	7	Mark Livingstone to provide an update on the Nitrates Effectiveness Programme at the next meeting.	Update available.
8	8	Joanne Livingstone to invite someone from IPPC and Waste and Contaminated land Unit to the next meeting to give a presentation on their role as industrial regulators.	Possible presentation for a future meeting.
8	9	Joanne Livingstone to send copies of the presentations to Omagh Anglers and Planning Service.	Completed
8	10	All to forward details of projects on the 'PAIR' form to Joanne.	Completed