

Minutes

7 April 2009

Venue: Cutters Wharf, Stranmillis, Belfast

Attendees:

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| 1. Dave Foster | Head of Water Management Unit, NIEA (Chair) |
| 2. Bridgeen Magorrian | River Basin Planning Group, NIEA (Presenter) |
| 3. David Miller | Senior Water Quality Inspector, NIEA (Presenter) |
| 4. Helen Nutt | North Eastern Catchment Officer, NIEA (Note-taker) |
| 5. Gabriel Nelson | River Basin Planning Group, NIEA |
| 6. Leo McGlinchey | Water Quality Inspector, NIEA |
| 7. Terry Acheson | Hollywood Flyfishers Club |
| 8. Jim Bradley | Belfast Hills Partnership |
| 9. Cathy Burns | Lagan Canal Restoration Trust |
| 10. George Butler | Northern Ireland Water Limited (NIWL) |
| 11. John Campbell | Hollywood Flyfishers Club |
| 12. Clifford Charlton | Belfast Rowing Club & Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP) |
| 13. Claire Cockerill | World Wildlife Fund (WWF) |
| 14. Seamus Connor | Fisheries Conservancy Board |
| 15. Brian Daly | Inland Fisheries, DCAL |
| 16. Gary Houston | Iveagh Angling Club |
| 17. Samuel Irwin | AES Kilroot Power Station |
| 18. Martin Johnston | Environmental Crime Unit, NIEA |
| 19. Jonathan Kerr | Iveagh Angling Club |
| 20. Robbie Marshall | Ulster Angling Federation (UAF) |
| 21. Deborah McLaughlin | Bog Meadows, Ulster Wildlife Trust (UWT) |
| 22. Trevor Ogborn | Dunmurry Community association |
| 23. Desmond Robinson | Northern Ireland Water Limited (NIWL) |
| 24. David Scott | Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP) |

1. Welcome, outline of agenda and introductions

Dave Foster opened the meeting and welcomed all.
Those in attendance were invited to introduce themselves to group.
Round room introductions.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and update on progress made in addressing the issues raised at 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 minutes by email or post. She said that she had received a request for an amendment to these. The group agreed that in the absence of any further amendments to the minutes that the minutes would be agreed and posted on the Belfast Lough and Lagan Catchment Stakeholder Group (CSG) website.

ACTION: Helen Nutt to add agreed minutes and the presentations from the Autumn 2008

meeting to the Belfast Lough and Lagan CSG website.

- 2.2 Helen Nutt gave a brief presentation detailing the updates on the action points raised at the last Belfast Lough and Lagan CSG meeting held on Thursday 13 March 2008.

Summary of actions from the last meeting:

Ref	Action	Update
2.1	Helen Nutt to add agreed minutes and past presentations from CSG meetings to new Belfast Lough and Lagan CSG website.	Belfast Lough and Lagan CSG website has been updated. http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public_partic/catchment_stakeholder_groups/belfast_lough_and_lagan.htm
2.7	Helen Nutt to ensure specific information is provided at the next CSG on PAIRS forms returned for the area.	Total of 14 forms returned, 6 for North Eastern RBD, 4 for Belfast Lough & Lagan CSG. Majority of respondents agree to have their details added to proposed web-based database. Iveagh Angling Club, Threemile Water Conservation & Angling Association, Dromore & District Angling Club, Ulster Wildlife Trust - Bog Meadows. Additional PAIRS sheets available at meeting.
6.1	Seamus Connor to follow up on NIPS comments made on Coarse Fish Bye-Laws Consultation.	Update given by Seamus Connor at meeting.

3. Discussions

Robbie Marshall asked whether there would be scope to review the plans after December 2009 when the so called final River Basin Management Plans are launched. Gabriel Nelson said that the Plans are working documents and there would be an ongoing cycle to review and update these to ensure they are on track for implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

- 3.1 Robbie Marshall asked if there was scope for using monitoring and sampling information collected by angling clubs to supplement the work of NIEA. Claire Cockerill asked if NIEA would be prepared to trial a scheme with an angling club. Dave Foster said that NIEA were keen to strengthen partnerships with the public and that he would talk with the NIEA monitoring team to consider running a scheme. Robbie Marshall said that he would provide the name of a suitable club for involvement. Samuel Irwin said that Kilroot Power Station had sponsored a year long survey with a locally based Ulster Wildlife Trust group and that it had been a successful partnership.

ACTION: Dave Foster and Robbie Marshall to liaise with regard to running a sampling trial with an angling club partner.

- 3.2 Trevor Ogborn asked how NIEA currently stood with regard to meeting standards for water quality given that there had been threats of infractions in the past in relation to other European Directives. Dave Foster said that there had been infractions in the UK for failure to meet targets of the Urban Waste Water Treatment (UWWTD) Directive but that as of last year the required work had been carried out. George Butler gave details of the 13 UK sites that had been flagged as being at risk of not meeting the standards of the UWWTD, 9 in Northern Ireland, 3 in England and 1 in Scotland. He said that work at all sites had been completed to bring them up to standard and that no sites in Northern Ireland were currently in danger of being infringed. Trevor Ogborn asked about the impact of new development on already overloaded Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTWs). George Butler said that Northern

Ireland Water were asking that where systems are under stress that Planning Service refuse new connections to the sewer and that waste water is instead treated by alternative means like septic tanks.

3.3 Robbie Marshall said that there had been a problem with Crumlin Sewage Pumping Station (SPS) which had resulted in the prosecution of Northern Ireland Water. David Miller said that there had been no problems noted with the SPS since the April 2007 prosecution. He said that a letter had been written by NIEA to the Crumlin Anglers about the matter.

3.4 Gary Houston said that the level of treatment of waste water discharges to the Lagan were not acceptable and that there were heavy algal blooms affecting the river. He said that his own canoe surveys had shown there to be a number of problems on the river. Helen Nutt said that she, David Miller and Robbie Marshall had been working with Iveagh Angling Club, which Gary Houston represented, to address local water pollution problems and that anything further that he noted by way of problems could be resolved through that established forum.

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

Presentation from David Miller "Area Managers Report, Belfast Lough and Lagan Catchment Stakeholder Group."

David Miller gave a presentation highlighting the pollution incidents that had been reported since the last meeting and giving a breakdown of their source and outcomes of recent cases. He highlighted work that NIEA Regional Operations were involved in in the catchment.

4.1 Judith Bankhead asked for clarification on the work that NIEA were carrying out on the Minnowburn. David Miller said that NIEA field staff were monitoring biotic scores and investigating what might be causing the suppressed invertebrate community that had been noted in the river.

4.2 Trevor Ogborn and Claire Cockerill asked for information on Northern Ireland Water (NIW) plans for upgrades to Waste Water Treatment Works in the Belfast Lough and Lagan Catchment Stakeholder Group area. David Miller gave updates on the planned work that he was aware of but said that the best information would be available directly from NIW.

ACTION: Helen Nutt to forward link to Northern Ireland Water upgrade plans to meeting attendees.

5. Draft River Basin Management Plans (dRBMPs) Consultation – Introduction and Scene Setting.

Presentation from Bridgeen Magorrian River Basin Planning Group, NIEA

Bridgeen Magorrian gave a presentation which was a brief overview of the process that has resulted in the publication of the draft plan. The current state of classification and the targets were outlined.

6. Group discussion focused on the dRBMP Consultation Questions.

After a short break the group looked at the six consultation questions which are detailed in the dRBMP Consultation Documents. The following questions were considered in relation to the North Eastern draft River Basin Management Plan, the document that relates to the Belfast Lough and Lagan Catchment Stakeholder Group.

1. *Do you agree with the objectives and level of improvement set for Northern Ireland's water environment?*
2. *Have we identified the most significant pressures affecting the water environment?*
3. *Have we identified all the important existing measures that are being used to address these issues? Please identify any important existing measures that we have missed.*
4. *Can you identify new or existing measures or initiatives, at a regional or local level that you*

or your organisation can help deliver?

5. *What suggestions do you have to improve the linkages this plan has with other relevant plans and programmes?*
 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?*
- 6.1 Helen Nutt said that the outcome of these discussions would be presented to NIEA as a record of the Belfast Lough and Lagan Catchment Stakeholder Group's response to the draft River Basin Management Plan Consultation. It was requested that the feedback received from the two breakout groups would be circulated to the group along with the minutes.
- ACTION: Helen Nutt to circulate the Belfast Lough and Lagan Catchment Stakeholder Group consultation response to the draft River Basin Management Plans to attendees and corresponding members of the Group.**
- 6.2 Robbie Marshall proposed that the focus of the next meeting should be the move from the draft to final plans and how these would be implemented.
7. **Close**
Dave Foster thanked all for attending and for their input to the discussion.

Summary of actions from the meeting:

Ref	Action	Update
2.1	Helen Nutt to add agreed minutes and the presentations from the Autumn 2008 meeting to the Belfast Lough and Lagan CSG website.	Belfast Lough and Lagan CSG website has been updated with Autumn 2008 documents and the agenda and presentations from this meeting. http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public_partic/catchment_stakeholder_groups/belfast_lough_and_lagan.htm
3.1	Dave Foster and Robbie Marshall to liaise with regard to running a sampling trial with an angling club partner.	Meeting was held to discuss this and a partner angling club has been identified.
4.2	Helen Nutt to forward link to Northern Ireland Water upgrade plans to meeting attendees.	Information is available on NIW's website on the "What We're Doing" pages http://www.niwater.com/whatweredoing.asp
6.1	Helen Nutt to circulate the Belfast Lough and Lagan Catchment Stakeholder Group consultation response to the draft River Basin Management Plans to attendees and corresponding members of the Group.	Enclosed with minutes from meeting.

Appendix

Belfast Lough and Lagan Catchment Stakeholder Group Consultation response to the draft River Basin Management Plans.

The following questions were considered in relation to the North Eastern draft River Basin Management Plan. The responses to these questions have been collated as a record of the Belfast Lough and Lagan Catchment Stakeholder Group's response to the draft River Basin Management Plan Consultation. These points were taken from discussions that were held by two breakout groups as part of the Belfast Lough and Lagan Catchment Stakeholder Group meeting at Cutters Wharf, Stranmillis, Belfast on Tuesday 7 April 2009.

- 1. Do you agree with the objectives and level of improvement set for Northern Ireland's water environment?**
 - Not ambitious enough
 - Information not clear
 - Not enough detail to comment
 - Don't stop if target reached
 - Optimistic targets
 - Concern over Funding beyond 2008-2011
 - Working with other Departments to determine funding
 - Objectives disappointing
 - Reasons for 'less stringent objectives' not clear.
 - Sceptical – without costings difficult to understand reasons
 - 15% not yet assessed - uncertainty around HMWBs
 - 'High' stays the same, no movement from 'Good' to 'High'
 - Paper version needed, web difficult
 - Management units – documents for these with measures specific to these detailed

- 2. Have we identified the most significant pressures affecting the water environment?**
 - Planning development not included
 - Planning legislation not referenced
 - Consenting Policy?
 - Economic Pressures
 - Sewage treatment works should be specifically mentioned as most significant pressure along with Combined Storm Overflows (CSOs) eg Blackstaff, Ormeau Road
 - More consideration of connections to sewer which cannot cope.
 - Splitting of combined systems should be considered– e.g. Dunnes Stores on Lagan
 - Canals not properly addressed in draft RBMP.
 - Lagan Canal Restoration – been told that 'Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) not required' – Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP) would like an EIA for

the whole system. There is currently a lock by lock approach – adhoc – small projects along way. Strategic and holistic view needed.

- The Lagan Canal Restoration Trust is working to secure funding for an EIA
 - Inefficient use of water not addressed
 - Economic deficiencies not covered
 - Plans don't differentiate between pressures at a River Basin District level and below – too broad
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.**
- Are existing measures working – No eg 26% of river water bodies not good
 - Enforcement paramount
 - Education – rethink attitudes
 - Increased fines for pollution
 - Additional measures – Urban Drainage
 - Abstractions eg Northern Ireland Water (NIW), Coca Cola
 - More information about local projects being carried out is needed through NIEA Projects Aiming to Improve aquatic ResourceS (PAIRS) initiative.
4. **Can you identify new or existing measures or initiatives, at a regional or local level that you or your organisation can help deliver?**
- Outreach programme for fish egg hatching and release
 - Effects of water rates on water usage etc. eg rain water harvesting
 - Awareness of local issues to help Non Government Organisations (NGOS) direct projects appropriately and find funding
5. **What suggestions do you have to improve the linkages this plan has with other relevant plans and programmes?**
- No evidence on the ground or in the plans on integration between plans
 - Need for local plans
 - Listing of relevant plans needed
 - Develop better links with agriculture plans – enforcements and regulations – rainwater – weather effects on farmers etc.
 - Flood plains – leaving land available
 - North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) – catchment management plans Fisheries Conservancy Board (FCB) and DCAL working with farmers.
 - Local pressures to stop pollution – eg Seymour Hill Residents
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?**
- Develop partnerships with private water bailiffs – collect water sample, invertebrate sampling
 - River bailiffs trained to take samples when pollution incidents occur, angling club.

- Civil cases taken – background information used in these cases – consequential losses.
- Using other organisation's information and independent information eg angling data following pollution incidents
- Using angling club individuals for monitoring - large numbers of people on ground. Clubs can drive it.
- Local knowledge – breaking down barriers eg bug cards 'good bugs, bad bugs' WWF Ripple initiative adopted by NIEA – reporting tool on web.
- Electro fishing stocks information, tying together databases, Government Departments need to improve data links and not replicate.
- Linkages and partnerships with Environmental Non Government Organisations (ENGOS)
- Partnership working eg NIEA and agriculture.
- Partnership working with NIW with respect to pollution problems
- Tie in with training from NIEA Staff of local interested parties eg invertebrates.
- Use public volunteers to help to fulfil Government needs

Q. Have you any other issues regarding the wider environment which may be impacted on by the River Basin Management Plans?

Any other comments on the draft Plans?

- In fixing water environment will other things be affected?
- Effects of removal of physical modifications not considered
- Reference to Fisheries Act – Not Water Framework Directive (WFD) proofed
- Migration of fish – low flow effects, abstraction and physical modification effects
- New toilets big flows and small flows, conserving water technologies, dual flush, European standard?
- Water wastage - £/litre
- New building regulations – toilets, rainwater usage, water rates, meters would solve, charge, typically 10-15%
- Effects of 'Grey water' entering wider environment from mis-plumbed home improvements.
- Smart time meter, water usage – 'next generation' technologies need to be adopted.

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