

Erne Melvin Catchment Stakeholder Group

Minutes

Wednesday 18 November 2009

Venue: Castle Archdale Country Park, Irvinestown, Co Fermanagh

Attendees

Norman Henderson (Chairman)
Joanne Livingstone (Catchment Officer)
Alvin Wilson (NIEA)
Alan Murphy (SWQI)
Michael Spillane (WQI)
John Gilmore (WQI)
Glenn McGivern (WQI)
Haidee Chamberlain (NH)
Gareth Greer (Rivers Agency)
Alan Morrow (DARD)
Anthony Maguire (Farmer)
Andrew Wilson (Farmer)
Derek Thornton (Farmer)
Albert Swan (Farmer)
Eddie McGovern (FDC)
Cllr Bert Johnston (FDC)
Cllr Paul Robinson (FDC)
Rodney McCrea (NI Water)
Jim McElrath (NI Water)
Robert Northridge (CNCC)
John Kane (DCAL)
Hugh Gormley (Rossien Angling Club)
Noel Melanaphy (Forest Service)
Mike Kingston (Inland Waterways Association Ireland)
Stephen Hey (Kesh Angler)
John Cunningham (Farmer)
Robbie Marshall (UAF)
Jack Spratt (Fermanagh Anglers)
Richard Turner (Erne Melvin Enhancement Company)

Apologies

Jim Haughey (UAF)
Peter Archdale (CNCC)
Albert Foster (Farmer)

1. Welcome and Introduction

Norman Henderson welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited all present to introduce themselves. The action points from the last meeting held on 13 May 2009 were circulated and the points addressed.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

These were agreed to be an accurate account and are available on NIEA website on the following link

http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/erne_and_melvin.htm

3. Matters arising

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

Ref	Action Point	Action	Update
AP4	1	JL to ensure that the issue of litter being deposited on land from rivers to be kept on agenda.	On-going.
AP 3	2	JL to get an update on the issue of litter being deposited on land from rivers from FDC and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.	JL informed the group that the NITB have allocated all current funding to tourism schemes and would not have any mechanism to provide funding to individuals for litter collection. FDC are running a very successful response contract to collect litter within the island of Enniskillen arising from Lough Erne. However the contract could not extend to rivers in the surrounding catchments. It was felt that landowners would be responsible for their own fields.
AP 4	3	GN to raise the issue of litter being deposited on land from rivers at the Inter-Departmental WFD implementation Group.	Alvin Wilson reported that this would be raised at the next meeting of the group.

4. Michael Spillane (MS) - Regional update on pollution incidents and investigations in the Erne Melvin Catchment.

MS gave presentation on the local water management issues and activities of water Quality staff since the last meeting in May. MS detailed the number and severity of pollution incidents and gave a full report on the recent investigation of plankton bloom on Mill Lough, Ballinaleck. The paper on the investigation on Mill Lough and the presentation is available on the link below:

http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/erne_and_melvin.htm

Concern was expressed that that cruisers on Erne system were only 50% compliant with the Erne regulations and it was felt that the approach of issuing

a warning letter was no longer appropriate and prosecution should now be enforced. One of the main problems is the lack of suitable pump-out facilities around the Lough – there are only 6 and only 3 of these were working this summer. It was suggested that boats that are not compliant should not be permitted on the Lough. This could be achieved through the registration process operated by Waterways Ireland and the Association of Boaters etc. All boats registered on the Lough must be compliant. This role is for a wider group and not just NIEA. The on-shore facilities also need improvement.

AP 1: NIEA to consider with Waterways Ireland better ways of enforcement of the Erne Regs and discuss with FDC potential improvements in the on-shore facilities.

Concern was expressed that pollution incidents severity was subjective and it was suggested that invertebrate sampling should be carried out at all pollution incidents to determine the severity. It was explained that each pollution incident had to be subjectively assessed by experienced staff and that resources would not allow a full biological survey at each pollution incident reported.

NIEA were commented for the investigation into the Mill Lough.

5. Alvin Wilson (AW) – Presentation on the way forward for implementation of draft River Basin Management Plan through the development of Local Management Area Plans.

AW tabled a paper on the development of Local Management Area Plans (LMA) to allow local engagement in the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan. The paper and the presentation is available at the link below.

http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/erne_and_melvin.htm

AW explained that the River Basin Management Plans would be implemented through the joint development of Local Management Area action plans. The Erne Melvin catchment is split into 3 LMAs:

- Lower Lough Erne
- Upper Lough Erne
- Arney

There was concern that the Arney LMA doesn't have Lough Melvin in the title so it was agreed that the name of this LMA would change to 'Lough Melvin & Arney'.

AP 2: AW to change the name of the Arney LMA to Lough Melvin & Arney LMA.

AW explained that each of these LMAs will be subject to the development of a local action plan with input from Stakeholders in the Catchment. This proposal was welcomed by the group.

It was asked what new resources and funding would be available to carry out any improvement works identified and it was explained that under the current economic climate funding was unknown. Funding proposals have been submitted to appropriate funders but the success of any financial bids was currently unknown. Concern was expressed that the Melvin Nutrient Reduction Programme cost 4.5m euro and a similar budget would be required for Lough Erne. It was suggested that the Melvin Nutrient Reduction Programme should be implemented in the Erne Catchment too.

There was a discussion on the importance of the Freshwater Pearl Mussels and the lack of recruitment of this protected species in our rivers. JL explained that Alan Keys had just completed an extensive survey on the 3 Fermanagh rivers which supported the Freshwater Pwearl Mussels and he could attend a future meeting provide the group with an up-date on this work

AP 3: JL to invite Alan Keys to a future meeting to discuss his recent Freshwater Pearl Mussel work in Fermanagh Rivers.

6. Nomination of independent chair.

The role of chairman for all the CSG meetings are open for nominations at each meeting and it was raised that an independent chair for the meeting was to be proposed. Terms of reference for the chairman role were circulated. The chair of the group will be reviewed every year.

Mr Robbie Marshall formally nominated Mr Jack Spratt to chair the Erne Melvin CSG meetings. This proposal was seconded by Mr Richard Turner.

It was agreed that they would be a show of hands for the existing chair to remain and a further show of hands for the nominated independent chair. Before the vote Mr Spratt was invited to address the group and explain what he could offer the group as chairman. Mr Spratt explained that he is the chairman of the Fermanagh Anglers, treasurer for the Disabled Anglers Association, had a deep seated interested in water quality and the game angling sector and in his role as chairman he would ensure that the implementation of the plans was carried out.

The decision was unanimous for Mr Jack Spratt to be the chair of the EMCSG meetings. Norman thanked Mr Jack Spratt and congratulated him in his new role within the group.

7. Close

NH thanked everyone for attending and for their input.

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