

Note of Meeting

15 October 2009

Venue: WWT Castle Espie, Comber

Attendees:

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|-----|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Claire Vincent | Head of Marine Assessment & Licensing, NIEA (Chair) |
| 2. | Helen Nutt | North Eastern Catchment Officer, NIEA (Presenter) |
| 3. | Kevin McGlynn | Water Quality Inspector, NIEA (Presenter) |
| 4. | Devina Park | River Basin Planning Group, NIEA (Presenter) |
| 5. | Diane Arthur | River Basin Planning Group, NIEA |
| 6. | Judith Bankhead | Conservation Officer, Rivers Agency |
| 7. | Keith Bradford | Friends of the Earth & Lecale Conservation Society |
| 8. | James Brown | Ulster Farmers Union, (UFU) |
| 9. | George Butler | Northern Ireland Water |
| 10. | Paul Byers | Northern Ireland Water |
| 11. | Justin Forsythe | Northern Ireland Pike Society |
| 12. | James Kennedy | Sandycove Holiday Homes |
| 13. | JJ Kennedy | Sandycove Holiday Homes & Armagh & Down
Regional Tourism Partnership |
| 14. | Stephen Kennedy | Dibney River Trust |
| 15. | Brendan Kerr | Natural Living Assets |
| 16. | Mike Mann | Lecale Conservation Society |
| 17. | Adam Mellor | Agriculture & Food Biosciences Institute (AFBI) |
| 18. | Tony Morgan | Water Quality Inspector, NIEA |
| 19. | Alan Morrow | Countryside Management Branch, DARD |
| 20. | Kevin McGrady | Regional Operations, NIEA |
| 21. | Philip McMurray | Planning and Environmental Policy Group, DOE |
| 22. | Sarah Noble | Countryside Access & Activities Network (CAAN) |
| 23. | John Peacocke | Lecale Conservation Society |
| 24. | Wesley Rowley | Regional Manager, NIEA |
| 25. | Billy Watson | Dibney River Trust |

Apologies:

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| 1. | Brian Black | Council for Nature Conservation & the Countryside |
| 2. | Melanie Gomes | Marine Task Force, Ulster Wildlife Trust |
| 3. | Conor Mallon | Rivers Agency |

1. Welcome, outline of agenda and introductions

- 1.1 Claire Vincent opened the meeting. Round room introductions.

- 1.2 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.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting and update on progress made in addressing the issues raised at the last meeting.**
Presentation from Helen Nutt, NIEA; "Update on action points from the last meeting"
- 2.1 Helen Nutt gave a brief presentation highlighting updates on the actions raised at the last meeting on 21 April 2009 in Mount Stewart, Newtownards.
- 2.2 Minutes have been issued by email and post to all parties who were present at the last meeting and to those who had requested to be corresponding members. The group agreed that in the absence of any further amendments to the minutes that the minutes would be agreed and posted on the Strangford and Lecale Catchment Stakeholder Group (CSG) website.

ACTION: Helen Nutt to add agreed minutes from the Spring 2009, and the presentations from the Autumn 2009, meetings to the Strangford and Lecale CSG website.

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

Summary of actions from the last meeting:

Ref	Action	Update
2.2	Helen Nutt to add agreed minutes and past presentations to the Strangford and Lecale CSG website.	Strangford and Lecale CSG website has been updated with agreed minutes from Autumn 2008 meeting and presentations from Spring 2009. http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/strangford_and_lecale.htm
6.1	Helen Nutt to ensure that feedback to the dRBMP Consultation questions is recorded as an official response from the Strangford and Lecale Catchment Stakeholder Group.	Points raised during feedback session have been submitted as the Strangford and Lecale Catchment Stakeholder Group response to the dRBMP Consultation. Enclosed with minutes.
7	Names for consideration for the role of independent chair of the Group to be passed to Helen Nutt for consideration by the Group.	Ongoing. <i>Feedback forms from the meeting have indicated that the meeting attendees are content with NIEA chairing the meeting for the time being.</i>

3. **Discussion on local water management issues.**
Presentation from Helen Nutt & Kevin McGlynn, NIEA.
- 3.1 Helen Nutt emphasised the importance of local people to the resolution of water management problems. She highlighted the work of the Quoile

Catchment Working Group and thanked attendees for their continued involvement and support. Kevin McGlynn gave an overview of the pollution incidents that had been reported since the last meeting, giving a breakdown of their source and the outcomes of recent cases. He highlighted routine and ongoing work that NIEA Regional Operations were involved in in the catchment e.g. consent applications and grey water problem area investigations.

4. Discussion on the way forward for the implementation of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) & the development of Local Management Area Plans (LMAPs).

Presentation from Devina Park, NIEA

- 4.1 Devina Park 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 Strangford being the primary focus in 2010 and the Quoile in 2011. The current state of water bodies in the Strangford and Lecale catchment areas were discussed and the targets for improvement were outlined.

5. Discussion for the way forward for the CSG meetings

- 5.1 John Peacocke queried the setting of conditions for Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTWs) discharge consents. Claire Vincent and George Butler explained that all Northern Ireland Water (NIW) discharges from WWTW and the sewerage network are regulated by NIEA. Discharges from all WWTWs are consented under the terms of the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 and are subject to compliance monitoring and assessment. The standards set for all works are based on calculations which consider the average daily flow of the discharge and the flow of the receiving water. All discharge standards are based on the needs of the receiving water. Claire Vincent said that these are regularly reviewed and that the compliance monitoring and assessment highlights where improvements are needed and performance needs to be tightened. George Butler said that with regard to Newcastle WWTW that there were plans for the installation of major new holding tanks.
- 5.2 There was a discussion about the separation of surface/ stormwater from sewage. Claire Vincent and George Butler clarified that new developments do have separate systems.
- 5.3 Paul Byers said that NIW would be happy to facilitate a site visit to Downpatrick WWTW.

ACTION: NIW to host a site visit to Downpatrick WWTW for interested

parties before the next Catchment Stakeholder Group meeting.

5.4 Keith Bradford said that Surfers Against Sewage had highlighted the number of Combined Storm Overflows (CSOs) affecting Bathing Waters and asked how the situation could be remediated. Claire Vincent gave a summary of the 2009 Bathing Water Compliance monitoring. She said that of the 24 identified Bathing Waters in Northern Ireland, 22 had met the mandatory water quality standards of the EC Bathing Waters Directive. 11 had met the tighter guideline standards and that Portrush Curran (East Strand) and Portballintrae (Salmon Rock) had failed to meet the Directive's standards. She said that NIEA worked closely with (Northern Ireland Water) NIW to pick priority areas for improvements.

5.5 George Butler was asked about the number of NIW CSOs in Northern Ireland.

ACTION: George Butler to ascertain the number of CSOs in Northern Ireland and provide a figure at the next meeting.

5.6 There was a discussion about the Government's failure to fully implement the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and how of the 12 sites in the UK highlighted for infraction in 2004, 9 were in Northern Ireland. NIEA and NIW emphasised the amount of investment that had been put into waste water treatment infrastructure since that time.

5.7 John Peacocke asked if Northern Ireland Water could give an update on what happened at Fofanny that had resulted in a fishkill on the Shimna River. Paul Byers said that NIEA and NIW were carrying out investigations into the incident. It was highlighted to the group that Jim Wells has arranged a meeting with Anglers to discuss the matter. There was a discussion regarding the definition of different severity classes that NIEA used for classifying pollution incidents.

ACTION: NIEA to provide information at the next meeting on severity class definitions for determining the impact of pollution incidents.

5.8 Brendan Kerr asked what the maximum fine was that a court could hand out for someone convicted of causing a water pollution incident. NIEA explained that under the terms of the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, the maximum fine was £20,000 but that the majority of fines were generally only a small percentage of this.

5.9 James Kennedy emphasized that there had been a lack of investment in Northern Ireland Water and the former Water Service for years and that this was now beginning to turn around.

5.10 Keith Bradford asked if there could be a detailed breakdown of pollution

incidents in the Strangford and Lecale area provided at future Catchment Stakeholder Group meetings.

ACTION: NIEA to provide more details of local water pollution issues at future meetings.

- 5.11 The meeting attendees were thanked for their participation in the consultation on the draft River Basin Management Plans and told that a document giving the responses to the comments raised during the consultation was available on the NIEA website.

ACTION: NIEA to forward a link to the draft River Basin Management Plan Consultation Response document once available.

- 5.12 It was explained that the River Basin Management Plans would be available from 22 December 2009 on the NIEA website. Feedback forms on the proposed terms of reference for the independent chair, on the meetings and Local Management Area Plans were issued.

ACTION: Meeting attendees asked to return independent chair terms of reference and Local Management Area Plans feedback forms to NIEA by 1 November 2009.

- 5.13 John Peacocke said that he had noted problems with foam along the shore at Gibbs Island and that he suspected this had been caused by the Quoile. Claire Vincent said she would ask her team to investigate.

ACTION: NIEA Marine Assessment and Licensing Team to investigate the problems reported in the Gibbs Island area.

- 5.14 Mike Mann said that he was keen to meet members from other Catchment Stakeholder Groups and that holding an event for groups to meet and share experiences would be very beneficial. He said that he had found the Information Days that NIEA had organised in Spring 2009 very useful. He commended the local information that was available but said that the events had not been particularly well attended. He said that involving elected representatives was particularly important. He suggested that NIEA consider holding an event for all the Catchment Stakeholder Groups in a venue where elected representatives would attend e.g. Stormont.

ACTION: NIEA to consider holding an event for all of the 9 Catchment Stakeholder Groups and invite elected representatives to attend.

- 5.15 The meeting discussed potential presentations for the next meeting.

ACTION: NIEA to organise for a presentation on coastal protection at a future meeting.

6. Close

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

Summary of actions from the meeting:

Ref	Action	Update
2.2	Helen Nutt to add agreed minutes from the Spring 2009, and the presentations from the Autumn 2009, meetings to the Strangford and Lecale CSG website.	Strangford and Lecale CSG website has been updated with agreed minutes from Spring 2009 meeting and presentations from Autumn 2009. http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/strangford_and_lecale.htm
5.3	NIW to host a site visit to Downpatrick WWTW for interested parties before the next Catchment Stakeholder Group meeting.	Lecale Conservation Society have had a visit to Downpatrick WWTW, NIW have asked to host another if required.
5.5	George Butler to ascertain the number of CSOs in Northern Ireland and provide a figure at the next meeting.	Update to be provided by NIW at meeting.
5.7	NIEA to provide information at the next meeting on severity class definitions for determining the impact of pollution incidents.	More details to be provided at Spring 2010 meeting.
5.10	NIEA to provide more details of local water pollution issues at future meetings.	More details to be provided at future meetings. Ongoing.
5.11	NIEA to forward a link to the draft River Basin Management Plan Consultation Response document once available.	Email issued to all CSG members on 9 November 2009 with link to response document : http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/consultation_responses.pdf
5.12	Meeting attendees asked to return independent chair terms of reference and Local Management Area Plans feedback forms to NIEA by 1 November 2009.	Feedback forms received. Local Management Area Information Leaflets published. Email issued to all CSG members on 15 March 2010 with link http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/ne-workingtogether
5.13	NIEA Marine Assessment and Licensing Team to investigate the problems reported in the Gibbs Island area.	Update to be provided by NIEA at meeting.
5.14	NIEA to consider holding an event for all of the 9 Catchment Stakeholder Groups and invite elected representatives to attend.	All regular attendees of the Catchment Stakeholder Groups were invited to attend the launch of the River Basin Management Plans event in the Belfast Harbour Commissioners on 21 January 2010. The Plans were launched by Minister Poots.
5.15	NIEA to organise for a presentation on coastal protection at a future meeting.	Presentation planned for Spring 2010 meeting.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

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