

**Minutes of the thirty-seventh meeting of the Lower Bann Advisory Committee held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2005 at 10.00am in Sperrin House, Magherafelt.**

**Present**

Mr Victor Hamill  
 Commander Peter Campbell  
 Mr Robert Anderson  
 Mr Denzyl Dinsmore  
 Cllr John Junkin  
 Mr Alan Foye  
 Mr John Moore  
 Cllr J P O'Neill  
 Alderman Joe Gaston  
 Cllr R D Stewart  
 Mr Newell McCreight

**In attendance**

Mr Stephen Douglas (Waterways Ireland)  
 Ms Kathleen Conlon (DCAI, Inland Navigation)  
 Ms Caroline Marshall (Liaison Officer)

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr Robin Ruddock, Mr Nick Mack, Rev Kennedy, Cllr Olive Church, Mr Edward Montgomery, Mr Richard Thompson, Prof Dave Wilcock, Mr David Agnew and Mr Terry Eakin.

**2. Minutes of last meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2005**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed, subject to the revision of the numbering of the action points.

**3. Matters arising from last meeting**

Members indicated that they were content with the Action list now attached to the end of the minutes. The meeting considered the 'renumbered' Actions of the last meeting as follows:

| Renumbered Action | Update/Discussion/Future Actions   |
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| 1,2,3,4&5         | Caroline informed members that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• she had received a copy of the 'North Coast Waster Water Treatment Works Scheme – Dispersion Compliance Report 28<sup>th</sup> April 2004', but on the cover was written 'This document is not to be reproduced for circulation as there is commercially sensitive material within',</li> <li>• she showed the document to the LNAC and LBAC Chairmen, but was unable to reproduce it for members of the Water Quality Working Group and was unable to call a Water Quality Working Group,</li> <li>• sections were missing from this document, these had been requested from Water Service on 18/02/05, but had not yet been received.</li> <li>• the document highlighted that the designated 'Bathing Water' beaches along the coast should meet the water quality legislative</li> </ul> |

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|    | <p>requirements, but the water quality in water sport areas that are not designated 'Bathing Waters' will still give cause for concern despite the implementation of the new North Coast WWTW.</p> <p>Members agree that a letter should be written to Water Service to highlight concerns about the water quality outwith designated Bathing Waters in the River and along the coast and to seek clarification as to a possible duty of care in these areas. Members also requested Water Service provides the missing sections of the document and the latest tidal modelling study.</p> <p><b>ACTION 19: Letter to be sent to Water Service to highlight concerns about the water quality outwith designated Bathing Waters in the River and along the coast and to seek clarification as to a possible duty of care in these areas on the part of Water Service.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION 20: Water Service to provide missing sections of the Dispersion Compliance Report and the latest version of the Tidal Modelling Study</b></p> <p>A letter was written to Water Service to commend it for work to date on the implementation of the NCWWTW.</p> <p>Caroline also informed members that planning permission had been granted for the main treatment works, that there would be a Ministerial announcement in March with follow up PR exercise and that the build would start six weeks after the Ministerial announcement.</p> |
| 6. | <p>The chemical and biological water quality data the River is still in a raw state. The processed data will be forwarded when available.</p> <p><b>Action 6: WMU to provide chemical and biological statistics for the river and estuary for 2004.</b></p>  |
| 7. | <p>This action has been carried forward</p> <p><b>Action7: Water Service/Water Management Unit to make a presentation on water quality and future treatment proposals in the Lower Bann catchment.</b></p>   |
| 8. | <p>Stephen Douglas indicated that the jetty at Ardbanna would be 18m long and 2.5 m wide, as indicated on the architect's plans. He also informed members that he would be meeting with the developers next week to discuss possible intrusion in to the navigation channel/river.</p> <p>Caroline informed members that she had received a planting plan from a landscape architect in relation to the landscaping of the bank</p>  |

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|     | at the Ardbanna Development. Members welcomed the planting and re-profiling scheme and agreed that the use of native species would be preferable. Members also agreed that this outcome would set a good precedent for future bank developments.  |
| 9.  | There was discussion about the possible rewording of this action.<br><br><b>ACTION 9: LO and WI to discuss a way forward for the preparation of framework for jetty development on the Lower Bann.</b>  |
| 10. | A letter was sent to Coleraine Borough Council to encourage the implementation of the Mountsandel Fort interpretation project.  |
| 11. | It was agreed that three public meetings, one each for the estuary, Drumaheglis and newferry, should be arranged for after Easter.<br><br><b>Action 11: LO to call three water based activity public meetings, in partnership with relevant agencies, and update the LBAC recommendations as necessary.</b>   |
| 12. | Ballymoney Borough Council confirmed that, if funding could be sourced, it is keen to proceed with the provision of coarse angling stands downstream of the Agivey Bridge.<br>Members were informed that Mr John Paul, the Director of Leisure Services for Ballymoney Borough Council would be retiring in the near future. Members agreed that there was a need to liaise with his replacement, particularly with reference to the Drumaheglis public meeting.<br><br><b>ACTION 21: Meeting to be set up with replacement of the Director of Leisure Services of Ball money Borough Council.</b>  |
| 13. | A letter was sent to the consultants preparing the report on the Randalstown to Castledawson to request provision for canoeists. Caroline informed members that the consultants had offered to meet with LBAC members. She also expressed concern at the intended use of a questionnaire given out at the public event at Toome that requested people to high their preferred route option.   |
| 14. | Caroline informed members that she had written to the Co-operative highlighting the offer of a meeting and of the need for public access to its structures at Portna in case of emergency.<br>Following discussion of all relevant communications, members agreed that a letter should be written to the Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-operative Society highlighting the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that there would be no retractions/changes to Eel Express articles or LBAC minutes as these were deemed to be accurate by both the Advisory Committee and the Management Committee,</li> <li>• that the offer of a meeting, to discuss relevant issues, was still pertinent and would be appreciate by the other LBAC members and</li> </ul> |

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|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that it would be more productive to discuss issues in which the Co-op had an interest, around the table at LBAC meetings rather than via a series of letters.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION 22: Letter to be written to the Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-operative Society Limited reiterating the offer of a meeting, highlighting that changes would not be made to previous minutes or Eel Express and that attendance at meetings would be extremely useful and more productive.</b></p> |
| 15. | The next meeting of the LBP, at which Robin Ruddock is to represent the environmental interests of the LNAC is due to be held on Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> March.   |
| 16. | Action to be carried over until water level drops.<br><b>ACTION 16: LO to set up a meeting/site visit with MDC and landowners in relation to the erosion alleviation project.</b>   |
| 17. | Caroline wrote to EHS to highlight the LBAC's interest in the boundary review of the North Derry AONB.  |
| 18. | The Fish Hatchery at Portna has now received planning permission.   |

#### 4. Liaison Officer's Report March 2005

Caroline drew attention to specific item in her report.

She also informed members that

- the Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Management Committee had discussed, and were content with, the Lower Bann Advisory Committee's approach to individual safety issues,
- the Management Committee agreed that a light lunch would be made available for Advisory Committee members, but that traveling expenses would not be provided and
- that the LNLBMC agreed that the Advisory Committees should set the priorities for relevant issues and that the minutes would be placed on the website, once approved.

Caroline highlighted the action in the Operational and Communication Report relating to the production of a Lower Bann Management Strategy (LBMS) that would link with the existing Lough Neagh Management Strategy. After discussion, members agreed that a working group should be established to progress this issue. The working group should have representation from the navigation, environment, landowner, local authority, angling etc. sectors. Stephen Douglas requested that the LNLB Management Committee confirm that the Advisory Committee can go ahead with the production of the LBMS.

**ACTION 23: Working group to be established to steer the preparation of a Lower Bann Management Strategy.**

**ACTION 24: LNLBMC to confirm that the LBAC can go ahead with the preparation of a Lower Bann Management Strategy.**

**5. Communication from Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-operative Society Ltd**

This item was dealt with under agenda item 3, Renumbered Action 14.

**6. Dumping downstream of Newferry and Need for river bank 'Clean Up'**

Caroline circulated photographs of agricultural and general waste dumped on the east river bank downstream of Newferry. Members agreed that this was a significant aesthetics issue and potential navigational hazard and that the farm manager should be advised of the possible consequences of this action and be encouraged to rectify the problem. It was also agreed that the LO should contact the UFU and NIAPA to explore ways to encourage responsible disposal of agricultural and general farm waste to help prevent future dumping in and along the watercourse.

**ACTION 25: Landowner to be contacted regarding removal of dumped agricultural and general waste on river bank downstream of Newferry.**

**ACTION 26: Liaison to take place with NIAPA and UFU regarding prevention of dumping along the Lower Bann and its tributaries and acceptable disposal of farm waste.**

Members also discussed the problem of flotsam and jetsam along the length of the River and in particular, in the estuary. Whilst members appreciated the complexities of addressing this litter issue, they agreed that a letter should be sent to each local authority to ask for its intentions in relation to a clean up and education campaign. It was agreed that this letter should contain an offer of assistance towards co-ordination from the Advisory Committee.

**ACTION 27: Letter to be sent to local authorities asking for intentions towards a litter clean up and education campaign.**

**7. Insurance for Advisory Committee Members**

After discussion, members agreed that there was little need for insurance, but that feedback from other organisations, with a similar function to the Advisory Committees would be appropriate for discussion at a subsequent meeting.

**ACTION 28: Report to be prepared on the need for insurance for the Advisory Committee.**

**8. Any Other Business**

Canoe/kayak Trail

Members were informed that a Floating Bann History Trail would meet at the Cranagh on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2005 at 10.00am and that Jim Allen would be providing commentary.

Navigational Marker Downstream of Cutts

Members were informed that river users had expressed concern that the new navigational marker poles placed downstream of the Cutts were very low in the water, and that they could present a navigational hazard in themselves. Stephen Douglas informed members that the red and white markers had not been placed on the top of the poles, and that when complete, there should be no problem with visibility even at the highest spring tides.

Navigational Dredging

Stephen Douglas informed members of the following:

- a. that a preliminary survey of the navigational channel had been completed, but that discussions were taking place with Rivers Agency as to the need for a more in-depth study and,
- b. plans to dredge the channel in the vicinity of the Cutts and Sandleford Bridge had been lodged with EHS and that subject to approval, dredging work would begin in the autumn.
- c. the spoil from navigation channel dredging would be placed on the bank to allow the water to drain away and then would be removed to a landfill site.

**9. Date and venue of next meeting – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2005**

The date of the next meeting was agreed for Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2005. The Cutts and The Cranagh were suggested as possible locations. The venue will be confirmed when the papers are distributed.

Members were informed that they were invited to attend a presentation by Waterways Ireland on the findings of the study into the need for a navigation authority on Lough Neagh. This presentation would take place on Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2005. Further details will be forwarded nearer the time.

**Actions from Lower Bann Advisory Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2005**

|           | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Implementer</b>                |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b>6</b>  | WMU to provide chemical and biological statistics for the river and estuary for 2004.  | WMU                               |
| <b>7</b>  | Water Service/Water Management Unit to make a presentation on water quality and future treatment proposals in the Lower Bann catchment.  | WMU / Caroline Marshall           |
| <b>9</b>  | LO and WI to discuss a way forward for the preparation of framework for jetty development on the Lower Bann.   | Caroline / WI                     |
| <b>11</b> | LO to call three water based activity public meetings, in partnership with relevant agencies, and update the LBAC recommendations as necessary.  | Caroline Marshall                 |
| <b>16</b> | LO to set up a meeting/site visit with MDC and landowners in relation to the erosion alleviation project.  | Caroline Marshall                 |
| <b>19</b> | Letter to be sent to Water Service to highlight concerns about the water quality outwith designated Bathing Waters in the River and along the coast and to seek clarification as to a possible duty of care in these areas on the part of Water Service.                           | Caroline Marshall                 |
| <b>20</b> | Water Service to provide missing sections of the Dispersion Compliance Report and the latest version of the Tidal Modelling Study  | Water Service / Caroline Marshall |
| <b>21</b> | Meeting to be set up with replacement of the Director of Leisure Services of Ballymoney Borough Council.   | Caroline Marshall                 |
| <b>22</b> | Letter to be written to the Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-operative Society Limited reiterating the offer of a meeting, highlighting that changes would not be made to previous minutes or Eel Express and that attendance at meetings would be extremely useful and more productive. | Caroline Marshall                 |
| <b>23</b> | Working group to be established to steer the preparation of a Lower Bann Management Strategy.  | Caroline Marshall                 |
| <b>24</b> | LNLBMC to confirm that the LBAC can go ahead with the preparation of a Lower Bann Management Strategy.   | Caroline Marshall                 |
| <b>25</b> | Landowner to be contacted regarding removal of dumped agricultural and general waste on river bank downstream of Newferry.   | Caroline Marshall                 |
| <b>26</b> | Liaison to take place with NIAPA and UFU regarding prevention of dumping along the Lower Bann and its tributaries and acceptable disposal of farm waste.   | Caroline Marshall                 |
| <b>27</b> | Letter to be sent to local authorities asking for intentions towards a litter clean up and education campaign  | Caroline Marshall                 |
| <b>28</b> | Report to be prepared on the need for insurance for the Advisory Committee.  | Management Committee              |

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