

**Minutes of the thirty-seventh meeting of the Lough Neagh Advisory Committee held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2005 at 10.00am in Sperrin House, Magherafelt.**

**Present**

Prof. Brian Wood (Chairman)  
Cllr Peter O'Hagan  
Mr C W Dickinson  
Mr Newell McCreight  
Cllr Tony Elliott  
Mr Conor Jordon  
Cllr John Junkin  
Cllr Gary McMichael  
Cllr Mrs M Baker  
Dr Arthur Mitchell  
Mr Ken Bell  
Mr John Scovell  
Mr Denzyl Dinsmore  
Mr Conor Moore  
Cllr Jim Canning  
Mr Billy Mullen  
Mr Brian Cassells  
Mr Conor Corr

**In attendance**

Mr Stephen Foster (EHS)  
Ms Kathleen Conlon (DCAL)  
Ms Caroline Marshall (Liaison Officer)

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr Archie Gibson, Mr Gerard Laverty, Cllr Arnold Hatch and Mr Bob Davidson. Reverend Kennedy informed the office that he would not be attending meetings until the "threat is lifted" (see Matters Arising, point 4 below).

**2. Minutes of last meeting – 19<sup>th</sup> January 2005**

With the insertion of the following action, members agreed the minutes of this meeting:

**ACTION 7a: LO to call an initial meeting of the Lough Neagh Resources Working Group.**

**3. Matters Arising**

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

| Action | Update/Discussion/Future Actions  |
|--------|---|
| 1.     | EHS has confirmed that Shaftesbury Estates of Lough Neagh Limited (SELN) was asked to become a member of the LNAC, but refused due to other work commitments. |
| 2.     | A letter has been sent to encourage SELN participation in the work of the Advisory Committee.   |
| 3.     | EHS confirmed that requests for copies of the Advisory Committee minutes can be honoured. Members agreed that minutes should only be sent out                 |

|    |  |
|----|--|
|    | <p>following final ‘signing off’ at the subsequent Advisory Committee meeting, that on occasion minutes may have to have ‘commercially in confidence’ sections and that it would be useful if they were available on the website.</p> <p><b>ACTION 12: LO to set up system to facilitate the uploading of Advisory Committee minutes to the website.</b></p>   |
| 4. | <p>Caroline drew members’ attention to ‘three meeting non-attendance rule’ in the covering letter sent with the minutes of the LNAC meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> January 2005. She informed members that she assumed that Rev. Kennedy’s statement in Item 1 ‘Apologies’ above referred. After discussion, members agreed that the letter, sent to all members and advisors, was sent in good faith and that there was never any intention to single out any one organisation. It was highlighted that this rule was intended to insure that there was good representation at meetings, thus allowing for well informed discussion and subsequent formulation of management ‘advice’. It was highlighted that this rule would continue to apply to all members, including local Council representatives, but would not apply to advisors from the statutory agencies, who would attend on an ‘as and when needed basis’.</p>   |
| 5. | <p>Caroline met with Patricia Campbell, Chairman of the Lough Neagh Fishermen’s Association (LNFA), formerly known as the Association of the Lough Neagh Fisher Families. Caroline informed members that the LNFA, a register Union, was originally set up in the 1960s. One of its roles was/is to lobby for the rights of fishermen on the Lough. The work of the LNFA is gaining momentum again and investigations are taking place into its past business. It has a wide and growing membership base. Patricia has agreed to forward copies of official papers. Caroline informed members that the LNFA is liaising with the Co-op at present over certain issues, but that this was not of concern to the Advisory Committees. Members agreed that the Management Committee should be asked to consider the merits of inviting the LNFA to be a full member of the LNAC to insure that the views of Lough Neagh fishermen inform discussions as well the Co-op, that represents the fishing industry.</p> <p><b>ACTION 13: Management Committee to consider the merits of asking the LNFA to become a member of the LNAC to represent the interests of Lough Neagh fishermen.</b></p> <p>Members also agreed that meetings should be held with the Association and the Co-operative with a view to increasing the input to Advisory Committee meetings from the commercial fishing sector.</p> <p><b>ACTION 14: Meeting to be held with the Association and the Co-</b></p> |

|    |   |
|----|---|
|    | <b>operative with a view to increasing the input to Advisory Committee meetings from the commercial fishing sector.</b>   |
| 6. | There has not yet been a meeting of the Management Committee to give consideration to asking the LNFA to represent the fishing industry on the Advisory Committee.  |
| 7. | <p>Letters were sent to the LNP, LNCo-op and the LNFA recommending that radar reflectors are installed on all fishing boats.</p> <p>By way of update, the LNP has called for new applications to the LNSF and is aware that the LNFA may apply for funding for radar reflectors for the fishing boats of its members.</p> <p>A reply from the LN Co-op, received by fax on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2005, was tabled. After discussion, members agreed that a reply should be sent addressing the points raised in the letter, with particular reference to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• radar reflectors are needed to make the fishing boats ‘visible’ to other boats that have radars,</li> <li>• sand barge operators have undergone training,</li> <li>• the LN Co-op could apply to the LNSF for reflectors,</li> <li>• pleasure craft tend to operate in daylight, whilst fishing boats operate in darkness therefore a radar reflector is more pertinent and</li> <li>• the navigation lights fitted to the majority of fishing boats are very useful, but they are not always turned on.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION 15: LO to reply to the letter received from the LNCo- op in relation to radar reflectors on fishing boats.</b></p> |
| 7a | A meeting of the Lough Neagh Resources working group was planned for the afternoon of 2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2005. After discussion, surrounding the disappearance of Lord Shaftesbury, members agreed that this meeting should be postponed.  |
| 8. | <p>Kathleen distributed copies of the Executive Summary of the Lough Neagh Navigation Authority study. (Copies are available from Sperrin House.) It was agreed that a copy of the full study should be sent by DCAL to Caroline.</p> <p><b>ACTION 16: Kathleen Conlon to forward a copy of the full Lough Neagh Navigation Authority study to Sperrin House.</b></p> <p>Members welcomed the publication of this report and agreed that the Safety &amp; Navigation Working Group should meet to discuss this document and report back to the Committee.</p> <p><b>ACTION 17: Safety &amp; Navigation Working Group to meet to discuss the Lough Neagh Navigation Authority study report and</b></p>   |

|     |   |
|-----|---|
|     | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>report back.</b></p> <p>Members accepted Kathleen's offer of a presentation from Waterways Ireland on the report and agreed that this should be facilitated at the next meeting and that other interested parties (Management Committee, LBAC and LNP members) should be invited to attend for this agenda item.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ACTION 18: Presentation from Waterways Ireland to be organised for the next Advisory Committee meeting and LNP, LBAC and Management Committee members to be invited.</b></p>   |
|     | <p>Cllr Gary McMichael entered the meeting at this point.</p>   |
| 9.  | <p>Kathleen provided the following update on angling on Lough Neagh: Research has been carried out into the potential of angling on Lough Neagh. This involved two rods in two boats for two days and analysing written and oral data from other anglers. The results implied that angling in the open Lough was relatively unsuccessful, whilst certain locations, including near the inflow rivers was more successful. It was highlighted that the factors contributing to the lack of success may include water pollution, high levels of suspended solids, chemistry etc. The possibility of more research being done with possible funding from the LNSF was discussed. Members welcomed an offer from David Houston of DCAL, Inland Fisheries to come and discuss the angling issue further and suggested that this could be an agenda item for a future meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ACTION 19: LO to organise a presentation from David Houston, Inland Fisheries at a subsequent meeting.</b></p> |
| 10. | <p>In Bob Davidson's absence, there was no report on the sand requirement of Northern Ireland.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ACTION 10: Bob Davidson to liaise with DETI on reports relating to the sand requirement of Northern Ireland and report back.</b></p>   |
| 11. | <p>The Management Committee had not met since the last LNAC meeting, so there has been no consideration relating to the provision of travel expenses or lunch.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ACTION 11: Management Committee to give consideration to the provision of travel expenses where appropriate and lunch for all attending Advisory Committee meetings.</b></p>   |

#### 4. **Liaison Officers Report March 2005**

Caroline drew members' attention to the March 2005 Report.

Item 7 refers – By way of update; the LNP Directors agreed that there should be an additional Director post, on the LNP, for a representative of the LNAC. Members agreed that Caroline should represent the LNAC in this position.

Conor Corr clarified that at the last LNP AGM, the Company Articles and Memorandum were changed to reflect the removal of Director posts for the statutory agencies and that no new director posts were created.

There were no other questions relating to this report.

#### 5. **Discussion of Draft 'Communications and Operational Plan for Advisory Committees'**

The following were highlighted during discussion of this document:

- a. The LNP will be researching additional funding sources and will be expanding to cover issues out with its current funding distribution role.
- b. There is a new consultation document available on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive. It was agreed that Caroline should source this document, draft comments and provide an update on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive for the next meeting.

**ACTION 20: LO to source Nitrates Directive consultation document, draft comments as necessary and provide an update relating to the implementation of the Nitrates Directive for a subsequent meeting.**

- c. It was agreed that a meeting should be held with the Partnerships to clarify roles and ways of working and that the outcome should be incorporated into the 'Communications and Operational Plan' for the Advisory Committees.
- d. Members agreed that it was up to the Advisory Committee to decide on the priority of relevant issues and on the introduction of new issues for discussion.  
Members agreed to revisit the 'Operations and Communications Report' in the light of the 'roles and ways of working' meeting with the Partnerships and the inclusion of the other changes detailed above.

**ACTION 21: LO to revise 'Operations and Communications Report', in light of subsequent information, and seek Committee approval at next meeting.**

#### 6. **Closure of Slipway at Loughshore Park Antrim**

Caroline informed members that, for reasons related to liability and insurance, Antrim Borough Council has closed the small slipway and restricted access to the large slipway at Loughshore Park. The Council state that this will be the case until full time staff is present to supervise launching. In the intervening three year period, the Council recommend that people join Antrim Boat Club and make use of the Club's facilities.

Members were extremely concerned at this development and were also concerned that it may set a precedent for other slipways and access points around the system. Members highlighted that there would probably be a reduction in the 'duty of care' if there was no charge for use of the slipways, that adequate signage could go a long way to mitigate against the issue of a 'slippy' slipway and that at night barrier should be put in place. Members agreed that a letter should be sent to Antrim Borough Council expressing great concern and highlighting the need for an acceptable outcome as soon as possible.

**ACTION 22: Letter to be sent to Antrim Borough Council expressing concern at the closure of the slipways at Loughshore Park and highlighting the need for action to have the slipways reopened as soon as possible.**

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

Members agreed that a brief reply should be sent to the Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-operative Society letters and that it should include an offer to meet with representatives of the Co-op to discuss relevant issues. Members also highlight that it would be better use of the Advisory Committees time to discuss issues with Co-op representatives at LNAC meetings rather than via a series of letters.

**ACTION 23: Reply letter to be sent to Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-operative Society Limited highlighting offer of a meeting and recommending that a representative attends LNAC meetings.**

**8. Insurance for Advisory Committee Members**

Caroline informed members that in the Letter of Offer for funding for the administration of the Advisory Committees, Environment & Heritage Service requested that the Committees are adequately insured. Magherafelt District Council has cover for people attending meetings and for its employees. After discussion, members agreed that they probably did not need insurance as it was purely 'advisory' in role. It was agreed that the Management Committee should advise on this issue.

**ACTION 24: Management Committee to research need for insurance for Advisory Committee members and as necessary.**

**9. Any Other Business**

a. Lough Neagh Management Strategy

It was agreed that action should be taken to ensure that the recommendations contained in the Lough Neagh Management Strategy remain high on the agendas of implementing bodies. It was agreed that a working group should be established to pursue this issue and that, post election, the Minister should be reminded of the importance of implementing the recommendations in the management Strategy and of the integrated management and sustainable development of Lough Neagh.

**ACTION 25: Working Group to be set up to steer and report on implementation of the recommendation in the Lough Neagh Management Strategy.**

**ACTION 26: Minister (post election) to be made aware of the importance of implementation of the recommendations in the Lough Neagh Management Strategy.**

b. Derrywarragh Bridge

Members requested that an update was provided on the implementation of works to Derrywarragh Bridge

**ACTION 27: Kathleen to provide an update on the implementation of works to Derrywarragh Bridge.**

**10. Date and Venue of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> June at 10.00am in Ballyronan.

Lnac/mins/37-020305

### **Actions from Lough Neagh Advisory Committee meeting held on 2 March 2005**

| <b>Action</b>  | <b>Implementer</b>                |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 7a LO to call an initial meeting of the Lough Neagh Resources Working Group.   | Caroline Marshall                 |
| 10 Bob Davidson to liaise with DETI on reports relating to the sand requirement of Northern Ireland and report back.   | Bob Davidson                      |
| 11 Management Committee to give consideration to the provision of travel expenses where appropriate and lunch for all attending Advisory Committee meetings.   | Management Committee              |
| 12 LO to set up system to facilitate the uploading of Advisory Committee minutes to the website.   | Caroline Marshall                 |
| 13 Management Committee to consider the merits of asking the LNFA to become a member of the LNAC to represent the interests of Lough Neagh fishermen.  | Management Committee              |
| 14 Meeting to be held with the Association and the Co-operative with a view to increasing the input to Advisory Committee meetings from the commercial fishing sector.                                     | Caroline Marshall                 |
| 15 LO to reply to the letter received from the LNCo- op in relation to radar reflectors on fishing boats.  | Caroline Marshall                 |
| 16 Kathleen Conlon to forward a copy of the full Lough Neagh Navigation Authority study to Sperrin House.  | Kathleen Conlon                   |
| 17 Safety & Navigation Working Group to meet to discuss the Lough Neagh Navigation Authority study report and report back.   | Safety & Navigation Working Group |
| 18 Presentation from Waterways Ireland to be organised for the next Advisory Committee meeting and LNP, LBAC and Management Committee members to be invited.   | Waterways Ireland                 |
| 19 LO to organise a presentation from David Houston, Inland Fisheries at a subsequent meeting.   | Caroline Marshall                 |
| 20 LO to source Nitrates Directive consultation document, draft comments as necessary and provide an update relating to the implementation of the Nitrates Directive for subsequent meeting                | Caroline Marshall                 |
| 21 LO to revise 'Operations and Communications Report', in light of subsequent information, and seek Committee approval at next meeting  | Caroline Marshall                 |
| 22 Letter to be sent to Antrim Borough Council expressing concern at the closure of the slipways at Loughshore Park and highlighting the need for action to have the slipways reopened as soon as possible | Caroline Marshall                 |
| 23 Reply letter to be sent to Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-  | Caroline Marshall                 |

|    |   |                      |
|----|---|----------------------|
|    | operative Society Limited highlighting offer of a meeting and recommending that a representative attends LNAC meetings.                     |                      |
| 24 | Management Committee to research need for insurance for Advisory Committee as necessary   | Management Committee |
| 25 | Working Group to be set up to steer and report on implementation of the recommendation in the Lough Neagh Management Strategy               | Caroline Marshall    |
| 26 | Minister (post election) to be made aware of the importance of implementation of the recommendations in the Lough Neagh Management Strategy | Caroline Marshall    |
| 27 | Kathleen to provide an update on the implementation of works to Derrywarragh Bridge.  | Kathleen Conlon      |