

**Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Coastal and Marine Forum held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2007 at 2.00pm in the Belfast Harbour Commissioners Office, Corporation Square, Belfast.**

**In Attendance:**

**Prof. Andrew Cooper, University of Ulster. (Chairman)**  
**John Anderson, Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside**  
**Peter Archdale, The Loughs Agency**  
**Ken Bradley, Planning and Natural Resources Division, DOE**  
**Joanne Gaffney, Cross-Border Aquaculture Initiative Team**  
**Melanie Gomes, Marine Task Force**  
**Maxine Sizaret, Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust**  
**Dick James, Northern Ireland Fish Producers Organisation Ltd.**  
**David Knott, Belfast Harbours Commissioners**  
**Campbell Tweed. Ulster Farmer's Union**

**Alan Hamilton, CMF Officer**  
**Gayle McKee, Shared Services Division, DOE (Minutes)**

**Apologies:**

**Maeve Bell, Royal Yachting Association**  
**Gordon Best, Quarry Products Association NI**  
**Jonathan Buick, Action Renewables**  
**Val Cummins, Coastal and Marine Resources Centre**  
**Phil Davidson, The National Trust**  
**Liam Flanigan, Northern Ireland Local Government Association**  
**Tony McNally, The Loughs Agency**

**1. Welcome**

- 1.1. Prof. Cooper welcomed those present to the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Forum. A special welcome was expressed to new member Campbell Tweed, Ulster Farmer's Union and to Maxine Sizaret who was attending on behalf of the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust until Peter Harper's replacement is in post.
- 1.2. He went on to thank David Knott, Belfast Harbour Commissioners for offering the use of the Harbour Offices for the meeting and the kind hospitality the members received.

**2. Minutes**

- 2.1. The minutes of the meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> May 2007 were approved as presented.

**3. Matters Arising**

**Item 4.5. Northern Ireland Coastal and Marine Forum – Extranet Web Site.**

- 3.1. Alan Hamilton gave a short update on progress on the development of the Coastal and Marine Forum Web Site. He said that the design and development of the web site is completed and thanked members for their contributions to date all of which have been included. He added however that further content is still required to populate the internet site before it can move to the next stage. He said that Robert Brown has sent him a copy of the various frames which make up the site and an electronic version together with a hard copy will be forwarded to members. Members will then be able to determine where information is still required and contributions should be sent to him (Alan) as soon as possible.
- 3.2. Alan went on to explain that at the Forum meeting in Bangor, Robert Brown, DRD, ISU had proposed the use of Snapmap which would provide the users with an aerial view of the Northern Ireland Coastline. A proposal which was greatly received by all present.
- 3.3. However, following further investigation after attaining this product from our colleagues within the Environment & Heritage Service (EHS), we encountered a number of problems. Firstly, the product supplied to EHS is a standalone version of Snapmap which is not transferable to the internet unless further development is made to the product.
- 3.4. Secondly, negotiations with the company that developed Snapmap to provide an Internet version have revealed two options each costing a significant amount of money.
  - **Option 1** was for the company to host the product at their location with support and training provided at an initial cost of £6,950 and annual cost s of £3,000 thereafter.
  - **Option 2** detailed the transfer of the product to the Clarence Court network and again training and support. The initial cost for this option was £25,950 for year 1 and £7,000 annually thereafter.
- 3.5. It is therefore recommended that this product for the present be ignored given the proposed costs.
- 3.6. However, Alan added that Robert has advised that the DRD ISU is currently developing a Web Viewer for a number of customers in partnership with the Ordnance Survey Office Northern Ireland. When completed it could then be utilised by the Coastal and Marine Forum.
- 3.7. Members were in agreement that the costs were prohibitive.
- 3.8. Alan concluded by saying that once members had forwarded their contributions and this had been incorporated in the web site Robert would give a further presentation to Forum members prior to the site being ‘signed off’ by Ken Bradley and the Chairman. Once the site goes live Alan and Gayle will be responsible for updating the site.
- 3.9. The Chairman complemented the web site and encouraged members to send in contributions as soon as possible.

**Action: Members to forward any contributions / suggestions for inclusion in the Web Site to the CMF Officer/Gayle McKee. [All Members]**

### **Item 5.7. Coastal Development Position Paper**

- 3.10. The Chairman gave a brief outline of the content of what was his first draft of a Position paper on Coastal Development. He apologised to members for not letting them have sight of the paper prior to today's meeting but welcomed any initial comments they might have.
- 3.11. Members noted that the ban, which was lifted by the previous Department of the Environment Minister Dermot Nesbitt, whereby housing developments can proceed even though the necessary infrastructure may not be in place to support them has not been amended. It was suggested therefore that the position paper should make some reference to the need for the Planning Service to address this problem.
- 3.12. Some discussion then took place on Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and in particular, PPS14 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside' and PPS20 'The Coast'.
- 3.13. With regard to PPS14 John Anderson said it was his understanding that in his 'ruling' which declared PPS14 unlawful in that the Department for Regional Development did not have the power to draft it, Mr Justice Gillen pointed out that if DOE had produced the draft PPS14 then he would have passed it. John went on to say that if this was the case then DOE should consider adopting PPS14 in retrospect if that is possible as ditching it would be unthinkable and only add to the Planning Service's backlog of work as somewhere in the region of 5,000 to 6,000 refusals would have to be revisited.
- 3.14. Ken Bradley pointed out that at a second hearing on Friday 14 September 2007, the Court gave the parties a further period to present information on possible remedies following Mr Justice Gillen's decision and that a further hearing is scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> September. In the interim, the Planning Service will hold all decisions based on the draft PPS 14.
- 3.15. With regard to PPS20 Ken said that he understood that the Planning Service was now considering including PPS20 within another PPS rather than produce a separate one on 'The Coast' however he had no further details at this time.
- 3.16. The Chairman said that it is crucial that the Coast is covered somewhere in the suite of PPS documents and he will take this into account when revisiting the draft position paper. He concluded by asking members to forward any contributions/suggestions for inclusion in the position paper to the CMF Officer.

**Action: Members to forward any contributions / suggestions for inclusion in the position paper to CMF Officer. [All Members]**

**Item 7.7. Coastal and Marine Forum Response to Marine Bill White Paper**

- 3.17. The Chairman confirmed that he had issued a broad response on behalf of the Forum and that he had copied this to members.
- 3.18. A short discussion followed on the aspects of the proposed Marine Bill and how they relate to Northern Ireland. Ken Bradley informed those present that at present no decision has been taken as to whether Northern Ireland is in or out of the UK Marine Bill with regards to those matters which are devolved. He went on to say that a Ministerial statement is expected in October on the Northern Ireland position. He did however recognise that one of the main issues to be addressed is whether or not Northern Ireland has its own Marine Management Organisation. He also confirmed that the Marine Bill is still scheduled for the Third Parliamentary Session.

**Item 7.10. Sand Extraction**

- 3.19. Ken Bradley introduced the paper on Sand Extraction copies of which had been handed to members at the start of the meeting. He said that the paper sets out the various pieces of legislation which in one way or another provides protection to our beaches. It would appear that the main problem seems to be that of enforcement whereby it is very difficult to catch the perpetrators carrying out the crime of illegal beach sand extraction. Such was the case at Ballintoy Harbour.
- 3.20. Alan Hamilton said that he had been in touch with colleagues in the Planning Service concerning the situation at Ballintoy Harbour which was drawn to the Forum's attention by Peter Harper from the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust. Planning Service confirmed that it was having difficulty witnessing the extraction first hand but were now pursuing it from another angle in that Planning Service is now aware that the beach is leased by Moyle District Council and a meeting with council officials is to be arranged to determine what action can be taken to stop this practise happening. Alan agreed to report on progress at the next meeting.
- 3.21. The Chairman enquired what precautionary methods could be put in place to stop illegal sand extraction from beaches. Ken said that in the case of Whitepark Bay the National Trust placed large boulders at several access points to the beach as a deterrent.
- 3.22. Members also raised concerns about forms of sand extraction, which can affect mussel/ scallop beds for example, but falls outside the regulation system. This arises from forms of dispersal dredging which apparently do not require approval for dredge spoil disposal under FEPA rules.
- 3.23. The Chairman thanked Ken for producing the paper and asked members to consider the paper and would accept comments prior to the next

meeting when further discussion on sand extraction will take place. Any comments/contributions should be forwarded to the CMF Officer.

**Action: Progress report on action being taken by the Planning Service/Moyle District Council at Ballintoy Harbour to stop illegal Sand Extraction. [CMF Officer]**

**Action: Members to forward any comments / contributions for inclusion in the Sand Extraction paper to the CMF Officer. [All Members]**

#### **Item 7.12. Social and Community Representative on the Forum**

3.24. The Chairman advised members that he had written to the Chairman of the Causeway Coast Communities Consortium (CCCC) stating the Forum's position regarding Community representation.

3.25. The CMF officer reported that since the last meeting and following discussions with NICVA who had been approached initially when setting up the Forum, Karin Eyben from Rural Community Network has been approached concerning possible membership on the Forum. Some members are already aware of the work undertaken by Karen and consider she would be an asset if she accepts. Alan said he would report on progress at the next meeting.

3.26. Cllr. William Burns suggested that an approach should also be made to Rural Development Council regarding membership on the Forum. Ken Bradley said he would consider such an approach.

**Action: Progress report on Community representation on the Forum. [CMF Officer]**

#### **4. Monitoring of ICZM Strategy**

4.1. Copies of Monitoring Reports outlining progress on objectives as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007 were handed out to members. Alan explained how the table should be interpreted. Blue text indicates those bodies who responded to latest update request. Black print position as at 30<sup>th</sup> March 2007. Red print indicates changes to wording of targets.

4.2. He went on to explain that the next meeting of the Water Framework Directive Inter-Departmental Implementation Board has not been confirmed yet but is likely to take place in late November and after the next scheduled meeting of the Forum which is 14<sup>th</sup> November.

4.3. In the circumstances therefore the Chairman suggested that as the monitoring of the objectives is the main core business of the Forum, members should give careful consideration to the content of the Monitoring Return spreadsheet and forward their comments/suggestions of issues which he should raise at the WFD Board meeting. These should be forwarded to the

CMF Officer and Gayle McKee for discussion at the November meeting of the Forum.

**Action: Members to forward any comments / suggestions of issues Chairman should raise at WFD Board to the CMF Officer /Gayle McKee.**  
**[All Members]**

## **5. Rathlin Island ICZM Project**

- 5.1. The Chairman welcomed the proposal to further ICZM awareness on Rathlin Island and the need to appoint a dedicated person to take on this role. He acknowledged that a steady population drift has occurred from Rathlin Island over the past years and that there was a need to address this situation and to try and assist the islanders to become a more sustainable community. If this can be 'kick started' through an ICZM project so much the better.
- 5.2. Ken Bradley then referred members to the paper prepared by Peter Harper. Ken explained that it was the Department's desire, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Coastal and Marine Forum and other interested groups, to undertake a "2 year pilot" ICZM project to assist promote Rathlin Island in terms of economic benefit, environmental awareness and social well-being and to seek support for the project.
- 5.3. He went on to say that the overall trust of the project is to encompass aspects of the Rathlin Island Sustainable Tourism Strategy of June 2005, within the context of ICZM. He added that while some of the strategy's recommendations have been taken forward a lot more needs to be done and considers that the employment of an individual to take responsibility for the strategy could provide the necessary catalyst.
- 5.4. Ken went on to say that while the Department was prepared to provide in the range of £20,000 to £25,000 per annum over a 2 year period towards the salary and running costs of an ICZM Officer. However he considered it important and critical to the success of the project to have the support of as many organisations as possible. To this end Ken said that he had already held preliminary discussions with CCGHT, the National Trust and Moyle District Council and has received offers of desk space, use of office equipment and payroll/salary arrangements. He has further meetings arranged with RSPB, WWF NI, CalMac, Regional Tourism Partnership and Rathlin Development and Community Association.
- 5.5. Members welcomed the proposal in general but felt they needed time to consider.
- 5.6. John Anderson asked who the officer would answer to and it was confirmed that it would be to the Forum. John suggested there was a need to establish targets to enable the ICZM concept, in general, to be fully understood and that any Job Specification would need to be very tight and carefully worded.

5.7. David Knott questioned if was exclusively a tourism project or are fisheries and others involved with ICZM to be included.

5.8. The Chairman stressed that the post is still subject to clarification and encouraged members to study the draft proposal further and consider what a job specification for a Development/ICZM officer might contain.

**Action: Consider what a job specification for a Development/ICZM officer might contain. [All Members]**

## **6. Any Other Business.**

### **NICFM Work Programme**

6.1. The Chairman confirmed the Forum's work programme has mainly been reactive to date. Ken confirmed the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group (NIBG) started as being reactive but since a new structure was introduced it now has a definite focus. As a member of the NIBG David Knott advised that the Coastal and Marine Forum could also benefit from a separate meeting to clarify its main focus, as the NIBG did resulting in the development of a 2 year plan. The Chairman said he would consider the possible benefits of holding a facilitated workshop for Forum members to develop a CMF work plan but in the meantime he was happy to receive any other proposals on a way forward from members.

**Action: Consider holding facilitated workshop to develop a CMF work plan. [Chairman]**

### **Significant Water Management Issues Reports**

6.2. Peter Archdale drew member's attention to the four booklets entitled **Water Matters "Have your say"** which provides a summary of the significant issues identified, to date, in each of the 4 NI River Basin Districts. Each also outlines the current measures for dealing with the issues. He went on to say that a clear understanding of objectives, issues and measures is essential because these will determine what will be incorporated into the first River Basin Management Plans, which will run from 2009-2015. He added that the consultation period closes on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2007.

6.3. Peter added that EHS are forming 9 Catchment Stakeholder Groups (CSGs) which will provide a forum for anyone with an interest in local water issues to identify their concerns to both Statutory Agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations and have them addressed at a local level, He confirmed stakeholder events have been organised throughout the Province to inform the consultation process and he encouraged members to attend where possible.

6.4. The Chairman clarified that it was up to individual members as to whether or not they or their organisations wished to respond to the consultation documents. It was not a matter for the Forum.

## **NICMF Conference**

- 6.5. Alan Hamilton said that it has always been the intention for the Forum to host a major conference each year to help raise the awareness of Forum in general but of ICZM in particular.
- 6.6. He went on to explain that several members had come up with suggestions one of which was a joint conference with I-CoNet, The Irish Coastal Network. Ken was a guest speaker at their conference this year.
- 6.7. A short discussion took place on a theme for the conference and also possible locations. Ken Bradley inform members about a seabed mapping project which was about to commence from Tory Island to Rathlin Island. The project is being carried out by the Marine Institute of Ireland and the UK's Maritime and Coastguard Agency with Environment & Heritage Service as the Lead Partner. He explained that the Joint Irish Bathmetric Project is part of a larger mapping project around the coast of the Republic of Ireland. The project is due to complete early next year. Ken suggested and it was agreed that a conference somewhere on the North Coast would provide an ideal opportunity to publish the findings of the project. Further work on a CMF Conference to be taken forward by CMF Officer.

**Action: Further work on a CMF Conference to be taken forward. [CMF Officer]**

## **NICMF Brochure**

- 6.8. Alan Hamilton provided members with the first draft of the brochure as composed the Department's Graphic Design Unit. It was agreed that 6000 copies should be printed for distribution and that once the CMF Web Site goes 'live' the brochure can be launched.

## **NICFM Maritime Leaflet**

- 6.9. The Chairman explained that draft Maritime Leaflet has now been produced and will be presented at the November meeting of the Forum for approval.

**Action: Draft Maritime Leaflet to be presented at the November meeting of the Forum for approval. [Chairman]**

## **Friends of Larne Lough**

- 6.10. John Anderson explained that he is secretary of a small ad-hoc environmental group Friends of Larne Lough whose members have a keen interest in protecting and promoting the sustainability of the lough and the surrounding area. John went on to say that a recent case the group had been involved in concerned illegal infilling adjacent to a protected ecosystem. Copies of the relevant correspondence concerning the case were handed out to members.

- 6.11. John said that in his opinion the case is an example of how ICZM and seemingly everything else can be ignored when making decisions. It also highlights the difficult task which lies ahead for the Forum to try and get ICZM work within government and the wider community.
- 6.12. The Chairman said that there were lessons to be learnt from this case and would like to discuss the case further with John in particular the generic problems and report back to the Forum at a later meeting.

**Action: Chairman and John Anderson to discuss case regarding generic problems it raises. [Chairman/John Anderson]**

### **Data Collection and Storage**

- 6.13. The Chairman introduced Joe Breen Environment & Heritage Service.
- 6.14. Joe Breen said that with the introduction of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and the proposed Marine Bill and in particular Marine Spatial Planning and Marine Protected Areas there is a greater need than ever to improve access to marine and coastal data and information in Northern Ireland. Currently coastal and marine data and information are scattered across a variety of government departments and agencies, other public bodies, NGOs and commercial organisations which frequently require essentially the same data, but collate them separately.
- 6.15. He described how data can quickly become outdated, how difficult it can be to update and how easily data can be lost or ‘forgotten’ with so many locations holding data. He outlined the benefits of how the creation a central location for holding such data would prove an immense aid and how this could affectively improve the reliability and validity of data held on the coast line.
- 6.16. He went on to say that it appears there is a gradual move towards greater openness and willingness between organisations to work together. Such changes in government attitudes to information, improved technology and new legislation regarding the availability of data, environmental data in particular, means that it should now be possible to provide easy access to many readily available data products. However, there still remains a need and a requirement for greater co-ordination between organisations to harmonise their data management procedures and encourage data sharing and consequently for such data and information to be held in a central repository.
- 6.17. A short discussion followed where members expressed concerns to the commitment required to organise the data not to mention the costs involved. suggested the obstacles may include training and IT issues. Responsibility was also a suggested issue. However members agreed that there was a need to standardise data collection and for it to be held in a central repository and made widely accessible.

6.18. It was finally agreed that the Chairman should write to Permanent Secretaries about this problem but also offering advice on a way forward. However in order to inform the letter it was agreed that perhaps as an initial step a desk top scoping exercise should be undertaken to determine the nature and scale of coastal and marine data and information holdings which relate to the Northern Ireland Coastal Zone to determine the need for the creation a central repository in Northern Ireland. Ken agreed to consider what the best method might be for taking forward such a scoping exercise.

**Action: Consider what the best method might be for taking forward a scoping exercise to determine the nature and scale of coastal and marine data and information holdings which relate to the Northern Ireland Coastal Zone [Ken Bradley]**

## **7. Date of next Meeting.**

7.1. It was confirmed that the date of the next meeting was Wednesday, 14th November 2007, time and venue to be confirmed. Peter Archdale said subject to availability there was a possibility we could hold the November meeting in the Coast Guard Offices in Coleraine. Prof. Cooper said that if the Coast Guard premises were not available he would host the meeting at the University Campus.

**Action: To confirm venue and time of November meeting of the Forum. [CMF Officer]**

**Alan Hamilton**

**October 2007**