

**Minutes of the Third Meeting of Coastal and Marine Forum held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2007 at 2.00pm in the Royal Ulster Yacht Club, 101 Clifton Road, Bangor.**

**In Attendance:**

**Prof. Andrew Cooper, University of Ulster. (Chairman)**  
**John Anderson, Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside**  
**Peter Archdale, The Loughs Agency**  
**Maeve Bell, Royal Yachting Association**  
**Ken Bradley, Planning and Natural Resources Division, DOE**  
**Jonathan Buick, Action Renewables**  
**Kathryn Callaghan, Countryside Access and Activities Network**  
**Phil Davidson, The National Trust**  
**Joanne Gaffney, Cross-Border Aquaculture Initiative Team**  
**Melanie Gomes, Marine Task Force**  
**Peter Harper, Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust**  
**Dick James, Northern Ireland Fish Producers Organisation Ltd.**  
**David Knott, Belfast Harbours Commissioners**  
**Dr Tony McNally, The Loughs Agency**  
**Caroline Nolan, Strangford Lough Management Advisory Committee**

**Alan Hamilton, CMF Officer**  
**Tim Irwin, Planning and Natural Resources Division, DOE**  
**Robert Brown, Information Systems Unit, DRD**  
**Lee Goudie, Information Systems Unit, DRD**  
**Una McConnell, Housing Policy, Research and Legislation Branch, DSD**  
**Pat Aldridge, Rivers Agency, DARD**  
**Jim Martin, Rivers Agency, DARD**

**Apologies:**

**Gordon Best, Quarry Products Association NI**  
**Val Cummins, Coastal and Marine Resources Centre**  
**Liam Flanigan, Northern Ireland Local Government Association**  
**Geoff Nuttall, The National Trust**

**1. Welcome**

- 1.1. Prof. Cooper welcomed those present, especially Robert Brown, Information Systems Unit, DRD, Una McConnell, Housing Policy, Research and Legislation Branch, DSD, Pat Aldridge and Jim Martin, Rivers Agency, DARD all of whom would be giving presentations later.
- 1.2. He also welcomed Phil Davidson from The National Trust who was attending in place of Geoff Nuttall and three new members, Melanie Gomes, Marine

Task Force, Kathryn Callaghan, Countryside Access and Activities Network and Jonathan Buick, Action Renewables.

- 1.3. He went on to thank Maeve Bell, Royal Yachting Association for offering the use of the Royal Ulster Yachting Club premises for the meeting and the kind hospitality the members received.

## **2. Minutes**

- 2.1. The minutes of the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> January 2007 were approved as presented.

## **3. Matters Arising**

### **Item 3.2.**

- 3.1. Ken Bradley then gave an update on the recent WFD Inter-Departmental Board.
- 3.2. He explained that at their December 2006 meeting, the Board agreed that, as an interim measure, agreed in principle, subject to the drafting and approval of a new Terms of Reference, to include ICZM and Marine issues on the agenda of future meetings. Ken pointed out that the Board was only prepared to consider Strategic issues.
- 3.3. Ken went on to say that at their May meeting the Board had ratified the revised Terms of Reference and agreed to the Forum's Chairman attendance at its meetings, for ICZM Items only. The Board had also agreed to the expansion of the Board's membership to include representatives from other Departments/ Agencies with an interest in Coastal/Marine issues but on an AD Hoc basis only.
- 3.4. Ken said it would therefore be in order for the Chairman to attend the next meeting of the Board which will take place in the Autumn.
- 3.5. The Chairman thanked Ken for his update.

### **Items 3.8. and 6.3.**

- 3.6. The Chairman said that a copy of the finalised 'Remit' had been sent to Members on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2007 and a copy of the amended 'NICMF Logo' would be sent out to Members on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007. In the absence of any comments the Chairman said he would take it Members were content.

### **Item 9.1.**

- 3.7. The Chairman said that he had spoken to Karin Dubsy, Coastwatch but a date for her attendance at the Forum had yet to be agreed.
- 3.8. The Chairman said that any remaining 'matters arising' would be dealt with later on in the meeting.

## **4. Presentation: Northern Ireland Coastal and Marine Forum – Extranet Web Site: Robert Brown, Web Project Manager, ISU, DRD.**

- 4.1. Robert Brown then gave a presentation to the Forum on his draft proposals for a dedicated Northern Ireland Coastal and Marine Forum Web Site.
- 4.2. He explained in great detail the format of the site, from the content of the Welcome Page right down to the various technologies which could be used, such as web2 technology, news applications, streaming videos, rotating picture gallery, and educational games to engage children.
- 4.3. Robert stressed that the draft Web site was for illustrative purposes only and was by no means the finished product. The material used to populate it had been provided by Alan Hamilton, Joe Breen, Environment and Heritage Service and himself, with a couple of examples of recent and not so recent presentations given by Ken Bradley and the Chairman he had found on the Internet.
- 4.4. He went on to explain that what he was proposing was an 'Extranet' web site. This was a somewhat different concept in that all Members, if they so desired, could update the content through a remote link. The application that will be used to accomplish this is widely used throughout the NICS and is called '**livelink**'. He went on to briefly explain how the content of the site is published with final approval for content by the CMF Project Board.
- 4.5. Robert went on to outline his programme for completion of the project from receipt of material to populate the site to going 'live' in September. In order to meet this programme and progress the project to the next stage it was crucial for Members of the Forum to have passed on their requirements to himself or Alan Hamilton by 8 June 2007.
- 4.6. The Chairman thanked Robert for what was a very interesting and informative presentation.
- 4.7. Members agreed that presentation was very informative and highlighted the there were obvious benefits from having a web site.
- 4.8. Considerable detailed discussion took place on the on the web site. Some of the salient points which emerged were:
  - Slight reservations about quality of graphics, videos etc. for non-broadband users and therefore failed the fundamental purpose of having the web site.
  - May become quickly dated with emerging new technologies/design features.
  - Accessibility Audits.
  - Core membership page could be personalised with Group photograph, email web site addresses for example.

**Action: Members to sent contributions / suggestions to populate the web site to Robert Brown/Alan Hamilton by 8 June 2007. [All Members]**

## **5. Presentation: Review of Affordable Housing - Una McConnell, Housing Research, Policy and Legislation Branch, DSD.**

- 5.1. The Chairman introduced Una McConnell, Housing Research, Policy and Legislation Branch, DSD. Una then gave a short presentation on the recent 'Review into Affordable Housing' carried out by Sir John Semple the final report on which was published on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2007. The review only took 8 months to complete and is an independent assessment of the issues and challenges facing Northern Ireland. The report examines the range of measures available to Government to influence the affordability of housing.
- 5.2. Una explained that there was consultation with communities, their representatives and across the public and private sectors and this was reflected in the scope of the recommendations contained in the final report which amount to 80.
- 5.3. She went on to say that the report is complemented by important research by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Universities of Ulster and Glasgow on the operation of the housing market. It also takes account of other research carried out into the impact of restricted housing choice.
- 5.4. Una then explained that the Social Development Minister, Margaret Ritchie MLA is to chair a taskforce on affordable housing. The taskforce, comprising officials from key government departments will consider Sir John Semple's recommendations. The Minister has said that delivering affordable housing is top of her priorities and wants to be able to help those people who cannot afford to buy a house due to unprecedented increases in house prices.
- 5.5. The Chairman thanked Una for a very interesting and informative presentation.
- 5.6. A short discussion followed. Some of the views expressed by Members included:
  - Need for sewage treatment infrastructure to be in place prior to forging ahead with new developments.
  - Issue of single people buying multi – occupancy dwellings.
  - Affordable housing only a start. Need to consider running costs. Fuel efficient/sustainable dwellings.
  - Initiate 'living above shops' initiative.
  - Difficult to fight against market forces perhaps the focus in coastal communities should be on trying to retain current businesses and create new business opportunities by providing incentives.
- 5.7. The Chairman pointed out that one of the recurring topics brought up at the ICZM strategy awareness seminars was that of second homes and in particular the building of apartments in place of single dwellings. He went on to say that our coastline is static in length and the amount of space for future development limited. He felt that this may be something the Forum should be discussing further and went on to say that he would draft a 'position paper' for the next meeting.

**Action: Draft ‘position paper’ on coastal developments for next meeting of CMF. [Chairman]**

**6. Presentation: Developments in Flood Risk Management in Northern Ireland – Pat Aldridge, Jim Martin.**

- 6.1. The Chairman welcomed Pat Aldridge and Jim Martin from the Rivers Agency, DARD.
- 6.2. Pat Aldridge gave a brief introduction about the Rivers Agency and its role as the Northern Ireland competent authority for the delivery of the EU Floods Directive and went on to say that the Forum will be a major stakeholder when it comes to consult on the Floods Directive.
- 6.3. This was followed by an informative presentation on Developments in Flood Risk Management in Northern Ireland by Jim Martin.
- 6.4. Jim outlined the Rivers Agency responsibilities. He said that the core business areas of the Agency have been changing in recent years. In the past its role was that of a Drainage Authority with a focus on arterial drainage schemes, flood protection to agricultural land and maintenance of designated watercourses. Today it focuses on flood protection in urban areas, urban flood relief schemes and the maintenance of designated watercourses. It also has responsibility for regard to regulation of the water levels in Lough Neagh and Lough Erne.
- 6.5. Looking to the future the Agency will have a role in river basin management, flood risk management, flood emergency planning, flood defence and land use planning.
- 6.6. Jim said he saw the role of the Agency changing from having a reactive approach to one of proactive. An example of this was having to prepare Flood Risk Management Plans by 2015 in line with the Floods Directive.
- 6.7. Jim went on to refer to a recently published report ‘Flood Management Policy Review – Proposed Policy Framework.’ He said that the Rivers Agency had appointed RPS Consulting Engineers to undertake an independent review of its Flood Management Policy and to provide a policy framework for the future which reflects the changing role of the Agency.
- 6.8. The report highlights three main areas where the Agency will have either new or additional responsibilities or enhanced input to existing work. These three areas are:
  - Floods Directive and Water Framework Directive;
  - Coastal flood and erosion risk management; and
  - Development control i.e. Consenting of SuDS.
- 6.9. He went on to add that with regard to Coastal flood and erosion RPS considers that Rivers Agency would be well placed to take a lead role and

would be best placed to be the Regulatory Authority for dealing with coastal issues.

6.10. The next stage is for Government to respond to the RPS recommendations made in the review.

6.11. Pat Aldridge then outlined the programme for the delivery of the Floods Directive while stressing that work on the transposition of the Directive has yet to start :

- By 2012 – Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments completed.
- By 2015 – Flood Risk Management Plans completed.

6.12. He went on to say that the Agency will have ‘undefended flood plain maps, completed by the end of the year.

6.13. Some of the topics raised by Members and dealt with in the course of the presentation included:

- Rivers Agency role in relation to PPS15.
- Does Floods Directive allow NI to develop Shoreline Management Plans
- Is Climate Change taken into consideration when producing Maps and Plans.

6.14. The Chairman thanked Pat and Jim for their very interesting and in depth presentation.

## **7. Any Other Business**

7.1. It was agreed to move on to AOB because the time remaining was limited.

7.2. Peter Archdale raised the matter as to whether or not the Forum would be sending a response to the Marine Bill White Paper. For his part he believed that the CMF should send a response and being conscious that the deadline is the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2007 he felt that if nothing else it should be a generally supportive input, whilst stating that our efforts will concentrate on making sure the MMO is an effective body.

7.3. Members were in agreement it would be impossible to have a lengthy debate on the content of the Marine Bill and reach a consensus on a response. They were content therefore that the Forum should send a response which should be supportive of the Bill, reaffirm that Northern Ireland be part of it and for more specific reference to ICZM to be made within the Bill.

7.4. Members whose organisations had already or were in the process of responding to Defra agreed to send a copy of their responses to the Chairman for information purposes.

7.5. Ken Bradley pointed out that the Marine Bill had been consulted on during a period of Direct Rule. Given the fact we now have our own Assembly and

because the Marine Bill is cross cutting in nature, until we get a steer from the Executive we cannot confirm whether NI is in or out of the Defra Bill.

7.6. Ken went on to say that he felt that the time for the Forum to get involved in the Marine Bill was when the detail of the legislation was being consulted on. This is expected to be early next year. He said that prior to the legislation consultation he and his colleague Sheila Rodgers would be willing to come to the Forum and give an in depth overview as far as Northern Ireland is concerned.

7.7. The Chairman agreed to issue a broad response pushing the ICZM aspect.

**Action: To issue broad response on behalf of the Forum pushing the ICZM aspect. [Chairman]**

7.8. Peter Harper said that approaches had been made to the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust Board about extraction of sand from a small beach at Ballitoy Harbour for commercial purposes and was wondering what can be done to stop this practice.

7.9. Ken Bradley confirmed that he also had been approached probably by the same individual. He went on to say that having investigated the matter Alan Hamilton had discovered that Moyle District Council has responsibility for the beach and Council officials were also aware of the situation but as yet had not been able to witness any of the events taking place. Alan had also confirmed that the beach does not have ASSI protection.

7.10. Ken went on to say that he was aware of several instances of sand extraction from other beaches around the coast but as yet Northern Ireland does not have legislation preventing this activity. He said that he would be keen to discuss this topic further and asked for it to be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime he would consider a way forward on how to deal with the issue of sand extraction from beaches in Northern Ireland.

**Action: Sand Extraction to be an Agenda item for the next CMF meeting. [CMF Officer]**

**To consider a way forward on how to deal with the issue of sand extraction from beaches in Northern Ireland. [Ken Bradley]**

7.11. Alan Hamilton reported that subject to approval by the Ulster Farmers' Union Executive Committee, Past President, Campbell Tweed will be the UFU representative on the CMF.

7.12. The Chairman indicated that he had been approached by the Causeway Coast Communities Consortium (CCCC) seeking membership on the forum. The issue of community representation was discussed and it was pointed out that the Heritage Trusts provide a vehicle for community concerns to be

raised. The Chairman said he would write to CCCC stating position regarding community representation.

**Action: To write to CCCC stating position regarding community representation.**  
**[Chairman]**

## **8. Date of next Meeting.**

8.1. It was agreed to hold the next meetings of the Forum on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2007 and 14<sup>th</sup> November 2007, time and venues to be confirmed. David Knott said subject to availability there was a possibility we could hold the September meeting in the Belfast Harbour Commissioners building.

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

**Alan Hamilton**

**June 2007**