

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE ARTS AND LEISURE

-Note of Proceedings-

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE *SALMON AND INLAND FISHERIES FORUM NI* HELD AT DCAL FISHERIES, MAHON ROAD PORTADOWN ON WEDNESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2010 AT 2PM

Present

Mr Robert Murtland
Mr Allan Kilgore
Mr Gary Houston
Mr Jack Tisdall
Mr Patrick Mc Neill
Mr Francis Conlon
Mr Jerry Mc Nally
Mr Martin Mc Neill
Mr J Haughey
Mr John Morton
Mr Mark P Horton
Mr Edward Montgomery
Mr Michael Crilly (Chairman)
Mr J Mc Williams

Apologies

Mr David Laughlin
Mr Pat Close

In attendance

DCAL

Ms Fiona Lavery (Minutes)

Mr Crilly welcomed two new members Mr John Morton – (Fish Merchants) and Mr John Mc Williams (Land owners with Riparian Rights), to the Forum. Two apologies were noted.

1.1 Minutes of previous meeting /actions arising:

Members reviewed the record of the meeting held on 8 June 2010 which had been circulated. All matters arising will be addressed as Agenda items below. Members noted that the last meeting was not quorate and the matter of amending the Standing Orders will be addressed at this meeting.

1.2 Report from Hydro Electric Power sub committee

Mr Crilly asked Mr Haughey to provide an update to members on the outcomes of the Hydro Electric Power sub committee meetings. Mr Haughey advised that in their opinion, they had identified a situation that consideration of Hydro Electric Schemes by DCAL was not adequate, they had been advised that DCAL only consider areas under the 1966 Fisheries Act relating to fish passes, grids and screens. All other issues are not commented on as DCAL were lacking the necessary expertise and would have to source technical advice from AFBI-(Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute). NIEA assume they get comprehensive advice from DCAL. Mr Haughey outlined a situation on the Carnowen River near Omagh and the process followed by both Departments. It was proposed that the Forum should send a letter to DCAL highlighting the disjointed approach and the limitations thereof. Following a question from Mr Crilly, Mr Haughey advised that there seemed to be a grey area concerning the roles and responsibilities. Discussion continued and Mr Kilgore highlighted the implications from an EU perspective, and the pressures and costs likely to be imposed, possibly in relation to ASSI Rivers. Mr Haughey noted that EU regulations are managed by NIEA. Mr Crilly felt that the only area of influence the Forum had was with DCAL, as they have a statutory responsibility to protect fish. Members agreed that the number of HES applications will increase and Mr Crilly suggested that it may be assistance to find out how many applications are in the process of approval and how many have been completed across the DCAL jurisdiction. Following further discussion on water abstraction and the cumulative damage on the rivers, members agreed that the Forum request a DCAL presentation on HES and water abstraction. In order to focus the presentation members agreed the main areas which require clarification from DCAL. Mr Haughey agreed to draft a letter to DCAL and NIEA requesting the statistics on HEP applications and abstraction and impoundment applications and agreed to draft a letter to DCAL re the Camowen River in Omagh.

1.3 Request from Fermanagh Anglers to review Angling Regulations.

Mr Crilly outlined the background to this agenda item and Mr Tisdall provided members with a comprehensive reply, highlighting that trout fishing has greatly improved in Lough Erne and outlined the matter of the boundary line and the implications on the fishery as a whole. He highlighted the impact of zebra mussels on fishing in certain parts of the Lough. In addition many of the traditional types of fishing have changed and many anglers now want to both Game and Coarse fish during a season. The Department, as fishery owner should include licencing and angling methods in the survey report they intend to produce and in particular, Mr Tisdall would support a review of the permit requirements on Lough Erne. In conclusion he felt that the matter would need a full consultation with all interested groups on the way forward rather than just revert back to previous regulations. Mr Crilly thanked Mr Tisdall for his input and suggested that a copy of the PAE survey should be circulated to the Forum. He recommended that DCAL meet with Anglers in an effort to resolve the issue and that a Forum member would be happy to attend. Members agreed this action. Mr Crilly requested a copy of the current map showing the boundary line on Lough Erne.

1.4 Amended Standing Orders – review quorum

Mr Crilly advised members that given the problems with attendance at the last meeting, it was proposed that the quorum should be reduced to 6. Members agreed this action and Item 21 of the Standing Orders will be amended accordingly.

1.5 Response to Waterways Ireland Public Consultation on Legislative Proposals.

Mr Montgomery requested that the Forum should be classified as a separate body on consultation lists. Mrs Lavery advised that the Forum were a DCAL advisory group and all views etc would be included in any DCAL response, although members could respond on behalf of their own groups, if they wished. It was agreed that a proviso should be included that *Failure to reply does not infer acceptance*. It was clarified that advice must go to DCAL for inclusion in their reply.

Mr Montgomery advised that the document contained very little fisheries matters which would impact on angling, fisheries or conservation other than Section 27 – fishing near a navigation path. Members noted the content.

1.6 Consultation on proposals to introduce new marine licensing systems

Hard copies of this consultation document were distributed to members for consideration. Members discussed the matter of replies to consultations and it was agreed that if members agreed to reply to a consultation with an inland fisheries interest then copies would be requested and a reply formulated.

1.7 Any other business

Mr Mark Horton raised the issue of the decline in the numbers of Dollaghan trout in Lough Neagh. He was aware that DCAL have been approached on this matter and outlined the rivers in which a noticeable decline in numbers had occurred, which was alarming anglers. He continued by stating that there was a lack of information on Lough Neagh stocks and Mr Conlon outlined the role of the Lough Neagh Co-operative which focused only on eel surveys. Discussion continued on the various types of commercial fishing and the increase in commercial fishing for coarse fish. Following discussion it was agreed to formally advise DCAL that given the anecdotal evidence of the decline of the Dollaghan and the recent introduction of zebra mussels a base line survey should be carried out to establish current stock levels. Mr Horton agreed to word a letter for consideration and forwarding to DCAL.

1.5 Date of Next meeting

Members agreed the date of the next meeting will be on
Wednesday 8 December 2010 at 2 pm in Mahon Road Portadown.

Signed _____

Date _____

