

Minutes of Upper Neagh Bann Catchment Stakeholder Group Meeting 14 November 2013

The meeting was held at the Cohannn Inn, Ballynakilly road on Thursday 14 November 2013 7pm-9pm

Present:

WMcK	Wendy McKinley (Chair)	NIEA
MT	Mert Thompson	NIEA
WC	Wendy Craig	NIEA
GW	Gerry Wilson	NIEA
KC	Kieron Callaghan	NIEA
KH	Keith Henderson	NIW
JT	Jenny Thompson	NIW
PM	Peter Maxwell	IWAI
AM	Alan Morrow	DARD
GG	Gareth Greer	Rivers Agency
PL	Peter Lynch	DCAL
PMcA	Paul McAleavey	DCAL
WM	Wilbert Mayne	UFU
DC	Dermot Corrigan	Coalisland and District anglers
FM	Frank Mitchell	River Care Ltd, Cookstown
FC	Francis Kelly	Coalisland and District anglers
TM	Thomas Marshall	Torrent Trout Farm
MMcC	Martin McCoy	NIEA
RM	Robbie Marshall	UAF
SS	Siobhan Sherry	NIEA
BOF	Bernie O'Flaherty	Monaghan County Council
CMcC	Chris McCarney	Blackwater Regional Partnership
TK	Tony Kew	Torrent Enhancement Association
CF	Catherine Fox	Blackwater Regional Partnership
DA	David Agnew	Countryside Alliance Ireland
NH	Norman Henderson	NIEA
JB	John Boyce	Derrykeevan stakeholder
DMcC	Dermot McConille	Derrykeevan stakeholder
IN	Ian Needham	NIEA

1. Welcome and Introduction

Wendy McKinley thanked everyone for coming and asked the attendees if the minutes of the meeting were an accurate record.

The attendees agreed that the minutes were an accurate representation of the meeting.

2. Actions from previous meeting

Updates were given regarding the last meetings actions by **MT**.

Action	Update
MT to look into rebooking Kevin Gallagher [afbi] for the spring 2014 CSG	Will follow up in Spring next year, and consider input on the genetic work being carried out on the Lough Neagh Trout populations.
Circulate details of the consumer council	Circulated with draft minutes.
GN to consider reviewing CSG start times to encourage better attendance from those working on farms.	Given travelling time, and the tendency for the meetings to run over, meetings will continue to be scheduled 7 to 9. CMOS are happy to meet with farmers separately or attend farming event/workshops as appropriate.

WM Later meetings in the summer would be appreciated –could this be kept under review?

WMcK there was a meeting of the chairs after all the CSG meetings were complete. This option was discussed and the position is as stated by **MT**.

3. Catchment Officers update

Presentation given by Mert Thompson, a copy of the presentation is available here.

Mert Thompson provided an update on implementation in the Upper Neagh Bann area. This included river walks completed; Nitrates Action Programme review; Water Quality Improvement Grants in the catchment; Riverfly monitoring and the development of the Blackwater Catchment Trust.

- Discussion followed on gravel abstraction from rivers and how DCAL deal with that.

WMcK Thank you. We will now hand over to Ian Needham for the regional manager's presentation.

4. Senior Water Quality Inspectors Report

Presentation given by Ian Needham a copy of Ian's presentation is available here.

Ian's presentation covered a breakdown of pollution incidents in the catchment, and broke them down into sector, severity and catchment.

- IN offered to look at seasonal trends in pollution incidents;
- Comment made that NI waters performance seemed to have dropped
- Noted that the number of agricultural incidents down significantly
- RM requested a means to track pollution incidents, which KMcG mentioned was in the pipeline;
- Discussion on the penalties for farmers in terms of Single Farm Payment
- the issue was raised about failures with above ground slurry tanks

Action 1

IN to compare trends on pollution incidents over a number of seasons.

Action 2

IN to look at incidents related to above ground slurry storage – to look for common themes e.g. is it structural issue or management issue.

Action 3

Develop a means for tracking issues raised via the pollution hotline to be made available on the web.

Question was asked about how much farmers lose when breached under Cross Compliance.

In 2012 341 breaches under NAP and 4 under Groundwater Regs. A total of €820000 was withheld in respect of Cross Compliance breaches.

Question asked what was NIEA doing about septic tanks? RM said that the consent issued needs to be part of the Planning process.

Ans. NH stated - It is part of the process but Planning Service and it is up to them to enforce the current legislation.

Tea was served

5. Guest speakers presentation - Alan Keys (Rivercare) – “Aghaveagh Stream Water Quality Improvement Project”

Presentation given By **Alan Keys**; Alan's presentation is available here.

Alan provided a presentation on a project funded by NIEA which looked at the pollution pressures on a tributary of the Ballinderry. Alan located pollution sources and then worked with the farms to resolve the pollution. Alan's presentation also covered an aspect of stream rehabilitation works which was carried out in partnership with the farmers.

This prompted discussion on drinkers for cattle which do not require the cattle to enter the river; best methods for dealing with agricultural incidents; large scale rehabilitation projects; and DARDs role in providing advice to farmers.

6. Any other Business

Hydroschemes: Robbie Marshall read out a prepared statement on hydroschemes.

'We are very concerned with the high risk of degradation of fisheries caused by the current procedures in the licensing of water abstraction and hydroelectric schemes. As a result we feel strongly there is a need for a fundamental review of the policy and practice of the licensing of abstraction and hydroelectric schemes as presently carried out by NIEA'.

This prompted discussion on the various types of hydro power units and the cumulative effect of hydro schemes within a system. RM urged that the precautionary approach be adopted.

WMcK Note taken and we will be taking this topic to the national stakeholder forum.

WMcK noted that a review of impoundment and hydro policy to take place 2014 led by WMU Regulation Group . NIEA will hold consultations with stakeholders and will include WFD National Stakeholders' Forum.

WMcK Closed the meeting.

END

Summary of Actions

Action number	Action	Taken forward by
1	IN to compare trends on pollution incidents over a number of seasons.	Ian Needham
2	Look at incidents related to above ground slurry storage – to look for common themes.	Ian Needham
3	Develop a means for tracking issues raised via the pollution hotline to be made available on the web.	Ian Needham