

COUNCIL FOR NATURE CONSERVATION AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

MINUTES OF THE RENEWABLES AND WASTE GROUP

FRIDAY 21 APRIL 2006

10.30 AM

CONFERENCE ROOM, WATERMAN HOUSE

Present:

**Mr Joe Furphy (Chair)
Mr John Anderson
Mr James Campbell
Mr Malachy Campbell
Mr Brian Murphy**

In Attendance:

Mrs F E Woods (Secretariat)

1. Introduction and Welcome

Mr Furphy welcomed those present said it would be useful to introduce themselves and give a resume of their main topic of interest in relation to the Group. He outlined his interest in the issue of Wind Farms in Northern Ireland.

- John Anderson – from an engineering background. Interested in waste;
- Brian Murphy – former Civil Servant with DARD. Waste issues.
- James Campbell – Down District Council – environmental enforcement; waste disposal sites.
- Malachy Campbell – WWF – interested in Climate Change.

Mr Furphy said it was good to see that the new group has an interesting mixed background and therefore a wider remit than previously.

2. Terms of Reference

Mr Furphy will put together a paper setting out terms of reference for the group and present it to the Chair's Meeting on Monday 24 April 2006 for ratification.

3. Renewable Energy

Mr Brian Murphy advised that the Minister has set up a group of experts who would look at manure treatment systems to improve nutrient management for crops. He raised the question of who was going to drive this initiative forward. A comprehensive discussion took place with regard to issues including incineration/burning plants, the pig and poultry industry and the Nitrates Directive.

Mr Murphy showed the meeting a publication by DETI entitled 'Environment and Renewable Energy Fund' and requested the Secretariat to obtain further copies for the members.

4. Action Renewables

Mr Joe Furphy said that he had endeavoured to contact Mr Andy McCrea of Action Renewables with a view to inviting Mr McCrea to give a talk to members establishing co-operation between the Group and his organisation.

A comprehensive discussion took place with regard to action renewables and it was agreed to invite Mr Andy McCrea to a future meeting to find out how we could help and vice versa.

5. Waste

The members agreed that waste was a major problem, both municipal and industrial. Concerns were raised about the Environment and Renewable Energy Fund and the allocation of £6m for two energy from waste projects to be selected from municipal, industrial and agricultural waste streams. It would appear from the wording in the funding document that it is possible for non-renewable energy sources to receive funding instead of being allocated to renewable energy sources like wind power or biomass. Members felt that this was an issue the group should pursue.

Members also discussed the problems such as hospital waste and the health risks surrounding this and the cross-border waste topic. Mr James Campbell said that there is large scale illegal dumping. He said that the main problem is that the legislation in Northern Ireland is different from GB. He said there needed to be district council guidelines which were not clear at present.

Mr Furphy said that culture change is essential. He also said that this discussion had highlighted some important issues.

Mr Furphy asked that various people and lead players on the waste side should be asked to come to future meetings – i.e. David Stanley (DETNI), Anne Blacker (EHS), Steve Aston (EHS), Brendan Forde (Climate Change EPG), DARD Representative and Jeff Smith from Carbon Trust. Mark McGuigan from Omagh College was also mentioned as a possible contact.

Mr Anderson felt that Debbie Boyd should be approached and invited to take part in the Group as a co-opted member. Mr Furphy suggested that it might be useful to discuss and explore areas of mutual interest with a variety of people.

6. Wind Farms

Mr Furphy said he was concerned about the number of wind farms already in place.

7. Review of Environmental Governance NI (REGNI)

Brian Murphy referred to REGNI – an independent review body – which has been set up by government in February 2006 to address the structure, management and resourcing of the publicly funded elements of the environmental governance system and will bring forward proposals for the future environmental governance arrangements in relation to environmental protection, the natural heritage and the built heritage.

8. Solar Energy

A discussion took place concerning solar energy. John Anderson mentioned the fact that the Secretary of State had suggested that solar thermal panels should be specified on all new builds. If there were enough people doing this, i.e. supply and demand, the cost of this form of heating would be more competitive. It was agreed that solar energy should be encouraged.

9. Any Other Business

Off-Shore Wind farm - James Campbell said he was aware of a renewable energy project which is underway in the Irish Sea at Clogher Head. The proposal is for a wind energy initiative 12kms NE of Drogheda and 27kms SE of Dundalk.

There is a list of different companies involved including Aqua-Fact International Services Limited, 12 Kilkerrin Park, Liosbaun, Galway. Tel no 353(0)91756812

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, 25 July 2006 @ 10.30am in EHS Conference Room.