

**MINUTES OF 151st MEETING OF THE DRAINAGE COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN
IRELAND HELD AT 10.30am ON THURSDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2010
AT THE ARMAGH CITY HOTEL, ARMAGH**

Present:

Mr G Crawford (Chairman)
Alderman H Nicholl
Alderman R Beggs
Councillor M Gillespie
Councillor A Rainey
Mr T Clarke
Councillor J McBriar
Councillor S Clarke
Councillor W King
Mr J Clarke
Mr T Hinds
Ms R Dobbin

In Attendance:

Mr J Glass (Secretary)
Mr P Loughlin
Mr P Aldridge
Mr P Mehaffey
Mr M Gilliland

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed all those present to the 151st meeting of the Drainage Council.

The Chairman went on to extend welcome to Mr Paul Loughlin and Mr Martin Gilliland, who were attending to assist with administration.

The Chairman then invited the Secretary to offer any apologies that had been received.

2. APOLOGIES

The Secretary advised that apologies had been received from Dr Harold Johnston, Councillor Alan Graham, Mr R Cummings and Councillor Oliver Hughes.

3. MINUTES OF 150th MEETING

The Chairman asked if members agreed that the minutes of the last meeting were an accurate record.

On the proposal of Alderman Beggs, seconded by Alderman Nicholl, the minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Mr Beggs commented on the Action Point contained on page 7 of the minutes relating to a letter to be sent in support of the Lough Neagh and Lower Bann Advisory Committee. Mr Glass confirmed that letter had been issued, and Mr Beggs stated that he appreciated this. The Chairman advised that the issue would be discussed later in the meeting.

Alderman Nicholl drew Mr Mehaffey's attention to page 10 of minutes, specifically the issue of silting at the road bridges over the Doagh River. Mr Mehaffey advised that DRD Roads Service had completed the works. Alderman Nicholl queried the volume of material removed. Mr Mehaffey advised him that he had been informed that all arches at the two bridges were now clear.

Mr Alan Rainey asked for a progress report on flooding in the Beragh area. Mr Aldridge advised that it would be discussed as part of the "Major Works" presentation later in the meeting.

The Chairman stated that Cllr McHugh was not present, but had requested a copy of the Fermanagh Flooding Report. Mr Mehaffey advised him that an e-mail detailing the web location of the report had been issued to Cllr McHugh and that a copy had been brought to the meeting today in anticipation of his attendance.

The Chairman enquired as to whether the list of Capital Works had been issued to all members. Mr Aldridge confirmed that it had been issued today, and proposed that discussion concerning it be left to the next meeting to allow members of the Council time to consider the contents. The Chairman confirmed all in favour and it was agreed to leave to next meeting.

ACTION – Mr Aldridge to lead discussion on Capital Works Paper at next meeting of the Drainage Council

The Chairman noted that the letter to the Bann Advisory Committee had been issued, and a reply received. The Chairman wished to put on record that, whilst the response had been negative, the Council all agreed that the work of the committee had been very useful.

Mr Mehaffey stated that he had considered the potential for providing flooding reports to the Drainage Council members and District Councils, and would be covering the issue as part of his presentation later in the meeting.

5. UPDATE ON MAJOR WORKS PROGRAMME

Mr Aldridge presented the details of the Major Works Programme being undertaken by the Rivers Agency. Using a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation to assist, he indicated the geographical location and details of completed, current and proposed works and schemes. Mr Aldridge also included photographs and other diagrams for illustration where appropriate.

5.1 Culvert Renovation Works currently under construction

Mr Aldridge advised that Rivers Agency has culvert assets worth £300 million which are vital to maintain.

Belfast-Mt Vernon Stream 84% complete
Belfast-Rochester Ave Stream 95% complete
Banbridge-Brookefield Stream – Just commenced

Mr Aldridge provided a short summary of each of the works listed, including the reasons for the works, outline of the works with photographs and maps for illustration, and the costs and benefits. Mr Aldridge went on to advise of the nature of difficulties faced when carrying out renovation works, detailing how the Brookefield Stream culvert was partially blocked by other services being placed through it.

5.2 Culvert Renovation Works currently proposed

Antrim Renovations-Steeple Burn, Springfarm
Armagh – D’Alton Drain
Derry – Springtown / Woodburn Pk
Keady-St Patrick’s St

Again Mr Aldridge provided a short summary of the works listed detailing the reasons for the works, an outline of the detailed works involved, and the costs and benefits.

Mr Aldridge then concluded this section by providing the Council with an overall tabular summary of the culvert renovation works being undertaken by the Rivers Agency.

5.3 Schemes Undergoing Feasibility Study

Annesborough
Belfast - Lucerne Parade
Belfast - Finaghy, Ashton Pk – study extended
Beragh - Cloughfin River
Dromara - River Lagan
Kilkeel - Cranfield, Whitewater
Maghera Co.Down
Mallusk - Blackwater/ Ballymartin
Newtownabbey
Collinbridge
Rostrevor
Whiteabbey
Threemile Water
Greenisland Stream

Mr Aldridge pointed out to the Council that the Beragh Feasibility Study was done “in-house”. All projects are subject to economic viability, and Rivers Agency undertake an economic appraisal on each scheme

5.4 Feasibility Studies recently completed

None to report.

5.5 Schemes Recently Completed

None to report.

5.6 Schemes Currently Undergoing Construction

Carrickfergus - Sullatober Water Phase 1 (almost complete - joint scheme with NIW)

Magherafelt NW Drainage – commenced 4 Oct 10

Lower Bann-Portna Gate Painting – due to commence 25 Oct 10

5.7 Proposed Schemes (To commence in 2010/2011 financial year)

Loop River Ph1 & Knock & Connswater Rivers (due to commence Dec 10)

Coleraine - Lodge Burn (due to commence Nov'10)

5.8 Schemes Currently Undergoing Design

Ballygawley - Ballygawley FAS inc. St Ciaran's School

Belfast - Loop River Ph2

Carrickfergus - Sullatober Water Phase II

Limavady - River Roe

Omagh - Hunter Crescent Floodwall, Johnston Park Stream II

Whiteabbey - Concrete Row Stream – Design Competition shortly

Mr Aldridge ended his presentation by advising the Council that Rivers Agency had been informed to work from a “zero baseline” for capital expenditure over the next four year period. On this basis the Agency had submitted capital spending proposals to DARD which were based on a Strategic Outline Case made to DFP. Mr Aldridge concluded by stating that the headline reduction figure being quoted was of the order of 40%, however, the position with regards to Rivers Agency remained unclear.

The Chairman thanked Mr Aldridge for his presentation, and invited comments and queries from the members.

Councillor King began by enquiring about a possible completion date for the proposed Lodge Burn scheme. Mr Aldridge advised that Rivers Agency is committed to funding the project, whilst being mindful of the need not to over commit into the next financial year. The Chairman queried the project from a fisheries perspective, asking Mr Aldridge whether any consultation had been carried out with local fisheries interests. Mr Aldridge advised him that at feasibility stage, Rivers Agency environmental staff provided advice on the environmental aspects of the scheme in question, advising the Council that all Rivers Agency works are carried out in a sensitive way.

The Chairman queried the option to “opt-out” of work on the Greenway project dependant on funding. Mr Aldridge advised that the full works have been tendered for, with the option to remove elements of the works as funding constraints dictated. Mr Aldridge advised that Rivers Agency remained optimistic that the case for funding presented extremely good value for the public purse. Mr Aldridge stressed that, whilst rigorous governance processes are in place, the merits of the project are sufficient for Rivers Agency to move forward. Mr Aldridge outlined that some 1700 properties at flood risk would receive much improved protection through the flood alleviation works element of the joint scheme.

Councillor Rainey enquired about the Ballygawley scheme and asked about its priority, the Rivers Agency prioritisation process was outlined in response. Mr Aldridge went on to say that Rivers Agency were looking at ways of making details of the works programme available to the public through the internet,. Mr Aldridge outlined the benefits of the public being aware of the programme of works and stated that he hoped the facility would be available in 2011.

Councillor Gillespie asked if there was any way the process could be expedited. Mr Aldridge advised that this was not possible due to the uncertainty surrounding programme budgets at this time.

Mr J Clarke provided further detail on the Greenway project, stating that the East Belfast Flood Alleviation Works were being brought forward in order to carry them out in conjunction with Greenway. This was in order to protect the public purse by ensuring environmental improvement works are not affected by necessary flood alleviation works following on as well as reducing disruption to the community. Mr J Clarke advised that the current works programme conformed with this prioritisation process and consequently funds over and above the current allocation would be required to take the work forward

Mr T Clarke stated that it was important to note the Greenway / East Belfast Flood Alleviation Projects commanded cross community support. Mr Aldridge agreed. Mr T Clark enquired about the potential to use Lottery funding to secure the project. Mr Aldridge explained that the Lottery bid was solely for environmental work, therefore using this funding for the flood alleviation

element of the joint project would not be possible. The Agency became aware of the project when public consultation by the East Belfast Partnership identified that the public were naturally very concerned about the flooding that had taken place. East Belfast Partnership then engaged with River Agency which gave rise to the integrated project.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contributions before inviting Mr Mehaffey to address the Council.

ACTION – Mr Glass to take forward public access to Rivers Agency Works Programme by 2011.

6. FLOODING REPORT

Mr Mehaffey presented the flooding report to the Council. He explained to the Council that in the intervening period from the previous meeting there had been one flooding event. This minor event had occurred on 6/7 September 2010, affecting mainly Armagh and Fermanagh. Mr Mehaffey detailed that the flooding that had occurred had mostly resulted from surface water run-off. Rivers Agency received 46 flood emergency calls in connection with 34 incidents. Mr Mehaffey advised that no domestic properties flooded, although Lisnaskea caravan park and a farm at Ballindarragh Bridge were affected. The Flooding Incident Line received 60 calls, of which 12 were referred to Rivers Agency.

Mr Mehaffey advised that the main issue involved the Colebrook River which suffered at least a 1 in 10 year flooding event, leading to the third highest river level recorded there in 30 years. Some criticism was received in the media however Mr Mehaffey stressed that silting at the mouth of the Colebrook had no impact on the flooding experienced at the farm or caravan park. Rivers Agency staff did not go to the farm at Ballindarragh Bridge because they were not contacted by them. Mr Mehaffey stated that both the farm and caravan park were built within the natural floodplain of the Colebrook, and that the caravan park floods every couple of years. Mr Mehaffey presented a series of slides showing the extent of the flooding and the natural flood plain of the Colebrook River.

Mr Mehaffey advised that Flood Information Reports will be disseminated to Council members and to local councils through the Emergency Planning Co-ordinating Officers. It will be based on Rivers Agency Flood Information Coordination reports and emailed next working day following flooding event. Mr Mehaffey further advised that Rivers Agency may put reports on the internet, after redaction of personal information.

The Chairman thanked Mr Mehaffey for his presentation of the flooding report and complimented the Rivers Agency on their performance. He then asked if members had any questions or comments.

Councillor Rainey queried the events surrounding the flooding at the caravan park, concentrating on the award of planning permission for the site and health and safety risks inherent in having a caravan park that is susceptible to flooding. Councillor Rainey questioned whether farmers are “up to speed” on liability, for example when storing grain on a floodplain. Councillor Rainey stated that people “need to be aware”. Mr Mehaffey advised the Council that Rivers Agency make great efforts to interact with the public in order to raise awareness of flood risk. Mr

Mr Mehaffey reiterated that the farm in question has a history of flooding, and that flood maps are available online for public use.

Mr T Clarke queried liaison between DARD Rivers Agency and Planning Service, and pointed out that there should be contact when people intend to develop land. Likewise, he continued, there should be communication between farmers and Planning Service if a change of business is being considered. Mr Mehaffey agreed that it was a valid point, again detailing availability of the Strategic Flood Map. Mr Mehaffey stated that the farm which suffered flooding had been there for decades and flooding could be anticipated.

The Chairman suggested that the Ulster Farmers Union may be able to provide advice to farmers concerning “change of use”. Mr Aldridge stated that Strategic Flood Maps had been made available to the public to allow people to make informed decisions. He further stated that coverage extended to all of Northern Ireland and the UFU & NIAPA had representation on the Floods Directive Stakeholder Group

Councillor Rainey advised that Rivers Agency cannot act as a watchdog for development issues, stating that people must pay attention to the information freely available.

Mr T Clarke advised that PPS15 clarifies building in floodplains, stating that the problem is historic. Mr T Clarke advised that PPS15 interpretation can be problematic, and that it cannot be applied retrospectively.

The Chairman stated that the Balmoral Show was an ideal vehicle to disseminate information to a wide range of people. Mr Aldridge agreed, stating that Rivers Agency had done this in the past and would continue to in the future.

ACTION – Mr Mehaffey to arrange dissemination of Flood Information Reports to Drainage Council members and local councils

ACTION – Mr Aldridge to raise availability of Strategic Flood Maps at next Stakeholder Meeting in order to raise awareness amongst farmers

7. DESIGNATION OF WATERCOURSE AND SCHEME RECOMMENDED FOR ACCEPTANCE

Sloefield Drive, Carrickfergus.

Mr Mehaffey provided a background report explaining that this proposal was being made to allow the Rivers Agency to maintain the inlet grille and reduce flood risk caused through its blockage. Mr Mehaffey advised that it was more efficient to place the grille on the Rivers Agency rota for maintenance, and in doing so be pro-active rather than reactive. The Agency had been called out to several flooding events associated with blockage of the grille which was located in an industrial estate.

On the proposal of Alderman Beggs, seconded by Councillor King, the Council determined that the aforementioned sections of watercourse should be designated, and the proposed scheme should be accepted.

Strathmore Park Stream, Belfast

Mr Aldridge provided a background report explaining that this proposal was to ensure that the new line of the culvert was designated for maintenance purposes. The reason for going off-line was for ease of construction and future maintenance as well as reduced disruption to people and property.

On the proposal of Mr Hinds, seconded by Councillor McBriar, the Council determined that the aforementioned culvert should be replaced with a new 600mm diameter culvert and re-routed.

Ferndene Stream, Dundonald

Mr Aldridge provided a background report explaining that this proposal was to ensure that the new line of the culvert was designated for maintenance purposes. The reason for going off-line was for ease of construction and future maintenance as well as reduced disruption to people and property.

On the proposal of Councillor McBriar, seconded by Councillor King, the Council determined that the aforementioned culvert should be replaced with a new 600mm diameter culvert and re-routed.

Dromore Stream, Dromore

Mr Aldridge provided a background report explaining that this proposal was to ensure that the new line of the culvert was designated for maintenance purposes. The reason for going off-line was for ease of construction and future maintenance as well as reduced disruption to people and property.

On the proposal of Councillor Rainey, seconded by Councillor Clarke, the Council determined that the aforementioned culvert should be replaced with a new 1050mm diameter culvert and re-routed.

Moneymore Stream, Moneymore

Mr Aldridge provided a background report explaining that this proposal was to ensure that the new line of the culvert was designated for maintenance purposes. The reason for going off-line was for ease of construction and future maintenance as well as reduced disruption to people and property.

On the proposal of Councillor S Clarke, seconded by Councillor Rainey, the Council determined that the aforementioned culvert should be replaced with a new 900mm diameter culvert and re-routed.

Mousetown Stream, Coalisland

Mr Aldridge provided a background report explaining that this proposal was to ensure that the new line of the culvert was designated for maintenance purposes. The reason for going off-line was for ease of construction and future maintenance as well as reduced disruption to people and property.

On the proposal of Councillor Rainey, seconded by Councillor S Clarke, the Council determined that the aforementioned culvert should be replaced with a new 1500mm diameter culvert and re-routed.

Armagh Road Drain, Newry

Mr Aldridge provided a background report explaining that this proposal was to ensure that the new line of the culvert was designated for maintenance purposes. The reason for going off-line was for ease of construction and future maintenance as well as reduced disruption to people and property.

On the proposal of Councillor Gillespie, seconded by Alderman Beggs, the Council determined that the aforementioned culvert should be replaced with a new 600mm diameter culvert and re-routed.

The Chairman thanked Mr Aldridge for his presentation and then referred members to the works recommended for acceptance on pages 29 to 48 of their business books, and invited Mr Mehaffey to again address members.

8. WORKS RECOMMENDED FOR ACCEPTANCE

Bann Road Drain, Kilrea

Mr Mehaffey advised the Council that the proposed works relate to a 120m length of defective culvert which runs adjacent to Kilrea Sewerage Treatment Works on the outskirts of Kilrea. The works are necessary to upgrade a 120m length of structurally and hydraulically inadequate culvert, and involve its replacement with 450mm culvert.

The estimated cost of the works is £32,000 and anticipated benefits arising from the works will be an avoidance of potential professional negligence and personal injury claims, avoidance of damage to property as a result of a culvert collapse and potential flooding, and a reduction in the length of dangerous and defective designated culverts in Northern Ireland.

Mr Mehaffey advised that the scheme was published and comments on the environmental and other aspects were invited by 10 September 2010. No environmental or other objections were received during the consultation period.

On the proposal of Councillor Nicholl, seconded by Mr Hinds, the Council agreed that the works on the Bann Road Drain should be accepted.

Killyclogher Burn Branch "A"

Mr Mehaffey advised the Council that the proposed works relate to a 150m culverted section of the watercourse that flows adjacent to the Tirquin Road, on the eastern outskirts of Omagh, Co Tyrone. Mr Mehaffey advised that following a CCTV survey a substantial length of the upper reaches of the culvert was identified as in imminent danger of collapse. Any collapse could put a local church, a public house, retail units and the Tirquin Road at severe risk of flooding. The works comprise the replacement of 150m of structurally defective and hydraulically inadequate culvert with 600mm diameter reinforced concrete pipes from the junction of Tirquin Road with Pinefield Drive to the entrance of No.38 Tirquin Road.

Mr Mehaffey stated that the estimated cost of the works is £15,000 and anticipated benefits arising from the works will be an avoidance of potential professional negligence and personal injury claims, an avoidance of damage to property as a result of a culvert collapse and potential flooding, and a reduction in length of defective designated culverts in Northern Ireland.

Mr Mehaffey advised that the scheme was published and comments on the environmental and other aspects were invited by 31 March 2010. No environmental or other objections were received during the consultation period.

Mr Mehaffey pointed out a typographical error in the grid and, on the proposal of Councillor Rainey, seconded by Councillor S Clarke, the Council agreed that the works on the Killyclogher Burn Branch "A" should be accepted.

Sixmilewater, Meadowside

Mr Mehaffey advised the Council that the proposed works relate to the designated watercourse known as the Sixmilewater at Meadowside, Antrim. The existing flood banks and flood wall were overtopped during an exceptional flood in August 2008 that caused serious flood damage to 32 properties and inundated local roadways. Refurbishment works on the flood banks and flood walls are necessary to provide a consistent level of flood protection, ensuring adequate freeboard.

Alderman Nicholl welcomed the works and provided the Council with a short history of flooding in the area.

Mr Mehaffey advised the Council that the works involve ensuring that the height of the existing 200m long flood bank and 45m long concrete flood wall are consistent with the new river model. The estimated cost of the works is £22,000 and, based on flood damage avoidance figures, works costing up to £1.8 million are considered viable.

Mr Mehaffey advised that the scheme was published and comments on the environmental and other aspects were invited by 31 March 2010. No environmental or other objections were received during the consultation period.

On the proposal of Alderman Nicholl, seconded by Alderman Beggs, the Council agreed that the works on the Sixmilewater, Meadowside should be accepted.

Springtown Stream, Londonderry

Mr Mehaffey advised the Council that the proposed works relate to a 140m length of defective culvert which conveys the Springtown Stream through the Derry City Council playing fields and gardens of adjacent properties. The works are necessary to upgrade the culvert which is structurally inadequate, and will involve the replacement of a 140m reach of structurally defective 600mm diameter pipes.

Mr Mehaffey stated that the estimated cost of the works is £40,000 and benefits arising from the work will include an avoidance of potential professional negligence and personal injury claims, an avoidance of damage to property as a result of a culvert collapse and potential flooding, and a reduction in the length of dangerous and defective designated culverts in Northern Ireland.

Mr Mehaffey advised that the scheme was published and comments on the environmental and other aspects were invited by 10 September 2010. No environmental or other objections were received during the consultation period.

On the proposal of Councillor King, seconded by Councillor Gillespie, the Council agreed that the works on the Springtown Stream, Londonderry should be accepted.

Tirsogue Drain, Shane Park, Lurgan

Mr Mehaffey advised the Council that the proposed works relate to a culvert at the location of Shane Park, Lurgan. Floodwater backs up from the inlet to a 1350mm diameter road culvert crossing at Shane Park, which does not have sufficient capacity and is prone to blockage. These recurrent flooding problems, combined with the exceptional flood of August 2008, have led to 6 houses being subject to flooding. The works are necessary to provide a road culvert of sufficient capacity to vent high flows and reduce the risk of damage from flooding as a result of blockage.

Mr Mehaffey advised that the works will involve the removal of the 1350mm diameter culvert and replacement with a 2m by 1.5m box culvert along with bank reshaping protection works as required. The estimated cost of the works is £50,000 and on the basis of flood damage avoidance figures, works costing up to £174,000 are considered viable.

Mr Mehaffey advised that the scheme was published and comments on the environmental and other aspects were invited by 31 March 2010. No environmental or other objections were received during the consultation period.

On the proposal of Mr Hinds, seconded by Alderman Nicholl, the Council agreed that the works on the Tirsogue Drain, Lurgan, should be accepted.

9. MINOR WORKS FOR INFORMATION OF DRAINAGE COUNCIL

Mr Mehaffey advised the Council that minor works were carried out “in house” and had the advantage of being able to be carried out quickly.

Mr Mehaffey went on to detail works on the Fourmile Burn which involved the replacement of the existing damaged flood bank with 60m of 1.2m high reinforced concrete wall to rear of property at 35 Ballywee Road, increasing the height of the existing concrete block wall by 600mm over a length of 40m to rear of property at 56 Hollybank Road.

Alderman Nicholl queried whether the works were part of a larger scheme. Mr Aldridge advised that further works are being considered and may be viable.

The Chairman reminded the Council that there was no need for proposals to be put forward for Minor Works.

Mr Mehaffey detailed works on the construction of an inspection chamber and repair of a 900mm diameter structurally defective and hydraulically inadequate culvert at Moneymore. Councillor S Clarke queried the exact location of the works and Mr Mehaffey stated that he would send details out to him.

ACTION – Mr Mehaffey to arrange issue of map detailing exact location of works at Moneymore to Councillor S Clarke

At this point, Mr Hinds asked for clarification on the age of culverts being replaced. Mr Mehaffey advised that while culverts could be expected to last over 100 years they can be laid incorrectly thus reducing their lifespan considerably. He also advised that they can be damaged by works being carried out around them, necessitating their replacement. Most culverts considered for replacement however are over 30 years old.

Mr Hinds then queried whether there was any comeback should a contractor do an unsatisfactory job on laying culverts. Mr Mehaffey advised that Schedule 6 should ensure that any work carried out would be done properly. Mr Aldridge advised that the River Agency’s “Asset Management Plan” was an overarching way of managing repairs and generating works programmes.

Mr Mehaffey stated that there are over 300km of culvert in Northern Ireland. Rivers Agency inherited much of this and their condition was, and often still is, unknown. Mr Mehaffey advised that modern construction methods give a lifetime of at least 120 years for new culverts, although in practice they may last much longer. At all times Rivers Agency must pay heed to why the culvert is there, and to its structural integrity. Mr Mehaffey went on to explain that the difficulty is in projecting development trends that are often on a different time span to culverting. He did state, however, that if a developer’s culvert degrades in a relatively short period, Rivers Agency will attempt to pursue them.

Alderman Beggs asked if there was a statutory requirement on developers to notify Rivers Agency when they are going to install a culvert. Mr Mehaffey stated that there is a requirement, again under Schedule 6, but no requirement for Rivers Agency to go “on site” to monitor - Rivers Agency do not have the resources to “police” development.

Bearing in mind that the Council has often criticised Rivers Agency for providing structures for private development at no cost to the developer, Mr J Clarke pointed out that at least it can then be assured that the work is done correctly. Mr S Clarke agreed, stating that the problem is that Rivers Agency is often left to 'pick up the pieces' of bad work. If the works fail to come up to standard and as a result riparian's inherit a problem not of their making or within their capacity to resolve the Agency adopts them and corrects the deficiency with the Council's support.

Ms Dobbin asked if any weight was given to maintaining the historical integrity of bridges etc when maintaining culverts. Mr Aldridge advised that the feasibility study would pick up any particular structures of importance, but that our experience is that very little of the infrastructure would be of historical interest. Mr Mehaffey agreed, and went on to say that drainage works were often a matter of expediency.

10. WATERCOURSE WHICH THE DEPARTMENT IS NOT PREPARED TO RECOMMEND FOR DESIGNATION

Cappagh Burn, Mountjoy, Omagh

Mr Mehaffey advised the Council that representations had been received for the designation of the Cappagh Burn at Mountjoy, Omagh. Mr Mehaffey advised the Council that no flooding risk had been identified at the site and therefore there was no reason to designate. Mr Mehaffey advised the Council that matters relating to silting of the river due to a bank slip were to be addressed by the Loughs Agency who will ensure work is carried out to protect spawning grounds. The farmer who requested designation has advised Rivers Agency that he is content with this approach.

Councillor Rainey wished it to be recorded that he appreciated Rivers Agency efforts in enlisting the help of the Loughs Agency in this particular matter.

On the proposal of Alderman Beggs, seconded by Councillor Rainey, the Council agreed that the Cappagh Burn at Mountjoy, Omagh should not be designated.

Carnlough River, Carnlough

Mr Mehaffey advised that, following representations from Sammy Wilson MP MLA and Councillor Oliver McMullan a survey was carried out on the Carnlough River, and the degree of drainage disability was assessed.

Rivers Agency has no record of flooding at this location emanating from the Carnlough River and is currently unaware of any proposed development within the catchment which would significantly increase run-off. The survey did identify the presence of some fallen trees in the upper reaches of the Carnlough River, however the river is situated in a deep ravine at this location and the presence of these trees is unlikely to cause any flooding.

Mr Mehaffey advised that from a conservation perspective it had also been identified that the fallen trees within the upstream reaches provide a valuable habitat for wildlife in this location. The assessment concluded that there were limited channel works required to maintain the free flow of water and these were within the capabilities of the riparians. Consequently Rivers Agency considers that there is currently no merit in designating the Carnlough River.

On the proposal of Alderman Beggs, seconded by Mr Hinds, the Council agreed that the Carnlough River, Carnlough should not be designated.

The Chairman then asked members to turn to the correspondence section of the business books, pages 55 to 57, and asked the Secretary to address the Council

11. CORRESPONDENCE ISSUED SINCE LAST MEETING

The Secretary drew members' attention to pages 55 to 57 of the business book. He advised the Council that correspondence had been sent to Minister Edwin Poots from the Drainage Council detailing their disappointment that the Lough Neagh and Lower Bann Advisory Committees were being wound up.

A response had been received from Graham Seymour, Director of Natural Heritage NIEA, on behalf of Minister Poots. The correspondence stated that in the current climate of budget pressure it was not realistic for NIEA or DCAL to make up the shortfall in funding experienced by these groups.

The Chairman stated that the Council reluctantly had no option to take the matter further. Councillor King concurred, stating that he was aware that no further funding was available for the groups in question.

The Chairman thanked The Secretary for presenting the correspondence, and asked if members had any other questions that they wished to raise. The Chairman confirmed that no further queries were to be raised.

12. AOB

12.1 Members Folders

The Secretary drew members' attention to the travel expenses claim form and enquiry form provided.

12.2 Date & general location for next meeting

The Secretary proposed a number of dates around late February 2011 for the next meeting. After some deliberation it was agreed that the Secretariat would make arrangements for 24 February 2011 and notify members of the arrangements in due course.

The Chairman requested that the meetings continue to be held at a central location, then thanked members for attending and declared the meeting closed.

Meeting Closed