

North Sea Commission Environment Group Minutes of the Annual Meeting held at Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland September 22, 2000



PRESENT:

Chair Gunn-Marit Helgesen, Telemark fylkeskommune, Norway
Vice chair Alison McInnes, Aberdeenshire Council, Scotland
NSCEG Co-ordinator Per Hörberg, Västra Götaland region, Sweden

Belgium:

Prov. West-Vlaanderen Kathy Belpaeme

Denmark:

Aarhus Amt Jørgen Erik Larsen
Nordjyllands Amt Susy Lauesen

England:

Norfolk County Council Graham King
Suffolk County Council Sandy Martin, Jerry Hindle

Germany:

Land Niedersachsen Klaus Wenn

The Netherlands:

Provincie Fryslân/
Samenwerkingsverband
Noord-Nederland Hans van Meerendonk
Provincie Groningen Jan Kunst

Norway:

Aust-Agder fylkesk. Arne Lauvhjell, Sverre Fosse
Telemark fylkeskommune Lars Haukvik
Østfold fylkeskommune Torhild Andersen Kongsness

Scotland:

Aberdeenshire Council Linda Mathieson, Deborah Burroughs
Highland Council Kathleen Matheson, Gordon Summers

Sweden:

Landstinget Halland Anita Persson, Sten Liljedahl
Västra Götalandsregionen Kristina Jonäng

IN ATTENDANCE:

Violette VANSTEELANDT Ministry of Flemish Community, Belgium
Ben ten Brummelaar Wetterskip (Water Board) Fryslân, The Netherlands
Lennart Blank WESTMA, Västra Götalandsregionen, Sweden

1. Opening of meeting.

The chair welcomed all participants and noted that, like in 1999, the NSCEG AGM had representation from all NSC countries.

2. Apologies

The NSC secretariat, due to a simultaneous meeting of the NSC Culture & Tourism Group.

3. Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was adopted with the addition of a new Item 13, Election of new Project Working Group.

4. Minutes of last meeting.

The Minutes of last meeting (Ipswich, October 19, 1999, distributed by e-mail Nov. 2 and by regular mail Nov. 15, 1999) were agreed as a true record.

5. Matters arising.

No comments were made as a result of last year's Minutes.

6. Annual Report 1999-2000.

The Annual Report, distributed with the papers for NSCEG Conference 2000, was adopted.

The co-ordinator commented that the correct date for the NSC Executive Committee meeting, Ipswich Oct. 20, 1999, had been mistakenly omitted. Also, the letter from the NSC President in May 2000, about the proposed EU directive on Port Reception Facilities for Ship-generated Waste, had only been sent to the environmental ministers of the EU countries and not to the European Parliament.

7. Efforts to influence Sellafield discharges.

Suggestions were made for the Project Working Group to keep following the issue. The chair will raise the issue at the NSC Executive Committee meeting on October 27.

Action: PWG + G-MH

8. Projects - reports & new ideas.

Project ideas had been brought to the Conference and were introduced in presentations, workshops and posters. Connections to the results of the Norvision project, as well as the Porsgrunn Challenge, were made. Several speakers mentioned the possibilities to develop co-operation projects around one of the themes for the Conference 2000, the new EU Water Framework Directive.

It was considered essential to have project applications well prepared in early 2001 for the arrival of the Interreg IIIB Programme for the North Sea.

(Note: the PWG meeting, taking place immediately after the Annual Meeting, gave the co-ordinator the task of compiling an extensive list of project proposals and ideas which had been presented during the Conference 2000 and its workshops.

Action: Per H)

9. Implementation of the Porsgrunn Challenge

It was decided that a new sustainability questionnaire should be issued to all NSC members during 2001. This would serve both as an update on ongoing sustainability work and as a reminder of the Porsgrunn Challenge.

Action: Per H

10. Work Programme for 2001.

A draft distribution of "areas of responsibility" had been distributed by the co-ordinator as a draft Work Programme. In general the persons/regions agreed to take on the designated tasks. It was decided that the NSCEG Work Programme 2001 should be a work programme for the Project Working Group. The tasks of the PWG were identified as follows:

- disseminate project ideas
- take NSCEG priorities further

The latter could be done by, for instance, encouraging particular projects, co-funding of meetings, arranging of seminars, etc.

The co-ordinator will prepare a Work Programme 2001 to be circulated first to the PWG for comments and then to the entire NSCEG.

Action: Per H

11. Conference 2000, evaluation

11.1 Theme + speakers

The theme(s) were considered well focused. The speakers were found to have given entertaining and good presentations, with a good order and good local connection.

11.2 Workshops

Workshop leaders should be more specific about the expected outcome of their workshops.

"More time for project discussions" was a general request, although these must not necessarily take place during workshops.

The workshop A, "political visioning", was found to have been rewarding, offering a new forum for political discussion. Participants requested that the concept be repeated at next year's Conference.

11.3 Arrangements

The arrangements were found to be excellent in every way (spontaneous applause for Aberdeenshire representatives).

11.4 Invitations

Several apologies from external persons/organisations had been received by the chair. This indicates that it is essential to keep inviting them to future events. More efforts should always be made to invite persons/organisations representing the national level in all NSC countries.

The co-ordinator was instructed to write a draft press release about the Conference, to be used in their respective countries by all country representatives in the PWG .

Action: Per H (*Note: Draft press release e-mailed to PWG on September 27th*)

As a way to increase CPMR interest in the NSCEG activities a CPMR Intercom Group for Environment issues was proposed. The chair will take the proposal to the NSC Executive Committee.

Action: G-MH (*Note: An Intercom Group on environment, led by the Spanish region of Valencia, was created at the CPMR General Assembly, October 11-13 2000.*)

12. Next Conference.

12.1 Host.

The offer of the Swedish members Landstinget Halland and Västra Götalandsregionen to host the Conference 2001 was welcomed.

12.2 Time

September 20-21 were preferred. Efforts should be made to invite the NSC Executive Committee to have its meeting at the same time and place.

12.3 Theme(s)

Alternatives such as "Climate Change" and "Chemicals" were discussed. It was considered essential that regional action possibilities were included as well as the "local touch", which could be eutrophication. It was remitted to the PWG and the hosting authorities to develop a proposal further.

Action: PWG

13. Election of new Project Working Group.

Some changes in the existing PWG were necessary, since some people have changed their jobs. The AGM proposed some changes, which all were accepted. (List of PWG members attached.)

Note: After the Annual Meeting, German Land Niedersachsen has announced that Klaus Wenn will participate as German member of the PWG.

14. Reports.

14.1 NSC General Assembly; The co-ordinator reported on the study trip and the workshop held in connection with the NSC General Assembly in Bergen, Norway, on June 8. A list of project proposals from the participants of the environmental workshop will be included in the comprehensive list of projects, to be prepared by the co-ordinator.

Action: Per H

14.2 The co-ordinator reported on the preparations for the 2001 Environmental Conference of Regional Ministers and Political Leaders of the European Union. Next such conference is scheduled to take place in the province of Carinthia, Austria - a politically somewhat controversial choice of location. Delegates to the AGM indicated that regions from their countries may have difficulties to attend, but that certain conditions may facilitate participation. The co-ordinator will take part in further preparations for this conference on behalf of his home region, Västra Götaland of Sweden.

14.3 Sverre F. reported on continued efforts to influence radioactive discharges from Sellafield, UK. Possible options for further efforts include expression of concern about leaking storage tanks at Sellafield, as well as support of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities, NFLA.

14.4 Per H reported on the upcoming meeting of the NSC Fisheries Group in Ringkjöbing, Denmark, on October 5-6, where the NSCFG would like participation from the Environment Group. The co-ordinator would get more information, including agenda, and one of the Danish members would try to attend on behalf of the NSCEG.

Action: Per H/Susy L

15. Any Other Competent Business

Member Profiles; NSCEG Member Profiles on the NSC home page have not been updated as previously agreed with Fife Council. The meeting decided that an update is urgent and instructed the co-ordinator to see to this.

Action: Per H

Endorsement of Porsgrunn Challenge; Norfolk County Council announced that it has endorsed the principles of the Challenge and has made a review to record how the elements of the Challenge are met. (Report available from Mike Halls, phone +44-(0)1603 222 754)

The co-ordinator will need e-mail addresses of all participants to the NSCEG Conference 2000 for distribution of the project list and will receive them from Aberdeenshire Council.

Action: Aberdeenshire Council

Minutes by
Per Hörberg
NSCEG co-ordinator
001023