

NIEL News

Your guide to the environmental sector

October 2012

TOP STORIES

£125,000 FOR COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL WORK (10 days to go)

The Minister for the Environment Alex Attwood MLA has provided funding for community and voluntary organisations in Northern Ireland to carry out 'oven ready' environmental projects before the end of March 2013. This funding, following on from a successful pilot programme run in early 2012, will provide at least £125,000 to local groups to improve their environment.

In the pilot exercise completed in March of this year 42 projects carried out by 23 different organisations delivered environmental, community, social and economic benefits to local communities across Northern Ireland. The success of the scheme encouraged the Minister to again provide funding for projects devised by and for local communities. The Fund is open to not-for-profit organisations with experience of delivering environmental projects and projects from the whole range of environmental interests are encouraged, including built and natural heritage, environmental protection, environmental education and public awareness. The Fund can provide up to 100% of the direct costs of a project, but involvement of partners and volunteers are highly encouraged.

Applications and guidance documents can be obtained from Northern Ireland Environment Link, which is again administering the scheme on behalf of the NI Environment Agency sue@nienvironmentlink.org. Closing date for receipt of applications will be 19 October with announcements of initial awards by 12 November. Applicants are encouraged to register their interest in applying as soon as possible at the above email address.

'We were delighted with the quality of the schemes delivered in the pilot exercise earlier this year and the Minister shared our enthusiasm when he visited a display of the successful projects in June. We hope to have a range of innovative and practical projects put forward for this round of funding, and confidently expect them to exceed our expectations, just as the previous projects did' commented Sue Christie, CEO of NIEL and administrator of the scheme. 'This is a very creative and useful way to demonstrate the incredible value that can be delivered when government, the voluntary sector and local people work together to address environmental issues.'

For more information please contact; Sue Christie, 028 9045 5770; Evenings, 028 9268 2770; Mobile, 077 6925 3700.

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JOINT LINKS CONFERENCE

On 26 – 27 September Northern Ireland Environment Link hosted the biennial Joint Links Conference in Belfast. The conference, titled ‘Valuing Our Environment: *helping people to recognise what nature does for us*’, looked at the attitudes to the environment across the UK; the ways we can raise its profile and how Link members can most effectively deliver their work.

Delegates from Links in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England took part in workshops on CAP reform; the marine environment; measures of societal success and working together.

A highlight of the event was a reception and guided tour at the Stormont Parliament Buildings, hosted by Simon Hamilton MLA, Deputy Chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly Environment Committee.

Delegates were also treated the next day to a boat trip around Strangford Lough, where representatives from the Environment Agency and Strangford Lough & Lecale Partnership gave a fascinating insight into the natural history, geology and environmental threats relating to the Lough

NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOR ENVIRONMENT AGENCY ANNOUNCED

Environment Minister Alex Attwood has announced that Terry A’Hearn, formerly of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in Victoria,

Australia has been appointed Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

Commenting today on the appointment, the Minister said: **“This is an important appointment and I am very pleased to welcome Terry to his new post.”**

“He brings valuable experience from his time with the EPA in Victoria, Australia and also the international environment consultancy, WSP Environment and Energy. I believe that he can help make the NIEA strong on the environment and strong working with farmers, businesses and others for work opportunities in a time of growing worklessness.”

Terry will have a key role to play in protecting and safeguarding the environment in Northern Ireland. There will be many challenges but also many opportunities in his inbox in the coming years. That is the character of DOE as the leading Environment Ministry.

“I want to see the DOE fulfil its potential to be a leading economic department and important generator of economic change. To do this, we need to recognise first that our built and natural heritage can be major tourist attractions, and secondly, to develop them in such a way that not only protects but creates many more jobs than currently exist.”

Terry A’Hearn will take up his post in mid-November.

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NI POLICY

ASSEMBLY NEWS

The latest edition of Assembly News is available on the NIEL website <http://www.nienvironmentlink.org/news/Assembly-News-September12.php>

ENVIRONMENT NEWS

- [Improved Water Quality](#)
- [Grim Climate Warning](#)
- [New Planning Guidance](#)
- [NIEA's Strategic Priorities](#)
- [Attwood on Slurry Spreading](#)
- [Concern as Sea Squirt Found](#)
- [Countdown on to Local Government Reform](#)
- [Social Enterprises Growth](#)
- [Environmental Performance](#)
- [£29million To Buy 145 New Buses](#)
- [£120,000 Confiscation Order](#)
- [Retail Living Space](#)

- [Cut Red Tape in Planning](#)
- [Mist & Yellow Fruitfulness](#)
- [Climate Change Health Risks](#)
- [Attwood Joins Volunteers](#)
- [Rural Challenge Programme](#)
- [Possible Strangford Threat](#)

EVENTS

- [Series of Lectures](#)
- [Autumn Watch at Delamont](#)
- [The Archaeology of Witchcraft and Superstition in Ireland](#)
- [Remarkable Trees of Minnowburn](#)
- [Wonderful Walks](#)
- [Book Fair](#)
- [Hydroelectricity Seminar](#)
- [Culture Matters 2012](#)
- [How can towns and cities drive Economic Recovery?](#)

For more information on events visit www.nienvironmentlink.org/events/

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CONSULTATIONS

NIEL responded on behalf of members to a number of consultations during the past month they include:

- Consultation on Policy Proposals for an Energy Bill (DETI)
- Call for Evidence – Development of a strategic plan for the agri-food sector (DARD)

Further information on these consultations can be obtained by contacting iona@nienvironmentlink.org

Over the coming months NIEL plan to submit responses on the following consultations

- Consultation on amending the Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 (DOE)
- Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework (DSD)

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

15th November: - State of the Environment Conference Lough Neagh Discovery Centre 9am – 2pm

The purposes of the Stakeholder Workshop are to:

- **Explore the use of environmental data, interfaces and opportunities**
- **Identify gaps and issues with existing environmental indicators**
- **Help develop the provision of accurate, accessible information in a useable form**

If you would like to attend, please complete the online WUFOO conference registration form at:

<http://stateofenvironment.wufoo.com/forms/m7x3q1/>

Should you have any queries please contact Annika Clements on annika@nienvironmentlink.org