



Northern Ireland
**environment
link**



2018-19 Annual Report

Our vision is for a **valued, resilient, healthy environment**

028 9045 5770

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Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) is the forum and networking body for organisations interested in the environment of Northern Ireland. It assists members to develop views on issues affecting the environment and to influence policy and practice impacting on the natural and built environment of Northern Ireland. Our 65+ Full Members represent 90,000 individuals, attract 1.5m visitors per annum and have an annual turnover of over £65 million in Northern Ireland. NIEL also has 40+ Associate Members composed of statutory organisations, companies and individuals with an interest in the environment. Northern Ireland Environment Link's Vision is for 'a valued, resilient, healthy environment'. NIEL's Strategic Aims are based around Environmental Policy; Collaboration & Partnership; and Governance.

Chair	Patrick Casement (Independent Member)	
Vice Chair	Jennifer Fulton (Ulster Wildlife)	<i>Completed Term Dec 2018</i>
Vice Chair	Alyn Jones (Independent Member)	
Treasurer	Terry Waugh (Action Renewables)	
Co Secretary	Craig McGuicken (NIEL)	
Trustees	Stephen Aston (Independent Member)	
	Jim Bradley (Belfast Hills Partnership)	<i>Completed Term Dec 2018</i>
	Anne Casement (Independent Member)	
	Gregor Fulton (Woodland Trust)	
	Stephen Harper (Independent Member)	
	Austin Herron (Carrickfergus Community Cultivators)	<i>Completed Term Dec 2018</i>
	Jim Kitchen (Independent Member)	
	Ian Nuttall (Business in the Community)	
	Diane Ruddock (National Trust)	
	Joanne Sherwood (RSPB)	
	Murray Watt (Supporting Communities NI)	
Staff	Craig McGuicken – Chief Executive Officer	
	Carol Forster – Operations Manager	<i>Resigned June 2018</i>
	Sean Kelly – Development Manager	
	Ruari Fairtlough – Finance Manager	
	Iona Meyer – Network, Events and Membership Coordinator	
	Connor McLean – Communications & IT Officer	
	Dr Jonathan Bell – Policy & Projects Manager	
	Dr David McBurney – NI Open Government Network Coordinator	
	Jane McCullough – Climate NI Manager	
	Stephen Jones – Climate NI Project Officer	
	Cassandra Moll – Climate NI Project Assistant	
	Kerry Melville – Belfast Food Network Coordinator	



Chairman's Foreword

For a third year the issues surrounding Brexit have dominated the activities of NIEL as we have grappled with the implications for environmental protection, regulation and governance, and for agricultural support and its impact on nature. The sector's campaign body Nature Matters NI has been exceptionally busy developing invaluable policy positions on all these concerns through the working groups on Sustainable Land Use, Nature and Environmental Protection, Marine and Fisheries and International Advocacy, and making its voice heard at the various committees set up by DAERA to prepare for life beyond the EU. As the prospect of leaving the EU without a deal seemed increasingly likely we contributed to the Department's work on contingency planning, highlighting some of the most significant threats posed to the environment.

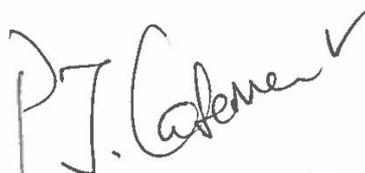
Two activities in particular stand out. Firstly the response to DAERA's stakeholder engagement on agricultural strategy, where our campaign elicited 1200 comments calling for a shift in support to a public goods for public money approach. Secondly the research we commissioned to look at the environmental implications of the Good Friday Agreement, which highlighted how few of the agreed actions and structures have actually been implemented. This has proved to be of significant interest to other sectors as well as our own. We also fed into early stages of DAERA's proposed new Environment Strategy, and will no doubt be putting a significant effort into influencing that as it is developed over the next year. Unfortunately these proposed strategies may not make any further progress in the absence of our Assembly.

Meanwhile NIEL has invested a good deal of effort in developing a new Strategic Plan to guide our efforts over the next five years. This involved consultations with a wide range of members and sectoral stakeholders, discussions at staff and Board levels, and a very productive facilitated workshop for staff and Board together. The result has been a clear and practical strategic plan which will stand us in good stead in both directing our work and in seeking funding over the next few years.

Other developments have included the signing of a new lease for our office on very good terms after a period of discussion with our landlord. Many members will be aware that we are keen on the idea of creating an environmental hub, but recognised that the concept requires further exploration before we could take it forward. Of course we do already provide office accommodation for some member organisations.

NIEL has had another good year in financial terms, as will be seen from the accounts. While grant aid from DAERA remains our most important provider we have continued to diversify our income sources, exploring a wide range of opportunities. After considerable discussion we have decided to register for VAT, largely because of the terms of the funding for our very successful subsidiary, Climate NI.

Our staff have continued to perform exceptionally well, showing great adaptability and resourcefulness as circumstances have changed. There have been some changes, with our Operations Manager Carol Forster moving to a new position at Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, and David McBurney concluding his term as the Open Government Network Co-ordinator, as that project's first phase came to an end. Our thanks to them for all the excellent work that they have done over the years. As a result of such changes we have had to work out how best to tackle our workstreams with the available resources, and so have gone through another restructuring exercise during the year. This has been accompanied by a comprehensive review of staff salaries which we hope reflects more accurately the quality of the work carried out.



Patrick Casement
Chair, Northern Ireland Environment Link



Chief Executive's Report

The continued lack of an Assembly together with the ongoing Brexit uncertainty has been frustrating for everyone in the environment sector.

However, there has, at least, been some clarification of priorities in recent times. In January 2019, DAERA launched their new multi-annual Environment Fund, and many organisations have now received letters of offer, allowing the NGOs to better plan for the longer term. There are caveats, but the sector recognises that our funding situation is preferable to many others across Northern Ireland at present.

There was also further clarification, albeit depressing, about the environmental crises that we are facing. The UN Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) states that hundreds of thousands of species are on the verge of extinction. The UN Committee for Climate Change has said that we have just over a decade to reduce our emissions to a level that could keep climate change in check.

These stark warnings have had some positive results. The public and politicians seem to have taken note. Young people have put older generations to shame. Led by inspirational figures like Greta Thunberg, they have proactively moved climate and environmental issues up everyone's agenda.

How does society react? Wringing our hands achieves nothing. Individual action, the sense that we're all in it together, is important - but behavioural change is too slow, too incremental for what this situation demands. Society as a whole - particularly business - needs to be proactively involved.

This crisis needs Government to lead with some fundamental policy shifts. DAERA has launched a pre-consultation on a new Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland. Over the coming months the Environment Sector will be engaging with a wide set of stakeholders, to develop a range of responses, including some of the 'Big Ideas' that Government is calling for.



Our political, civic and business leaders need to be honest and realistic about what we need to do. Brave decisions and ambitious plans are essential.

Craig McGuicken
Chief Executive Officer, Northern Ireland Environment Link

This annual report details the activities and initiatives delivered by NIEL in accordance with the organisation's purposes for the public benefit.

- ◆ Advance and promote for the public benefit environmental conservation, protection, improvement and sustainability in Northern Ireland.
- ◆ Raise awareness of environmental issues by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and promoting a collective voice on environmental matters.
- ◆ Advance the education of all sections of the public in environmental and ecological sciences.



The NIEL Board of Directors have had due regard to Charity Commission guidance in the preparation of this report.

Aim 1 Environmental Policy:

Contribute to the development, promotion and delivery of environmentally relevant policies

DAERA Stakeholder Engagement Group

NIEL were represented on four DAERA Brexit Stakeholder groups namely Trade & Agriculture, Environment, Fisheries & Marine; and Rural Society. We continued to represent the voice of the environment sector in a range of positional papers and briefings for these DAERA Brexit Stakeholder Groups.

Vision 2020

The Vision 2020 annual report card was published, setting out progress in Northern Ireland towards the delivery of a range of statutory environmental targets. The Vision 2020 report card is available on the NIEL website.





Brexit

Following the UK's decision to leave the European Union, NIEL established the NIEL Brexit Coalition, involving a wide range of organisations and individuals dedicated to securing the best future for our environment post Brexit.

“Nature Matters NI” is the NIEL Brexit Coalition’s new public-facing campaign designed to raise awareness of Brexit and its implications for Agriculture & Land-Use, Nature & Environmental Protection, and Fisheries & Marine.



The NIEL Brexit Coalition held an event on 17th May at Balmoral show, “A Path to a Green Brexit in Northern Ireland”. At this event, the coalition’s key asks on agriculture, environmental protection, marine and fisheries were shared with decision-makers and key representatives from the agricultural sector.

Ammonia Stakeholder Forum

NI is responsible for 12% of UK ammonia emissions, despite only having 6% of the land area. NI is also the only part of the UK to see a rise in ammonia emissions since 2005. NIEL is represented on the Ammonia Stakeholder Forum and has presented at various events and workshops throughout the year. NIEL will be publishing its recommendations in an Ammonia position paper in 2019/20.

Northern Ireland Environment Week 2018 (NIEW)

As part of NI Environment Week, NIEL and the NI Marine Task Force organised a conference on 28th September focussing on the role of the marine environment in Northern Ireland and the importance of protecting and sustainably managing our marine and coastal ecosystems to ensure healthy, productive oceans. NIEL Members also hosted a series of events throughout the week.



Environmental Policy Consultations

NIEL responded to a range of policy consultations including: the Draft NI Marine Plan, the Belfast Local Development Plan 2035 and the Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Framework.

A comprehensive list of policy consultations responses is available on the NIEL website.

Consultation	Organisation	Response Deadline
NI Affairs Committee Inquiry: Opportunities and challenges for NI agricultural sector in light of the UK's decision to leave the EU	NI Affairs Committee	26th April 2018
Antrim Forests and Woodland Plan	Forest Service	31st May 2018
Draft NI Marine Plan	DAERA	15th June 2018
The Future of the Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme	Dept for the Economy	6th September 2018
Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Framework	DAERA	10th October 2018
Conservation-led restoration of Belfast Bank Buildings	Belfast City Council	25th October 2018
Belfast Local Development Plan 2035	Belfast City Council	15th November 2018
Northern Ireland Environment Strategy - Initial Scoping	DAERA	18th March 2019
Scoping a New Forestry Plan for North West Area Forests and Woodland	Forest Service	1st March 2019
The Proposed Nitrates Action Plan for 2019-2022	DAERA	19th March 2019



The Charter for Trees, Woods and People

In 2018, after more than 2 years of work, organisations from across the UK joined forces to publish a Charter for Trees, Woods and People. The Charter will guide policy and practice in the UK, enabling a future in which trees and people stand stronger together. NIEL has been working with the Woodland Trust to help secure wider participation and support in Northern Ireland. The NIEL CEO is a member of the UK-wide Board which is tasked with the strategic development of the Tree Charter.

Aim 2 Collaboration & Partnership:

Facilitate partnerships and support collaboration in the environmental sector to promote and deliver shared objectives

Task Forces & Working Groups

We would encourage members to engage with Task Forces/Working Groups that are relevant to their own work areas – if you are interested in participating in any of the below, please contact Sean Kelly - sean@nienvironmentlink.org

Economics of Nature Working Group

The Economics of Nature Working Group (EoN) is a cross-sectoral coalition which aims to raise awareness and understanding of the Natural Capital concept, and assess the potential of this approach to inform policy and decision-making in Northern Ireland.

In June 2018, a Natural Capital policy options paper was forwarded to DAERA officials for consideration - as requested by the Department.



The Economics of Nature Working Group met in August and November 2018.

A new webpage was created on the NIEL website to host the Natural Capital research pilots published in March 2018. The research was shared with DAERA and was further disseminated at a CAFRE event on 22nd April.

Resource Efficiency Working Group

Meetings with the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) Circular Economy Working Group were held in April and September 2018. Input was provided to the SIB's Circular Economy mapping process. Sectoral involvement was also facilitated at the SIB Circular Economy Workshop in October, where key policy priorities were identified.

A webinar on the "Better Retail Better World" initiative was delivered in November in collaboration with the British Retail Consortium. The webinar provided useful examples of how retailers can reduce food waste, improve efficiency and introduce sustainable packaging to their supply chain.

Grassroots Challenge

NIEL was proud to be delivery partners in the Grassroots Project again in 2018. The Grassroots Challenge project continued to develop throughout the year and engaged with a range of young people from Special Schools, Young Farmers Clubs and Duke of Edinburgh Award participants from across Northern Ireland on environmental issues. We were pleased to deliver Grassroots Democracy Day events in Parliament Buildings Stormont throughout 2018 and contribute to the Celebratory Event held in November 2018.





Planning and Land Matters Task Force

The NI Planning & Land Matters Task Force (PLMTF) is a coalition of sectoral organisations seeking to influence and inform appropriate management, planning and protection of Northern Ireland’s limited land and landscape resource.

On 13th September, NIEL, QUB and the Landscape Institute hosted an event entitled “Nature Nearby: Planning Biophilic Cities”. The event showcased best practice examples of how natural habitats can be promoted within new urban developments.



The Planning & Land Matters Task Force responded to the 2035 Belfast Local Development Plan and met with the Department for Communities to discuss opportunities for greening initiatives.

The Task Force met in June, September and October 2018.

Freshwater Task Force

The Northern Ireland Freshwater Taskforce (FWTF) represents a range of organisations working together to ensure that Northern Ireland preserves and improves freshwater ecosystems.

FWTF met with the Water Framework Directive SPAR group in May 2018 to discuss a range of issues affecting water quality e.g. ammonia and phosphorus.

The Freshwater Task Force met in June, September, October, November and December 2018.

Transport Working Group

The Transport Working Group exists as a policy sounding board for the NIEL policy team, informing responses to transport consultations and other engagement with decision-makers.

NIEL Communications

NIEL website

Analytics continue to record considerable interest in the website, with 19,400 visits recorded in the April 2018 - March 2019 period. 115,000 webpages were viewed throughout April 2018 - March 2019.

NIEL e-Bulletin

Due to the requirements of the new data protection legislation (GDPR), NIEL was required to obtain “express consent” from subscribers as defined by the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). The e-Bulletin maintains a very high open rate of 48.21%

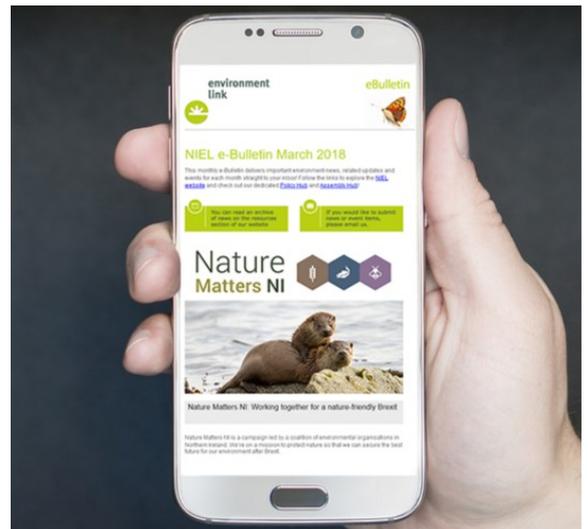
NIEL issues e-Bulletins on a monthly basis and publishes special issues on a range of topics and projects.

Social Media

NIEL social media analytics for the 2018/2019 period showed a moderate increase in following, with the Facebook page growing from 1,000 followers to 1,200 followers (20% increase) and Twitter followers growing from 1,600 to 1,720 (7.5% increase). NIEL LinkedIn company profile has seen moderate growth, reaching 241 followers (20.5% increase) this year.

EU Matters

In recognition of the key role that the European Institutions play in the development of environmental policy at the local level, NIEL continued to produce a monthly environmental news sheet entitled EU Matters which provides the latest EU information and policy analysis relevant to Northern Ireland.





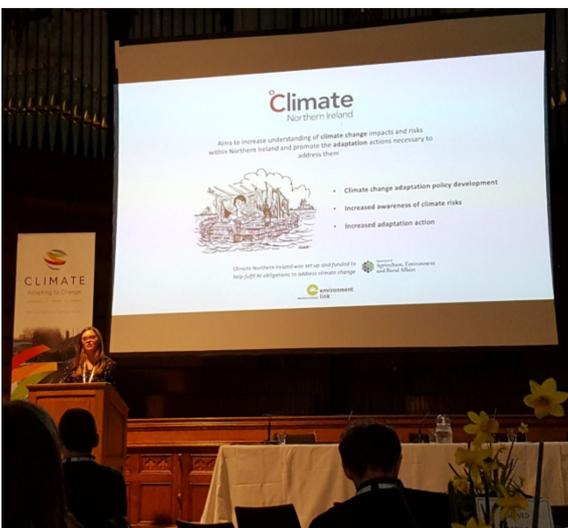
Climate Northern Ireland

Over the past year Climate Northern Ireland (CNI) delivered a broad programme of work funded by DAERA. This work progressed valuable steps in NI climate change adaptation, built on existing partnerships, and developed exciting new collaborations. Some of the key elements included:

Climate NI Steering Group - the steering group consists of 26 organisations from across academia, the private sector, the community and voluntary sector, local and central government. The Climate NI steering group structure was reviewed and it was agreed to replace sectoral groups with task and finish groups and sectoral leads.



Second Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP2) 2019-2024 - Climate NI gathered evidence from stakeholders in the civil society and local government sectors on the actions they are taking to address the climate risks facing NI. Climate NI worked with organisations to agree 39 new actions included in the chapter. Climate NI prepared the NICCAP2 chapter on Civil Society and Local Government Adapts and the separate Civil Society and Local Government Adapts Supporting Document.



Climate Change Risk Assessment research project - Climate NI commenced work as a project partner for the research project on “Understanding how behaviour change can influence climate change risks and opportunities”. Climate NI are working with AECOM as the lead partners to engage with relevant stakeholders in NI.

Climate NI attended and presented at Climate Ireland adaptation workshop in Castlebar, Ireland. This involved promoting the work of Climate NI and gathering information on methods for supporting adaptation planning in local authorities.

The CLIMATE Project

The CLIMATE Project (funded by NPA Interreg VB) continued this year with Climate NI supporting development of the first local council Climate Adaptation plan in Northern Ireland with lead partner Derry City and Strabane District Council, as well as developing a suite of resources for use in councils across NI and Europe. The project features partners from countries as far afield as Finland, Sweden and Iceland, as well as colleagues in the Republic of Ireland, and is acting as a catalyst for other climate change initiatives within council, providing an invaluable case study for the region. NIEL has been co-creating and facilitating workshops to undertake a risk planning process, developing a range of resources such as service area factsheets, as well as undertaking a range of public appearances on National Radio and TV to raise public awareness of the project and climate change impacts in NI.

NI Open Government Network (NIOGN)

During 2018-19, the NIOGN reconstituted as a Community Interest Company. A new Board of Directors has been elected and everyone concerned is excited about future possibilities.

There were a number key developments during the year.

The NICS Board have signed off on Northern Ireland specific commitments for inclusion in the UK's 4th Open Government National Action Plan. These include commitments to:

- ◆ Improve transparency in government contracting
- ◆ Make comprehensive data on government land and property assets publicly available
- ◆ Increase the number and quality of open datasets released





- ◆ Improve Transparency and Public Accountability
- ◆ Develop and trial effective open policy-making and public engagement methods
- ◆ Develop Open Government Skills across the Public Sector

NI Open Government Events

The Autumn Conference took place in The Riddel Hall, Queen's University Belfast on 13th September 2018 and included sessions on:

- ◆ Beyond RHI: How to restore democratic accountability at Stormont
- ◆ Trump on Trial
- ◆ The Magic Money Tree
- ◆ The (Post) Truth about Saving the World
- ◆ How will a Citizens' Assembly work in Northern Ireland?

OGN also organized a session on 'Training for Deliberative Public Engagement' which introduced participants to the concepts, principles and practices of deliberative public engagement.

An OG Workshop for community activists at Clifton House, on 24th November, asked: Is Local Democracy Working in Northern Ireland? Workshop participants were asked to share their experiences of community planning, to explore what lessons have been learned in terms of effective engagement, and consider what actions might be taken to make local government more transparent, accountable and responsive to citizens' needs.



The Joint Forum

NIEL represents the Environment Sector on the Joint Forum, which is made up of representatives from central and local Government (Public Sector Group) and the Voluntary and Community Sector (Voluntary and Community Group).

The Forum provides a mechanism to facilitate open discussion of key issues which shape the relationship between the voluntary and community sector and the public sector, influence and examine the impact of public policy and support opportunities for greater co-operation and joined up activity to better serve the people of Northern Ireland. Full meetings of the Forum were held in June and October 2018 and February 2019.

Way Forward for Archaeology in Northern Ireland

The Department for Communities (DfC) has brought together a wide range of stakeholders to look at the long term strategic development of the archaeology sector in NI. As part of this process, NIEL has been appointed as secretariat, assisting a range of working groups looking at issues including Research, Policy, Skills and Communications.

On 19th October 2018 a workshop entitled “A Research Framework for Northern Ireland?” was organised at Clifton House. Attendees heard from a panel of speakers on how archaeology research frameworks have been developed in Scotland and England.

This discussion helped inform the direction of a new Strategic Document which will be launched in 2019-20.





Linking with the Historic Environment

Most of NIEL's work is around the Natural environment, but given the breadth of the environment sector and of the NIEL membership, we have endeavoured to maintain as strong a relationship as possible with the new Historic Environment Division. Together with some member organisations, NIEL has been an important participant in the creation of a Historic Environment stakeholder group. Together we have been working to show how fundamental heritage is to our society - how it supports our economy, strengthens our communities and is crucial in shaping our character.



A key aspect of this work is around advocacy. The NIEL CEO has Chaired the Marketing and Communications Group during 2018-19, succeeding Gabriel Cooney in the role.

One of our main contributions in the period has been the finalisation of 5 'Heritage Audits' for North Belfast, Downpatrick, Armagh, Strabane and Lower Erne. We have now also led on the development of a further 4 audits - for Bellaghy, Hillsborough, Lower Ards and Carrickfergus. These will be published in 2019-20. The intention of the audits is to examine the heritage assets in the area, the organisations involved in the management and use of the assets, and the benefits being derived from them. The exercise has proven valuable in recommending further opportunities for realising economic and community value from heritage.

The final versions of the reports are available on the NIEL website.



Belfast Food Network

The Belfast Food Network (BFN) is a cross-sector partnership of public sector organisations, NGOs and businesses working together to foster the development of Belfast as a Sustainable Food City. The Network seeks to promote sustainable food as a means of enabling positive social, economic and environmental benefits for Belfast and beyond.

BFN is part of the pioneering, and rapidly growing, Sustainable Food Cities network, which is an alliance of cities and towns, each of which is harnessing sustainable food as a vehicle for driving positive change. Belfast was one of the six founding cities of the UK-wide programme, now engaging forty-one cities, towns and districts.

From obesity and diet-related ill-health to food poverty and waste, climate change and biodiversity loss, food is at the heart of some of our greatest social, economic and environmental problems, but it's also a vital part of the solutions.

BFN, as part of the Sustainable Food Cities Network helps people and communities share challenges, explore practical solutions and develop best practice on food issues.

During this year the BFN has delivered the Nourish programme, a food citizenship programme where participants explore the food system whilst making delicious meals with locally grown fresh, seasonal ingredients. The 'Food, Health and Wellbeing' event was held to explore how we can build a sustainable food system in Northern Ireland. The sustainable food movement is gaining momentum with DAERA envisioning "a transformed food system that protects natural resources for future generations, is economically and environmentally sustainable, and provides safe, nourishing, accessible food to people who make informed healthy choices."





We have focused on increasing the understanding of sustainable food through workshops, talks, courses and the delivery of the 'Enough is Enough' collaborative food poverty plan.

It's been a busy year, with projects delivered with Food Sense Wales, Nourish Scotland, Impact Hub King's Cross, Sustainable NI, Food Forum NI, Food Power and many businesses and community organisations. It's heartening to see the increase of activity around sustainable food; we'll be helping to develop a sustainable food manifesto for NI in the coming year and hope you can get involved.



Social Farms & Gardens

Social Farms & Gardens relocated to the NIEL office in May 2017. Social Farms & Gardens support thousands of grassroots projects across the UK that have helped millions of people. Social Farms & Gardens help them use farming and gardening as a way to transform lives and connect people, putting pride back into communities and improving health and wellbeing.

Education for Sustainable Development

The Education for Sustainable Development Forum (ESDF) is a networking organisation that promotes a coordinated approach to the delivery of environmental education in Northern Ireland. ESDF published 10 e-bulletins during the year, providing a range of information and updates for its members. These e-bulletins are circulated to the school and youth services network.



Shared Services

Sustainable NI share financial services with NIEL and relocated to the NIEL office in August 2018. Also, during the year, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful hosted an employee at NIEL to work on a plastic pollution project.

Aim 3 Governance

Ensure the efficient, effective and accountable operation of NIEL for the delivery of the outcomes of the strategic plan

Environmental Links UK (ELUK)

During 2018-19 ELUK continued to develop our joint working, with a significant focus on Brexit issues. Brexit is an obvious example of the strengths of partnership working on a cross-UK and Ireland basis. Individually our NGOs would find it impossible to react to the fast-changing circumstances of Brexit, but working together we have managed to maintain a significant campaign. For more on this please see the Nature Matters NI section on the NIEL website.

The highlight of the year was the Biennial ELUK Conference, which was held in London in October. The theme was the Sustainable Development Goals, and there was representation from Policy Makers and NGOS from right across the sector.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

NIEL completed a review of all policies and procedures relating to data management and updated these in line with new data protection legislation (GDPR), implemented on 25th May 2018.

Staff have received training and a detailed data asset register and action plan were produced. Key policies within the staff handbook were also updated in line with professional advice to ensure compliance with the new regulations.





Strategic Planning

A good deal of time was spent in preparing a new Strategic Plan for NIEL. The previous Strategy, which ran until 2019, had served the organisation well. Following a general organisational review including a detailed survey of members, 2 strategy workshops (for staff and Board members) were organised. The feedback was gathered and a draft Strategy was presented to the Board in March 2019, for finalisation in early 2019-20.

Staff Changes

Carol Forster resigned as Operations Manager in June 2018, moving to Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.

Funding

In March 2019, NIEL, along with many other environmental NGOs came to the end of a 3-year funding programme from DAERA. There was much attention during the year on the proposed new multi-annual programme, which opened for applications in January 2019. NIEL was successful in our application, which is crucial and allows the organisation to draw down a range of other resourcing.

Our other very significant funding came from Esmée Fairbairn, who have provided a 3-year grant.

In 2018-19 we also accessed funding from: the Department for Communities, Building Change Trust, and Big Lottery (through Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations).

Finances and Subscriptions

NIEL is a membership organisation and receives income from subscriptions. Detailed, draft annual budgets are prepared in December of the previous year, and finalised at the March Board meeting. Accounts are prepared for each meeting of the Finance and Human Resources Committee, which meets four times per year, in advance of the Board. Accounts are also included on all Board Agendas.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors met on the following dates:

- ◆ 19th September 2018;
- ◆ 4th December 2018 (also AGM); and
- ◆ 28th March 2019

The FHR Sub Committee met on the following dates:

- ◆ 8th August 2018;
- ◆ 26th November 2018;
- ◆ 23rd January 2019; and
- ◆ 13th March 2019

The SIM Sub Committee did not meet in 2018-19.

3 Board members came to the end of their terms:

Jim Bradley (Belfast Hills Partnership);
Jennifer Fulton (Ulster Wildlife); and
Austin Herron (Carrickfergus Community Cultivators)

Risk Register

The Risk Register is a standing item on the FHR Agenda and reviewed quarterly by the NIEL Board of Directors to ensure that emerging risks that could potentially impact on the organisation are identified and mitigation measures are agreed.



Full Members

Action Renewables
 Belfast Charitable Society
 Belfast Civic Trust
 Belfast Healthy Cities
 Belfast Hills Partnership
 British Trust for Ornithology
 Broughshane Improvement Committee
 Bryson Charitable Group
 Buglife
 Business in the Community
 Butterfly Conservation
 Carntogher Community Association
 Carrickfergus Community Cultivators
 Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust
 Cavehill Conservation Campaign
 Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
 Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
 Colin Glen Trust
 Community Places
 Copeland Bird Observatory
 Council for British Archaeology
 County Armagh Wildlife Society
 Creggan Country Park
 EcoSeeds
 Enriched Earth Ecovillage
 Field Studies Council
 Glens Red Squirrel Group
 Grass Roots Conservation Group
 Holywell Trust
 Institute of Northern Ireland Beekeepers
 Institute of Public Health in Ireland
 Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
 Lagan Valley Regional Park
 Landscape Institute Northern Ireland
 Lecale Conservation
 Light 2000
 Lough Erne Heritage
 Lough Neagh Partnership
 Mountaineering Ireland
 Mourne Heritage Trust
 National Trust
 Natural Copeland
 Northern Ireland Badger Group
 Northern Ireland Forest School Association
 Organic Centre
 Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland
 Ringhaddy Area Residents
 Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
 Rural Community Network
 Social Farms & Gardens
 Speedwell Trust
 Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership
 Supporting Communities NI
 Sustainable Northern Ireland
 Sustrans
 The Conservation Volunteers
 The Woodland Trust
 True Harvest Seeds
 Ulster Angling Federation
 Ulster Archaeological Society
 Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs
 Ulster Wildlife
 Waste and Resources Action Programme
 Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

Associate Members (Organisations)

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council
 Association of Professional Game Angling Instructors
 Delamont Country Park
 EcoTourism Ireland
 Education Authority - Belfast Region
 Education Authority - South Eastern Region
 Education Authority - Southern Region
 Envirocentre
 Glenhordial Permaculture Farm
 Made In Trebania
 Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
 RES UK and Ireland
 The Hermitage Cottage
 The Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Associate Members (Individuals)

Anderson, Zoe	Robinson, Lorraine
Casement, Anne	Saunders, Jim
Casement, Patrick	Sims, Gary
Christie, Peter	Stelfox, Dawson
Christie, Sue	Stephens, Jude
Curry, Robin	Williams, Brian
Foster, Bill	Workman, Sacha
Green, Frances	
Hernan, Robert Emmet	
Heron, Alastair	
Hood, Isabel	
Jack, Brian	
Knott, David	
McAdam, Jim	
McCabe, Stephen	
Moorhead, Heather	
Nelson, Roy	
O'Neill, Leah	
O'Sullivan, Philip	
Orford, Julian	
Reid, Gordon	



Events

NIEL hosted, co-hosted and participated in a broad range of events throughout the year. A full list is available on our website – www.nienvironmentlink.org/events

Event	Location	Date
Taking Responsibility for Delivering the SDGs	Online Webinar	31st May 2018
Grassroots Challenge	Parliament Buildings, Stormont	15th June 2018
Open Government Partnership Global Summit	Tbilisi, Georgia	16th - 20th July 2018
The Future of Environmental Governance in NI	Queen's University Belfast	23rd July 2018
Nature Nearby: Planning Biophilic Cities	Queen's University Belfast	13th September 2018
NI Open Government Conference: Transparency for Accountability	Queen's University Belfast	13th September 2018
NI Environment Week Conference - Valuing the Marine Environment in Northern Ireland	WWT Castle Espie	28th September 2018
A Way Forward for Archaeology - A Research Framework for Northern Ireland?	Clifton House Belfast	19th October 2018
The SDGs in Action: Better Retail, Better World	Online Webinar	12th November 2018
Getting Our Act Together: Human Rights, Our Environment & Brexit	The Black Box, Belfast	14th November 2018
NI Open Government Workshop: Is Local Democracy Working in Northern Ireland?	Clifton House Belfast	24th November 2018
NIEL Annual General Meeting	RSPB Window on Wildlife	4th December 2018

Company Registration Number NI034988
HMRC Charity Reference Number XR19598
NI Charities Commission Reference Number NIC101074

Northern Ireland Environment Link

A private company limited by guarantee without share capital - exempt from using "limited"

Summary Financial Statement for the year ended 31st March 2019

Northern Ireland Environment Link

**DIRECTORS' STATEMENT
ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

The directors present herewith the summary financial statement of Northern Ireland Environment Link for the year ended 31st March 2019 and confirm the following:

- the summary financial statement is only a summary of information derived from the charity's annual accounts;
- the summary financial statement does not contain any additional information derived from the directors' report;
- the full annual accounts, the independent auditor's report and the trustees'/directors' report can be obtained on application to Northern Ireland Environment Link;
- the annual accounts were approved by the Board on 5th December, 2019

This directors' statement was approved by the board of directors on 5th December, 2019 and signed on its behalf by:

Patrick Casement

Chair - Board of Directors / Trustees

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' STATEMENT TO THE MEMBERS
OF NORTHERN IRELAND ENVIRONMENT LINK**

We have examined the summary financial statement of Northern Ireland Environment Link.

Respective responsibilities of directors and examiner

The directors are responsible for preparing the summary financial statement in accordance with applicable law. Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statement with the full annual accounts and Directors' Report, and its compliance with the relevant requirements of Section 427 of the Companies Act 2006 and the regulations made thereunder. We also read the other information contained in the summary financial statement and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summary financial statement.

Basis of opinion

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Opinion

In my opinion the summary financial statement is consistent with the full annual accounts and directors' report of Northern Ireland Environment Link for the year ended 31st March 2019 and complies with the applicable requirements of Section 427 of the Companies Act 2006, and the regulations made thereunder.

Nigel V Skillen FCA
Diamond & Skillen
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditor
Sinclair House
89/101 Royal Avenue
Belfast
BT1 1FE

5th December, 2019

Northern Ireland Environment Link

Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31st March 2019

	General Funds <i>(unrestricted)</i> £	Restricted funds £	Totals 2019 £	Totals 2018 £
Income				
<i>from donations and legacies</i>				
• Subscriptions	6,805	-	6,805	11,126
• Grants	277,445	21,274	298,719	490,967
<i>from charitable activities</i>				
• Event and project income	67,985	3,763	71,748	25,480
• Members servicing and accommodation	6,890	-	6,890	5,333
<i>from other activities</i>				
• Sundry income	-	-	0	1,945
• Other servicing and accommodation	81,589	-	81,589	-
<i>from investments</i>				
• Investment income	515	-	515	525
Total income	441,229	25,037	466,266	535,376
Expenditure				
<i>on raising funds</i>				
• Advertising / PR costs	2,738	-	2,738	2,556
<i>on charitable activities</i>				
• Employee costs and expenses	304,963	29,329	334,292	347,194
• Premises costs	23,908	-	23,908	26,043
• Travel & training costs	12,613	7,798	20,411	15,138
• Administration costs	14,858	320	15,178	20,817
• Programme / event costs	11,379	5,040	16,419	41,846
<i>on other items</i>				
• Legal and professional fees	29,299	14,344	43,643	56,328
• Other expenses	13,013	-	13,013	3,065
• Depreciation of assets	-	-	0	-
Total expenditure	412,771	56,831	469,602	512,987
Net (deficit) / income for the year	28,458	(31,794)	(3,336)	22,389
<i>Transfers</i>				
• Gross transfers between funds	-	-	0	-
Net movement in funds for the year	28,458	(31,794)	(3,336)	22,389
<i>Reconciliation of funds</i>				
• Fund balances b/fwd at 1st April	283,889	43,791	327,680	305,291
Fund balances c/fwd at 31st March	312,347	11,997	324,344	327,680

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.
All gains and losses in the year are included above.

Northern Ireland Environment Link

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)
as at 31st March 2019

	2019 £	2018 £
Non Current Assets		
• Tangible assets	-	-
Current Assets		
• Receivables	140,551	145,997
• Cash and cash equivalents	192,963	207,114
	333,514	353,111
Payables: amounts falling due within one year	(9,170)	(25,431)
Net assets	324,344	327,680
Accumulated funds		
<i>Unrestricted income funds:</i>		
• General funds	312,347	283,889
• Other funds	-	-
	312,347	283,889
<i>Restricted income funds:</i>		
• HLF Catalyst Fund	13,296	27,084
• Open Government Network Pioneer Fund	24,016	17,123
• Interreg Fund	(25,325)	(426)
• Other projects	10	10
Total funds	324,344	327,680

The summary financial statement was approved by the Board of Directors on 5th December, 2019 and signed on their behalf by:

Patrick Casement
Chairman of Directors

Terry Waugh
Director, Hon Treasurer



Northern Ireland Environment Link
89 Loopland Drive
Belfast
BT6 9DW

Northern Ireland Environment Link is funded by



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Community Foundation
NORTHERN IRELAND