

## COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2013  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Joe Byrne (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr William Irwin MLA  
Mr Declan McAleer MLA  
Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA  
Mr Ian Milne MLA

Apologies: Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA  
Mr Robin Swann MLA

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk  
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk  
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor  
Ms Dagmar Walgraeve Clerical Officer

*1.34 p.m. The meeting commenced in Open Session*

The Chairperson advised that Trevor Lunn has replace Kieran McCarthy as a Member of the Committee and that his declaration of interests is contained in the tabled papers pack.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies are noted above.

*1.35 p.m. Mr Byrne joined the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to move to Agenda Item 5.

## **2. Issue of concern to the Farming Community: Oral Briefing NILGA**

The following representatives of NILGA joined the meeting at 1.38 p.m.

Councillor Sean Clarke, Cookstown District Council  
Councillor Charles Chittick, Omagh District Council  
Derek McCallan, Chief Executive NILGA  
Karine McGuickin, European Officer, NILGA

The representatives briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

*1.58 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the NILGA briefing paper to the Minister for comment.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the NILGA briefing paper to the Minister for the Environment to seek his opinion on the issues raised.

## **3. Chairperson's Business**

There was no Chairperson's Business.

## **4. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2013**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2013.

## **5. Matters arising**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the update from the Department on Ash Die-back.

*2.13 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.*

*2.15 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.*

## **6. October Monitoring Round: Oral Briefing DARD**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.15 p.m.

Graeme Wilkinson, Finance Director

Roger Downey, Accountant

The officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

*2.24 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's proposed Monitoring Round bid.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 8.

## **7. Correspondence**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Minister dated 17 September 2013 which contains the response to the Committee's position paper on plant health and tree disease. The Committee agreed to publish the Minister's response on the Committee website and advise stakeholders that it can be accessed.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department dated 19 September 2013 on the Abolition of Food from Britain. The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the ETI Committee to ask if it has any concerns regarding the proposals.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Finance and Personnel Committee on Post Project Evaluations (PPEs). The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request a written brief on the four outstanding PPEs.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department dated 19 September 2013 regarding the DARD Resource Accounts 2012-13.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the copied correspondence from Portaferry Regeneration to the Minister regarding the closure of Exploris Aquarium. The Committee agreed to request that the Minister copies the Committee into the response and that she advises the Committee if there is any support or assistance that she can offer to Exploris.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister dated 12

September 2013 regarding the Alleviating Hardship Report which was published 13 months ago.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the emailed correspondence from Mr Thompson regarding the use of sniffer dogs to detect TB in badgers.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence from Sainsbury's advising that a new £1million fund to support Research and Development in UK Farming has opened.

*2.42 p.m. The meeting suspended.*

*3.35 p.m. The meeting resumed with the following Members present: Mr Frew, Mr Byrne, Ms McIlveen and Mr McAleer.*

## **8. CAP Reform Pillar 1 Direct Payments Policy Options Consultation: Oral Briefing DARD**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 3.36 p.m.

Norman Fulton, Chief Agricultural Economist  
Rosemary Agnew, Principal Officer  
Mark McLean, Senior Agricultural Economist

*3.40 p.m. Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting.*

The officials briefed the Committee and this followed by a question and answer session.

*Mr Irwin declared an interest as a farmer and a member of SOAR.*

*4.23 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting*

*4.30 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.*

## **9. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

## **10. AOB**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to ask what factors and evidence she considered when making her decision regarding fracking on land belonging to the Department.

**11. Date, time and place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 8 October 2013 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 4.34 p.m.*

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Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Date