

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2013
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA
Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Mr Declan McAleer MLA
Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA

Apologies: Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor
Mr Jonathan Lamont, Clerical Supervisor
Ms Dagmar Walgraeve Clerical Officer

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

1. Apologies

The apologies are recorded above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed the content of a letter to the Minister regarding a number of concerns in respect of farm safety.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the list of individuals and organisations on the Christmas card list.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2013

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2013.

1.39 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.

4. Matters arising

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from the ETI Committee regarding renewable generation installations and agreed to forward it to the Department for comment and the Ulster Farmers Union for information.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department regarding issues raised at the meeting on 5 November 2013. The Committee agreed to request oral evidence in respect of the Reservoirs Bill from the councils with the largest number of reservoirs.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information on the Terms of Reference and timescale for the consultancy work and indicative timescale for completion of the report from the Lough Neagh Working Group. The Committee agreed to forward the extract on this issue to other committees with an interest in this area.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an oral briefing from the Department on the Rathlin Island Fishing Exclusion Zones when it comes before the Committee at SL1 stage.

Noted: The Committee noted the weekly update from the Department on Ash-Dieback.

5. 2013/14 Business Plan Progress Report to 30 September 2013: Oral Briefing DARD

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.40 p.m.

Graeme Wilkinson, Assistant Secretary
Pauline Keegan, Assistant Secretary
Andrew Elliott, Assistant Secretary

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information on the TVR Scheme including an update on the uptake of farmers from the two trial areas and the possibility of a third area.

1.55 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

1.55 p.m. Mr Swann joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an update on the further financial assistance for the local fishing industry that was announced in the Ministers press release of 4th July 2013.

2.00 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the details of when the Research Challenge Fund is likely to be launched and what consideration the Agri-Food Strategy Board is giving to the fund in realising the recommendations of its 'Growing for Growth Report'.

6. DARD Resource Accounts 2012/13: Oral Briefing DARD

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.07 p.m.

Graeme Wilkinson, Assistant Secretary
Andrew Elliott, Assistant Secretary
Sheryl Henderson – Grade 7, Accountant; and
Sean McGuinness – Grade 7, Principal.

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

2.12 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.

2.15 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an update on what cases the Central Investigation Service has been looking at including details of what prosecutions it had during the Resource Accounts reporting period..

2.33 p.m. Mr Swann left the meeting.

2.38 p.m. The meeting suspended.

2.46 p.m. The meeting resumed with the following Members present: Mr Frew, Mr Buchanan, Mr Irwin, Ms McIlveen and Mr McMullan.

7. CAP Reform 2014-20: EU Agreement and Implementation in the UK and Ireland.

2.48 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting

2.49 p.m. Mrs Dobson joined the meeting

Noted: The Committee noted the research paper on CAP Reform 2014-20: EU Agreement and Implementation in the UK and Ireland.

8. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from the ETI Committee on the Green Investment Bank and agreed to forward it to the Department for information.

Noted: The Committee noted the Executive Summary of the Report and Accounts year ending 31 March 2012 from the NI Fishery Harbour Authority.

Noted: The Committee noted the invitation to a book launch on John Thompson and Sons on 5 December 2013.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department on the Sea Fishing (Licences and Notices) Regulations (NI) 2014 and agreed to write to express disappointment at the low number of consultation responses.

Noted: The Committee noted the invitation from the Rural Community Network to its annual conference and AGM on 3 December 2013.

9. Forward Work Programme

Noted: The Committee noted that the written briefing on Classical Scrapie Control Options and Sea Bass Regulations have been deferred to the New Year.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

10. AOB

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Roads Service to ask what uptake they had received from the farming industry in respect of clearing roads during severe weather.

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 3 December 2013 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 2.55 p.m.

Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date