



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL
AFFAIRS**

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 02 JUNE 2016

ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Caoimhe Archibald MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr David Ford MLA
Mr Patsy McGlone MLA
Mr Harold McKee MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Edwin Poots MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Stella McArdle (Assembly Clerk)
Miss Ciara McKay (Assistant Clerk)
Mrs Tara McClafferty (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Mark Allen (RAISE, item 6 only)
Ms Suzie Cave (RAISE, item 6 only)

Apologies: None

10.02 a.m. The meeting opened in closed session.

The Chairperson welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

10.03 a.m. Mr Sydney Anderson joined the meeting.

10.05 a.m. Mr Patsy McGlone joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that meetings, as a rule, should be held in public session, unless the Committee agrees that there is an overriding reason for proceedings to be in closed session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Agenda Item 1: Committee Protocols, be held in closed session.

1. Committee Protocols

Agreed: The Committee agreed: a protocol on conduct and courtesy at Committee meetings; its approach to dealing with correspondence and requests for meetings; and its approach to using social media.

10.11 a.m. Mr Edwin Poots joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its approach to questions for the first Committee meeting, and agreed to consider this again at next week's meeting. The Committee agreed to discuss and agree other protocols at its strategic planning day.

10.21 a.m. The meeting moved into public session.

2. Apologies.

There were no apologies.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Committee noted the composition of the Committee.

The Committee noted staff's contact details.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that she and the Deputy Chairperson met with the Minister on Tuesday 31st May 2016.

4. Declaration of Interests

The Chairperson briefed the Committee on the procedures relating to Declaration of Interests.

Members of the Committee made the following declarations:

Mr David Ford MLA made a declaration that he has a shared interest in a farm;

Mr Edwin Poots MLA made a declaration that he has a partnership in a farm;

Mr Robin Swann MLA made a declaration that he is a Member of both the Young Farmers Club and the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society.

Mr Harold McKee MLA made a declaration that he held past Membership with the Northern Ireland Blue Cattles Club; and that he was the Northern Ireland representation for the British Blue Cattles Club UK.

5. Committee Procedures

The Committee noted the following documents:

- Guide to the Powers and Operation of Statutory Committees for Chairpersons and Members;
- Guide to the Role of the Chairperson;
- Guide for Members on the Role and Functions of the Committee Office;
- Guidance on timescales for interaction between committees and departments; and
- Advice on the EU Referendum.

6. Research Services to Committees

The Committee noted guidelines on providing an effective research service to committees.

Researchers from the Assembly's Research and Information Services (RaISe) provided an introductory briefing on the role of RaISe.

7. 2011 – 16 Legacy Reports

The Committee noted 2011-16 Legacy Reports from the following Committees: Agriculture and Rural Development; Culture, Arts and Leisure; and Environment.

Agreed: The Committee to defer consideration of these reports until its strategic planning day.

8. Subordinate Legislation

“Question: That the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, under Standing Order 43, resolves to delegate to the Examiner of Statutory Rules the technical scrutiny of statutory rules referred to the Committee under the above mentioned Standing Order.

The Committee further resolves that in carrying out this function the Examiner shall be authorised to report her technical findings on each statutory rule to the Assembly, and to the relevant Department, as well as to the Committee itself and to publish her report, put and agreed to.”

9. Departmental briefing – Strategic Overview

10.37 a.m. The following officials from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs joined the meeting:

Mr Noel Lavery, Permanent Secretary;

Ms Louise Warde Hunter, Deputy Secretary;

Mr David Small, Deputy Secretary;

Mr Robert Huey, Deputy Secretary; and

Mr Norman Fulton, Deputy Secretary.

The officials provided the Committee with a strategic overview of the Department.

Mr Harold McKee MLA made a declaration that he previously held the post of Carlingford Lough Commissioner.

Agreed: Officials agreed to provide the following information to the Committee: responsibility for Kilkeel Harbour infrastructure; challenges around cod fishing; update on the supply chain forum; details regarding penalties imposed on farmers on Rathlin Island given its special status; the Department's approach to working with and integrating NIEA; EU and NI targets on Greenhouse Gas emissions; update on the project between Northern Ireland, Teagasc and Scotland regarding greenhouse gases; security on the Ballykelly site; and a contact number for Committee MLAs for constituency issues.

12.10 p.m. Mr George Robinson left the meeting.

Agreed: Officials agreed to provide the following information to the Committee regarding the cost to farmers for obtaining a licence for tyre disposal and issues around transporting tyres between different farm sites.

12.13 p.m. Mr George Robinson rejoined the meeting.

Agreed: Officials agreed to provide assurances that the tools used to address waste crime will not cross over to the farming industry.

12.16 p.m. Officials left the meeting.

10. Correspondence

The Committee noted the House of Lords EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee report 'Responding to price volatility: creating a more resilient agricultural sector'.

The Committee noted the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee report 'Special Report on Farmgate prices'.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Horse Racing Group.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request from the Department a written update on The Horse Racing (Charges on Bookmakers) Order (NI) 2016, including timescale for introduction. The Committee agreed to advise Northern Ireland Horse Racing Group of this action.

The Committee noted correspondence from Northern Ireland Environment Week.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this item of correspondence until Agenda Item 11: Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted the invitation to a public briefing from the Centre for Cross Border Studies.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Ulster Farmers Union.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from the Ulster Farmers Union before its strategic planning day in late September.

11. Draft Forward Work Plan

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work programme to summer recess.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should provide options for a date and location of the Committee's strategic planning day in September 2016 by 30th June 2016.

Agreed: Members agreed to inform the Clerk of their intention to attend the National Ploughing Championship and the Grocery Code Adjudicator's conference by Tuesday 7th June 2016.

12.27 p.m. Mr Patsy McGlone left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request details on the review of the Grocery Code Adjudicator.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to sponsor events in Parliament Buildings during Northern Ireland Environment Week, on 26th and 27th September 2016.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that its next meeting will be held at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday 9th June 2016 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

12.32 p.m. The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Linda Dillon MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

9th June 2016