



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

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

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2016

ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

- Present: Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Caoimhe Archibald MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr David Ford MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA
Mr Patsy McGlone MLA
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA
- In Attendance: Mrs Stella McArdle (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Liz Marsh (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Oliver Bellew (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Marion Johnson (Clerical Officer)
Miss Zoe Rogers (Bursary Student)
- Apologies: Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA
Mr Harold McKee MLA
Mr Edwin Poots MLA

The meeting opened in public session at 10.01 a.m.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's business

The Chairperson informed members of her acceptance of an invitation to speak about the priorities of the Committee at NI Rural Women's Network event on Wednesday 19 October in Long Gallery.

In connection with the Committee meeting and visit on 24th November, the Chairperson requested members to indicate whether they would be attending and if they required overnight accommodation.

The Chairperson informed members of a written update received from the Department on the recent fish kill at Carrigs River.

10.06 a.m. Mr Patsy McGlone joined the meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding the recent fish kill at Carrigs River, and to ask if the same chemical that caused the kill is used in all NI Water Treatment plants and, if so, whether alternative chemicals could be used. The Committee agreed to schedule a visit to the NIEA Water Management Unit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange a meeting with its counterpart Committee in the Republic of Ireland to discuss the implications of EU Referendum vote.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to release a statement in relation to comments made by the Chair of the Agri-food Strategy Board during an oral briefing at the meeting on 6th October.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting on 6th October 2016 were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department in relation to issues raised at the meeting on 22 September 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to remind the Department of its previous request for information on the budget and October monitoring rounds.

The Committee noted a written response from the Department in relation to late receipt of papers for the meeting on 22 September 2016.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department in relation to data regarding Northern Ireland farmers who have taken up the Commission's Milk Production Reduction scheme.

5. Oral briefing from DAERA – Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)

10.13 a.m. The following witnesses joined the meeting:

Mr Colin Armstrong, Principal Scientific Officer, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Mr Joe Breen, Principal Scientific Officer, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Mrs Carol O’Boyle, Deputy Principle – EMFG Marine Conservation and Reporting, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

The witnesses briefed the Committee on the results of a recent consultation on four proposed Marine Conservation Zones.

10.25 a.m. Mr David Ford left the meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department with further questions raised relating to the consultation on proposed MCZs.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Office and Minister McIlveen to ask what is being done to protect fishermen in relation to MOD movements in local waters.

10.59 a.m. The officials left the meeting

11.00 a.m. Miss Caoimhe Archibald left the meeting

6. Oral briefing from RaISe – NI Fisheries Sector – Background and possible Brexit considerations

11.01 a.m. The following officials joined the meeting:

Mr Mark Allen, Researcher, Research and Information Services, NI Assembly

Dr Dan Hull, Senior Researcher, Research and Information Services, NI Assembly

The officials briefed the Committee on the background and possible Brexit considerations for the Northern Ireland Fisheries sector.

11.04 a.m. Miss Caoimhe Archibald re-joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the various Research paper to the Department, to NI MEPs, to the EU Commissioner Hogan and to counterpart committees in the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Westminster, and to Minister Creed in the Republic of Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department to share this and the other Research papers with the Department of the Economy

and to draw its attention to those issues for which it has responsibility.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Minister what her intention is in regards to the reintroduction of the Fisheries Bill.

11.54 a.m. The officials left the meeting

7. Correspondence

The Committee noted a hard copy of the Loughs Agency Annual Report and Accounts 2014.

The Committee noted an invitation from Bryson Charitable Group to visit facilities at Mallusk and host a Committee meeting.

The Committee noted information from the Committee for the Executive Office on a briefing it had on the implications for NICS of the decision of the UK to withdraw from the EU

8. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the Department speaks to the main stakeholders about the reintroduction of the Snares Order before officials come to the Committee on 10th November. The Committee also agreed to request a written brief on the background to the Snares Order ahead to the meeting.

The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

9. Any other business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an update regarding the resignation of the Chief Executive of Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute

10. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Committee noted that its next meeting will be held at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday 20th October 2016 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

11.59 a.m. The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Linda Dillon MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
20th October 2016