



COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**THURSDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2020
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Clare Bailey MLA
Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA
Mr John Blair MLA
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA
Mr John Dallat MLA
Mr Harry Harvey MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA
- Apologies: None
- In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Assembly Clerk
Ms Marion Johnson, Clerical Supervisor
Ms Marianne McGuiggan, Clerical Officer
Mr Mark Allen, Research Officer (agenda item 8)

The meeting commenced at 10.01 a.m. in closed session.

1. UK Government Agriculture Bill – Clerk’s Briefing

The Clerk briefed the Committee the UK Government Agriculture Bill.

The meeting moved into open session at 10.15 a.m.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson updated the Committee on a meeting he and the Deputy Chairperson had with representatives from the RSBP on 13 February 2020 to discuss a range of issues. Papers from that meeting were included under Correspondence.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that two Statutory Rules, which will revoke SR 2019/061 and SR 2019/065 previously considered by the Committee, would be laid in the Business Office on 18 February 2020.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2020.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following:

- i. Correspondence from the House of Lords EU Select Committee regarding a visit to Parliament Buildings on 25 February 2020 for a series of meetings.
- ii. Briefing papers from an informal meeting with the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson with the RSPB on 13 February 2020.

The Committee considered correspondence from Bryson Recycling inviting the Committee to visit its Mallusk site.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a visit to the Bryson Recycling Site as time and priorities permit.

The Committee considered correspondence from a member of the public regarding Japanese Knot Weed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the member of the public to explain that the issue raised is for the Department to consider and does not fall under the remit of the Committee.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure regarding a joint visit to Belfast/Larne Posts on 22 April 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer making any decisions on visits until after its Strategic Planning session.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request written evidence from representatives of the fish processing industry in respect of the UK Government Fisheries Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to cover the travel expenses for witnesses coming from GB to give evidence to the Committee on the Fisheries Bill.

8. Oral Briefing from RaISe on the UK Government Agriculture Bill

The Research Officer joined the meeting at 10.20 and briefed the Committee on the UK Government Agriculture Bill.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Bradley joined the meeting at 10.28 a.m.

Ms Bailey left the meeting at 11.14 a.m.

9. Oral Evidence from DAERA on the UK Government Agriculture Bill

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 11.15 a.m.

Norman Fulton, Deputy Secretary, Food and Farming Group
Rosemary Agnew, Director of Brexit, Food and Farming Group
Mark McLean, Grade 7, Principal Agricultural Economist, Food and Farming Group

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

Ms Bailey rejoined the meeting at 11.17 a.m.

Mr Blair left the meeting at 11.50 a.m.

Mr Blair rejoined the meeting at 11.59 a.m.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

10. Oral Evidence from Ulster Farmers' Union and Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers' Association

The following representatives from the Ulster Farmers' Union and Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers' Association joined the meeting at 12:13 p.m.

Wesley Aston, Chief Executive, Ulster Farmers' Union
Ivor Ferguson, President, Ulster Farmers' Union
David Brown, Deputy President, Ulster Farmers' Union
James Lowe, Chairperson, Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association
Sean McAuley, Vice Chairperson, Northern Ireland Agricultural producers Association

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

Mr Dallat left the meeting at 12:54 p.m.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

The meeting was suspended at 13:03 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 2:05 p.m. in Room 29

*Present: Mr Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Clare Bailey MLA
Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA
Mr John Blair MLA
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA*

11. Oral Evidence from Rural Community Network, Rural Action, Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network and Mid Ulster Local Action Group

The following representatives joined the meeting at 2.05 p.m.

Aidan Campbell, Policy Officer, Rural Community Network
Teresa Canavan, Chief Executive Officer, Rural Action
Louise Coyle, Director, NI Rural Women's Network
Conor Corr, Mid Ulster Local Action Group

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

Mr Irwin left the meeting at 2.41 p.m.

Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting at 2.45 p.m.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Research Paper on the UK Government Agriculture Bill and the Hansard transcript of the oral evidence sessions to the House of Commons Bill Committee and the Department.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

12. Oral Evidence from Northern Ireland Meat Exporters and Dairy UK (Northern Ireland)

The following representatives from Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association and Dairy UK (NI) joined the meeting at 2.53 p.m.

Conall Donnelly, NI Meat Exporters Association
Dr Mike Johnston, NI Director, Dairy UK

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

Mr McGuigan left the meeting at 3.17 p.m.

Mr McGuigan rejoined the meeting at 3.21 p.m.

Mr Blair left the meeting at 3.30 p.m.

Mr Blair rejoined the meeting at 3.35 p.m.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

13. Oral Evidence from Northern Ireland Environment Link

The following representatives from Northern Ireland Environment Link joined the meeting at 3.38 p.m.

Sean Kelly, Development Manager, NIEL
Philip Carson, Policy Officer (Sustainable Farming), RSPB NI
Jennifer Fulton, CEO, Ulster Wildlife
John Martin, Head of Policy and Advocacy, RSPB NI

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

Mr Irwin left the meeting at 4.00 p.m.

The Chairperson left the meeting at 4.02 p.m.

The Deputy Chairperson took the chair.

Mrs Barton left the meeting at 4.07 p.m.

The Chairperson rejoined the meeting at 4.09 p.m. and resumed the chair.

Mr Blair left the meeting at 4.19 p.m.

Mr Blair rejoined the meeting at 4.23 p.m.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

14. AOB

There was no other business.

15. Date, time and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs will take place on Thursday 27 February 2020 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 30.

4.24 p.m. *The meeting adjourned.*

Declan McAleer

Declan McAleer, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

27/02/2020

Date