



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

## Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 10 June 2021

**Meeting Location:** Room 30, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Clare Bailey MLA

Rosemary Barton MLA

John Blair MLA

Maurice Bradley MLA

Harry Harvey MLA

William Irwin MLA

Patsy McGlone MLA

**Apologies:** Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

**In Attendance:** Nick Henry, Clerk

Kate Duffy, Clerical Officer



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**In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:**

Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk

Neal Flanagan, Assistant Clerk

Marion Johnson, Clerical Supervisor

The meeting commenced at 9.32 a.m. in Open Session

**1. Apologies**

As above.

**2. Chairpersons Business**

None.

**3. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The minutes of the meeting held on 27 May and 3 June 2021 were agreed.

**4. Matters arising**

None.



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**5. Departmental Oral Briefing on ILT Outbreak and Oral Evidence Session on Business Plan 2021-22**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting by StarLeaf at 9.35 a.m.

Neal Garland, Director of Animal Health and Welfare

Jim Blee, Deputy Director of Animal Health and Welfare

Gemma Daly, Senior Principal Veterinary Officer

Ignatius McKeown, Divisional Veterinary Officer

The officials briefed the Committee on the outbreak of larynogotracheitis and this was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Blair joined the meeting at 9.37 a.m.

Ms Bailey joined the meeting at 10.00 a.m.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The following departmental officials joined the meeting by StarLeaf at 10.03 a.m.

Brian Doherty, Head of Central Services and Contingency Planning

Norman Fulton, Head of Food and Farming Group

Colin Breen, Director of Environmental Policy Division

Dave Foster, Director of Regulatory and Natural Resources Policy

The officials briefed the Committee on the Business Plan 2021-22 and this was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.



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## **6. Oral Evidence Session Climate Change Bill: UK Climate Change Committee**

The following representatives from the UK Climate Change Committee joined the meeting by StarLeaf at 10.48 a.m.

Lord Deben, Chair of the UK Climate Change Committee

Thomas Andrew, Senior Analyst

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Ms Bailey left the meeting at 11.15 a.m.

The Chairperson left the meeting at 11.37 a.m. Mr Harvey assumed the Chair.

The Chairperson rejoined the meeting at 11.40 a.m. and resumed the Chair.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

## **7. Oral Evidence Session Climate Change Bill: The Woodland Trust**

The following representatives of the Woodland Trust joined the meeting by StarLeaf at 11.46 a.m.:

Paul Armstrong, Public Affairs Manager

Dave Scott, Estate and Project Manager

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Mr Blair left the meeting at 12.19 p.m.

Mr Blair rejoined the meeting at 12.23 p.m.



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The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to publish the Woodland Trust written briefing paper on its webpage.

### **8. Oral Evidence Session Climate Change Bill: AFBI**

The following AFBI officials joined the meeting by StarLeaf at 12.29 p.m.

Josephine Kelly, Acting Chief Executive

Dr Elizabeth Magowan, Director of Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division

Pieter-Jan Schon, Director of Environment and Marine Sciences Division

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to publish the AFBI written briefing on its webpage.

### **9. Departmental Written Briefing: SL1 - The Sea Fish Industry (Coronavirus) (Fixed Costs) Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2021**

The Committee considered the SL1 on the Sea Fish Industry (Coronavirus) (Fixed Costs) Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2021 which will provide the legislative basis for provision of financial support to the static gear fishing fleet to help the sector deal with the impact of Covid-19. The Committee noted that the SR will replace SR 2021/65 which was made on 12 March 2021 and which the Examiner of Statutory Rules reported on advising that it was ultra-vires due to the Department citing incorrect primary powers.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the merits of the policy and that it should move to the next legislative stage.



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### 10. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following:

- i. The ISNI Investing Activity Report for May 2021.
- ii. Correspondence from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group on the late arrival of departmental papers to committees.
- iii. Correspondence from the Institute for Government on its report outlining recommendations for how the UKG should engage with departments around future regulatory divergence between the UK and the EU.
- iv. Correspondence from the Committee for the Economy enclosing the Hansard Report from a meeting it had on the 19 May 2021 with the Department for the Economy on EU Exit.
- v. The Forty-first report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules in which she draws attention to a drafting error in SR 2021/133: The Agriculture (Student Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.
- vi. Correspondence from the Department confirming that it will not be making any resource of capital budgetary bids in the June Monitoring Round.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department in response to issues raised at the meetings on 13 and 20 May 2021.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the clerk would write to the Department to indicate that the monthly EU Transition Update should now be more operationally focused and any significant updates are provided as and when they occur.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department on the progress of the compensation scheme for farmers affected by flooding in the Glenelly area in 2017, advising that legislation will come before the Committee in July 2021.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to welcome the progress and to seek clarification on what measures will be put in place to support farmers who were affected but did not submit force majeure applications; why there are two rates of compensation and what the rationale is for the differential.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department which provides a summary of consultation responses on its discussion document, "Future Recycling and Separate Collection of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland".



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**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to acknowledge the summary of consultation responses and to request future information as the policy progresses.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance on the Forecast Outturn for 2021-222.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarity around the approximate 370% in month capital spending in March 2021 compared to the previous 11 months.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Communities in which it shares a RalSe research paper outlining considerations for the potential establishment of a “High Street Task Force”.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Communities to request an update on the progress of the development and to ascertain what consideration has been given to ensuring the needs of towns in rural areas will be addressed by any potential Task Force.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Ulster Farmers’ Union and the Dairy Council on research they have carried out on the future strategic outline of a dairy farming policy.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to invite the authors of the research paper to brief the Committee following summer recess.

### 11. Forward Work Programme

**Noted:** The Committee noted the additional virtual closed session meeting this afternoon at 2.30 p.m. to discuss the issue of the Committee’s investigation around the withdrawal of DAERA and Local Authority staff from the ports.

**Noted:** The Committee noted that a number of additional dates in June have been set aside to consider the ports investigation, if required, and to agree the Committee’s report.



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**Noted:** The Committee noted the additional meeting on 16 June 2021 at 2.15 p.m. in order to progress the oral evidence sessions on the Climate Change Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to confirm their individual availability for the two stakeholder events scheduled for Thursday 17 June 2021 a.m. and p.m. to the clerk by close of play.

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

### 12.AOB

### 13.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 10 June 2021 at 2.30 p.m. and will be a virtual closed meeting on StarLeaf.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.03 p.m.

**Declan McAleer MLA**  
**Chairperson, Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee**