



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**23 OCTOBER 2013**

**EXPLORIS AQUARIUM, PORTAFERRY 10.30AM.**

- Present: Mr Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)  
Mr Phil Flanagan (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Gordon Dunne  
Mr Fearghal McKinney  
Ms Sandra Overend
- Also Present: Ms Anna Lo, Committee for the Environment  
(Chairperson)  
Ms Pam Brown, Committee for the Environment  
(Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Michelle McIlveen, Committee for Culture, Arts  
and Leisure (Chairperson)  
Mr Kieran McCarthy, MLA
- In Attendance: Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Stephanie Mallon (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Nathan McVeigh (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Jacqueline Holt (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mr Steven Agnew  
Mr Sydney Anderson  
Mr Sammy Douglas  
Mr Paul Frew  
Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin

*The meeting began at 10.55am in public session.*

## **1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

## **2. Chairperson's Business**

Members noted an Assembly Research paper on the Riverwatch Aquarium.

Members noted a response from the Department regarding an assessment of the impact the proposed closure of Exploris will have on tourism and the economy on the area and what the Department considers can be done to prevent the closure.

Members noted a Private Members' Motion which is on the Order paper for 5 November regarding Exploris.

*Ms McIlveen declared an interest as a previous member of Ards Borough Council and has a brother that is currently a member of Ards Borough Council.*

*Mr McCarthy declared an interest as a previous member of Ards Borough Council.*

## **3. The future of Exploris Aquarium - Oral Briefing from Portaferry Regeneration Ltd**

*Representatives joined the meeting at 11.00am*

Members received an oral briefing from Mr Doug Edmondson, Chairperson, Mr John Herlihy, Director and Mr David Russell, Director.

Key issues discussed included: the economic impact of the closure of Exploris, the benefits of Exploris to the local economy and options for retaining Exploris by considering sustainable options.

*Mr McCarthy declared an interest as a member of Portaferry Regeneration Limited.*

*Representatives left the meeting at 11.53*

## **4. The future of Exploris Aquarium - Oral Briefing from NIPSA and Friends of Exploris**

*Representatives joined the meeting at 11.54*

Members received an oral briefing from Antoinette McMillen, NIPSA, Judith Caldwell, NIPSA and Cathie McKimm, Friends of Exploris.

Key issues discussed included: the economic impact of the closure of Exploris, the benefits of Exploris to the local economy and options for retaining Exploris through public service initiatives.

*Representatives left the meeting at 12.44pm*

## **5. The future of Exploris Aquarium - Oral Briefing from Ards Borough Council**

*Representatives joined the meeting at 12.45pm*

*Ms Brown left the meeting at 12.56pm*

*Mr Dunne left the meeting at 1.27pm*

*Ms McIlveen left the meeting at 1.49pm*

Members received an oral briefing from Mr Ashley Boreland, Chief Executive, Mr Brian Dorrian, Acting Director of Development and Mr Andrew Scott, Head of Corporate Projects.

Key issues discussed included: the economic impact of the closure of Exploris, the benefits of Exploris to the local economy and options for retaining Exploris.

*Representatives left the meeting at 1.52pm*

## **6. Any other business**

None.

## **7. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on **24 October at 10.00am** in **Room 30, Parliament Buildings**.

*The Chair adjourned the meeting at 1.52pm*

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**Mr Patsy McGlone**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment**

**7 November 2013**