



Minutes of the One hundred and thirty seventh meeting of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Confirmed

Date: 22nd November 2023 (Day one of a two part meeting)

Time: 11.00

Venue: Virtually Via MS Teams

Present

Members

Melanie Austin
Natural England

Charles Banner
Independent Interim Chair

Lord Blencathra
Natural England

Cath Denholm (items 1-6 and 10)
Independent Member

Pete Higgins
NatureScot

Rhys Jones
Natural Resources Wales

Tom Meagher
Independent member

Julian Orford
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Steve Ormerod
Natural resources Wales

Attendees

Natalie Askew
JNCC

David Collins
JNCC

Tracey Elliott
JNCC

John Goold
JNCC

Gemma Harper
JNCC

Jane Hawkrige
Joint Committee Observer

Sara McGuckin
Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Jem Powell
Joint Committee Observer

Beth Stoker
JNCC

Dave Stone
JNCC

Eileen Stuart
NatureScot

Steve Wilkinson
JNCC

Sarah Wood

Apologies

Members

Aoife Martin
Nature Scot

Attendees

Rebecca Grattage
Board apprentice

Lynn Heeley
JNCC

Tracey Quince
JNCC

1. Closed session

- 1.1. There are no minutes for this item.

2. Chairman's opening remarks

- 2.1. Charles Banner welcomed members and attendees to the 137th meeting of the Joint Committee.
- 2.2. A request was made for a CNCB member to volunteer to join the Remuneration Committee. A vacancy has arisen following the departure of Hilary Kirkpatrick from the Joint Committee.
- 2.3. Members were reminded to book a place on the data protection training currently being offered.

3. Declaration of interests

- 3.1. Three new interests were declared, none were considered conflicts for this meeting:
 - i. Mel Austen declared that she is involved with developing a programme for funding for Plymouth University with some of the organisations detailed

within paper JNCC 23 51D and is Chair of the North Devon Biosphere Reserve Partnership.

ii. Steve Ormerod declared that he is Vice President of the RSPB.

3.2. Charles Banner requested that members review their declarations of interest and confirm to the Governance Team if any updates need to be made.

Action point(s)
AP01. Governance Team to provide members of the Joint Committee with the latest register of interests for review.
AP02. Members to send any changes to the Governance Team.

4. Confidential minutes of the September Meeting (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 48D)

4.1 This item was taken in confidence.

5. Matters arising (Official) (JNCC 32 49I)

5.1. Members **confirmed** they were content with the paper.

6. ARAC and People Committee updates (Official-sensitive) (Presentation)

6.1. This item was taken in confidence.

7. Chief Executive's report on topical issues (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 50P)

7.1. This item was taken in confidence.

8. Delivery of Welsh Offshore Renewable Energy casework advice (Official-Sensitive) (JNCC 23 51D)

8.1. This item was taken in confidence.

9. Q2 performance report 2023/2024 (Official-Sensitive) (JNCC 23 52P)

9.1. This item was taken in confidence.

10. Briefing for engagement event and introduction to SP3 (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 53I)

10.1. The item was taken in confidence.



Minutes of the 137th meeting of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Confirmed

Date: 23rd November 2023 (Day two of a two part meeting)

Time: 09:30

Venue: Virtually Via MS Teams

Present

Members

Mel Austen
Natural England

Charles Banner
Independent member

Lord Blencathra
Natural England

Pete Higgins
NatureScot

Tom Meagher
Independent member

Julian Orford
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Steve Ormerod
Natural Resources Wales

Aoife Martin (Items 1-7)
NatureScot

Attendees

Rebecca Ashcroft
JNCC

Natalie Askew
JNCC

David Collins
JNCC

Pippa Day
JNCC

Tracey Elliot
JNCC

John Goold
JNCC

Rebecca Grattage
Board Apprentice

Gemma Harper
JNCC

Jane Hawkrige
JNCC staff Observer

Tim Hill
Natural England

Liz Loughran
Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Sara McGuckin
Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Clive Mitchell
NatureScot

Samantha Morgan

JNCC

Jem Powell
JNCC staff Observer

Tracey Quince
JNCC

Beth Stoker
JNCC

Dave Stone
JNCC

Marja Van den Houten
JNCC

Sarah Wood
Natural Resources Wales

Steve Wilkinson
JNCC

Emma Wright
Leadership staff observer

Apologies

Members

Cath Denholm
Independent member

Rhys Jones
Natural Resources Wales

Attendees

Lynn Heeley
JNCC

1. Chairman's opening remarks

- 1.1 Charles Banner welcomed everyone to day 2 of the 137th meeting of the Joint Committee.

2. Declaration of interests

- 2.1 No new declarations were made.

3. Feedback on SP3 Engagement Event (Official) (Oral)

- 3.1 The item was introduced by Dave Stone, who thanked members for a rich discussion on this key strategic priority. Dave gave a brief presentation on the conclusions from the discussion the previous day. The presentation set the outputs into a theories of change process which identified activities, outputs, short, medium, and long-term outcomes, and the vision for strategic priority 3. The theories of change slide can be found in Annex 1. Dave explained that outputs from the engagement event would now be discussed by the Executive Leadership team (ELT) to agree further acceleration and would be circulated to members after the meeting.

3.2 In discussing the engagement event, members made the following comments:

- i. The event was a useful exercise to see where the Committee can add value given the range of opportunities, gaps, and risks. For future events more use could be made of discussion boards with the event split into discussion and reflection.
- ii. A more articulated statement on climate change, spatial scales and timescales would help staff understand the concepts.
- iii. The data over the last 40 years shows clear impacts on biodiversity and climate change. Reviewing the evidence to identify the key effects of climate change on biodiversity was important.
- iv. There were multiple benefits from adaptations, particularly land use change for JNCC.
- v. Communication was a key tool in explaining the impact nature can have on climate change. Biodiversity and nature interact with climate change and are not victims of climate change. This should be communicated with clarity to both houses of Parliament.
- vi. Mainstreaming strategic priority 3 as a golden thread through all of JNCC's work was critical and should be included in all three roadmaps. The Executive should however be mindful of duplicating the work of others in this space and target resources effectively. Gemma and Charles should meet with Chris Stark, CEO of the Climate Change Committee (CCC), to discuss the work being undertaken by both organisations. Members noted CCC now had an ecological team. Committee was asked to consider others that should be engaged in discussions.
- vii. Joint Committee should be presented with a paper in March setting out in more detail, what will be delivered to implement strategic priority 3. Clive Mitchell agreed to co-author the paper with Dave Stone.

3.3 In conclusion, Committee welcomed the opportunity to input into the work to implement strategic priority 3, noting the rich discussion at the engagement event. This area of work was a big space where identifying who was doing what would be challenging. Discussions with CCC were an important part of the process and should be prioritised. In the UK context, there was valuable work JNCC could do in this space on behalf of the country nature conservation bodies.

Action point(s)
AP03. Dave Stone to circulate the presentation on conclusions from the event.
AP04. Charles Banner and Gemma Harper to meet with Chris Stark to discuss the climate change work being undertaken by both organisations to avoid duplication.
AP05. Dave Stone and Clive Mitchell to co-author a paper for the March meeting on implementing strategic priority 3.

4. Climate change and migratory species (Official-Sensitive) (JNCC 23 54I)

4.1 The item was taken in confidence.

5. Reports from the three thematic Joint Committee sub-groups (Official-Sensitive) (Oral)

5.1 This item was taken in confidence.

6. Strategic updates from around the UK (Official-sensitive) (Oral)

6.1 This item was taken in confidence.

7. Report From the Chief Scientists Group (Official-Sensitive) (JNCC 23 56D)

7.1 This item was taken in confidence.

8. JNCC's Business Plan 2024/2025 (Official-Sensitive) (JNCC 23 57P)

8.1 This item was taken in confidence.

9. Joint Committee forward programme (Official) (JNCC 23 58D)

9.1 Committee **discussed** and **agreed** the forward programme contained in Annex 1, noting the list of engagement event themes in Annex 2 (table 1) and the dates and locations of Committee meetings for 2023-24 in Annex 2 (table 2).

9.2 Charles noted that the balance of in-person and virtual meetings would be further discussed once the new Chair was in place.

10. Any other business (Official)

10.1 Sarah Wood informed members that the Welsh liaison lead Becky Phillips would be leaving JNCC at the end of the month. Sarah thanked Becky on behalf of

Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government for her hard work. This was echoed by members.

- 10.2 Charles welcomed feedback from Committee observers, Jem Powell, Jane Hawkrige, Emma Wright and from the Joint Committee's boardroom apprentice Rebecca Grattage. Jane reflected that she was pleased to act as an observer and had found the discussions to be rich, particularly in relation to climate change. Jem reflected that she was finding the observer programme to be both rewarding and beneficial and insightful to hear discussions. Emma reflected that she would be encouraging other members of staff to join the observer programme and was looking forward to seeing how the discussions would filter down into team workplans. Rebecca reflected that she had found the discussions interesting and useful.
- 10.3 The next main meeting of the Joint Committee would take place on Wednesday 6th and Thursday 7th March in Cardiff. Charles reminded members to leave time in their diaries for the field trip on the 5th and the engagement event on the 6th.