



Minutes of the 135th meeting of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Confirmed

Date: 7th June 2023 (Day one of a two-part meeting).

Time: 11:00

Venue: Northern Counties Ballroom, Bishopsgate Hotel, 24 Bishop Street, Londonderry, BT48 6PP

Present

Members

Professor Melanie Austen
Independent member

Mr Charles Banner
Independent member

Lord Blencathra
Natural England

Ms Cath Denholm
Independent member

Professor Colin Galbraith
Independent Chair

Professor Pete Higgins (from item 7)
NatureScot

Professor Tom Meagher
Independent member

Professor Julian Orford
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Professor Steve Ormerod
Natural Resources Wales

Attendees

Ms Natalie Askew
JNCC

Mr David Collins
JNCC

Tracey Elliott
JNCC

Dr John Goold
JNCC

Rebecca Grattage
Board apprentice

Dr Gemma Harper
JNCC

Mr Mark Hammond
DAERA

Lynn Heeley
JNCC

Dr Tim Hill
Natural England

Ms Ruth Jenkins
Natural Resources Wales

Dr Sara McGuckin
Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Ms Tracey Quince
JNCC

Dr Dave Stone
JNCC

Ms Beth Stoker
JNCC

Dr Steve Wilkinson
JNCC

Apologies

Ms Aoife Martin
NatureScot

Mr Chris Collins
Natural Resources Wales

Sir David Henshaw
Natural Resources Wales

Ms Eileen Stuart
NatureScot

Ms Helen Wilkinson
Natural Resources Wales

1. Closed session

- 1.1. There are no minutes for this item.

2. Chairman's opening remarks

- 2.1. Professor Galbraith welcomed members and attendees to the 135th meeting.
- 2.2. Professor Galbraith reminded members that this was his last meeting as Chair of JNCC. Further information about the plan for succession will be confirmed as information becomes available.
- 2.3. Professor Galbraith expressed his thanks to the Chairs and CEOs of the SNCBs for their input into the meeting on 6th June.

3. Declaration of interests

- 3.1. No additional declarations were made. Members were reminded of the need to keep their declarations up to date and to advise the Governance team of any new declarations as soon as they occur.

4. Confidential minutes of the March 2023 Meeting (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 20D)

- 4.1. This item was taken in confidence.

5. Matters arising (Official) (JNCC 23 21P)

- 5.1. There were no matters arising for this meeting.
- 5.2. Professor Ormerod requested JNCC liaise with Natural Resources Wales regarding the planned ARAC meeting in Bangor in November 2023 and Joint Committee meeting in Cardiff in March 2024.
- 5.3. Professor Austen requested that AP12 from the March 2022 meeting be closed as this has been superseded by AP01 from the March 2023 meeting.
- 5.4. Members **noted** the paper and confirmed they were content with the progress

made on outstanding actions to date.

Action point(s)
AP01 Governance Team to liaise with NRW regarding the planned ARAC meeting in Bangor in November 2023 and Joint Committee meeting in Cardiff in March 2024.
AP02 Governance Team to amend action point table to show that AP12 from the March 2022 meeting has been superseded by AP01 from the March 2023 meeting.

6. CEO report (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 22P)

6.1 This item was taken in confidence.

7. Report from Chief Scientists Group (Official) (JNCC 23 22P)

7.1 The item was introduced by Professor Stone who commented on the change in the work of CSG from a reactive to a proactive approach. This has been particularly reflected in recent workshops. The workshops have identified opportunities for JNCC along with opportunities for collaboration.

7.2 CSG have discussed recruitment and career paths within the sector and challenges that are being faced. A collective supportive approach between the SNCBs has been suggested.

7.3 CSG have agreed that an annual horizon planning paper will be provided to the Joint Committee for discussion which will be produced following horizon scanning and forward look discussions at CSG.

7.4 Joint Committee members raised the following in relation to the paper:

- i. Horizon scanning is a 'thing of the moment', with Bill Sutherland's work in ecology cited as an example. CSG were encouraged to take a structured approach to establishment of the future horizon and to select a top 10 to tackle. Horizon landscape analysis could identify areas to develop and feed into UKRI. Horizon scanning should not be completed in isolation – it could present an opportunity to work with Research Councils.
- ii. Members of the Joint Committee offered to assist and contribute to workshops as well as engaging with the academic community. Governance at different levels will form a strong part of implementation.
- iii. The use of joint appointments with universities was raised as a way to fill vacancies where relevant.
- iv. JNCC is not currently represented on the UKRI RIDE forum. There is a need to ensure programmes are UK focused and meet needs across the four countries. Dr Harper agreed to follow up on this and continue to develop a relationship into UKRI.

- v. One key area to influence agendas was through thematic programmes and to consider how these address themes. Being involved in development.
- 7.5 Members suggested CSG could provide a steer on how bureaucracy could be reduced to assist in action to tackle the current nature loss crises. Lord Blencathra suggested that JNCC’s scientists could play a more public role.
- 7.6 The Committee noted the report from the Chief Scientists Group and welcomed the planned paper on horizon scanning, agreeing that this should become an annual item presented to the Joint Committee. Members welcomed the plan for increased engagement with UKRI.

Action point(s)
AP03 Dr Harper to follow up on JNCC inclusion in the UKRI RIDE forum and continue to develop relationship with UKRI.

8. The role of JNCC within the context of CBD Global Biodiversity Framework Commitments – updates on actions agreed at the March engagement event (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 24D)

8.1 This item was taken in confidence.

9. Species Monitoring – investment in surveillance schemes (Official-Sensitive) (JNCC 23 025D)

9.1 This item was taken in confidence.

10. Delivery of Welsh Offshore Renewable Energy casework advice (Official-Sensitive) (JNCC 23 26I)

10.1 This item was taken in confidence.

11. Discussion on the afternoon engagement event (Official) (Oral)

11.1 Dr Wilkinson introduced the item.

11.2 The engagement event is intended to highlight the complexity of how targets are defined by multiple countries and how these could be drawn into a coherent response from the UK. 3 targets will be focused on in group discussion. Joint Committee members were asked to assist in facilitating the groups, with ELT taking

notes and feeding back.

- 11.3 An update on attendees was provided by Dr McGuckin, with confirmation that work to meet targets for Northern Ireland would be completed by several agencies and not just by NIEA.
- 11.4 The first part of the Joint Committee meeting closed and members were thanked for their contributions.



Minutes of the 135th meeting of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Confirmed

Date: 8th June 2023 (Day two of a two-part meeting).

Time: 09:30

Venue: Northern Counties Ballroom, Bishopsgate Hotel, 24 Bishop Street, Londonderry, BT48 6PP

Present

Members

Professor Melanie Austen
Independent member

Mr Charles Banner
Independent member

Lord Blencathra
Natural England

Ms Cath Denholm
Independent member

Professor Colin Galbraith
Independent Chair

Professor Pete Higgins
NatureScot

Professor Tom Meagher
Independent member

Professor Julian Orford
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Professor Steve Ormerod
Natural Resources Wales

Attendees

Ms Amy Arnott (all items, except item 5)
JNCC

Ms Natalie Askew
JNCC

Mr David Collins
JNCC

Ms Tracey Elliott
JNCC

Dr John Goold
JNCC

Ms Rebecca Grattage
Board apprentice

Dr Gemma Harper
JNCC

Mr Mark Hammond
DAERA

Ms Lynn Heeley
JNCC

Dr Tim Hill
Natural England

Ms Ruth Jenkins
Natural Resources Wales

Dr Sara McGuckin
Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Ms Tracey Quince
JNCC

Dr Dave Stone
JNCC

Ms Beth Stoker
JNCC

Dr Steve Wilkinson
JNCC

Apologies

Ms Aoife Martin
NatureScot

Sir David Henshaw
Natural Resources Wales

Mr Chris Collins
Natural Resources Wales

Ms Eileen Stuart
NatureScot

Ms Helen Wilkinson
Natural Resources Wales

1. Chairman's opening remarks

1.1 Professor Galbraith welcomed everyone to day 2 of the 134th meeting of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

2. Declaration of interests

2.1 No new declarations were made.

3. Feedback on the engagement event (Official-sensitive) (Oral)

3.1 This item was taken in confidence.

4. Developing JNCC's Communications Strategy and approach to external engagement (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 27P)

4.1 This item was taken in confidence.

5. Update on Defra Groups Corporate Services (onboarding) (Official-Sensitive) (JNCC 23 28D) RESTRICTED PAPER

5.1 This item was taken in confidence.

6. Report from the three thematic Joint Committee sub-groups) (Official-Sensitive) (JNCC 23 29P)

6.1 This item was taken in confidence.

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

7.1 This item was taken in confidence.

8. Performance report for year ended 31 March 2023 (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 30D)

8.1 This item was taken in confidence.

9. Joint Committee forward programme (Official) (JNCC23 31D)

9.1 Committee noted the forward programme.

9.2 The next meeting will be held in JNCC's offices in Aberdeen. Committee hoped there would be an opportunity to engage with staff based there. Members noted that the engagement event would be focused on strategic priority 2, looking at the international marine area, including OSPAR quality status report, deep sea mining and GBF targets from a marine perspective. Field trip options would be explored.

9.3 Members noted the Holyrood event planned for 21 September where JNCC and NatureScot will showcase joint working between NatureScot and JNCC in delivery of CoP15's Global Biodiversity Framework and the developing Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

10. Any Other Business (Official) (Oral)

10.1 Committee thanked Professor Galbraith for his service to the Joint Committee for the past 8 years and for his excellent chairmanship over the past 2 and a half years.

10.2 Professor Galbraith thanked members for their kind words and wished the Committee well for the future.