



Minutes of the 134th meeting of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Confirmed

Date: 8 March 2023 (Day one of a two-part meeting).

Time: 11:00

Venue: Virtually, via MS Teams

Present

Members

Professor Melanie Austen
Independent member

Mr Charles Banner
Independent member

Lord Blencathra
Natural England

Ms Cath Denholm
Independent member

Professor Clare Fitzsimmons
Natural England

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 (from item 6)
Natural Resources Wales

Attendees

Ms Natalie Askew
JNCC

Mr David Collins
JNCC

Dr John Goold
JNCC

Rebecca Grattage
Board apprentice

Dr Gemma Harper
JNCC

Lynn Heeley
JNCC

Dr Tim Hill
Natural England

Dr Sara McGuckin
Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Ms Tracey Quince
JNCC

Dr Dave Stone
JNCC

Ms Eileen Stuart
NatureScot

Dr Steve Wilkinson
JNCC

Observers

Dr Hilary Kirkpatrick
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Apologies

Ms Aoife Martin
NatureScot

Sir David Henshaw
Natural Resources Wales

Mr Chris Collins
Natural Resources Wales

Bethany Stoker
JNCC

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 134th meeting.
- 2.2. Members were reminded to advise the Governance Team of non-attendance at meetings sufficiently far in advance to ensure quoracy and to also advise of any amendments to meeting minutes in advance so they may be incorporated into the minutes paper for the subsequent meeting.
- 2.3. Members were advised of a very constructive meeting between Professor Galbraith and Minister Harrison on 7th February. The Minister has been invited to the strategy launch on 22nd May.
- 2.4. Professor Austen steps down as an independent member of the Joint Committee on 31 March. Professor Galbraith thanked Professor Austen for her exemplary work over the past five years.
- 2.5. Members welcomed Dr Dave Stone as JNCC's new Chief Scientist.
- 2.6. Members welcomed the letter from Minister Harrison on 7th February which thanked JNCC for its work in providing technical advice to inform Government positions, and to support negotiations at COP19, COP14 and COP15.
- 2.7. Professor Galbraith informed members that he had given evidence to the Scottish Government's Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee meeting on 7th March in relation to the agenda item "Outcomes of the 15th UN Conference on Biodiversity". The session had been positive and supportive of the work of JNCC and NatureScot.

3. Declaration of interests

- 3.1. Professor Austen declared membership of the Land, Nature and Adapted Systems Advisory Group (LNAS AG), set up by Defra and the Green Finance Institute in

direct response to recommendations made by the Green Technical Advisory Group (GTAG).

- 3.2. 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 November 2022 Meeting (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 04D)

- 4.1 This item was taken in confidence.

5. Matters arising (Official) (JNCC 23 05P)

- 5.1. There were no matters arising for this meeting.
- 5.2. Members noted the paper and were content with the progress made on outstanding actions.

6. Global nature: context and implications for the UK (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 06P)

- 6.1 This item was taken in confidence.

7. JNCC Strategy 2030 – “Together for Nature” (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 07D)

- 7.1 This item was taken in confidence.

8. Report from three thematic Joint Committee sub-groups (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 08P)

- 8.1 This item was taken in confidence.

9. Strategic updates from around the UK (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 09P)

- 9.1 This item was taken in confidence.

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

10.1 Dr Wilkinson gave a brief summary of the purpose of the engagement theme planned for the afternoon. The event would focus on the role of JNCC within the context of CBD Global Biodiversity Framework commitments. Three key risks had been identified around the UK implementation,

- i. Whether there is sufficient shared and consistent ambition across the four countries in how it will be implemented.
- ii. Ensuring that there is a robust route to efficiently assess and demonstrate progress towards implementation.
- iii. Whether the overall ambition set by the countries is sufficient to genuinely enable nature recovery across the UK.

10.2 Dr Wilkinson explained the structure of the engagement session with presentations on global targets and the main opportunities and potential risks within the agreed CBD targets particularly from the perspective of implementation within the UK; the current status of emerging strategies across the four countries; and the current process to develop a set of UK indicators and emerging activity within the four countries. The event would also include an update on the work JNCC has been doing with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) and the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) to assess the impact of interventions on biodiversity across the UK. In the discussion session, members will be asked to consider the profile and role the Joint Committee would like to have within a UK context and what steps should be taken to build this. Members would also be asked to consider the breadth of the role and to what extent should the plan for implementing JNCC's strategy reflect the wider UK plan for implementing CBD commitments.



Minutes of the 134th meeting of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Confirmed

Date: 9 March 2023 (Day two of a two-part meeting).

Time: 09:30

Venue: Virtually, via MS Teams

Present

Members

Professor Melanie Austen
Independent member

Mr Charles Banner (Items 1 and 5 only)
Independent member

Lord Blencathra
Natural England

Ms Cath Denholm
Independent member

Professor Clare Fitzsimmons
Natural England

Professor Colin Galbraith
Independent Chair

Professor Pete Higgins
NatureScot

Ms Aoife Martin
NatureScot

Professor Tom Meagher
Independent member

Professor Julian Orford
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Professor Steve Ormerod (from item 4)
Natural Resources Wales

Attendees

Natalie Askew
JNCC

Mr David Collins
JNCC

Dr John Goold
JNCC

Rebecca Grattage
Boardroom apprentice

Dr Gemma Harper (from item 7)
JNCC

Lynn Heeley
JNCC

Dr Tim Hill
Natural England

Dr Sara McGuckin
Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr Clive Mitchell
NatureScot

Ms Tracey Quince
JNCC

Dave Stone
JNCC

Ms Eileen Stuart
NatureScot

Dr Steve Wilkinson
JNCC

Observers

Dr Hilary Kirkpatrick
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Apologies

Sir David Henshaw
Natural Resources Wales

Mr Chris Collins
Natural Resources Wales

Dr Gemma Harper
JNCC

Ms Eileen Stuart
NatureScot

Bethany Stoker
JNCC

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 CBD engagement event (Official-sensitive) (Oral)

- 3.1 This item was taken in confidence.

4. JNCC business plan 2023 to 2024 including budget scenarios (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 10D)

- 4.1 This item was taken in confidence.

5. Reports from ARAC and People Committee (Official-sensitive) (Presentation)

- 5.1 This item was taken in confidence.

6. Risk management in JNCC (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 12D)

6.1 This item was taken in confidence.

7. Performance report for Q3 2022 to 2023, including CEO report (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 13D)

7.1 This item was taken in confidence.

8. Organisational development update (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 14D)

8.1 This item was taken in confidence.

9. Joint Committee working objectives (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 23 15D)

9.1 This item was taken in confidence.

10. Joint Committee forward programme (Official) (JNCC23 16D)

10.1 Professor Galbraith informed members that the next meeting in June would be in Derry/Londonderry on 7th and 8th June. The engagement event theme would be monitoring and volunteer networks. This would build on the March engagement theme and look at how the relationship between the countries and JNCC is working to deliver the UK context and the UK view.

10.2 Dates for future meetings through to 2025 had been set and any clashes with country board meetings had been avoided. The March 2024 meeting was to take place in Wales. It was agreed that Mrs Quince should liaise with relevant staff in Wales to secure a venue.

11. Oral update on JNCC's convening role and two-year engagement and comms plan (Official) (Oral)

- 11.1 Mr Collins provided members with an update on the forthcoming paper on JNCC's convening role and two-year engagement and comms plan. A Committee workshop to explore the communications area in more detail and generate ideas for raising the profile and developing a new communications and engagement strategy was planned for April. Work was already underway with the Communications Team working more closely with Directors and Team Leaders to identify key engagement events and structural and resource changes in the Communications team were planned to put more resource into stakeholder engagement and build capability, capacity and resilience in the team.
- 11.2 Mr Collins explained that the paper to be presented in June would focus on why and how JNCC will raise its profile and where the focus of engagement should be and with whom and how the effectiveness of those relationships would be measured going forward.
- 11.3 Committee noted that being clear about what is meant by raising the profile was important alongside how more impact in the communications and engagement space would be delivered and the mechanisms and tools needed to deliver the vision. Where JNCC wants its impact to be and who those audiences are should be clearly identified in a stakeholder relationship plan or strategy. A multi-channel approach was vital, using social media alongside traditional print media and television to reach respective communities. Looking at how other similar organisations and larger NGO's communicate and get their messages out would help inform thinking.
- 11.4 In conclusion, Committee agreed the importance of getting the communications piece right and that this should be a priority over the next couple of months to maximise the impact of the new JNCC strategy. New practices and ways of working were needed to deliver a more planned and thought-through approach. Designing communications input at an early stage for each event was vital to ensure key messages were conveyed in an appropriate way. The workshop planned for April should focus on priorities and tactics with some clear outputs on the way forward for the Executive to implement. The Executive should also give some thought to who should attend the workshop to ensure expected outcomes.

12. Any Other Business (Official) (Oral)

- 12.1 Professor Galbraith informed members that this would be Dr Kirkpatrick's final meeting as she stepped down from her role as Chair of the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC). Professor Galbraith and Dr Harper thanked her for her hard work and dedication to the Committee over the past 9 years and in particular her work on biodiversity, climate change and pollution. Professor Galbraith asked Dr McGuckin to confirm Dr Kirkpatrick's departure in writing following the meeting.

- 12.2 Professor Austen informed members that this would be her final meeting as an independent member of the Joint Committee as she was to take up a new role on Natural England (NE) Board from 1 April. Professor Austen would return to the Joint Committee as NE's second member on 1 April, replacing Professor Fitzsimmons. Professor Galbraith thanked Professor Fitzsimmons for her work on the Committee over the past few months.
- 12.3 Professor Galbraith noted that 2022-2023 had been a particularly busy and demanding year for staff and the excellent delivery from JNCC in very difficult post-Covid circumstances. He thanked the staff for their efforts and achievements in 2022/23.

Action point(s)
AP19 Ms McGuckin to arrange for a formal letter to be sent to Professor Galbraith to confirm that Dr Kirkpatrick's term as Chair of CNCC had concluded.