

**Ratified**

**COUNCIL FOR NATURE CONSERVATION AND THE COUNTRYSIDE  
RECORD OF ISSUES COVERED BY CORRESPONDENCE  
(190th MEETING)**

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021

**Papers were issued to CNCC members on 8<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021 and the business was conducted by correspondence and virtual meeting. The minutes reflect this way of working.**

<p><u>Members</u> Dr. A.H. Kirkpatrick (Chair) O. Murnion E.S. Smyth</p>	<p><u>Officials</u> Ms. Helen Anderson – DAERA Dr. Sara McGuckin - DAERA Ms. Pauline Campbell - DAERA Ms. Hilary Carson - Secretariat Ms. Oonagh Murray – Secretariat</p>
<p><b>1. Apologies</b> Mr. K Bradley</p>	
<p><b>2. Declarations of interest</b></p> <p>2.1 Due to the CNCC Chair experiencing IT technical difficulties at the start of the meeting Mr. Murnion agreed to temporarily Chair the meeting. Members had been asked for declarations of interest before 12.00 on 13<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021 and there were no declarations of interest in relation to agenda items. Mr. Murnion reminded Council that in relation to bovine TB he is a cattle farmer.</p>	
<p><b>3. Minutes of last meeting</b></p> <p>3.1 These were agreed as a correct record.</p>	
<p><b>4. Welcome, Chair’s report and JNCC update</b></p>	

- 4.1 The Chair joined the meeting at 10.40, welcomed everyone and thanked Mr. Murnion for chairing the meeting until that point.
- 4.2 The Chair gave the Members an update on the progress towards appointment of a new Deputy chair and Members and asked that the minutes formally recorded thanks to all those in DAERA Public Appointments and CPANI who were involved in the process, together with the other members of the panel who interviewed the applicants. The Minister has now appointed a Deputy chair and nine Members but there are a small number of steps still to complete before these can be announced.
- 4.3 The Chair drew the attention to Members to the ongoing work at UK and devolved level in relation to CoP15 and CoP26 and highlighted that the first revised first draft of the Global Biodiversity Framework had come out on 12th July 2021. At CoP26 in Glasgow 6th November will be 'Nature Day'. The Chair also highlighted the significance of the 'Nature 2030' document launched on 22nd September and promoting the contribution nature-based solutions can make in tackling the climate and biodiversity crises. The Chair noted that Members had received a copy with their meeting paperwork and drew their attention to the NIEA input.
- 4.4 The Chairs of the three SACs (HMC HBC and CNCC) had held a meeting and were looking at areas of potential mutual interest.
- 4.5 Emily Smyth stated that she was she was unaware of the departure of former Members in February and she was not happy with the lack of communication from the Chair and CNCC. The Chair responded by stating that all CNCC papers had been sent to her by e-mail and that this information should have been recorded in the minutes from the CNCC meeting in January 2021.

**Action Point (4.5 of 15/10/2021): - Chair and Secretariat to double check on**

whether the information on the departure of other Members was recorded in the minutes and on the extent of communication with Emily Smyth.

## **5. Matters Arising – Chair**

### **Actions from previous meetings.**

- 5.1 The Chair to take information on marine skills from the CNCC skills audit to MCWG. – **This will be progressed in the context of the incoming Council skills audit (close).**
- 5.2 Chair to forward a copy of the public realm document to Helen Anderson (completed) for consideration of issue to Biodiversity Officers in Councils. **Ongoing – Chair has raised the matter with the Chair of the Biodiversity Forum and will progress it when it next meets.**
- 5.3 Chair to issue agreed paper on microplastics to Helen Anderson. The Chair reported that there has been ongoing input from MCWG but the final draft has not been agreed. – **Ongoing.**
- 5.4 CNCC as a statutory advisory body to the Department and how it can feed into ongoing discussions/meetings and various interactions within the Department re: climate change, agricultural policy and the air quality strategy (ammonia) to ensure a higher profile for these issues, and enable a successful outcome for the environment. CNCC to have the opportunity to highlight concerns with Directors from EMFG and the Departmental Board. Chair to write to Minister to press CNCC critical issues for departmental consideration. – **Ongoing and to be progressed with the new Council.**
- 5.5 Chair to circulate to Council the updated version of the strategic priorities document (post 15/5/2020) when this has been updated. – **Ongoing and to be progressed with the new Council.**
- 5.6 CNCC advice to DAERA on Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and Climate Change. Members were asked to indicate by correspondence whether they wished the

topic to be raised with the Local Biodiversity Forum wither via a letter or as an agenda item at its next meeting. Professor Christie suggested a letter would be the most appropriate means. Professor Orford took the view that the topic should be raised as an agenda item at the next local Biodiversity Forum meeting. CNCC Chair to write to the Chair of the Local Biodiversity Forum. **Ongoing (Chair has contacted the Chair of the Local Biodiversity Forum but COVID is impacting on meetings).**

5.7 Chair to re-visit the matters arising, particularly the action on microplastics to see that it is possible to progress – **Ongoing (action 5.1 of the meeting on 27/11/2020).**

5.8 Chair/Secretariat to see if more information can be located on the forestry EIA consultations – as per email from Dr McGuckin on 29/1/2021 ‘John Farren would have more info on this’ – **Ongoing (action 6.1 of the meeting on 27/11/2020).**

5.9 Chair/Secretariat to liaise with officials in relation to adding the matter of future forestry and peatland restoration to an agenda for a future meeting of the CNCC – **Ongoing (action 6.2.2 of the meeting on 27/11/2020). COP15 and 26 will impact on this policy area.**

5.10 Dr McGuckin to forward publication to Secretariat – **Ongoing (action 9.1 of the meeting on 27/11/2020).**

5.11 The Policy Fellows to be invited to a future meeting of CNCC – **Ongoing – (Review action in the light of the timetable for new appointments and ongoing work plan). Closed**

5.12 Dr McGuckin to provide an update to CNCC on the procedures in relation to contractors undertaking works on designated sites – **Ongoing (action 9.5 of the meeting on 27/11/2020) – Completed**

5.13 Chair/Hilary Carson to take forward with relevant officials the issue of any gaps in CNCC representation on groups, in particular the EU monitoring committees

until the appointments process for new members has been completed. This is being actively monitored for risks – **Ongoing (action 6.2 of the meeting on 29/1/2021) This is being progressed with SEUPB in conjunction with the appointments process.**

5.14 First tranche of the NI Priority Species Review **(action 7.1 of the meeting on 26/3/ 2021).** CNCC to provide their views/endorse the proposal by 30/6/2021. **Completed.**

5.15 Pauline Campbell to send a copy of the powerpoint presentation for circulation to members. **(action 7.4 of the meeting on 26/3/2021). Completed.**

5.16 Pauline Campbell to look into whether more material is available on the relationship between the history of the site and the environment – **(action 8.1 of the meeting on 26/3/2021). Ongoing.**

5.17 Pauline Campbell to find out more about the meadow management – **(action 8.1.1 of the meeting on 26/3/2021). Ongoing.**

## **6. Meeting Reports – Chair**

6.1 The Chair advised that meeting reports had been circulated and asked for any questions. Members indicated they had none.

## **7. Consultations - Chair**

7.1 Members reviewed the forthcoming public consultations. The Chair reminded Members of the limited resources CNCC had to respond until new Members were in place. Emily Smyth stated that she would like sight of the recent consultations especially the one she had provided input to.

**Action Point (7.1 of 15/10/2021): - Chair and Secretariat** to check what has been sent out and respond.

## 8. Nature Positive 2030 Report - Chair

8.1 The Nature Positive Report was included with the meeting papers and the Chair drew Council's attention to the significance of the document and asked if they were content for it to be publicised by putting it on the CNCC Website. Members indicated they were in agreement.

**Action Point (8.1 of 15/10/2021) Secretariat** to arrange for the report to be put on the CNCC website.

8.2 Helen Anderson stressed the evidence-based approach of the Nature Positive 2030 and highlighted the involvement of young people in the foreword. She also noted it is a very accessible document to the wider public and that a video has been produced to accompany it.

Dr. McGuckin joined the meeting at 11am

8.3 Dr. McGuckin reminded Council of the significance of the 'Leaders' Pledge' that 90 countries had signed up to. She noted the nine priority actions. Dr. McGuckin stressed that the purpose of the Nature 2030 report was to highlight what can be achieved and show good practice in relation to nature-based solutions. In response to a Member's question Helen Anderson stated that the report is released under NIEA authorship but the DAERA Minister has commended it.

8.4 Emily Smyth commented that despite the example of having nature-based solutions by default when she had promoted these in her profession as a landscape architect she often got a response that only actual *commitments* by Government would be enacted. She therefore wanted to know how to get everybody to accept nature-based solutions by default. In replying, Dr. McGuckin stressed that the aim of the Nature 2030 report was to demonstrate effective case studies and that in broad terms following COP agreements there would have to be mainstreaming of these commitments into Government policy. There was still a lot of work to be done.

8.5 Mr. Murnion asked about carbon credits and farming and the long-term

Government view on these. Dr. McGuckin highlighted the Woodland and the Peatland Code as relevant. She stressed that the carbon perspective will be looked at as future schemes are developed. She is involved in work related to the financing of UK Nature Recovery and a report will issue shortly. The Chair stressed the complexity of the topic and noted it could not be resolved in the time available today.

**Action Point (8.5 of 15/10/2021)** – Dr. McGuckin to send secretariat a link to the report on financing nature recovery when it is published.

**Pauline Campbell joined the meeting at 11.20**

**9. Blackhead Path Local Nature Reserve (Mid and East Antrim) – Pauline Campbell**

9.1 Pauline Campbell gave an overview of the site and Council endorsed the declaration as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). The Chair thanked Ms. Campbell for her presentation.

9.2 Ms. Campbell responded to some questions from Members explaining that the site had no other designations and the declaration had been welcomed by the community. Members stressed the importance of a management plan with sufficient funding to effect change.

**10. Departmental Update – Helen Anderson**

10.1 The bovine TB consultation on an eradication strategy for NI closed on the 10th September. It outlined what has been done to date, what the Minister intends to do in relation to enhanced testing, partnership working, improving herd health and biosecurity and research. The consultation asked for views on the use of gamma testing, the testing of non-bovines, badger intervention and changes to compensation. There were 3,367 responses. Officials have been analysing these. The Minister will consider the responses along with relevant scientific evidence and the Strategy business case which looked at a range of options before coming to a decision on the way forward.

10.2 The Future Policy Framework Portfolio has been published. This sets out an agricultural policy framework for Northern Ireland, taking into account the views of key food, farming and environmental stakeholders from an engagement exercise undertaken in 2018. The Department is continuing with policy considerations and consultation will follow in due course.

10.3 The Conference of the Parties on Biodiversity (COP 15) will now take place in two parts: a virtual format from 11-15th October 2021, and an in-person event from 25th April – 8th May 2022. Among the agenda items for COP 15 is the conclusion of negotiations on a post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The UN Biodiversity conference will convene governments from around the world to agree a new set of goals for nature over the next decade through the Convention on Biological Diversity post 2020 framework process. The framework sets out an ambitious plan to implement broad-based action to bring about a transformation in society's relationship with biodiversity and to ensure that, by 2050, the shared vision of living in harmony with nature is fulfilled. COP 26 on Climate Change is in Glasgow 31st October to 12th November 2021. The importance of nature and nature based solutions will be a key theme.

10.4 Natural Environment Division has joint authored the Nature Positive 2030 Report to be available for the UN General Assembly in September on the anniversary of the launch of the Leaders Pledge for Nature and the report will also feed into COP 15 and 26. Department officials are inputting into central government and Statutory Nature preparations for both of this COP and COP 26 on climate change.

10.5 The Minister has appointed a Deputy chair for CNCC but the name cannot yet be released as some paper work is still to be completed.

Ms. Anderson and Dr. McGuckin left the meeting at 11.20am



**11. Launch of the Future Agricultural Policy Framework – Chair**

11.1 The Chair give a brief introduction and opened up the subject for comment. Mr. Murnion considered that payment should focus on outcomes and that there was a need to consider the perspective of the farmer. He pointed out that agri-environment schemes had to be attractive to farmers.

11.2 Emily Smyth noted she was unable to open the relevant link and the Chair offered to send her a pdf version.

**Action (11.2 of 15/10/2021)** Chair to ensure Emily Smyth receives a pdf version of the Future Agricultural Policy document.

12. Date of next meeting – to be confirmed in light of new appointments.
