



## Joint Nature Conservation Committee 114th Meeting Minutes Confirmed

<b>Date:</b> 7 March 2018	<b>Time:</b> 09.00
<b>Venue:</b> Scottish Natural Heritage, Silvan House, Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT	

### Present

Professor Melanie Austen  
Independent member

Mr Charles Banner  
Independent member

Professor Ian Bateman  
Independent member

Professor Colin Galbraith  
Independent member

Professor Chris Gilligan  
Independent Chair

Dr Madeleine Havard  
Natural Resources Wales

Dr Joe Horwood  
Natural England

Dr Hilary Kirkpatrick  
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Professor Howard Platt  
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Dr Susan Walker  
Scottish Natural Heritage

### In attendance

Mr Colin Armstrong  
DAERA

Dr Steve Gibson  
JNCC

Dr John Goold  
JNCC

Dr Tim Hill  
Natural England

Ms Sue McQueen  
JNCC

Professor Christine Maggs  
JNCC

Mrs Tracey Quince  
JNCC

Mr Paul Rose  
JNCC

Ms Sally Thomas  
Scottish Natural Heritage

Mr Marcus Yeo  
JNCC

Dr Clare Whitfield (item 15 onwards)  
JNCC

## Apologies

### Members

Dr Mike Cantlay  
Scottish Natural Heritage

Diane McCrea  
Natural Resources Wales

Professor Marian Scott  
Independent member

### Attendees

Mr Mike Evans  
Natural Resources Wales

## 1. Chairman's opening remarks

- 1.1 Professor Gilligan welcomed Mr Banner and Professor Austen to their first meeting following appointment as independent Committee members in December. Each gave a brief introduction to their background and interests. Professor Scott, the third new independent Committee member, was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior engagement. Professor Gilligan informed members of the newly devised induction programme and encouraged all members to attend sessions where there were areas of interest. Mrs Quince would circulate the programme to all members.
- 1.2 This was Dr Walker's last meeting and Professor Gilligan thanked Dr Walker for her remarkable service over the past six years and for her contribution to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.
- 1.3 Professor Gilligan reported on his visit to the Welsh Government in January with Mr Yeo. They had met the Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths and Environment Minister Hannah Blythyn. The meeting had been positive with much support for JNCC's work.
- 1.4 Professor Gilligan had recently met Professor Ian Boyd, Defra Chief Scientific Adviser.
- 1.5 Professor Gilligan informed members of forthcoming JNCC conferences, in particular the *Beyond the Coast* conference being held at the University of Hull in June. The conference will bring together practitioners, academics and others to discuss key themes and to focus on progressive marine conservation in the UK's offshore marine environment. Members were welcome to attend.
- 1.6 Ms McQueen will be leaving JNCC in May. On behalf of the Committee, Professor Gilligan thanked Ms McQueen for her hard work, commitment and exceptional service over the past twenty years.

Action point(s)
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AP01. Mrs Quince to circulate the induction programme to all Committee members.
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## 2 Declaration of interests

2.1. No new declarations were made.

## 3 Confidential minutes of the November 2017 meeting (JNCC 18 02)

3.1 The minutes of the November meeting were approved with the following amendment:

- i. Paragraph 14.2 amended to 'The Committee discussed the changes to both documents and subject to final amendments approved them'.

## 4 Matters arising (JNCC 18 03)

- 4.1 There was one matter arising for this meeting relating to the development of a list of questions to be answered through academic partnerships. Members felt that the questions could be better framed to promote greater interest from potential academic partners. Professor Maggs was tasked with refining the questions.
- 4.2 The Committee noted the report of outstanding actions in Annex 1.
- 4.3 Professor Gilligan noted that JNCC had produced some succinct and elegantly presented publications to communicate the work of JNCC to stakeholders. It was agreed that the publications would be circulated to members and added to SharePoint.

Action point(s)
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AP02. Professor Maggs to further refine the research questions and present to the Joint Committee for discussion.
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AP03 Ms Elliott to circulate JNCC publications to members and add the documents to the Committee SharePoint site.
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## 5 Chief Executive's report on topical issues (official-sensitive) (JNCC 18 04)

5.1 This item was taken in confidence.

## 6 Report from Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Sub-Group (Official) (Oral report)

- 6.1 Dr Horwood reported that the MPA Sub-Group would be meeting that afternoon. The Sub-Group had made a recommendation that Professor Austen become a member of the group; the Joint Committee approved this appointment.
- 6.2 Recent discussions had centred on the accelerated timetable for the production of Conservation Objectives, the draft overview of JNCC advice on Marine Conservation Zones, and post-consultation advice on Braemar Pockmarks SAC and Scanner Pockmark SAC.

## 7 Report from ARAC (oral)

- 7.1 Professor Galbraith gave a presentation on the key issues discussed at the ARAC meeting on 6 March.
- 7.2 The meeting had focussed on a number of matters and the Committee was informed that:
- i. a new Interim Head of Finance and Planning, Shendi Keshet, had been appointed. Shendi will be focussing on producing the Annual Report and Accounts over the next few months;
  - ii. the risks around the UNICORN system for CITES would be kept on the radar. The risk would be noted in the Governance Statement for 2017/18;
  - iii. the draft internal audit strategy and plan for 2018/19 had been approved by ARAC subject to comments from EMB. The plan showed an increase in days and costs for internal audit but ARAC was comfortable with both. Internal audit would be brought in at an early stage to assure the new financial processes currently in development;
  - iv. ARAC had reviewed the findings in three audit reports: scientific evidence, key financial controls and contract management. The first two had received moderate assurance, with contract management receiving substantial assurance;
  - v. ARAC noted the severity of the risks around EU exit and that the risks extended beyond the 12 months covered by the register. Engagement with Defra and the devolved administrations would be maintained;
  - vi. ARAC was content with the draft significant risk register for 2018/19 and agreed to look at how the 2017/18 risks mapped on to the new risks. ARAC asked to be sighted on the corporate risk register in parallel with the significant risk register. The revised risk appetite was noted;
  - vii. ARAC considered the annual report on information management and noted the report on the cyber security incident. The welfare of staff involved in the investigation was discussed and ARAC was assured that line management and HR had worked closely together to minimise the impact on staff;
  - viii. ARAC raised some concerns over compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), but was assured that with some small risks JNCC would be ready when the regulation comes into force in May;

ix. ARAC had discussed the performance of internal audit over the past 12 months and was pleased to see a positive report, with the new Head of Internal Audit getting to grips with the complexity of JNCC quickly;

7.3 ARAC had recommended at the meeting that Charles Banner be appointed as a member of ARAC. The Joint Committee approved Mr Banner's appointment.

## **8 Report from Chief Scientists Group (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 18 05)**

8.1 This item was taken in confidence.

## **9 External factors affecting JNCC (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 18 06)**

9.1 This item was taken in confidence.

## **10 JNCC strategy: review of implementation (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 18 07)**

10.1 This item was taken in confidence.

## **11 Q3 performance report 2017/18 (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 18 08)**

11.1 This item was taken in confidence.

## **12 Business plan for 2018/19 (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 18 09)**

12.1 This item was taken in confidence.

## **13 Risk management in JNCC (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 18 10)**

13.1 This item was taken in confidence.

## **14 JNCC's Overseas Territories work programmes: current status and future opportunities (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 18 11)**

14.1 This item was taken in confidence.

## **15 Future directions for joint work on air pollution (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 18 12)**

15.1 This item was taken in confidence.

## **16 Update on JNCC's EU exit activities (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 18 13)**

16.1 This item was taken in confidence.

**17 Joint Committee objectives for 2017/18 and Committee's role in income generation (Official-Sensitive) (JNCC 18 14)**

17.1 This item was taken in confidence.

**18 Joint Committee sub-groups – structure and purpose (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 18 15)**

18.1 This item was taken in confidence.

**19 Joint Committee: outline forward programme 2018/19 (Official) (JNCC 18 16)**

19.1 Professor Gilligan informed the Committee that the plan was to produce a full 12-month forward programme. The Committee noted the forward programme and that the programme was well populated with governance items but work was required to add scientific and technical items.

**20 Any other business**

20.1 Nothing further was discussed.

20.2 The next meeting is to be held in Peterborough on 6-7 June 2018.