



Minutes

Extraordinary meeting of the Board

Thursday 22 January 2026

MS Teams

Members

Malcolm Beatty OBE	Board Member
Professor Liz Fisher	Board Member
Richard Greenhous	Chief of Staff
Julie Hill MBE	Board Member
Professor Dan Laffoley	Board Member
Dr Paul Leinster CBE	Board Member
Caroline May	Board Member
Natalie Prosser	Chief Executive
Dame Glenys Stacey	Chair

OEP Attendees

Dr Donnacha Doody	Head of Analysis (item 26.02)
Neil Emmott	Head of Monitoring Environmental Law (item 26.02)
Mike Fox	Head of Communications and Strategic Relations
Angel Lai	Head of Finance and Corporate Services
Andy Lester	Head of Business Strategy and Planning
Professor Robbie McDonald	Chief Insights Officers
REDACTED	Board Secretary and Private Office Manager
Helen Venn	Chief Regulatory Officer

26.01 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Paul Leinster attended from item 26.02.

Malcolm Beatty declared an interest in item 26.02 due to him administering Northern Ireland Agricultural Grants and Inspections during 2009-2011.

Donnacha Doody declared an interest in item 26.02 as he was involved in the development of the regulations in question.

26.02 Environmental Law Report – Nutrient Action Programme Regulations 2019

The Board had previously considered the draft findings, executive summary and draft recommendations of the project.

It was reminded of the context including the consequences of the issue of nutrient pollution on the environment in Northern Ireland. It was also reminded of ongoing proposals to review and update the regulations, led by the Minister. In this context, it considered the report which considers the adequacy of the current regulatory scheme.

This section has been redacted as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.

It was noted that the implementation of the existing scheme is not sufficient to address the extent of nutrient pollution challenges. The report under consideration highlights this concern.

The Board noted that its feedback had been reflected in the updated draft. The report now adopts a more constructive tone and acknowledges improvements already made within the agricultural sector.

Discussion focused on the implementation of existing regulations, which was identified as a primary problem. The recommendations in the report have been presented in a more direct and concise manner to reflect this

The Board noted that the topic of nutrient pollution remains contentious. The report has been carefully positioned in anticipation of public and stakeholder scrutiny. The communications team is assessing how this will inform our approach to engaging with stakeholders and public authorities.

As the Board requested, the declarations of potential conflicts of interest of all OEP staff are being reviewed.

The Board agreed with the recommendations to approve the report in substantially the form at Annex A (subject to only non-material amendments) and to delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair, ensuring that the final report has satisfactorily incorporated such amendments as the Board may direct.

26.03 Any other business

The Board was updated on the progress of the Annual Report and Accounts 24/25. The final report will now come to the Board for sign off via electronic business by 29 January.

It was noted that we are awaiting Defra's confirmation of the successful candidate for the Interim Chair position. If an update is not received by 28 January, a paper with a contingency plan will be sent to Board members by electronic business.

Dame Glenys was thanked by Board members for her work during her time with the OEP.