

MINUTES

All Party Group on Climate Action

7 June 2024 | 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

At: Virtual

Chair: Danny Donnelly MLA

Minutes: Nichola Hughes

Members in attendance: Danny Donnelly MLA (Chair), John Blair MLA, Cllr Lauren Kendall, Cllr Billy Webb, Cllr Roisin Lynch, Cllr Martin McKeever, Cllr Jay Burbank, Cllr Kurtis Dickson, Cllr Caitlin Deeney.

In attendance: Nichola Hughes, Ciara Brennan, James Orr, Andrew Wilson, John Barry, Colin Buick, Donal McP, Jack Armstrong, Adrian, Nick Hanrahan, Karl Beattie, Johnny Stewart, Joseph Carter, Ciara Robinson, Chris C, Amanda McLaughlin, Declan Allison, Sophie Brown, Eimear Montague, Abe Agnew, Brandon Andrews, Francesca Di Palo, Amy Bell, Shakheera Ross, Andy Frew, Rosemary Mulholland.

Apologies: Michelle McIlveen MLA, Harry Harvey MLA

Total attendees: **35**

1	Opening Remarks
1.1	Welcome & apologies
	Danny Donnelly (DD), Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were recorded.
1.2	Minutes of meeting on 3 May 2024
	Minutes of the meeting on 3 May were adopted: Proposed by John Blair MLA; Seconded by Cllr Lauren Kendall.
1.3	Matters arising
	No matters arising from the previous meeting.
2	What would an Independent Environmental Protection Agency look like for Northern Ireland?
	DD welcomed James Orr (JO) from Friends of the Earth and Dr Ciara Brennan (CB) from Environmental Justice Network Ireland who provided an overview of what an independent EPA for Northern Ireland might look like, why it is needed, essential components and next steps. The speakers highlighted that Northern Ireland

	<p>Environment Agency's position as environmental regulator is undermined due to its position within the Department of Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs (DAERA), the lack of separation between policy and regulatory roles and its lack of political independence.</p> <p>They noted the considerable support for the creation of an independent environmental regulator and that for an Environmental Protection Agency to be effective it must have the following key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It must be independent of government and operate without ministerial interference • It must be sufficiently funded and staffed • It must have inspection and enforcement powers • It must be responsible for both land and sea • It must have the authority to prosecute <p>See briefing.</p> <p>A group Q& A followed. See recording.</p> <p>DD thanked JO and CB for their contributions. He proposed writing a letter on behalf of the APG to the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, including a request for a future briefing on environmental governance.</p> <p>Action: DD to draft letter for approval at the next APG meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Lauren Kendall (LK) suggested a similar letter should be sent to councils to support the proposals through notices of motion.</p>
3	AOB
	<p>DD noted the date of the next meeting: Friday 2nd August 2024 @ 12 noon (Virtual).</p> <p>No further items of business.</p>
4	Close
	DD thanked everyone for attending. Meeting closed at 12.56.