

TEAGASC

414th Meeting of the Authority, 04 January 2023

Authority members present were: Mr Liam Herlihy, Chairman, Ms Martina Donnelly, Mr Pat Duffy, Ms Eilís O’Connell, Mr John Buckley, Professor Ger Fitzgerald, Mr Donald Scully, Mr Liam Woulfe, Ms Elizabeth Reynolds, and Mr Brian Rushe.

Apologies: Professor Thia Hennessy

Executives present were: Professor Frank O’Mara, Director; Mr Alan Phelan, Chief Operations Officer and Secretary to the Authority, and Mr Eric Donald, Head of Corporate Communications.

Ms Susan Kearney for Item 5.1

Ms Lorraine Ryan facilitated.

0. Declaration(s) of Interest(s)

None.

The Chairman welcomed the members and executive to the first meeting of the Authority in 2023. He noted apologies from Professor Hennessy and offered the sympathies of the Authority on her recent family bereavement. On behalf of the Authority he congratulated Professor Hennessy on her appointment to the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) Council.

1. Agenda

2. Minutes

2.1 Draft Minutes of Authority Meeting of 07 December 2022

The minutes of 07 December 2022 were approved on the proposition of Professor Fitzgerald and seconded by Mr Buckley.

2.2 Matters Arising from Minutes of 07 December 2022

None

3. Director’s Report

The Director in his report to the Authority noted:

- Teagasc met the Department on 21 December at which a discussion took place regarding MTL staff pay; the matter is ongoing.
- He referenced recent negative social media commentary on Teagasc research work on insect protein. The Director advised that the research project concerned is an EU-wide project and just one of over 500 ongoing Teagasc research projects. The Authority concurred that the project is within the remit of Teagasc independent research. The coverage emphasised the importance of careful wording in social media communications.
- The Director informed the Authority that Teagasc would further consider the format for its Dairy and Beef Conferences. It was important that these conferences remained flagship events that attracted both industry leaders and farmers.

- He noted his intention to commence a review of the Advisory service in the context of the exceptional level of Scheme demands on the service, the climate service demands and the importance of maintaining the capacity to provide farmers with a state of the art technical service. A shorter term plan would have to be put in place to address the immediate workload issues confronting advisory staff in 2023, as well as the longer term issues.
- Referring to SFI's Co-Centre Call ((i) Climate (ii) Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems), the Director said that Teagasc is collaborating with Queen's University on the Food Centre submission, however, the Climate Centre submission is more challenging in terms of identifying a collaborative partner in Northern Ireland. Therefore, it is unlikely Teagasc would be in a position to put forward a submission on this occasion.
- He congratulated Professor Catherine Stanton, Food Research, who has been declared 'best female scientist' in Ireland by Research.com.
- The Director advised that the Teagasc gender pay gap is 12%; a gradual improvement since 2017. The Authority welcomed the improvement and noted that this would continue to be an area of focus in the years ahead.
- 2022 was designated the Year of Diversity and Inclusion in Teagasc; It resulted in a number of major initiatives including surveys and related training for all staff in this area, managers also undertook three training modules and the organisation celebrated Pride for the first time. 2023 is dedicated to 'Teagasc Together' which is a central theme of the Teagasc Statement of Strategy.

3.1 Draft Corporate Risk Register 2023

The Corporate Risk Register was noted.

3.2 Health and Safety Reports

The report was noted.

4. Strategic Item

None

5.1.1 Management Accounts at 30.11.22

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Completion of the capital projects will be funded from 2023 Capital Grant.

The Authority thanked Ms Kearney for her briefing, and approved the accounts.

Item 5.1.1 Draft 2023 Current Operations Budget

The Head of Finance presented the draft 2023 Current Operations Budget. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

The Authority approved the proposed budget.

5.2 Industrial Relations Report

None.

5.3 Staff Appointments

(a) Items for Approval

The Authority approved the appointment of:

[REDACTED]

(b) Items for Notification

The Authority noted the appointment of:

[REDACTED]

Technologists:

[REDACTED]

Administration Grade 4

[REDACTED]

Temporary Appointments:

[REDACTED]

Post-Doctoral:

None

5.4 Property Approvals

5.4.1 Kildalton College Lands Rental (Walsh)

The Authority on the proposal of Mr Woulfe and seconded by Mr Scully approved the renewal of the rental of 3.52 Ha (9 acres) for a further five years commencing on 15 January 2023 and concluding on 17 January 2028.

6. Report(s) of Committee(s) Meetings

6.1 Draft Minutes of Research Committee Meeting of 07.12.22

Professor Fitzgerald informed the meeting the Committee examined the 2023 New Research Projects Call and Walsh Fellowships Call; the Scientific Assessment Panel approved 32 projects and 31 associated Walsh Scholarship applications, subject to the availability of funding. Additionally, the Committee considered a peer review assessment of REDP; the full report including management's response will be available to the Committee for its first meeting in 2023. The Committee noted the highly cited Teagasc researchers in the Clarivate 2022 report, and received an update on Teagasc Horizon Europe 2022 research funding. The Committee is in the process of revising its Terms of Reference.

The Authority thanked Professor Fitzgerald for the report, and accepted the report.

6.2 Draft Minutes of Audit & Risk Committee Meeting of 09.12.22

Ms Reynolds, on behalf of Committee Chair Professor Hennessy, reported on the meeting. The Committee thanked Mr O'Connell for his invaluable input to its work and welcomed Ms Howe, as the new external member. Considerations included: High Priority Issues, a Authority Meeting, 01 February 2023, Page 4 of 6

Deloitte presentation on ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance); a Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control 2022; Teagasc Risk Registers; a follow-up report on Payroll and Pensions; a consolidated report on MTL issues; internal audit work-in-progress, and work programme.

The Authority thanked Ms Reynolds for the report, and accepted the report.

6.3 Draft Minutes of Operations Committee Meeting of 14.12.22

Mr Duffy advised that the Committee reviewed and accepted: the draft 2023 Current Operations budget, the 2023 Corporate Risk Register; the draft 2023 Level 1 Business Plan; the Committee requested a report on Teagasc farms' sustainability at its February 2023 meeting. A review of the Operations Committee Terms of Reference includes one amendment to read under Item 2, 'There will be five members of the Committee'.

The Committee was briefed on Teagasc's Digital Transformation Strategy (three priorities include: Sustainability Platform, Client Management Platform and Data Value Platform). A report of Teagasc's 2022 Staffing Plan identified starting salary as a major issue in recruitment.

The Authority thanked Mr Duffy for the report, and accepted the report.

6.3.1 Draft Level 1 Business Plan 2023

The Director presented the draft 2023 Teagasc Level 1 Business Plan noting the Plan communicates Teagasc's focus and intentions for the year ahead. Section 2 highlights a selection of significant activities for the coming year; identified under each of Teagasc's Strategic five Goals. Section 3 details Teagasc resources, Section 4 outlines Teagasc's Evaluation Framework, Section 5 expands on Teagasc's outputs' targets for 2023 while Section 6 defines Technology/Practice Adoption and Impact targets for 2023.

The Authority thanked the Director and approved the draft 2023 Teagasc Level 1 Business Plan.

7. Items for Decision

7.1 MTL Warehouse

The Authority on the proposal of Liam Woulfe and seconded by Pat Duffy approved the construction of a dedicated 320m² store to service the requirements of MTL. The total cost of the project is ██████████ the project will be funded from MTL retained profits.

8. Items for Consideration

None.

9. Items for Information

9.1 Corporate Communications Report

Mr Donald presented Teagasc digital analytics across its social media platforms and the Teagasc App. for the month of December. He reported on the Newford Herd visit of 20 December noting the joint initiative enters its second seven-year phase. Upcoming events include: Teagasc/AHI Calf-Care events; Signpost Farms' Webinars; Ewe Nutrition; Managing Scouring Calves; Spring Tillage Seminars; DairyBeef 500 Spring Conference; National Tillage Conference; National Lowland Sheep Conference; PastureBase Week; and, Teagasc at the Young Scientist Exhibit in RDS.

9.2 Draft MTL Board Meeting Minutes of 09.12.22

Professor Fitzgerald reported that: the Committee met in closed-session in advance of the meeting proper; Deloitte presented to the meeting on ESG reporting; Year-end forecast concludes income at [REDACTED]; the meeting approved the draft budget and capital expenditure 2023; a review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control; Risk Management; Strategy and Business Outlook, Annual Board Evaluation; and Health and Safety.

10 AOB

10.1 Retirement of Ms Eilís O'Connell

The Chairman noted that this is the last Authority meeting for Ms O'Connell who will shortly retire from her position as Assistant Secretary in DAFM. On behalf of the Authority he thanked her for her excellent service and contribution and wished her well in her future endeavours.

The Director also thanked Ms O'Connell on behalf of Teagasc management and colleagues and wished her well in her retirement.

11 Next Meeting

Wednesday 01 February 2023 in the Conference Room, Teagasc Head Office, Oak Park.