

TEAGASC
410th Meeting of the Authority
07 September 2022

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

Apologies: Ms Elizabeth Reynolds
Also Mr Eric Donald (Executive)

Executives present were: Professor Frank O'Mara, Director; Mr Alan Phelan, Chief Operations Officer and Secretary to the Authority.

Mr Tim Ashmore, Kildalton College Principal - Welcome
Ms Valerie Farrell, Head of Human Resources for Item 4.1
Ms Susan Kearney for Item 5.1

Ms Lorraine Ryan facilitated.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Ashmore and recorded his appreciation of the College's accommodation of the meeting at short notice.

Mr Ashmore welcomed the Authority to Kildalton College noting the house dates back to the 1740s and the time of the first Earl of Bessborough. The Bessboroughs never returned to Kildalton following a catastrophic fire in 1923. The house was rebuilt in 1929 and the 9th Lord Bessborough sold the house in the late 1930s. The Oblate Fathers established a seminary in 1941 and it remained as such for over 30 years. The Oblates sold Bessborough House to the Department of Agriculture in 1971 and it opened in 1980 as Kildalton Agricultural College.

The college provides courses in agriculture, horticulture and equine. It has an annual footfall of c1,400 students/annum., a dairy cow herd of 120, suckler cow herd of 50 with all progeny finished to beef, and a 30 dairy herd of calf-to-beef. Its main collaborations are with UCD, SETU, Dublin Technological University and KCETB. The college has a staff FTE of 51.2 with in excess of 6,000 teaching hours subcontracted. The college is the largest in the country with increasing student numbers; challenges include facilities (classrooms, practical training areas, car parking); student and staff well-being; student activities; learner support; and reliance on a significant amount of leased land which is an ongoing risk.

The Authority thanked Mr Ashmore for his overview of the college and congratulated him and his team for the excellent job they are doing in delivering high quality education. The Chairman noted the excellent event that had recently taken place to mark the 50th Anniversary of the College. It was a great event and was very well attended most particularly by alumni of the College and their families.

0. Declaration(s) of Interest(s)

None.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Authority recorded the members' deepest condolences to Prof Pat Dillon, Director of Research on the recent loss of his wife Claire.

1. Agenda**2. Minutes****2.1 Draft Minutes of Authority Meeting of 06 July 2022**

The minutes of 06 July 2022 were adopted on the proposition of Mr Woulfe and seconded by Professor Fitzgerald.

2.2 Matters Arising from Minutes of 06 July 2022

Referring to Item 3, the Director advised that Teagasc would continue to explore the possibility of a sustainability programme involving the overall retail sector. Referring to Item 5.1.2 the Director thanked DAFM for its assistance in processing Teagasc's claim for recoupment of costs of hosting Ukrainian refugees.

3. Director's Report

- He outlined that Teagasc's presence at the National and World Ploughing Championships is important in the context of a two-year absence of the event. The event presents an opportunity to communicate Teagasc's messages and response to the climate change challenges confronting the sector; the theme of the exhibit is 'Science Working for You'.
- Teagasc understands a complaint has been made by the [REDACTED] to the European Commission. It is alleged by the [REDACTED] that Teagasc is in breach of EU competition law. As yet Teagasc has had no contact from the European Commission.
- Teagasc continues to provide input to the Food Vision (FV) Groups; the Dairy FV Group report is almost complete.
- Teagasc expects significant interest in the Organic Farming Scheme 2022 and has already recruited and assigned three additional advisors prior to commencement of the Scheme in October, with another three to be assigned in the coming months.
- Teagasc has signed a new Level 9 Post-Doctoral Fellowship programme in association with UCD.

The Director advised the exit poll from the 'Farming for a Better Future' Open Day in Johnstown Castle on 30 August 2022 showed 60% of attendees felt the event had exceeded their expectations and 28% said the event met their expectations. The Chairman and Mr Woulfe endorsed the findings specifically noting the passion and expertise of Teagasc staff at the event and asked the Director to convey their appreciation.

3.1 Draft Corporate Risk Register 2022

The Corporate Risk Register was noted.

3.2 Health and Safety Reports – June and July, 2022

Both reports were noted.

4. Strategic Items**4.1 Diversity and Inclusion**

The Head of HR reported on progress in the organisation since the adoption of a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in 2019 which was followed by a Teagasc Gender Strategy in 2020. Ms Farrell explained that the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is strategically aligned to public sector duty, gender equality, talent management, Teagasc Statement of Strategy, and Foodwise 2025. One important initiative from the Strategy has been the development of a Gender Equality Plan, whose strategic objectives are: (i) creating a gender diverse culture, (ii) reshaping decision-making and governance, (iii) developing equal career support measures, and (iv) integrating gender in research, teaching and funding.

Teagasc designated 2022 as the 'Year of Diversity and Inclusion' and introduced a number of initiatives such as staff webinars and an audit of staff on the subject. Ms Farrell stressed the need for ongoing cultural change and the audit had identified a number of focus areas for improvement. Future plans may include the appointment of a dedicated month in the calendar year to the issue, publication of the gender pay gap report (which is mandatory), and the appointment of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

The Authority welcomed the update, commending the organisation on its progress. The Director said the organisation is currently on a journey and that initiatives being undertaken were extremely valuable in ensuring an inclusive culture. Following discussion on dedicated gender discussion groups, Ms Donnelly considered that female only discussion groups provide a safe space particularly for less experienced female farmers to raise issues. Professor Fitzgerald noted that 16% of females are landowners and this figure continues to remain static.

The Authority thanked Ms Farrell for the presentation.

5. Routine Items

5.1 Management Accounts at 31.07.2022

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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

5.2 Industrial Relations Report

The Report was noted.

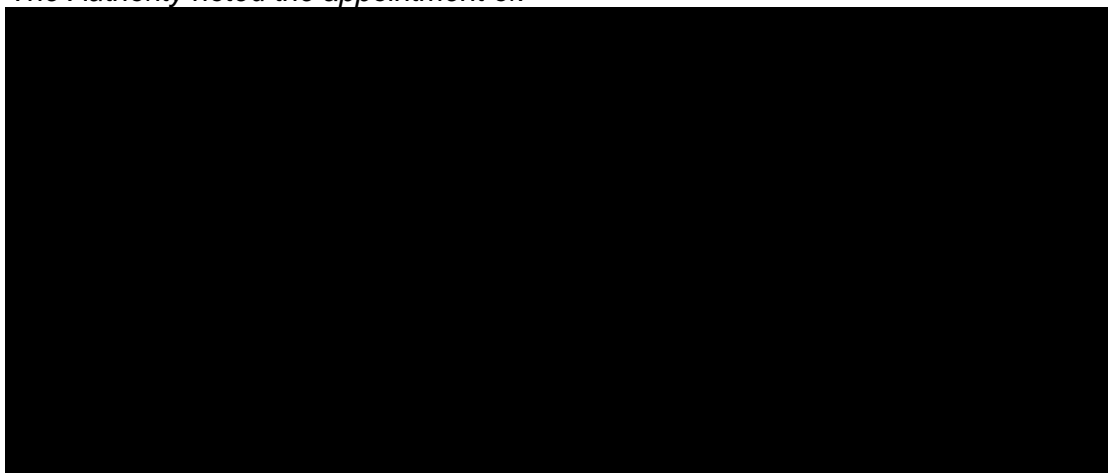
5.3 Staff Appointments

(a) Items for Approval

None

(b) Items for Notification

The Authority noted the appointment of:



Technologists



Research Farm Technician



(c) The Authority noted the appointment of Post-Doctoral:



5.4.1 Bailieborough Clinic Rental

The Authority approved the rental renewal of the clinic (c172 square ft) in Bailieborough as proposed. The rental period is from 01 October 2022 to 30 September 2023. Required ministerial approval will be sought.

5.4.2 Athenry Bell Tower Rental

The Authority approved the rental renewal to Munster AI Farm Services Group Limited (Munster AI) of the Bell Tower Building in Athenry, Co. Galway as proposed. The rental period is 01 November 2022 to 31 October 2025. Required ministerial approval will be sought.

5.4.3 Athenry White House Rental

The Authority approved the rental renewal to Galway Rural Development Company (GRDC) for one year commencing on 29 November 2022 and expiring on the 28 November 2023 as proposed. Required ministerial approval will be sought.

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

6.1 Draft Minutes of Audit and Risk Committee Meeting of 06 July 2022

Professor Hennessy updated the Authority on Deloitte's review of Teagasc's Budgeting process and a follow-up report on Procurement. The Committee held a members' only meeting at which recommendations were made to the internal auditor on future Committee

agendas, categorisation of agenda items, supplementary reports etc. The Committee reviewed a report on high priority issues, a follow-up report on tax compliance, the internal audit unit's work programme to year-end, C&AG correspondence in relation to the 2021 Financial Statements, Teagasc Risk Registers, removable media use in Teagasc, and the upcoming appointment of an external advisor to the Committee.

7. Items for Decision

7.1 Electricity Contract Tender 2022

The Authority approved an Electricity Supply Contract with Energia through an Office of Government Procurement (OGP) framework. Given the exceptional level of price increases for energy, it is currently estimated that Teagasc's energy costs will increase to ██████ for a 12-month period from ██████ in 2021. The Energia electricity price will be fixed for short (two-monthly) periods, the first period being August/September. Mr Woulfe suggested using reserve fund monies to meet the additional costs associated with Teagasc initiatives to reduce energy costs.

The contract was approved on the proposal of Mr Duffy and seconded by Mr Scully.

7.2 Clonakilty College Machinery Instruction Facility

The Authority in February 2022 approved the preliminary Business Case for a machinery instruction facility at Clonakilty College. The final approval of the Business Case is now required which outlines an increase in costs following a tendering process largely due to construction inflation and the VAT treatment of the building. The final Business Case seeks approval to proceed with the project which will cost ██████

The Business Case was approved on the proposal of Mr Buckley and seconded by Mr Rushe. Required ministerial approval will be sought.

7.3 Moorepark Milking Machine Training Laboratory

The Authority approved the proposal to allocate an additional ██████ to the project's budget. The additional approval of ██████ brings the project's overall total cost to ██████

7.4 ACRES Programme Charging

The Authority approved a charging structure for the ACRES Programme as follows:

Farm Size	< 10 ha	10-35 ha	> 35 ha
General Scheme (incl. FSP)	€ 320	€ 450	€ 550
Co-operation Scheme (incl. FSP)			
Co-operation Scheme*	€ 160	€ 225	€ 275

* Where no FSP (Farm Sustainability Plan) is required as part of the application submission process (50% of 'normal' rate).

These charges are additional to standard client contract fees, are inclusive of VAT, and apply to Year 1 of the Scheme only.

Ms Donnelly advised the meeting of the significant interest in the Scheme amongst clients. The Authority noted that access to the Schemes was a policy matter for DAFM.

The proposed charges were adopted on the proposal of Mr Woulfe and seconded by Mr Duffy.

8. Items for Consideration

8.1 Level 1 Business Plan Mid-Year Review 2022

The Director presented the mid-year review of Teagasc's Level 1 Business Plan. The organisation's progress on its activities and outputs for each of the programme areas were detailed; no significant issues arose.

9. Items for Information

9.1 Corporate Communications Report

The Director, on behalf of the Head of Corporate Communications, noted the following significant upcoming events: Teagasc exhibit at the National and World Ploughing Championships in Laois on 20, 21 and 22 September; the outdoor exhibit will demonstrate how Teagasc is using science and the latest technologies to help farmers farm sustainably, protect the environment, and reduce the output of greenhouse gases. Other events in September include: Contract Heifer Rearing Farm Walks, BETTER Farm Sheep Lowland Farm Walk in Sligo, Best Practice Hedge Cutting in Gurteen College, Shinagh Dairy Farm Open Day, Signpost Farm Webinars, Grassland Farmer of the Year Farm Walk, Spring 2023 preparation, Resilient Swards for the Future, Crop Forum, DairyBeef500 Farm Walk, Winter Finishing Seminar, Soil Life in a Changing Climate exhibit, Surveillance Welfare and Biosecurity of Farm Animals (SWAB) project, 5th Food Structure and Functionality Symposium in Cork, National Organic Beef Open Day on 28 September in Cashel, also on 28 September the 2021 Young Grassland Farmer of the Year Farm Walk in Wexford.

9.2 MTL Mid-Year Management Accounts

9.3 MTL Draft AGM Minutes of 08.08.22

9.4 MTL Draft Board Minutes of 08.08.22

Professor Fitzgerald noted he would report on the three items simultaneously. Footfall through MTL is back to pre-Covid levels. Of concern to the company is ever-increasing energy costs. He said the MTL pay issue is an area of concern and needs to be resolved.

The Director advised that a proposal for the construction of an MTL warehouse space will likely be brought to the Authority's October meeting.

9.5 Young Trained Farmer Qualifications

The Director informed the Authority that Teagasc is identified in the Stamp Duties Consolidation Act 1999 (SDCA 1999) Section 81AA as the agency charged with certifying that a qualification corresponds to those set out in the Revenue Schedule 2B of recognised qualifications for the purpose of meeting Trained Farmer status for Revenue exemptions/incentives relating to young farmers. DAFM and Revenue have requested Teagasc to update, maintain and publish the list of approved YTF qualifications. Teagasc are in discussion with DAFM and Revenue and currently await receipt of draft legislation for review. The Authority approved the initiative.

9.6 CAPEX Reports

9.6.1 Summary

The CAPEX reports detail three capital projects in Teagasc which are under construction phase. These are: Food Biotest at Moorepark; Biogas Plant at Grange; and, Kildalton College farmyard redevelopment.

9.6.2 Food Biotest

The project is complete with final cost expected to be within budget.

9.6.3 Grange Biogas

Completion of the project is delayed due to delay in the delivery of the gas upgrader from Nova-Q under the Gas Networks Ireland Innovation Grant.

9.6.4 Kildalton College Farmyard Redevelopment

Kildalton College's Farmyard redevelopment project incorporates perimeter roadways, three silage pits, a machinery instruction facility, a wash-down area and a straw storage shed. The timeframe for the project's completion is mid-October.

9.7 Teagasc/ICBF/Bord Bia MOU

The Director presented the draft Memorandum of Understanding between Teagasc, ICBF and Bord Bia in relation to collaborative activities to deliver the new digital sustainability infrastructure. He stressed that this was a public good initiative. All intellectual property belonging to a party providing it to the other will be dealt with as per normal standards for IP ownership. In response to Ms O'Connell he confirmed that all GDPR requirements will be strictly adhered to in relation to the project.

The Authority welcomed the initiative.

10 AOB

None.

11 Next Meeting

Wednesday 05 October 2022 in Buswells Hotel, Dublin at 10.30 (following the Oireachtas Briefing 08.00-10.00). The Chairman said the briefing will focus on the areas of sustainability, fodder, fertiliser, and ACRES.

The Chairman closed the meeting.