

Minutes of the Horticulture Forum Meeting

Tuesday 28 June 2016, 10:00 am, Manor Suite, Greenmount Campus, CAFRE

Chair: Keith Crawford

Present: Barclay Bell, Barbara Erwin, Patricia Erwin, Hamilton Loney, Eric Long, Roy Lyttle, George Mathers, Terry McGarry (standing in for Sam MacNeice), Robin McKee, Patrick Taggart

1. Apologies

Elaine Chapman, Peter Donnelly, Sam MacNeice, Paul Mooney, John Shannon, Elaine Shaw, Lyn Sherriff

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

Patrick Taggart has opened discussions with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association. They are still considering appointing a representative to the Forum.

Ian Duff has agreed to facilitate a discussion to update the Forum's Action Plan at the meeting on 19 September.

3. Event at Parliament Buildings

It was agreed to aim to hold the event in September 2016, if at all possible. Patricia mentioned that consideration should be given to timing of the event and publicity; holding it on a Tuesday would give access to the Thursday press, while holding it on a Wednesday would give access to the weekend press. Thought should be given, also, to pre-publicity.

After some discussion, it was agreed that the new Minister, Michelle McIlveen, would be the preferred sponsor for the event. In the event of her unavailability, Michelle Gildernew would be approached. Other possible sponsors suggested were: Steven Agnew; Simon Hamilton; Naomi Long; and Michele O'Neill.

Roy Lyttle to invite Michelle McIlveen to sponsor the event.

It was envisaged that the event would be held in the Long Gallery at Stormont.

Howard Hastings and Jilly Dougan were suggested as possible speakers at the event.

The draft "Why horticulture matters in Northern Ireland" leaflet was discussed. Several VIPs were suggested for the opening photograph and quotation: Howard Hastings; Paul Rankin; Simon Dougan; and Michael Dean. (After the meeting,

and after the CAFRE Horticulture Awards Ceremony, Diarmuid Gavin, the guest speaker at the Awards Ceremony was added to the list.)

Patrick Taggart to redraft leaflet in response to suggestions and circulate for comments.

Barbara Erwin mentioned that she knew of a good graphic designer and printer.

Discussion moved on to consideration of the exhibit and samples that would be available at the event.

Exhibit		Samples	
Display	Organisations	Sample	Organisations
Cut flowers and foliage	NIFFA	Cider, apple juice, apple pies	FIF, UFU Fruit Growers' Committee
Plants	Growers NI, HTA	Vegetable snacks	UFU Vegetable Committee
Vegetables	UFU Vegetable Committee	Button holes	NIFFA
Mushrooms	Northway		
Landscape	ALCI		

Patricia Erwin suggested inviting Yellow Door to assist with provision of the vegetable snacks and possibly other edible samples.

Barclay Bell suggested that Food NI have considerable experience in organising similar events and may be in a position to help.

UFU to approach Food NI.

The cost of the event was then discussed. It was hoped that the event would cost less than £1000. North Down and Gilfresh were mentioned as possible financial sponsors. Barclay Bell mentioned that UFU may also be in a position to help.

Elaine Shaw to complete opening of bank account and invoice member organisations (if not already done).

Consideration was given to extending invitations to industry representatives as well as MLAs. It was felt that the sponsor (potentially the Minister) would give guidance on the appropriate guest list and may, in fact, take responsibility for issuing invitations. Keith Crawford suggested that personal invitations from Forum members to their own MLAs may be helpful.

Roy Lyttle to enquire of the Minister about guest list and invitation protocol (assuming she agrees to sponsor).

The Forum agreed to delegate responsibility for planning the event to a sub-group: Keith Crawford; Barbara Erwin; Patricia Erwin; Roy Lyttle; Patrick Taggart; and Doug Thomson.

4. AOB

Eric Long reported on structural changes to CAFRE, initiated by new CAFRE Director, Martin McKendry. The Horticulture Development Advisers team, under Kieran Lavelle, and Horticulture Technology team, under Teresa Maguire, along with the Horticulture Centre, will transfer from Crops and Horticulture Sustainability Development Branch to Horticulture Education Branch, with effect from 1 July 2016. The aim of this change is to strengthen CAFRE's capability to better meet the education, training, knowledge and technology transfer and business development needs of the entire Northern Ireland horticulture industry.

Patrick Taggart alerted the Forum to an imminent public consultation on the Department's proposal to relinquish protected zone status for fireblight (caused by the bacterial pathogen *Erwinia amylovora*).

Keith Crawford congratulated Barclay Bell, on behalf of the Forum, on his recent appointment to the office of UFU President.

5. Dates of future meetings

19 September and 21 November, both at 7.30pm. Details to be confirmed.