



Minutes of NCI AGM 2021

Wednesday 24th March 2021 7pm - 8pm

Venue: Zoom

Board members: Jane Stout (JS), Kate Hotten, Pat Costello, Emer Moriarty Crowley, Alan Costello

Secretariat: Fiona Smith, Orlaith Delargy

In attendance: 32 members

1. Welcome & apologies

JS welcome attendees. There were no apologies from members.

2. Approval of minutes from AGM 2020

JS noted that NCI had not received any comments on the minutes of last year's AGM. JS proposed the minutes, Kate Hotten seconded then. No objections from members, minutes were accepted as an accurate reflection of the AGM from last year.

3. Annual report

JS provided a breakdown of NCI membership, which grew by over 50% in the year, to 900+ members.

Overview of Governance was provided including the addition of three new Directors and Financial Officer Chloe Lipscombe over the year. Micheál Ó Cinnéide who stepped down in 2020, was thanked for his service.

An overview of the 2020 Steering Committee elections was provided. Conor Kretsch is the new Chair of the Steering Committee. Outgoing SC members Ken Bradley, Kate Flood, Grainne Devine and Aileen O'Sullivan and former Chair Andrea Carroll were thanked for their service.

An overview of NCI's Policy work was provided (further details in [Annual Report](#)).

An overview of NCI's activities was provided including:

- A survey of the teaching of natural capital concepts in third-level education in Ireland
- The Business and Biodiversity project and webinar

- INCASE research project
- Supporting the National Biodiversity Forum to produce a review of the National Biodiversity Action Plan www.biodiversityimpactplan.ie
- Natural Capital on Farmland video
- Dieter Helm seminar

The organisation also rebranded from Irish Forum on Natural Capital to our new trading name of Natural Capital Ireland.

4. Audit report & financial statements

Chloe Lipscombe presented the accounts. There were no issues from the auditors. Revenue has decreased year on year, mainly because the income from the 2019 National Biodiversity Conference did not recur in 2020. Decrease in funding from the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (as it was called at that time, now DECC). Administrative expenses decreased, also because there was no National Biodiversity Conference in 2020.

On the tax side, NCI reduced any liability it had with Revenue and claimed back a small amount from the amount paid in 2020.

NCI maintained its cash position, which is positive given the reduction in revenue. NCI closed the year 2020 with €41,812 in cash.

JS asked for approval of annual report, audit report & financial statements. This was seconded by Conor Kretsch. These were accepted.

5. Appointment of Directors

Pat Costello explained that at the 2020 AGM, NCI has three Directors and that Micheál Ó Cinnéide retired after that. NCI then hired three new Directors for a term up to the 2021 AGM. According to NCI's constitution, one third of Directors have to step down at each AGM. Accordingly, the three new Directors stepped down and put themselves forward for re-election at this AGM. PC proposed the re-election of Emer Moriarty Crowley, Alan Costello and Kate Hotten and this was seconded by Conor Kretsch. No objections were recorded.

6. Authorisation for Board to appoint Auditors and to fix their remuneration

JS sought approval from the members to re-appoint Whiteside Cullinane as auditors for NCI. NCI has been happy with their work to date. No objections were recorded.

7. NCI Strategy 2021-2023 and Workplan 2021

Orlaith Delargy presented the Strategic Plan to the membership as well as NCI's main areas of work: convening, connecting, building capacity and contributing.

The next [Strategic Plan](#) has three core pillars: Fundraising, Engagement and Awareness and Research.

On Fundraising, OD explained the fundraising target of 200k per annum by 2022. NCI will launch a partnership programme, aimed at corporate donors. Members were invited to support this programme by connecting the Secretariat to potential donors in their network.

On Engagement and Awareness, a summary of our reach on social media and through our events is being prepared by Fiona Smith. NCI also plans to launch a data hub with natural capital learning resources and case studies.

On Research, the INCASE project has been the main avenue for NCI participation in original research. NCI has submitted several proposals with universities and will continue to do so, for example by responding to the EPA Research Call later in 2021.

OD highlighted the Workplan for 2021 including the launch of the partner programme aimed at corporates, the Data 4 Nature workshop in May and the target for €100k in funding.

8. AOB

An open discussion with membership was held.

Suggestions were made by members in relation to the corporate partner programme. It was agreed that there is likely to be a lot of interest in the programme and members offered their help in identifying corporate donors.

KH explained that we will look to the tech sector, ESG teams as partners.

The potential risks associated with being registered as a lobbyist and receiving money from corporates was raised. It is important to have a clear guide for which corporates are accepted onto the partner programme and which are not. NCI will prepare an internal Code of Ethics guide.

One member mentioned the Climate Action Fund as a potential source of funding. Money for that Fund is collected from the carbon fund. It was agreed that NCI should pursue this.

It will be useful for NCI to have promotional materials ready in time for corporate funding cycles.

It was noted that NCI does not have charitable status as yet. There was a brief discussion of the benefits of applying for charitable status. This is being considered by the NCI Board.

JS introduced some of NCI's new contractors, Iseult Sheehy and Emer Ní Dhuill.

PW highlighted that NCI has launched a Media Response Unit to better respond to relevant press topics, issuing press releases to national radio, media outlets etc. Invited other members to get involved.

Shane McGuinness offered his support in feeding into offering NCI education products.

Catherine Farrell suggested a one pager for Community Groups, as what they do is front line natural capital work. Working with businesses is important but we need to also include community groups.

One member proposed that we should bring the language of ecosystem services to communities and Iseult Sheehy noted that there are useful infographics that do this.

JS brought the AGM to a close.