



All Party Parliamentary Group for the Wood Panel Industry

Tuesday 22nd September 2020, 10:00am
Meeting Minutes

Attendees from the Secretariat and Industry:

Alastair Kerr	Director General, Wood Panel Industries Federation
Steve Roebuck	Director for Environment, Health and Safety, Norbord
John Paterson	Manager, EGGER UK
Mark Cummings	Invicta Public Affairs
Ross Stephen	Invicta Public Affairs
Stephen Kerr	Chair, Expert Working Group for the Wood Panel Industry
Brian Wilson	Member of the Expert Working Group for the Wood Panel Industry

Office Bearers:

Selaine Saxby MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for North Devon
Mark Jenkinson MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for Workington
Neil Parish MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for Tiverton and Honiton
Jim Shannon MP	DUP Member of Parliament for Strangford
Ben Lake MP	Plaid Cymru Member of Parliament for Ceredigion
Lord Wallace of Tankerness	Liberal Democrat Peer

Members:

Sion Davies	Office of Simon Baynes MP (Conservative MP for Clwyd South)
Andrew Bowie MP	Conservative Member for West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine
Chris Green MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for Bolton West and Atherton
Mary Robinson MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for Cheadle
Douglas Ross MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for Moray
Jamie Stone MP	Liberal Democrat Member for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross
Tom Tugendhat MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for Tonbridge and the Malling
Heather Wheeler MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for South Derbyshire
William Wragg MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for Hazel Grove
Lord Duncan of Springbank	Conservative Peer
Allan Dorans MP	SNP Member of Parliament for Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock
Steve Baker MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for Wycombe

Apologies:

Simon Baynes MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for Clwyd South
Alan Brown MP	SNP Member of Parliament for Kilmarnock and Loudon
The Rt Hon Stephen Crabb MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for Preseli Pembrokeshire
The Rt Hon David Mundell MP	Conservative Member for Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale
Ian Liddell-Grainger MP	Conservative Member for Bridgwater and West Somerset
Nusrat Ghani MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for Wealden
Rob Roberts MP	Conservative Member of Parliament for Delyn
Drew Hendry MP	SNP Member for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey
Ian Murray MP	Labour Member for Edinburgh South

Meeting Minutes:

Stephen Kerr: Opened the meeting on behalf of Selaine Saxby MP (Chair) and the wood panel industry. Stephen thanked all for attending virtually. Stephen asked for any comments on the Inaugural Meeting Minutes from July 2020 (*Appendix 1*). No comments or alterations were recorded.

Andrew Bowie MP proposed the minute for approval and Heather Wheeler MP seconded.

Mark Cummings and Ross Stephen led a Policy Update (*see Appendix 2 - 4*). The key policy points covered within the presentation were: (1) the ongoing concerns around wood security - notably the declining availability of the wood basket and the rising demand exacerbated by subsidised biomass; (2) the need for reciprocal trade arrangements for the import / export of wood products.

Mark Cummings and Ross Stephen led a presentation of the Draft Expert Working Group for the Wood Panel Industry Report and Engagement Strategy (*see Appendix 5*). This report was digested and a mandate given to approve the Report and undertake the targeted Departmental engagement.

Neil Parish asked about the Industry's understanding of the working relationship between the Secretary of State and Energy Minister on planting and timber industries. Mr Parish suggested that a greater supply of homegrown wood for the wood panel industry is important and that the Treasury will be keen to save money during the pandemic.

Alastair Kerr answered Mr Parish that the connection between the Secretary of State and Energy Minister is not as strong as it ought to be from an Industry's perspective. Alastair detailed that availability of wood in the UK is declining and that planting is not happening at the speed it should be, although new planting occurring in Scotland has been a welcome step. However, in England, planting is much more limited, and in the England Tree Strategy there are no clear targets or direction for England. This is key in the Industry's ability to meet increasing demand for UK products.

Actions:

- The Chair is mandated to target the following Departmental stakeholders, with Selaine Saxby MP and Alastair Kerr to jointly write to Ministers seeking engagement:-
 - The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP (Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy);
 - The Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP (Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth);
 - Kemi Badenoch MP (Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury);
 - The Rt Hon George Eustice MP (Secretary of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs);
 - The Rt Hon Liz Truss MP (Secretary of State for International Trade);
 - The Rt Hon Alister Jack MP (Secretary of State for Scotland);
 - The Rt Hon Simon Hart MP (Secretary of State for Wales).
- The finalised Report will be issued to all UK parliamentarians in order to highlight the updated policy recommendations. This will be similar to action taken in 2018 as it promotes the message we strive to get across. Selaine Saxby MP suggested that anyone with creative ideas of getting Parliamentarians to read this Report should come forward.

Selaine Saxby MP: Asked attendees whether there was any further business and thereafter, closed the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: This will be confirmed with the APPG for the Wood Panel Industry once engagements have taken place and a meaningful update on progress can be advised.

Appendix Items:

1. APPG for the Wood Panel Industry Inaugural Meeting Minutes (July 2020);
2. WPIF Submission to the RHI Consultation;
3. WPIF Submission to the Future Support for Low Carbon Heat Consultation;
4. WPIF Submission to the England Tree Strategy;
5. APPG Presentation (Report and Engagement Strategy).