

Reference Number: **DAERA/26-310**
Request Details:
Minutes and Briefings of Ministerial
meetings October 2025 to December
2025



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Depairtment o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Garrett Hargan

Email: ghargan1794@gmail.com

EMFG Executive Support
303 Airport Rd W,
Belfast
BT3 9ED

E-mail: EMFG.InformationRequests@daera-ni.gov.uk

01 June 2026

Dear Mr Hargan,

Environmental Information Regulation 2004 and Freedom of Information Act 2000

I refer to your request for information received by the Department on 05 May 2026 that sought the following information:

The minutes of the following ministerial meetings which took place from October 2025 to the end of December 2025.

If there were briefings given to the Minister prior to or after the meeting, I would also like to see those.

1. Claire Hanna - to discuss Lough Neagh
2. David Holmes to discuss odour issues at Warrenpoint Harbour Authority
3. Gavin Robinson about Lough Neagh.
4. First Minister Michelle O'Neill.
5. Orlaithi Flynn at Colin Glen Park.
6. Rob Williams, British Vet Association.
7. Mary Lou McDonald.
8. William Irvine from UFU.
9. Nick Shaftesbury to discuss Lough Neagh.

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10. Stewart Dickson about beaches.

The list of names that you provided above matches those listed by the Department to the open data portal for ministerial meetings between October 2025 and December 2025. The Department's search has been restricted to those names listed by you.

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds some of the information you requested.

The information held which can be disclosed to you is attached as documents DAERA/26-310 1 to 8.

Some of the information you requested has been treated under the Environmental Information Regulation 2004 and some under Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Department has decided not to disclose some of the information you requested as it considers the following EIR exceptions and FOI exemptions to be engaged.

EIR Regulation 12(3) and 13(1) of EIR 2004 – Personal Data of which you are not the data subject

EIR Regulation 12(4)(d) – Policy in development

EIR Regulation 12(4)(e) – Internal communications

EIR Regulation 12(5)(a) – Disclosure would be likely to adversely affect international relations

EIR Regulation 12(5)(e) – Commercial or Industrial information

EIR Regulation 6(1)(b) – already published / accessible information.

FOI Section 35(1)(a) – formulation or development of government policy

FOI Section 35(1)(b) – Ministerial Communications

FOI Section 43(2) – Information where disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice commercial interests

During the search of the information, I identified that information relating to the meeting with William Irvine UFU has already been released to you as part of the response to a previous request for information – DAERA/25-764- doc 24 refers. This response was sent to you on 14 January 2026.

In addition, the minutes of the North South Ministerial meeting are published and can be found via this link [The Thirtieth Plenary Joint Communiqué - 17th October 2025 | North South Ministerial Council](#).

Some of the information you requested includes minutes of the NI Executive (meetings between Minister Muir and Michelle O'Neill MLA) and these have been treated under the FOIA. Other information you requested that has been treated under FOIA includes meetings with Rob Williams of the British Vet Association.

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All other information identified has been treated under EIR.

Some of the information requested i.e. briefings are internal briefing and notes of briefing meetings and these are internal communications with the Minister and fall under the appropriate EIR exceptions and FOIA exemptions.

Some of the information contains commercially sensitive information and falls under the appropriate EIR exceptions and FOIA exemptions.

Some of the information identified relates to policy in development and has been considered under the appropriate EIR exceptions and FOIA exemptions.

In these instances, the Department is legislatively required to consider the public interest in disclosure. An associated Public Interest Test has been conducted and is attached for your information at Annex A.

Some of the information held constitutes personal data of which you are not the data subject. In these instances, the Department is required to consider if disclosure would breach the first Data Protection Principle, which states that processing must be lawful, fair and transparent.

The Department has considered this element within the test attached at Annex B and has determined that no lawful basis for disclosure under EIR exists. Please bear in mind that any disclosure must be considered in terms of disclosure to the “world at large” and not just to you, the requester. Consequently, third party personal data falling within the scope of this request has been withheld.

If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department. If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane,

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Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Kerr". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first letter of "Joseph".

JOSEPH KERR
EMFG EXECUTIVE SUPPORT BRANCH

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