

News story: Natural England Board members appointed

Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Michael Gove, has appointed Catherine Dugmore as Chair of the Audit, Risk, Assurance Committee and Lord Blencathra, Professor Sue Hartley, Henry Robinson and Marian Spain to the Board of Natural England.

The appointments will take effect from 12 March 2018 for three years.

Board members provide non-executive leadership challenge and support to the executive through regular Board meetings, committees and groups. They also undertake individual lead roles on relevant issues and with local operational teams.

All appointments to the Natural England Board are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. The appointments comply with the Ministerial Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body, set up under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Its remit is to ensure the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations.

There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be declared during the past five years. The Rt. Hon. the Lord Blencathra has declared that he speaks publically, generally in support of Conservative policies, in the House of Lords and that he usually votes with the Government. The other four Board members have not declared any significant political activity during the past five years.

Natural England Board Members receive £11,808 per annum based on a time commitment of 36 days. As Chair of the Audit, Risk, Assurance Committee Catherine Dugmore will receive £14,760 per annum based on a time commitment of 45 days.

Biographical details

Catherine Dugmore

Catherine is a qualified Chartered Accountant, from 1988 to 2002 Catherine worked at PricewaterhouseCoopers latterly as an audit partner based in Johannesburg. Catherine is currently a Trustee of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and WWF-UK. She has worked in the NHS since 2012 and currently holds a non-executive role at Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust. She was formerly Vice Chair and Trustee of Action for Children and Chair of Victim Support.

The Rt Hon the Lord Blencathra

Lord Blencathra is a Member of the House of Lords where he chairs a Select Committee and has been appointed to the Council of Europe. He was formerly Minister of State at the Home Office and a Minister at the Department of the Environment in the 1990s. At the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 he led for the UK and launched the Darwin Initiative. He formerly represented England's largest rural constituency as the Member of Parliament for Penrith and The Border. Lord Blencathra has multiple sclerosis and uses a wheelchair.

Professor Sue Hartley

Sue is Professor of ecology at the University of York and Director of the York Environmental Sustainability Institute, a pioneering interdisciplinary research partnership generating solutions to global environmental challenges. She served as President of the British Ecological Society (2016-2017) and she is a Trustee of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. In 2009 she delivered the Royal Institution Christmas Lectures, becoming only the fourth woman to do since they began in 1825.

Henry Robinson

Henry has farmed in the Cotswolds since 1978. He has had various roles at the Country Land & Business Association (CLA), from joining the CLA Council representing Gloucestershire in 1999, to stepping down as President in 2015. He is also currently a trustee of two large estates, Chairman of The Deer Initiative, a Trustee of the Hawk and Owl Trust and Chairman of Trustees at Rendcomb College.

Marian Spain

Marian is Chief Executive of Plantlife International, the UK's leading wildplant conservation charity, a role she took up in 2014. She is also a Secretary of State appointed Member of the New Forest National Park Authority. She was formerly Ofwat's Senior Director of Policy and Communications (2010-13) and Director of Strategy at the Energy Saving Trust (2007-10). Prior to that she worked for the Environment Agency and also held a number of roles at the Countryside Agency.