

Press release: Joint Nature Conservation Committee appointed three new independent members

The Government has appointed Professor Melanie Austen, Charles Banner and Professor Marian Scott as Independent Members of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. The appointments took effect from 15 December 2017 for three years.

All appointments to the JNCC are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. The appointment complies with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be declared. The appointees have not declared any significant political activity during the past five years.

The JNCC was established in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) as a non-departmental public body. The JNCC advises the UK Government and Devolved Administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales on UK-wide and international nature conservation.

Remuneration is £9,836 per annum based on a time commitment of 2½ days per month.

Professor Melanie Austen

Melanie is a marine ecologist and interdisciplinary marine researcher who is Head of Science for the 'Sea and Society' science area at Plymouth Marine Laboratory. She has recently completed a 3 year term as the Chief Scientific Advisor to the UK's Marine Management Organisation. For the last fifteen years she has been developing and leading UK and EU funded collaborative marine research. Through her interdisciplinary research she has examined and quantified the societal consequences and policy relevance of changes to the marine environment and its ecosystems. She has been an Honorary Professor at the University of Exeter medical school since 2014. Melanie is currently a member of UK JNCC's South Atlantic Natural Capital Assessment Technical Advisory Group. She has previously been a member of other Expert Advisory Groups and has chaired an EU Marine Board ecosystem valuation working group.

Charles Banner

Charles is a barrister at Landmark Chambers. He was called to the Bar in England and Wales in 2004, then to Northern Ireland in 2010. He practices across both jurisdictions and internationally specialising in environment and planning law and government and regulation. In 2015 Charles became Co-founder of Landmark International establishing a bespoke platform for barristers offering their services to the international legal market. In 2016 Charles became a trustee and council member of the UK Environmental Law Association

which aims to make the law work for a better environment and to improve the understanding and awareness of environmental law. He has recently been announced as 'Environment & Planning Junior of the Year' at the Chambers Bar Awards 2017.

Professor Marian Scott

Marian is Professor of Environmental Statistics in the School of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Glasgow; an elected member of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) and a chartered statistician of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS). Marian's research interests include model uncertainty and sensitivity analysis; modelling the dispersal of pollutants in the environment, radiocarbon dating and assessment of animal welfare. She was awarded an OBE in 2009 for services to social science.