

Minutes of NSTA Board meeting on 19th March 2026
10.00-15.00
1 Marischal Square, Broad Street, Aberdeen

Directors	In attendance
Liz Ditchburn Chair	Suzanne Lilley (item 9) Head of HR
Stuart Payne Chief Executive	Pauline Innes (items 11 and 13) Director of Supply Chain and Decommissioning
Nic Granger Chief Information and Financial Officer	Jane de Lozey (items 11 and 12) Director of Regulation
Iain Lanaghan Non-executive Director	Alastair Bisset (item 11) Head of Decommissioning
Sara Vaughan Non-executive Director	Rebecca Allan (item 11) Decommissioning Projects & Interface Manager
Sarah Deasley Non-executive Director	Sarah Steele (item 12) Legal Manager
Vicky Dawe Shareholder Director	Christopher Ashbourne (item 12) Senior Legal Advisor
Malcolm Brown Non-executive Director	Russell Richardson Company Secretary
	Fiona Gruber Head of Governance and Board Secretary

1. Welcome and introductions

Liz Ditchburn welcomed directors to the meeting.

2. Conflicts of interest

No conflict of interest with any agenda item, nor as a result of new appointments, was declared by any director.

3. Minutes and matters arising

The board discussed and approved the minutes of the January meeting and reviewed the action log.

Directors agreed that they had found their meeting with Tom Child, Director of OPRED, and Matt Taylor, Director CCUS, DESNZ, the previous evening to be very beneficial.

4. Committee reports

The remuneration committee met prior to the board meeting and discussed and agreed arrangements for end of year performance bonuses, the process for Remco assurance on pay proposals and plans for the proposed reorganisation of the NSTA to align with the policy framework set out in the North Sea Future Plan.

The audit and risk committee met on 17th March. The Committee approved the audit plan and received updates on the Company and Trust accounts for period nine and reviewed the draft going concern statement. There were no areas of concern to report from the audit. The internal audit work has been completed but the reports have yet to be finalised. The indicative opinion for 2025-26 is moderate, the same as in previous years. The draft 2026-27 audit plan is being approved within the GIAA and will be finalised in correspondence. The committee received a good IT security update and

an update on the enhanced corporate risk management process and the draft risk section for the annual report. The committee reviewed the corporate governance statement prior to it being sent to DESNZ for review. The committee met the internal auditor privately after the meeting and there were no concerns raised.

The nomination committee met on 23rd February and agreed to recommend the appointment of Mitch Flegg, Rebecca Wiles and Ian Chisholm, subject to DESNZ review. The draft minutes of the nomination committee were discussed and agreed, subject to minor amendment.

5. Safety and environment report

The Chief Executive presented the safety and environment report, including an update from OPRED.

6. Chief Executive report

The Chief Executive updated the board on the NSTA's activity, including attending the first two meetings of the North Sea Future Board, chaired by Minister Shanks. The NSTA is supporting the Board in establishing a delivery function for the supply chain workstream.

The Chief Executive attended a Fiscal Forum with industry chaired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer following her Spring Statement. Noting the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, the Chief Executive confirmed that the NSTA is engaging regularly with DESNZ to provide information and support relating to energy security as required.

The Chief Executive highlighted two recent cases of poor commercial behaviours where the NSTA had intervened to facilitate a satisfactory resolution.

7. Shareholder report

The Shareholder Director updated the board on departmental business and the work of the North Sea Future Board.

8. Annual review of risk appetite and Powers of Attorney

Following the previous day's deep dive with the leadership team on corporate risks and risk appetite, the board approved the revised risk appetite statement.

The board approved a proposal to renew six Powers of Attorney for a further year.

9. Annual HR update

The executive presented the annual HR dashboard, highlighting a good gender balance at all grades and very low staff turnover. The team has enhanced its focus on behaviours, helping managers to handle incidents and to better understand when an HR intervention is necessary. Recorded sickness absence has increased, in part due to improved reporting but also to some cases of serious illness, though it remains well below that of comparable organisations.

The board discussed the presentation and noted the positive trends in most areas but asked whether low turnover might be a concern. The team acknowledged that it may be necessary to retrain some people to ensure the NSTA is appropriately staffed after the reorganisation and that this would present positive opportunities for career development. The team is preparing a workforce plan to accompany the final reorganisation plan for board review in July.

10. Litigation lessons learned

The General Counsel set out the lessons the NSTA has learned from handling two expedited judicial reviews run simultaneously, which required a coordinated response across the NSTA. The board thanked him for the overview.

11. Annual review of impact of transparency process

The executive updated the board on the industry's response since the NSTA's first publication of well P&A data on 1st December 2025. It is already clear that increased transparency, together with other initiatives, can be an important tool in driving timely well decommissioning. Making the data public further underlines the NSTA's focus on well P&A, ensures that the best performers are recognised, and early evidence suggests that industry is responding to improve the rate of compliance, with increased action on well decommissioning.

The board commended the team for the excellent work they had done to bring publication to fruition and welcomed the early signs of its potential impact. The board hoped that similar transparency tools could be rolled out in other areas of stewardship.

12. Sanction decision

Further to a Sanction Warning Notice and receipt of representations, the Director of Regulation presented a recommendation to issue a Sanction Notice to EnQuest for its failure to comply with 33 petroleum-related requirements (PRR) and to give EnQuest a financial penalty notice imposing a financial penalty of £500,000 for each failure to comply with a PRR, totalling £16,500,000. The board discussed the case and agreed the recommendation and delegated to the Director of Regulation the completion and issuance of the Sanction Notice, publication of the sanction on the NSTA's website and accompanying press notice.

13. M&A update

Due to time pressures, this item was postponed to the May 2026 board meeting.

14. Agenda planning

The board agreed that it would be good to schedule a session on the NSTA's preparatory work in anticipation of the government's hydrogen strategy, probably as part of the induction of incoming NEDs.

15. AOB

The board confirmed its agreement to appoint Mitch Flegg, Rebecca Wiles and Ian Chisholm to the board. The Chair will confirm their dates of appointment in due course and induction meetings will then be scheduled.

The board thanked Iain Lanaghan, who is stepping down after six years on the board, for his huge contribution.

Vicky Dawe is leaving her current DESNZ role shortly but will remain on the NSTA board until her permanent successor is in post.

There was no other business.



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Liz Ditchburn, Chair, 20th May 2026