Quality Meat Scotland

Minutes of the 92nd Meeting of the Board
19th February 2026
Inchyra Grange Hotel and Spa

Present:
Kate Rowell (Chair)
A. Irvine
A. McGowan
C. Ruxton
E. Buckby (online)
J. Duncan Grant
N. Jeffrey
A. Ivory
I. Roebuck
F. Ross
G. Scott

In Attendance:
S. Millar (Chief Executive)
D. Phillips (Standards Officer)
P. Byrne (Accountant)

Minutes:
Laurie Adam

Apologies: G. Wallace

Item No.	Detail	Action
1.0	**Welcome & Apologies** Kate welcomed everyone to the meeting. There was an apology from Gordon Wallace. The new Board members, Isla Roebuck and Frank Ross introduced themselves to the rest of the QMS board members.	
2.0	**Additions to the agenda** There were no additions	
3.0	**Declarations of interests in any agenda item** The following board members declared an interest as being Quality Assurance members and levy payers however these did not conflict with any agenda item: • Emma Buckby • Niall Jeffrey • Jilly Duncan Grant • Ann Irvine • Kate Rowell • Adrian Ivory • Gareth Scott • Isla Roebuck	

	• Frank Ross Andy McGowan declared an interest due to his membership of SAOS and SF & D Boards Carrie Ruxton declared that she has provided consultancy services to QMS, but this did not conflict with any agenda item.	
4.0	**Minutes of Board meeting on 27th November 2025** The minutes were approved	
5.0	***Commercial in confidence* – Update on Action Points** Nothing to highlight. Everything was completed or on today's agenda.	
6.0	**Chairs Report** Kate Rowell provided an updated to the Board on the Chairs Report. The board had no questions in relation to this report.	
7.0	**Chief Executives Report** Sarah Millar provided an update to the Board on the Chief Executives Report. This included information on the following: • External Risks • Internal Risks • General Updates • Industry Updates • Staffing Updates • Quality Assurance Updates	
8.0	**Financial Report 10 months to 31st January 2026** Kate thanked Paul Byrne for joining the meeting and introduced him to the new QMS Board members. Paul stated no issues of concern within the Financial Report covering 10 months to 31st January 2026.	
9.0	**Review of Reserve's Policy – Discussion Required** Kate shared that this is a recurring agenda item, however, this is only formally discussed on two occasions throughout the year. Paul shared that the basis of reserves is to keep reserves to cover office overheads and contractual commitments. The board agreed to maintain a medium appetite for risk in previous years and were happy with this going forward. The board shared that the information provided in the Reserve's Policy document was clear and well explained.	

	Kate thanks Paul for his time and he left the meeting at this point.	
11.0	**Remuneration Budget Recommendation** The Board reviewed recommendations relating to staff remuneration and pay award arrangements as part of its regular governance process.	
12.0	**Approve Corporate Business Plan and 2026/2027 Budget** Sarah shared a presentation on the corporate business plan and the 2026/2027 budget. The Board reviewed and approved the organisation's Corporate Business Plan and budget for 2026/2027, following consideration of strategic priorities, resource planning and future delivery requirements. The Board also discussed how planned activities and any related changes should be communicated clearly to stakeholders, with further updates to be provided through the appropriate channels. <u>Action: Sarah Millar to write to the ScotGov Cabinet Secretary in relation to the levy rate increase.</u> <u>Action: Iain MacDonald to provide a Cattle and Sheep numbers update at the April 2026 Board meeting.</u> The Board approved the Corporate Business Plan and budget for 2026/2027.	**Sarah** **Iain**
13.0	**Draft Programme of recurring Business 2026/2027** Kate provided information on the programme of recurring board business for 2026/2027. **Away Day and Board Meeting September:** Scheduled for 23rd and 24th September. It was proposed to push back this back by a week to 30th September and 1st October. <u>Action: Laurie and Debbie to change September Board meeting to 30th September and 1st October 2026.</u> **Board Planning Day:** Scheduled for 25th November 2026 which would fall day before the November Board meeting. <u>Action: Laurie to update the recurring business programme table dates.</u>	**Laurie & Debbie** **Laurie**

14.0	**QMS Conference Briefing** **Holly McLennan in attendance** Kate welcomed Holly McLennan to the board meeting. Holly presented information to the Board on the QMS Conference. Holly shared information on Board attendance and roles and responsibilities of QMS staff on the day.	
15.0	**Implementation Highlight Report Plans 2025/2026** **SMT in attendance** The Board received summary updates from teams on progress against implementation plans, including key highlights and current challenges. **Corporate Services Highlights:** • Audit and assurance work continued to progress positively. • IT infrastructure improvements were nearing completion. • Workforce and people-related planning continued to move forward. **Corporate Services Challenges:** • Some operational and resourcing pressures were noted. • Knowledge sharing and team development remained an ongoing focus. The Board received an update on activity within the Business Development team. **Business Development Highlights:** • Industry engagement and promotional activity continued across key markets. • Sector events and knowledge-sharing activity progressed during the period. • Partnership and sponsorship opportunities continued to support wider industry objectives. **Business Development Challenges:** • Funding and delivery timelines continued to require careful management. • Export and policy-related issues remained under review. • Some planned events required adjustment due to external factors. The Board received an update on activity within the Marketing team. **Marketing Highlights:** • Brand development and campaign planning continued to progress. • Recent marketing activity performed well across a range of channels. • Procurement and insight work continued to support future delivery. **Marketing Challenges:** • Some brand, regulatory and technical matters remained under discussion. • Website and digital delivery work required additional coordination. • Stakeholder engagement continued around scheme-related changes.	

	The Board received an update on activity within the Communications and External Affairs team. **Communications and External Affairs Highlights:** • Conference planning and stakeholder engagement activity continued to progress. • Public-facing campaigns and community engagement activity remained active. • Industry and public affairs activity continued to support sector priorities. **Communications and External Affairs Challenges:** • Team capacity and transitions were being managed. • Some areas of work were being reallocated or reviewed for future delivery. • Environmental and partnership activity continued to develop.	
16.0	**Strategic Indicators Update** **SMT in attendance** Sarah provided an update to the Board on Strategic Indicators. These updates were shared and highlighted within the Strategic Indicators Report.	
17.0	**Gamechanger Projects Update** **SMT in attendance** The Board received an update on the Gamechanger Project and noted progress on collaborative work to support future delivery. • A short-term working group has been established to consider project priorities and next steps. • Relevant research and sector evidence are being reviewed to inform the project approach. • Engagement activity with industry stakeholders continued, with plans being adapted where required.	
19.0	**Cabinet Secretary in attendance** Kate Rowell thanked the Cabinet Secretary, Mairi Gougeon, Michelle Colquhoun and Rebecca Payne for their time and welcomed them to the meeting. Sarah provided an update on current projects QMS are running. She also provided information on current highlights and challenges. Kate wished to place on record thanks to Scot Gov and the Cabinet Secretary on the backing of the small producer's fund and livestock numbers. The Cabinet Secretary shared she was grateful for the work that QMS do within the industry. She was please to support the Monitor Farm programme and looked forward to seeing how this would progress in the future. The Cabinet Secretary welcomed questions from the QMS Board and a round table discussion took place. Kate thanked the Cabinet Secretary for her presence at SIAL and Anuga. The Cabinet Secretary highlighted she took a lot from these experiences and shared with the	

	Board she would advise her successor to attend such events, as the red meat industry is of extreme importance to Scotland. Kate thanked the Cabinet Secretary for her time. The Cabinet Secretary, Michelle and Rebecca left the meeting at this point.	
20.0	**Update on QA Tender** • The Board received an update on the Quality Assurance tender process and related governance considerations. • Discussion covered proposed delivery arrangements, member engagement, assessment options and stakeholder consultation. • The Board noted progress and agreed that further information would be gathered before final decisions are taken through the appropriate process.	
21.0	**Contract for approval for Event Services tender as per scheme of delegation Emma Heath in attendance** The Board received an update on the Event Services tender and considered the proposed contract award through the organisation's governance process. • The tender process was reviewed in line with the relevant procurement and approval requirements. • The Board noted that the evaluation process had been completed and that appropriate feedback would be provided to participants. • The Board approved the contract award in line with the scheme of delegation.	
22.0	**QMS Committee Meeting Updates:** Andy McGowan rejoined the meeting at this point. **Pig Assurance Standards Setting Body** Andy provided a verbal update on the Pig Assurance Standards Setting Body meeting that took place during January 2026. **Climate & Nature Industry Leadership Group** The notes of this were provided in the papers. There were no questions in relation to the committee update. **Scottish Red Meat Resilience Group** The notes of this were provided in the papers. There were no questions in relation to the committee update. **Sheep Industry Leadership Group** The notes of this were provided in the papers. Kate shared that the work on this would be aimed at decision makers and citizens rather than a specific focus on farmers. **Brands Integrity Advisory Group** Carrie provided a verbal update on the previous BIAG meeting which took place	

	during January 2026. Carrie highlighted that this meeting focussed heavily on the QA Tender work and was covered in previous agenda items. **Remuneration Committee Meeting** Adrian provided a verbal update on the previous Remuneration Committee meeting which took place on 3rd February 2026.	
23.0	**Any Other Business** There was no other business.	
24.0	**Chairs Semi-Closed Session**	
25.0	**Chairs Closed Session**	
26.0	**Close**	