



**Minutes of a meeting of the Directors of Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC) held at 10am at Tŷ Rheidol, Aberystwyth on Thursday 13 November 2025**

- Present:** Cath Smith (Chair)  
Gareth Wynn Davies, John T Davies, Jack Evershed, Mike Humphreys, Vicki Spencer-Francis, Emlyn Roberts; Caroline Sanger-Davies (*virtual – joined 11.30*), Dewi Hughes, Paul Savage (*virtual*), Hugh Hesketh-Evans (*virtual*)
- By invitation:** Maria Richards (Welsh Government)
- Executive:** José Peralta, CEO  
Gareth Jones, Head of Finance and Corporate Governance  
Meilyr Ceredig – Head of Promotions and Operations  
John Richards, Producer and Processor Lead  
Jason Craig, Market Development Lead  
Pip Gill, Brand Engagement Lead  
Russ Thomas, Sustainability and Policy Development Lead  
Jo Horder, Secretariat
- For Item 4:** Owain Edwards, Head of Animal Policy (Welsh Government)  
Chris Moore, Multi-Species Wales Project and Roll-Out Lead (Welsh Government)

1. **Welcome and Chair's Comments**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and gave an update on the key events and meetings she had attended since the previous Board meeting:

18 September – Farming Connect Strategic Advisory Board,  
5-7 October – Anuga Trade Fair,  
20 October – Welsh Government Governance meeting with HCC,  
27 October – HCC Remuneration Committee,  
30 October – Ministerial Roundtable,  
3 November – First session of HCC Meat Minds Group,  
6 November – NFU Conference,  
12 November – Public Leaders Forum.

The Chair thanked Vicki Spencer-Francis for attending the Public Bodies Unit, Public Sector Recruitment Process meeting on 5 November on her behalf. It was noted that this had been a productive day and the group had identified several opportunities for improving the recruitment process.

2. **Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies received.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

Vicki Spencer-Francis and Meilyr Ceredig declared an interest in relation to item 8c on the agenda.

4. **Multi-Species Wales (EIDCymru) Progress Update**

The Chair welcomed Owain Edwards and Chris Moore to the meeting.

An update was provided on the project plan, which will be undertaken in a staged approach. Stage one will be to take data from CTS into the Wales platform. This is the foundation step. A phased approach will then be adopted to bring on board abattoirs, market/collection centres, and keepers / other users in stages two, three and four respectively.

Stage one will begin in December, with the aim of completing stage four by the end of 2026, although timescales can be revisited if the timing proves problematic. A communication plan tailored to the different sectors will be put in place.

The project governance framework, SLAs, budget and timelines were discussed. The detail is being finalised and the project team will report back in due course.

**Action: Welsh Government**

It was noted that the detail of the service desk provision is still being worked on within a separate workstream. This will be reported to the Board at a later date.

The presentation slides will be shared with the Board and a progress update will be included as a standing agenda item for future meetings.

**Action: Welsh Government / HCC**

5. **To approve the minutes of the Board meetings**

a) *The Board meeting held on Thursday 11 September 2025*

The above was taken as read and approved by the Board subject to correcting GW Davies role with Fane as a Non-Executive Director.

6. **Matters arising**

The above was taken as read.

7. **Corporate**

a. *6-month Operational Plan 2025-26 Performance Review against KPI's*

The Producer and Processor Lead presented the above and highlighted the main points. It was noted that there were no concerns regarding the current KPI position.

*b. Vision 2030 and Funding*

The Producer and Processor Lead presented the above.

It was noted that Vision 2030 is now ready to be shared with Welsh Government for sign-off. Work will now begin on the development of the HCC Business Plan for the four-year period. This will be brought to the Board in January 2026.

The HCC Executive is continuing to engage with Welsh Government Ministers regarding funding.

The Board approved Vision 2030.

It was noted that, instead of the annual HCC Conference, roadshows will be held in the New Year to communicate Vision 2030 to the industry. Communication messages prior to the publication of the Vision will be included in the lines to take for the Winter Fair.

**Action: Head of Promotions and Operations**

**8. HCC Reports**

*a. Delivery Report*

The report was taken as read by the Board. Key highlights were;

Strategic Marketing and Connections

- The Welsh Lamb campaign was coming to an end and the evaluation had started;
- The Welsh Beef campaign is now live;
- Welsh Beef Ambassador, Lauren Price will be attending the HCC trailer at the Winter Fair;
- HCC is currently engaging with pork producers on marketing support;

Supply Chain - Market Development

- The Market Development team are undertaking face-to-face engagement with retailers;
- HCC presence at Anuga and Blas Cymru had been very positive;
- HCC is collaborating with AHDB on attendance at Gulfood.

Supply Chain – Producers and Processors

- There had been a reduction in PGI sites to 41;
- All abattoirs are being visited by the end of November to collect information to highlight the importance of the processing sector in Wales.

## Sustainability and Future Policy

- Focus was on the Baselining project. Participating farms had been selected, with a tight timescale of activity planned to bring the project in line with the rest of the UK.

### *b. Financial Update: Management Accounts September 2025*

The Head of Finance and Corporate Governance presented the above. Key points highlighted were;

- There was an operating surplus of £351k, £399k ahead of budget;
- This positive variance was primarily driven by levy income exceeding profile to date and expenditure underspend against profile, due to timing matters;
- Total income to date was £2.158m, against a budget of £1.977m. Total expenditure was £1.807m, below the budgeted £2.025m.

The report was noted by the Board.

### *c. Business Case for 12-Month Extension of Integrated Agency Services Contract*

VS-F and MC left the meeting for the duration of this agenda item.

The Head of Finance and Corporate Governance presented the above and summarised the key points.

The business case was taken as read and approved by the Board subject to ratification by Welsh Government Sponsor Team.

## **9. Review and Approval of Key Documents**

### *a. Articles of Association – deferred until new Government in Office*

### *b. Performance Review Policy*

The policy was taken as read and approved by the Board.

### *c. Code of Conduct and Complaints Procedure for Board Members*

Points were raised in relation to paragraphs 2.1.2 regarding operational decisions, and 12.2 in relation to a visible process to assess Board performance. The final draft will be amended accordingly.

### **Action: Head of Finance and Corporate Governance**

The Board approved the procedure subject to the above amendments.

### *d. Disciplinary Policy*

A point was raised in relation to paragraph 5.7.1 regarding the informal warning right to appeal. Clarification will be sought on this point.

### **Action: Head of Finance and Corporate Governance**

The Board approved the policy subject to the above.

*e. Grievance Policy*

The policy was taken as read and approved by the Board.

*f. Suspension Policy*

The policy was taken as read and approved by the Board.

## **10. HCC Committees**

### **Audit & Risk Committee**

*a. To adopt the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 June 2025*

The above was adopted by the Board subject to amendment.

*b. To receive a verbal report of the meeting held on Thursday 16 October 2025*

The Committee Chair provided a verbal report and highlighted the key points;

- Internal audit follow up on electronic communication and information sharing - Cloud-based Board management software was considered the best option. HCC aimed to implement a system in time for the January Board meeting;
- External audit fees for 2026-27 – the proposed fee increase was 5.5%. The final fee proposal will be reported in February 2026;
- Internal audit - the Data Protection audit had begun and will report to the Committee in February 2026. The Procurement audit will now be reported in June 2026 to take account of changes required to HCC's procurement strategy following legislative changes;
- Risk management – the analysis of the IT risk was discussed in detail, given its strategic importance. Overall, the Committee was content with the current position;
- Register of interests, gifts and hospitality annual report – No issues were raised. It was noted that, to maintain or improve compliance, it was recommended to review and update related policies and the code of conduct;
- Information governance - it was noted that HCC had retained its Cyber Essentials Plus certification in August 2025 and had recently achieved IASME Level 1 Cyber Assurance.

A discussion was had on the External Audit fee increase for 2026-27 and the potential to discuss the proposal with other public bodies.

### **Action: Chair**

The Committee Chair announced that this was the last Committee meeting for both himself and John T Davies, as their tenures as HCC Board members will end in March 2026. He welcomed Paul Savage and Hugh Hesketh Evans, who will be joining the Committee. It was noted that Jack Evershed will be taking over as Committee Chair. The Chair thanked the Committee and HCC for their support during his time on the Committee.

The Board Chair thanked Gareth Davies and John T Davies for their Chairmanship and participation on the Committee.

*c. To receive the External Audit Report 2024-25*

The Head of Finance and Corporate Governance reported on the key points.

The audit opinions, for both financial statements and regularity, were unqualified.

The Audit & Risk Committee resolved to recommend that the Board authorise the Chair and Accounting Officer to sign the letter of representation, on behalf of the Board. This was approved by the Board.

The Committee Chair congratulated the Finance Team on the outcome of the report and thanked the Head of Finance and Corporate Governance for the quality of the financial reporting to the Committee.

*d. To receive and approve the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024-25*

The Board approved the draft Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, and authorised the Chair and Accounting Officer to sign them on behalf of the Board.

The approved and signed financial statements will be laid before the Senedd and filed at Companies House by the submission deadline of 31 December 2025. They will be displayed on the HCC website.

The Board Chair congratulated HCC and the Executive on the financial position achieved.

**11. Any other business**

Regarding the ETRA report on HCC, it was noted that this is scheduled to be discussed at a Senedd Plenary session on 3 December 2025.

**12. Dates of forthcoming meetings**

Board Meeting - Thursday 15 January 2026 at 10.00am

Board Meeting (Virtual) – Thursday 12 February 2026 at 09.30am (Approval of Business Plan)

Board meeting – Thursday 12 March 2026 at 10.00am

**HCC Board Closed Session**

A separate and confidential meeting of the Board followed.

**Signed..... Chair of HCC**