

News story: Defra non-executive board member appointments

Defra has today announced the appointment of new non-executive board members to join the departmental Board.

Henry Dimbleby takes on the role of lead non-executive board member with Elizabeth Buchanan, Lizzie Noel, Ben Goldsmith and Colin Day appointed as non-executive board members.

Colin Day will chair the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee from July 2018.

Non-executive board members are senior figures from outside government, appointed to provide challenge to government departments.

As set out in the government's Code of Practice, non-executive board members should be appointed directly by the Secretary of State and are not civil servants.

Henry Dimbleby

Henry Dimbleby was co-founder of the Leon restaurant chain. He is also co-founder and Director of The Sustainable Restaurant Association and of London Union, which runs some of London's most successful street food markets. He co-authored The School Food Plan (2013), which set out actions to transform what children eat in schools and how they learn about food.

Henry previously worked as a Strategy Consultant at Bain & Company (1995-2002) where he advised businesses on strategy, performance improvement and organisational design.

Colin Day

Colin Day recently retired as Chief Executive of Essentra plc, a FTSE 250 global business with over 10,000 employees. He was previously Chief Financial Officer at Reckitt Benckiser plc for over 10 years and prior to that at Aegis Group plc.

Colin is currently a non-executive director and Audit Committee Chair at Meggitt plc, a non-executive director and member of the Audit Committee at FM Global Inc., and a member of the Board and Finance Committee of Cranfield University. He has served as a non-executive director on the boards of major UK plcs including Amec Foster Wheeler, WPP, Cadbury, Imperial Brands and Easyjet.

Colin is a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants and has an MBA from Cranfield School of Management.

Ben Goldsmith

Ben Goldsmith is CEO of Menhaden Capital Management LLP which manages London-listed investment trust Menhaden Capital plc which invests in business opportunities arising from the efficient use of energy and resources. Sectors of focus include industrial process and material efficiency, energy efficiency and storage, power generation and waste and water. Previously Ben co-founded and built WHEB Asset Management, now one of Europe's leading sustainability-focused fund management businesses.

Ben chairs the Goldsmith family's philanthropic foundation, the JMG Foundation, which has a focus on the environment. Ben is also a Trustee of one of the UK's largest philanthropic foundations, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation. In 2003 Ben co-founded the UK Environmental Funders' Network.

Lizzie Noel

Lizzie Noel has over 20 years' experience of senior roles in both the commercial and public sectors. She is Chief Executive of Hemera Data Science Ltd, a training and consulting provider. She was on the founding team of training, consulting and technology firm Tribal Group plc, where she was Director of Communications from start up to annual revenues of £200 million and from five to 2,000 employees.

Lizzie was appointed a non-executive board member of the Ministry of Justice in August 2015. She was a former expert advisor at the Department for Education, as well as developing and delivering the Team London programme for the Mayor of London between 2008 and 2012. She is currently a non-executive director of the Sports and Recreation Alliance.

Elizabeth Buchanan

Elizabeth Buchanan is currently a Special Adviser to Waitrose, Dairy Crest plc and the Chime Group, a global sports marketing and communications company. She also manages the family's 200 acre organic livestock farm in East Sussex which produces pedigree Sussex beef and has been owned by the family since 1976. She is a Trustee of the Prince's Countryside Fund.

She is a Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Societies, sits on the BBC Rural Affairs Committee, is a Senior Associate of the Cambridge Institute of Sustainability Leadership and a trustee of the Smith School for Enterprise and the Environment at Oxford University.

Elizabeth was formerly Press Secretary to Lady Thatcher (1992-98) and worked for TRH the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall (1998-2008) handling interests in agriculture and the environment, relations with the business community and work through The Prince's Trust. She was Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales from 2005-2008.

Non-executive board members are Secretary of State appointments drawn from the commercial private sector in accordance with [Cabinet Office guidelines](#).

The appointments are confirmed following a public recruitment exercise.

The Defra Board provides strategic, corporate leadership to the department and has particular responsibility for monitoring performance and delivery.
[More details about the Defra Board](#)

Recruitment process

A process to recruit new non executives began as incumbents neared the end of their terms.

A fair and open competition for the posts was conducted, with the recruitment and selection process overseen by Sir Ian Cheshire, the Government's lead non-executive.

An advertisement for the non-executive board members was published on 14 September 2017. Recruitment of non-executive board members followed the procedures set out in the Government's Code of Good Practice for Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments, and its supporting guidance.

The [guidance](#) makes clear:

- Non-executive board members in Whitehall will be appointed by the Secretary of State. The appointment of lead non-executives will be on the approval of the Prime Minister.
- Non-executives on departmental boards are not employees and they do not benefit from temporary civil service status.
- Previous or current political activity should not be an automatic bar to appointment.

Board movements

- Current non-executive board member Paul Rew's term of office runs until the end of June. He will be replaced by Colin Day, with a period of overlap to ensure continuity on our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.
- Catherine Doran's second three-year term expired on 30 November 2017.
- Steve Holliday stepped down from the Defra Board in November and will be replaced by Henry Dimbleby as lead non-executive board member.
- Peter Bonfield remains on the Board.

Political declarations

All appointees have declared any political activity as required.

Ben Goldsmith has made donations to the Conservative Party and the Green Party on an irregular basis since 2004. This has included to the constituency parties of the Environment Secretary (2005) and the Green Party (2009).

Full details are available from the [Electoral Commission website](#).

He is Chairman of the Conservative Environment Network, which promotes environmental issues and their solutions amongst Conservatives. The Conservative Environment Network is not formally affiliated with the

Conservative Party.

Lizzie Noel was a Conservative candidate in the 1997 General Election.