

Minutes of the 175th meeting of the
SafeFood Advisory Board
held on Thursday 10th April 2025 at 11:30 am
Killeavy, Newry

Members Present in person:

Dr Eddie Rooney (ER) (Chair)

Ms Elaine Clohosey (EC)

Mr Alan Lewis (AL)

Dr Kenneth McKenzie (KMck)

Mr Alex Attwood (AA)

Prof Elizabeth Keane (EK)

Dr Elaine Mooney (EM)

Ms Teresa Canavan (TC)

In attendance:

Dr Gary A. Kearney, Chief Executive Officer (GK)

Ms Patricia Fitzgerald, Director Corporate Operations (PF)

Ms Colette O'Shea, (CO'S) Secretariat

Apologies:

Ms Irene Collins (IC)

Mr Damien McCallion (DMcC) (Vice-Chair)

1. Introduction and apologies

Noted: The Chair welcomed members of the Advisory Board to the 175th meeting. Apologies were noted from Irene Collins and Damien McCallion.

2. Conflicts of interest

Noted: No conflicts of interest were recorded.

3. Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 13 February 2025.

Approved: The Chair asked members if they were happy to approve the minutes of the previous meeting which were circulated in advance. No issues were raised, and the minutes were approved.

Proposed: AL

Seconded: EC

4. Matters arising from the minutes

Noted: No matters arising.

5. Financial Report

Noted: PF advised that Safefood's expenditure to date total spend stands at €3.294 million for the first five months of the year. The full-year budget is approximately €8 million. Current spend is €25,000 ahead of budget, which is considered marginal. The comparison to the previous year expenditure is €370,000 higher than the same period last year, primarily due to earlier disbursement of Community Food Initiatives funding.

Noted: PF advised that Safefood is on track to meet the annual budget, though it remains tight. A detailed review meeting has already taken place, with another scheduled for August.

Noted: PF advised that currency impact had been more stable in recent years. All noted variances in the accounts are due to currency exchange fluctuations. Losses due to currency shifts are not recoverable from departments and must be absorbed internally.

Noted: PF Advised that the Financial Memorandum allows for annual review of the funding ratio between Ireland and Northern Ireland. Any change in ratio's requires approval from the North/South Ministerial Council and four departments (Health and Voluntary sectors in both jurisdictions).

6. Chief Executive Officers report

Noted: The Chief Executive Officer's report detailed Safefood's activity since the last Board meeting on 13 February. The report was circulated to Members prior to the meeting and taken as read. The CEO highlighted the following items.

Noted: Safefood's Corporate Plan 2026-2028: Safefood has already carried out two very successful facilitated workshops internally with both the Directors and Managers and Staff, focusing on strategic objectives and carrying out an internal/external analysis.

Noted: Safefood is participating as the Ireland country-partner for the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) 'Safe2Eat' campaign which launches in April across the EU. EFSA will run social and digital advertising in Ireland which will be co-branded with Safefood.

Noted: The UK four Nations Diet and Health technical group involves collaboration between the nations of the UK and focuses on public health standards and technical cooperation. Safefood is represented on this group by the Nutrition Team as observers.

Noted: Following an open recruitment competition the upgraded ICT position was filled. The successful candidate took up the position on 30 March 2025.

Noted: The Food Environment Campaign will run in early May across Television, Radio, Social and Digital. The campaign aligns with Safefood's broader goals of encouraging societal change in how people consume their food.

Noted: The Food Safety Campaign is scheduled to launch in Q3. The focus of the campaign, which reuses an older existing TV ad called 'Ultraviolet', is on the avoidance of cross-contamination in the home kitchen.

Noted: The new all-island Community Food Initiatives Programme is launching in May with a significantly enhanced budget and reach. The May launch will be a virtual one, with a follow-up physical launch later in

the year. There will be 18 new CFIs established in Ireland and 10 in Northern Ireland.

Noted: The “Safe Food for Life” programme for older children is ongoing and focuses on food safety education in second-level schools. Efforts continue to integrate this valuable asset into the school curriculum in Northern Ireland.

7. Tour de Table

Noted: The CEO advised that the next Board meeting will take place on Thursday 19 June in Cork.

8. Meeting close

Noted: The meeting closed at 13:00 pm

Noted: Following the normal Board business, Members of the Board engaged in facilitated consultation sessions over two half-days to help shape Safefood’s 2026-2028 Corporate Plan. These sessions were crucial for setting strategic objectives and ensuring that activities align with the organisation's goals, objectives and remit.

Signed

Dr. Eddie Rooney
Chairperson
Safefood Advisory Board.