
Minutes: AWERB

Status: Chair approved

Meeting held: 17 October 2017 at 2.30 pm in Council Room Camden videolinked to Council Room Hawkshead

Attendees: 13 members present; 1 in attendance; 9 apologies sent.

1 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record.

2 MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Item 8: training records

Camden: these records have been checked and all current personal licence holders have up to date training records.

Hawkshead: these were in the process of being checked.

2.2 Item 13.2.2: Pigeons

Measurements have been taken for the netting.

2.3 Item 14.1: Ponies:

One of the technicians had undertaken an examination of the ponies at Camden and taken recordings so that there was now a baseline to compare with when the horses were at Hawkshead. The ponies were due to be swapped over on 10th November.

2.4 Item 4.1: CPD (June 2017 meeting)

A plan of CPD events was being put together. Technicians have been going to events that accrue CPD points.

It was agreed that a formal programme should be put together, with one or two events organised per term. AWERB would have oversight of the programme. The programme for the forthcoming year would be reviewed each summer. The programme should also encourage interaction between the scientists and technicians.

2.5 Item 7: Training records update (May 2017 meeting)

The wording in the policy on training and competency for the use of animals in research had been updated to reflect that it was down to the NTCO discretion about how frequently the reassessments should be done.

2.6 **Item 12.1: Theatre lights at Hawkshead (May 2017 meeting)**

It had been decided to go for portable theatre lights. Quotes were being obtained from the manufacturers.

3 **WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

3.1 **Update on NC3Rs mouse handling workshop attended on 27th September**

Several technicians had attended this workshop. It had been an informative event and they had gained practical advice and tips on using the refined handling techniques. The workshop had demonstrated that picking up mice by the tail induces aversion and high anxiety, whereas tunnel and cup handling avoids or reduces these negative responses. Non-aversive tunnel handling also leads to more robust and reliable responses in behavioural tests, benefiting the science the animals are used for. The technicians who attended were all now very supportive of using tunnel handling over tail handling, if the mice were in the unit for a long time. There was still a query though whether for short-term studies, if it was more stressful to the mice to train them in tunnel handling, than to use tail handling for short periods.

NC3Rs have put together several tutorials and videos on their website about mouse handling which would be circulated along with copies of the slides from the event to users via the users news forum with a message explaining why the technicians were now supportive of this approach.

4 **INFORMATION DISSEMINATION**

4.1 **Speaker Training: 14 September 2017: The A-Word: speaking about animal research**

A report was provided on speaker training that had been organised by Understanding Animal Research.

It was noted that the College had interactions with local schools through the widening participation programme. It was possible that this could be expanded to include tours of part of the Unit for the schoolchildren.

Introductory sessions were provided to the first year veterinary students on the Unit. The slides used were being updated to make them more user friendly and would also be using Turning Point to get the students more engaged by asking them questions. The aim of the session was to inform the students about the biomedical research that was carried out at the College and how animals were involved and to also explain about the role of AWERB and A(SP)A legislation. Discussions would be held with other course leaders to see if these sessions could be incorporated into the timetable for their courses.

5 **AWERB UK: TO NOTE THE RECENT PUBLICATIONS**

AWERB noted the AWERB UK publications that had recently been circulated for information:

- ASC and AWERB Hubs workshop report 2017
- AWERB Hub Support note version 1
- The first issue of “the Hub”: the ASC newsletter for AWERBs

The aim of the hubs was to share best practice and to be a forum for communication, discussion and information sharing. It had been set up by the Animals in Science Committee. A new Chair of the London Hub had only recently been appointed.

The following points were made:

- Experimental Design and Statistics in Licence applications: intending project licence holders were required to attend PPL holder training that included training in statistics and experimental design, so that they should know the proper way to design a study. It might

perhaps be useful for members of AWERB to attend this training too as background for when they were reviewing project licences. A website was mentioned that provided an interactive short course on experimental design for research scientists working with laboratory animals. The aim of the course was to reduce the number of animals which were used, improve the quality of the science and save time, money and other scientific resources. It was agreed the website link should be circulated to AWERB and also to Users and all encouraged to work through the course.

- The NVS team would be asked whether they could provide refresher training for all PPL Holders. This session could be combined in reminding PPL Holders of the importance of good practice for experimental design and using the right number of animals. It was possible that this training could be opened up to other members of the AWERB Hub.

6 HOME OFFICE INSPECTOR UPDATE

The College's Home Office Inspector would be changing, as the current Inspector had been promoted.

7 ESTATE ISSUES

7.1 Camden.

Phase 2 of the refurbishment was going well and was improving the environment in the unit. There was no impact on the animals. The Ethics and Welfare Committee had a tour of the unit and had commented positively on the signage that was on display in the unit, as it clearly indicated that welfare was at the top of the agenda.

There had also been an upgrade in biosecurity, with new lino flooring and the surgery rooms painted with sterilisation paint.

7.2 Hawkshead

H60 refurbishment: this was now underway with the air handling units and boilers being removed.

Amersham barn: this was being rebuilt.

Theatres: Key changes to the theatres were being planned in order to optimise the current surgical facilities and upgrades some of the features which have been in use for considerable time. This included new flooring to replace the cracked flooring.

Shelters: One of the shelters in the field had blown down and needed to be replaced.

7.3 Environmental controls in the buildings

Records of environmental controls in the building were kept and AWERB would be alerted if the controls went out of range.

7.4 Boltons Park Farm Chimney

A redundant chimney at the farm was due to be demolished by hand on Monday 23rd October. The work would involve the use of heavy plant machinery and would take up to two weeks.

8 ESTABLISHMENT LICENCE

AWERB noted the changes that had been made to the Establishment Licence. The Licence was being reviewed to make sure that it was all correct.

9 PROJECT LICENCES

9.1 Standard questions

The comments that were made by the Home Office Inspector on the draft project licences she had reviewed, were now circulated to the original AWERB reviewers for information.

One general area that the HOI was commenting on related to the harm benefit analysis sections. It was important that when reviewing project licences, consideration be given to whether the set out approaches had been adequately explained; why these decisions had been taken and the rationale for doing so; and why different options had been discounted. These should be clearly indicated in the relevant section of the licence as having been debated at AWERB.

10 PROJECT LICENCES

AWERB noted that two new project licences had been granted by the Home Office and three licences amended.

11 PROJECT LICENCE – MID TERM REVIEW

AWERB noted the mid term review that had been submitted and requested that the project licence holder provided further information.

12 CONDITION 18 REPORTS

One condition 18 report had been submitted. No comments had been received.

Details of a potential condition 18 report had been submitted to the Home Office Inspector.

13 NVS REPORTS

13.1 Camden

AWERB noted the Camden NVS report.

13.2 NVS report

AWERB noted the Hawkshead NVS report.

14 TRAINING RECORDS

This item was deferred to a later meeting.

Secretary

23 October 2017