
Summary Minutes: AWERB: Standing agenda items meeting

Status: FINAL

Meeting held: Wednesday 30 July 2025 at 10am: MS Teams

Present:

MS Teams: 13, plus one in attendance and 16 apologies.

1 **PIL TRAINING RECORDS AND COMPLIANCE**

A session on Personal Licence (PIL) training records was held, focusing on the requirements for maintaining accurate and comprehensive records.

Key points included:

- An overview of the essential components necessary for effective training records, highlighting the significance of thorough documentation.
- The development of a new SharePoint-based system for managing Personal Licence training records was demonstrated, which will centralise and standardise records across all campuses

2 **NTCO REPORT**

- There was a need for mandatory refresher workshops for PIL Holders to ensure that they remain aware of processes and conditions of their licences. Regular refresher workshops will therefore be introduced to ensure PIL Holders follow legal and biosecurity requirements.

3 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2025 were approved.

4 **NVS REPORTS**

4.1 **Camden**

- Investigations into ferret implant issues found no systemic problems. Procedural reviews and consultations with other groups that work with ferrets are ongoing.

4.2 **Hawkshead**

- In a pig surgery project, concerns regarding stress from transportation and fasting have prompted changes in protocol being trialled, with the aim of reducing stress for the pigs. Instead of transporting the pigs to the facility the night before their procedure and fasting them overnight, they are now being transported on the morning of the surgery, which minimizes the stress associated with overnight fasting in an unfamiliar environment. However, due to ongoing issues with bloating, other alternatives are also being considered, such as bringing the pigs into the unit earlier to allow for a proper acclimatization period, which may help reduce stress during fasting.

AWERB expressed their support for these proposed alternative approaches to safeguard animal welfare and minimize stress for the pigs.

- In a separate sheep surgery project, procedural and welfare issues have led to a temporary pause. Two primary issues have been encountered:

Fasting Protocol: The project requires the overnight fasting of sheep, who are placed in a separate fasting pen and taken into surgery as early as possible to minimize the risk of aspiration into the lungs.

During the most recent surgery, one sheep exhibited significant stress, circling throughout the night and subsequently becoming lame in one of her front legs. Although she was administered a relaxant for comfort, it was determined that she should not proceed to surgery due to the stress and her lameness.

Changes are being implemented to try and improve the fasting process. Sheep will be moved to single housing pens a day or two earlier than previously. New pens with Perspex sheeting have been constructed, allowing the sheep to see each other and reduce feelings of isolation while preventing food transfer between pens. The use of mirrors is also being trialled.

ACL Surgery Protocol: several recent surgeries have encountered complications. As a result, the project has been paused for a thorough assessment of the surgical procedure. A cadaver surgery is scheduled, which will be evaluated by other specialists to review the surgical technique. If the specialists approve the techniques, recovery surgeries will be conducted using the newly implemented protocol and the recovery of these animals will be closely monitored, after which a decision will be made about the project.

5 ACTION LOG UPDATES

5.1 Item 3: Annual reports from PPLs that involve special species (dogs and horses) – 05 June 2025 meeting

Regarding the two PPL holders who are now required to submit additional reports related to their PPLs, one has already been notified. The other will be informed that the AWERB now requests updates for each individual protocol upon completion, as part of the feedback process for the mid-term review of their project licence.

5.2 Item 6.1: 3Rs training webinar: breaking the gold standard – 5 June 2025 meeting

A link to the webinar has been provided, plus a link to the Johns Hopkins Centre for Alternatives to Animal Testing YouTube channel.

5.3 Item 6.1: 3Rs resources on how to seek alternative replacement methods – 5 June 2025 meeting

Links to these resources have been provided and circulated to the BSU Users group.

5.4 Item 10: End of PPL review – 5 June 2025 meeting

AWERB's response to the poorly written and incomplete end-of-PPL report has been issued, accompanied by a covering email outlining AWERB's concerns regarding the report's quality. The email emphasised that if the report is not completed satisfactorily, no further work from the group will be reviewed

5.5 Item 11: Condition 18 report – 5 June 2025 meeting

It was confirmed that the eight mouse pups, whose mum had been found dead, were culled due to concerns regarding their welfare.

5.6 Item 5.5: Environmental enrichment seminars/workshops – 5 June 2025 meeting

Work on these were progressing.

5.7 Item 5.6: Culture of Care meeting (05 June 2025 meeting)

The next meeting would be arranged soon.

5.8 Item 3.5: AWERB anonymous survey – 2 April 2025 meeting

Feedback from the responses to this survey and the main themes identified would be given at the September 2025 meeting.

One area that had been highlighted, was the concern regarding the length of time it took for AWERB introductions to be made, when PPL Holders attend the meetings. It was recognised that it was useful for PPL Holders to know who they were talking with, so it was proposed that a list of AWERB members and their roles be created which would be shared with invitees prior to meetings.

5.9 Item 3.7: Training database working group (with HR): 2 April 2025 meeting

The new SharePoint-based system being developed to maintain Personal Licence training records has now replaced this action

6 NACWO REPORTS

6.1 Camden

- Some mice have shown signs of possible ringtail disease. Environmental factors are being investigated.

7 POLICIES

The following were formally signed off:

- Aged Mice Policy
- Internal Tissue Request Process

8 MID-TERM REVIEW

One PPL Mid-term review was signed off.

9 RETROSPECTIVE ASSESSMENT

One retrospective assessment for a PPL that had expired was approved for submission to the Home Office.

10 CONDITION 18 REPORTS

AWERB noted that 4 condition 18 reports had been submitted to the Home Office since the last standing agenda items meeting. No comments were raised.

11 ITEMS TO NOTE

The following items were noted:

- The animals that were rehomed in June
- The details of the new project licences granted and project licences amended by the Home Office since the previous meeting
- The details of the study requests approved since 5 June 2025

12

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

27 August 2025 – Project Licence Review Meeting

18 September 2025 – Standing Agenda Items Meeting.

AWERB Secretary

13 August 2025