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**Summary Minutes:** AWERB PPL review meeting

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**Status:** FINAL

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**Meeting held:** 22 February 2023 at 10am via MS Teams

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**Present:** 13 plus 1 in attendance and 11 apologies

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**1 WELCOME**

The external lay panel member for 2023 was welcomed back onto AWERB. The Chair also welcomed the new Trainee Named Veterinary Surgeon who had recently joined AWERB.

**2 RSPCA LAY PANEL MEMBERS FORUM DEC 2022**

The external lay panel member had attended this event on behalf of the RVC. She had found it very useful in terms of being able to talk to other lay panel members and compare experiences.

One key area that had been highlighted at the Forum was the importance of having an ongoing consideration of the 3Rs throughout the project licence life cycle. They recommended that lay members should be encouraged to ask questions from the beginning of a project licence application and possibly go through questions with AWERB before meeting the researcher to clarify any points.

The following was therefore agreed:

- Prior to an AWERB PPL review meeting, lay panel members would be asked if they had any questions they wanted to raise following their review of the NTS.
- Lay panel members would be encouraged to ask questions of the PPL applicant at the meeting so they could really dig into the research being done and to understand what the potential benefits of the research was and to make sure they were happy with the proposed research.
- Where possible, from now on, AWERB meetings would be held in a hybrid format, rather than just via Teams, to encourage interaction and communication from all AWERB members as it was felt that was easier to do in person than through virtual meetings.

**3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record.

**4 MATTERS ARISING**

## **RVC – Summary Minutes: AWERB, 22 February 2023**

- 4.1 **Item 2.2: Gathering costing information for purchasing cryopreservation equipment (11 January 2023 meeting):** A couple of companies had been contacted to requests costs of purchasing cryopreservation equipment.
- 4.2 **Item 2.3: Group Composition (11 January 2023 meeting):** 3 people had applied following the recent call for new members. They were scheduled to have an introductory meeting that afternoon with the Chair and another member of AWERB.
- 4.3 **Item 2.4: Paper for senior management about the proposed BSU virtual tour (11 January 2023 meeting):** The paper had been finalised but it was not known which meeting it was on the agenda for.
- 4.4 **Item 2.5: Camden Stables (11 January 2023 meeting):** The fire access routes had been reviewed with Estates. They would raise with management and the fire reps to confirm where the access routes should be.
- 4.5 **Item 3.1: Lone Housing of pigs policy (11 January 2023 meeting):** The intranet page had been updated to reflect the amended policy.
- 4.6 **Item 3.2.2: Interim review of PPLs (11 January 2023 meeting):** A workshop was being arranged for PPL Holders to explain the information they were being asked for and why in terms of the mid and end of PPL reviews.
- 4.7 **Item 3.2.4: 3Rs awareness and 3Rs local culture (11 January 2023 meeting):** informal discussions have been held with technicians to get their ideas of how best to promote 3Rs awareness. The suggestions of having a poster competition and targeted e-mails had been viewed positively so would be taken forward.
- 4.8 **Item 3.2.6: Performance appraisals (11 January 2023 meeting):** AWERB were encouraged to approach their line managers to ensure that their attendance and contribution to the AWERB business was included in their appraisal goals.
- 4.9 **Item 3.3: Breeding and Colony Management Discussion group update (6 December 2022 meeting):** The importance of including costings for freezing down lines in grant applications and then ensuring that this was done when projects were coming to an end, was on the agenda for the BSU Users meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February.
- 4.10 **Item 2.3: AWERB Budget (01 November 2022 meeting):** A paper listing the training courses and costs that it would be useful for AWERB members to be able to attend was being put together.
- 4.11 **Item 2.9: Mid Term Report (01 November 2022 meeting):** A meeting had been scheduled for March to go through this report.

## **5 3RS**

### **5.1 3R Events**

Details of a couple of upcoming 3R events were provided.

- 5.2 **Annual International 3Rs Prize:** this competition had recently opened and was for papers that describe outstanding and original work that has had or could have major impacts on the replacement, reduction, or refinement of the use of animals in research.

**6 NC3RS SELF-ASSESSMENT 2022 REVIEW**

The results from the recent review had been analysed.

Areas done well in:

- Research and Infrastructure (70.84%)
- Experimental design and reporting (67.75%)

Areas for improvement:

- Training (35.71%)
- Publications and wider dissemination (38.92%)

The following areas were suggested as areas to concentrate on:

Leadership:

- Identifying an academic lead for 3Rs
- Having departmental 3Rs champions
- Developing a 3Rs strategy covering the next two to five years setting out what want to achieve in this area.
- Having regular meetings with the 3Rs regional programme manager: this had used to happen but had lapsed following the pandemic.

People:

- Repeating the 3Rs symposia that showcased 3Rs initiatives taking place at the RVC, to encourage researchers to constantly consider the 3Rs.
- Having a 3Rs section in newsletters and asking for contributions
- Having an independent 3Rs subgroup
- Offering 3Rs awards such as poster prizes.

Research and Infrastructure:

- Having a formal cryopreservation policy (which was being worked on)
- Having a policy on non-animal reagents (such as antibodies).

Experimental design and reporting:

- Repeating the ARRIVE dipstick survey to see whether compliance with following the ARRIVE guidelines had improved following the workshops that had been held.
- Extending Experimental Design training to AWERB members as there was now a greater focus of incorporating this into project licence applications.
- Encouraging the submission of experimental design reports alongside project licence applications as that can really help identify how experiments will be carried out and whether the applicants were carrying out the best experiments.

Training:

- Encouraging attendance of researchers, animal technicians and NVSs at 3Rs events and talks.
- Encourage 3Rs training for those postgraduate students that aren't specifically involved in in vivo work to broaden their knowledge.
- Encourage students to follow ARRIVE guidelines where applicable for their reports and theses, so they get in the habit of following these guidelines.

Publications and wider dissemination:

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- Encourage the publication of “null” or “negative” data although it was recognised that this was a difficult area to tackle.
- Using the website to publish examples of 3Rs advances
- Submit 3Rs case studies to be considered for the next REF.

It was recommended that the exercise should be repeated in approximately 2 years’ time to give time for the proposed initiatives to be implemented and have an effect.

### **7 NVS REPORT – HAWKSHEAD**

#### **7.1 Pig Barn at Boltons Park Farm**

Significant delays in fixing the roof on a pig barn were disappointing and unacceptable. The Establishment Licence Holder would escalate AWERB’s concerns to the Director of Infrastructure Services.

#### **7.2 Dog Unit**

- Ongoing issues with incidences of diarrhoea within the dog unit caused by coccidia and giardia. Advice had been widely sought.
- Technicians were commended for their diligence in attending whelpings, several of which had occurred concurrently making for very long hours.

Their care of two sick puppies which ended up being euthanised was particularly notable as well as dealing with some puppies with deformities. These occurred from time to time but their occurrence alongside the need to nurse two sick puppies had proved difficult for the technicians.

#### **7.3 Culture of care for staff**

Enquiries were being made to find suitable sources of counselling to provide support to the animal technicians to help them handle the stressful situations that they encountered. Several possible options were being looked into.

### **8 NVS REPORT - CAMDEN**

- Mice: there had been issues with male mice fighting. Several measures were being implemented to see if they improved the situation.
- 6 month report to the Home Office on the ferrets: this had been submitted on 23<sup>rd</sup> January. There had been no concerns to report. The previous report had been sent in June 2022 but a formal response had only been received from the Home Office recently.
- Rats: one of the anaesthetic protocols had been recently changed and the animals were recovering faster. However it had been noted that some of the animals were now fighting between themselves after they had woken up. It was possible this was due to the animals being aware that they were in a different environment, so in future, the animals would be moved back to their usual environment much quicker to see if that stopped the fighting.

### **9 NACWO REPORT**

#### **9.1 Hawkshead**

9 dogs had been rehomed in the past month, which was good news.

**9.2 Camden**

- Some recently imported mice had developed what appeared to be transport stress related dermatitis and issues. They had been put on a treatment plan which seemed to be working.
- Cage wash facility: this had developed a leak. The leak was going through into the yellow surgery area. The situation had been escalated to the Operations Manager to push forward with Estates.

**10 AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISHMENT LICENCE**

AWERB noted that a Mobile CT Unit and a Mobile MRI Unit had been added to the Establishment Licence at Hawkshead to enable onsite CT and MRI scanning and guided surgical procedures.

AWERB also noted that the Home Office have confirmed that when animals are transported within an establishment between approved areas, the vehicle used for the transport does not need to be added to the Establishment Licence. The animal however needed to be transported in conditions that were appropriate for its health and well-being.

**11 PROJECT LICENCES AMENDED BY THE HOME OFFICE**

AWERB noted that two project licences had been amended by the Home Office since 5 December 2022.

**12 STUDY REQUESTS**

AWERB noted that 4 study requests had been approved since 5 December 2022.

**13 MID TERM PPL REVIEW**

AWERB noted the mid term review that had been submitted.

**14 RETROSPECTIVE ASSESSMENT FOR THE HOME OFFICE**

AWERB approved the submission of a retrospective assessment for a project licence to the Home Office.

**15 END OF PPL REVIEW**

AWERB noted that the end of PPL review had been returned to the project licence holder to be re-written following queries raised by AWERB members. A meeting had also been held with the project licence holder.

**16 CONDITION 18 REPORTS**

AWERB noted that 2 condition 18 reports had been submitted to the Home Office in January.

**17 FOI REQUEST**

AWERB noted that an FOI request had been received in relation to Decapod Crustaceans.

**18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

This was scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> March and would be a PPL review meeting.

Secretary  
05 May 2023