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**Minutes:** AWERB

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**Status:** Chair approved

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**Meeting held:** 27 March 2019 at 2pm

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**Present**

**Attendees:** 10 plus 1 in attendance, 4 by invitation, 7 apologies

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**1 AMENDMENT TO PROJECT LICENCE**

A project licence holder who was looking to make an amendment to a project licence was welcomed to the meeting. The amendment focused on 3 areas:

- Addition of the treatment of chronic antibiotics to one of the protocols to produce a microbiome knock down mouse in which they wished to test compounds in, as an alternative to germ free mice. Papers had been published that showed altering the microbiome mediated the seizure threshold hence they wanted to trial this.
- Implantation of osmotic mini pumps for the delivery of a drug in previously implanted animals. This was for chronic administration.
- A new protocol to enable the breeding of transgenic mice to be used under this licence. Addition of this protocol had been advised by the Home Office Inspector as it had proved not possible to obtain the transgenic mice that were required.

AWERB discussed the amendment. They had a query about one of the antibiotics that were to be used and asked that this be discussed further with the NVS to see if they were aware if it might have an adverse effect.

It was agreed that once discussions had been held with the NVS that the licence should be circulated for one final check.

**2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2019 were confirmed as an accurate record.

**3 MATTERS ARISING**

**3.1 Item 2: Project Licence discussion (February 2019 meeting)**

A message was being drafted to be posted on the applicable forums to see if anyone was aware whether there have been any refinements of IP injections.

**3.2 Item 4.4: PPL refresher training and culture of care workshop (February 2019 meeting)**

This had been discussed and preliminary dates for June were in the process of being arranged. They would also be used to publicise the proposed surgery sessions that would be run for the project licence holders with the NACWOs, NVS, Home Office Inspector and the Establishment Licence Holder.

**3.3 Item 3: Consent forms (13 December 2018 meeting)**

The consent forms had been reviewed and AWERB confirmed that they were happy with them.

**3.4 Item 4: Environmental Enrichment Audit Working Group (13 December 2018 meeting)**

An assessment of what improvements had been made to environmental enrichment over the past 12 months had been provided for the HOI annual meeting held on 4 March 2019. The HOI had been very positive and happy with what had been provided.

**3.5 Item 11: Schedule 1 Register review (13 December 2018 meeting)**

Quotes had been received but it was looking like the software would be very expensive as it seemed that there was no general programme available – instead each programme had to be customised for that institute. Once a final quote had been received, then the details would be circulated.

**3.6 Item 9.1: Rehoming (30 August 2018 meeting)**

The technicians working on the rehoming would be asked to come to AWERB to do a little report on the rehoming programme. Work was being done to align the processes in Camden and Hawkshead as the process should be similar whichever type of animal was rehomed.

**3.7 Item 9: Attending other AWERB meetings (19 July 2018 meeting)**

A fellow London institution had confirmed that they were happy for AWERB members to attend their meetings to see how they functioned. Dates of the meetings have been circulated. The institution also had an open invitation to attend our meetings.

**3.8 Item 4: ARRIVE guidelines (19 June 2018 meeting)**

It was reported that whilst going through and reviewing the draft ARRIVE template and the study request forms, it had become clear that this was one small part of a bigger process. It was therefore suggested that the whole process be reviewed to make sure that it was all harmonised and worked well and was made more refined. This was agreed.

**4 UPDATE ON PROJECT LICENCE**

The project licence holders were welcomed to the meeting. AWERB were reminded that they had previously attended AWERB in April 2018 to provide an update on the work being done. They had subsequently submitted an amendment to the project licence in summer 2018. Following this amendment, surgical procedures had been carried out in 3 pigs. All surgeries had been completed with no complications.

AWERB were reminded that the aim of this project licence was to augment or reconstruct the bladder using a segment of vascularised intestine/bowel. Various refinements to the model had been required initially and the optimised protocol had now been applied to three pigs. Recovery and post-op had mainly gone well for the animals however one of them struggled with some diarrhoea and poor appetite, resulting in weight loss. As the pig did not improve, it was euthanised 5 days earlier than planned.

Despite all 3 pigs receiving a similar dosage of immunosuppression, the response turned out to be variable. Post-mortem examinations were unremarkable. The researchers had therefore concluded that although good results had been obtained in relation to the surgical procedure with the optimised protocol, as the procedure seemed to be tolerated by all 3 animals, the immunosuppression results and the immunohistochemistry results had not been fully conclusive. This therefore meant that with the data gathered so far, they were not in a position to fully answer the questions that had been posed by the funder. Permission was therefore requested to continue the experiments in two more animals.

AWERB asked a number of technical questions and sought reassurance that undertaking experiments on two further pigs would increase the power of the study substantially giving a good chance that the original research question could be answered to the funder's satisfaction.

The researchers were thanked for attending the meeting and advised that the request to do the experiments on a further two pigs would be discussed and a decision reported back.

Once the researchers had left, AWERB discussed this request in more detail weighing up the welfare issues of repeating this experiment and the scientific benefits of doing so. After detailed discussions the following was decided:

- More information was needed on what the next steps would be if the results proved positive. What would the researcher be proposing to the funder to do next?
- Further measures would need to be taken to improve animal welfare post-operatively based on the experience with the last three pigs if permission to do two more experiments were to be granted.

One of the AWERB members would meet with the researchers to report back on the AWERB discussions.

## **5 DISCUSSION ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF GETTING INVOLVED EARLIER IN DISCUSSIONS WITH GRANT APPLICATIONS THAT INVOLVE ANIMAL WORK TO PROVIDE ADVICE ON THE PRACTICALITIES OF DOING SUGGESTED STUDIES**

At the previous AWERB meeting it had been suggested that it would be useful if AWERB could get involved at an earlier stage when discussions were being held in order to provide advice on the practicalities of doing suggested studies. It was agreed that this would be useful in theory however in practice it could be difficult to get researchers to build in time to do this as part of the grant application process. In addition, grant applications do not go into the detail that project licence applications do in terms of protocols and sometimes grant applications were made by academics with existing project licences. It was agreed after the meeting that the NACWOs should offer to look at the animal sections of grant applications and give feedback on 3Rs aspects and how clear these were in terms of justification of use of animals and the numbers of animals needed.

## **6 MEETINGS ATTENDED**

### **6.1 Feedback from AWERB Hub workshop**

The focus on this workshop had been on improving experimental design and effective tools that could be used to do that. For example NC3Rs had a free online tool (the Experimental Design Assistant) which was designed to guide researchers through the design of their experiments, helping to ensure that they used the minimum number of animals consistent with their scientific objectives, methods to reduce subjective bias and appropriate statistical analysis. The workshop had stressed the importance of considering what would be done with the data that was collected and how it would be interpreted at the start of the design of the project.

There had been a number of different workshops, involving case studies which the attendees had found very useful.

### **6.2 Feedback from Annual HOI meeting**

This had been a very positive meeting. The focus was on how things were progressing, such as the plans for the fish facility and making sure that the costs to improve it were included in the budgets and running workshops that made use of the relevant expertise and facilities that the College had, rather than having set targets. The emphasis was on AWERB and the Unit's Management Team setting its own targets and concentrating on priorities that were deemed as important. AWERB had a big range of expertise that should be used. It was agreed that AWERB should consider for the next

meeting which new priorities that should be focused on. Initiatives should as Environmental Enrichment and dog socialisation and the rehoming programme had all proved successful.

**7 NEW PROJECT LICENCES GRANTED BY THE HOME OFFICE**

AWERB noted that one project licence had been granted by the Home Office since the previous AWERB meeting.

**8 STUDY REQUESTS APPROVED**

AWERB noted that one antibody request had been approved.

**9 MID TERM REVIEW**

A mid-term PPL review was noted. The report had originally been submitted to the Nov 2017 meeting but as not much work had been done it had been agreed that an update would be provided for this meeting.

**10 END OF PPL REVIEW**

An end of PPL review was noted. The study had aimed to test whether monitoring bird flocks at ground level via a moving station was possible without disturbing bird behaviour and welfare. There were plans to publish in place.

**11 TRAINING RECORDS**

This item was deferred to the April meeting.

**12 SCHEDULE 1 REGISTER REVIEW**

This item was deferred to the April meeting.

**13 BSU VIRTUAL TOUR**

An initial “pilot” tour had been done of Hawkshead unit to demonstrate what could be done using the equipment. It needed to be “polished” up and shots taken of the refurbished areas but the intention was to put the virtual tour on the website so that members of the public could see how the unit worked.

The Camden version was still being worked on but would be demonstrated at the April meeting. The Camden tour would go into more detail about biosecurity and processes that have been put in place so would also be a useful tool for inductions.

AWERB were pleased with the progress that had been made. It was suggested that a “shopping list” of areas that could be covered by the tour should be put together.

**14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

This was scheduled for 23 April at 9.30am.

Secretary  
28 March 2019