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Minutes: **AWERB**

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Status: **Chair approved**

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Meeting held: **29 March 2016 at 2pm in Camden Council Room videolinked to F82 Hawkshead**

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## **1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2016 were confirmed as an accurate record.

## **2 PRESENTATION FROM PPL HOLDER**

It was explained that there had been a request for more information about how work was progressing under this project licence. The work involved personalised medicine for patients with cancer. A patient would have a tumour removed which would then be xenographed into mice to test different drug treatments against the cancer.

The presenter explained the whole process from start to finish (only part of which occurred within the College) so that the welfare aspects could be understood and the reasons for the various steps and where they occurred could be rationalised. The whole process took about 6 months. In some cases this information was very useful in selecting treatment plans for individual patients – where that was the case the positive predictive value of the tests done on the mice was 94% and negative predictive value 89%. If the information was not possible to use in the individual patient (because the patient had died before the information became available), the research carried out into the gene profile of the cancer and how this is useful in predicting its behaviour in the patient and its sensitivity to different chemotherapeutic agents was still very valuable.

AWERB explored the issues around transportation of mice to be sure this was absolutely necessary, undertaken to a high standard and effects on the animals minimised. Additional data were requested to verify the need for transportation of the animals.

AWERB were of the consensus though that from the information provided this was worthwhile research for the College to contribute to.

## **3 LONDON AWERB REGIONAL HUB**

The Chair of the London AWERB Regional Hub was welcomed to the meeting. He explained that a workshop had recently been held. The workshop had been a think tank to work up policies for initiating regional AWERB hubs. Regional hubs had originally been suggested due to the realisation that AWERB committees very rarely met with other committees in order to exchange knowledge or working practices. The workshop had discussed several issues including the possibility of holding joint meetings but who would host and cover the costs of the meeting; and there was also the issue of confidentiality and data security.

As Chair he was in the process of attending AWERB meetings in the London Region as an observer and to pick up pointers for good practice which could be shared.

It was agreed that it would be useful to be able to ask questions via a bulletin board to ask about other people experiences and to share information about 3Rs. As the RVC was a relatively small institution, it could be difficult to find the answers to questions that were raised within the College.

## **4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON GOOD PRACTICE FOR ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODIES**

AWERB were reviewing the RSPCA document “Guiding principles on good practice for Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies” in order to see if there were good practices within the document that the College should be carrying out but weren’t.

### **4.1 Section: Retrospective assessment and review:**

A scientist had been involved in reviewing this section in order to provide input from a scientist’s perspective.

The overall purpose of retrospective review is to, wherever possible, reduce the harms and increase the benefits of every project at an establishment. It also enables AWERB and project licence holders to reflect properly on the results of the project and what else needs to be done.

Projects should be reviewed at the end of the project licence and also part way through the project. Currently at the RVC, AWERB required a mid-term review but it was suggested that perhaps the timing of the review should be determined by the project licence holder who would decide when the review would most benefit them, depending on the stage of the project rather than automatically being scheduled for 2.5 years after the project licence was granted. It was agreed that the project licence holder would be asked to propose to AWERB the most appropriate time to review the project progress with respect to the 3Rs at the time the project licence was granted.

It was agreed though that as part of the review project licence holders should be asked whether there was anything from the project that could be featured on the website to promote the research being done.

A suggestion was made that the mid term review could be done as a presentation rather than a form to fill in. It would mean more work for the project licence holder but should be more informative for the Committee. AWERB were receptive to this but pointed out that currently presentations from project licence holders tended to be a 20 minute lecture on the science of their research instead of focusing on the areas that AWERB were interested in, namely 3Rs.

### **4.2 Section: Application of the 3Rs**

The consensus was that the RVC was covering most of the points raised in this section. What was needed though was getting more people involved in order to discuss ideas. The sharing of resources working group was progressing well and was a good example of the application of 3Rs. It would be useful though for animal care staff to feed in examples of refinements that they came across.

Welfare assessment protocols relating to species were being developed that could be used and provided to PIs to help with the development of protocols in project licences: for example measurement of body weight. By formalising protocols it meant more people could work on them.

It was suggested that there be an internal review of procedures working group. This group would look at procedures and whether they should be continued or whether more ideas should be bought in. Workshops could also be held focusing on finding alternatives in relation to 3Rs.

#### **4.2.1 Accommodation and Care**

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

## **5 NVS REPORTS**

**5.1 Hawkshead**

AWERB noted the report. No queries were raised.

**5.2 Refinement:**

A refinement that had been made in relation to the work done on sheep. The sheep were put in a pen with straw however it had been found that the straw masked their lameness. The sheep were therefore now walked on the floor outside the pen so that it made it possible to identify if there was any lameness.

**6 AMENDED PROJECT LICENCES**

AWERB noted that the Home Office had approved one amendment to a project licence on 23 February 2016.

**7 CONDITION 18 REPORTS**

AWERB noted that a condition 18 report had been submitted. The Home Office Inspector had confirmed that no further action was required subject to that which had been set out in the report.

**8 WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

**8.1 Sharing of resources working group**

The next meeting was scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> April.

**8.2 Rehoming of animals working group**

It was noted that a new animal technician who would be working with the dogs had started that day. Questionnaires had now been sent to dog owners that had rehomed animals from the College.

**8.3 Rodent Handling Group**

Due to sickness, work on developing an “in house” policy on rodent handling had been delayed.

**8.4 Efficient Breeding of Genetically Altered Animals Group**

It was reported that in relation to the efficient rodent breeding, most of the mouse colonies were being maintained to the minimum and BSU was collaborating with users in terms of spare mice/tissues that were available.

BSU had also moved away from using rats for the Home Office courses so this had reduced the usage numbers for these species. BSU were also looking to use rubber mice to demonstrate on for the Home Office small procedures courses also reducing usage.

**9 MATTERS ARISING**

**9.1 Large animals – handling sessions**

AWERB’s concerns about the ponies being left without a companion during the anatomy handling sessions had been passed on. The option of bringing in a 3<sup>rd</sup> pony was being looked into.