
Summary Minutes: AWERB

Status: Chair approved

Meeting held: 5 October 2021 at 10am via MS Teams

Present:

Attendees: 8 plus 1 in attendance and 8 apologies.

1 WELCOME BACK

One of the NACWOs was welcomed back following her return from maternity leave.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Item 5.1: Condition 18 training (22 September 2021 meeting)

One of the NVS and one of the NTCOs had now attended the training, with another NTCO scheduled to attend later in the month. A meeting would then be arranged to determine a practical plan for taking forward the condition 18 reporting and providing messaging to project licence holders to make them aware. They would also feedback the main content and a review of the training at a future AWERB meeting.

3.2 Item 5.3: Pony (22 September 2021 meeting)

AWERB were advised that for the pony that had to be recently euthanised following an anaesthesia, no post-mortem had been required as there had been a definitive clinical diagnosis.

The NVS added that originally the decision had been that a condition 18 report was not required, however following the recent condition 18 training provided by the Home Office, his view now was that a condition 18 report should be submitted. The form needed to be completed by the project licence holder and include an explanation of why there had been a delay in submitting the form.

3.3 Item 7: End of PPL and mid term report templates (22 September 2021 meeting)

The templates had been reviewed to see if any changes could be made to make it clearer what information was required from PPL holders. It was felt that they already provided a pretty good explanation of the information that AWERB wanted to see. Some examples of what was being looked for had been added for the key questions. The amended templates would be circulated for comment.

3.4 Item 3: Keeping large animals at Camden (8 September 2021 meeting)

A contact at the fire brigade needed to be identified to speak to about whether they thought the area by the stables was actually the most appropriate emergency access point for them.

3.5 Item 3: Curriculum changes (8 September 2021 meeting)

A meeting had been held with the anatomy team. They had discussed the necessity of practical teaching experience and the difficulties there would be in hosting the teaching offsite. The anatomy team were aware of why AWERB were not keen on having ponies at Camden due to it not being the most suitable environment for them, but currently there was not a way around that in order to provide the required teaching to the students.

The ponies were used a lot for teaching purposes whilst at Camden. It had therefore been decided that 2 additional new small teaching ponies would be sourced. A small budget had been made available to purchase the ponies. Once potential ponies had been identified a full veterinary assessment would be done to see how they would handle being teaching ponies.

AWERB were asked to consider whether they thought it was fair ethically to take on old ponies for teaching purposes that had probably been institutionalised and bring them into the middle of London.

3.6 Item 9: Fish (8 September 2021 meeting)

- A zebrafish users group had been scheduled for 20th October where there would be a discussion about squeezing zebrafish.
- UV lighting issues: a new piece of kit had been acquired to see if that would help with the problem with the UV light.

3.7 Item 9: Establishment Licence (8 September 2021 meeting)

There were a number of changes that needed to be made to the establishment licence, such as rooms that needed to be removed, or amalgamated. The changes that were required had been written on to a site map. A discussion would now be held with the Establishment Licence Holder.

3.8 Item 10.1: Humidity regulation (8 September 2021 meeting)

A specialist had recently looked at the air handling unit and would be providing recommendations about what could be done to make the system more efficient and better.

3.9 Item 11: End of PPL reports not received (14 July 2021 meeting)

One of the outstanding reports had now been received

3.10 Item 3.2: Rat playpens for improved welfare (9 June 2021 meeting)

A short presentation had been given on 17th September by one of the technicians. There had been several side projects following that meeting in relation to double deckers and playpens. It had been very positive. The welfare benefits of the transitions that had already been made could already be seen. There had also been comments made about the wild running and hopping behaviour of the rats that were in the established long term playpens in the training room. There was a visual difference in the behaviour of these rats as they were actively coming to the front of the cage to see what was happening.

3.11 Item 5: ARRIVE compliance report (9 June 2021 meeting)

The ARRIVE subgroup had met to discuss the responses from the survey. They were also working on the proposed workshop which would initially focus on rodent work.

The survey had identified that word limits were an issue in being able to follow the ARRIVE guidelines but there were also good suggestions provided of ways around it. The Chair thanked the sub group for the amount of work that they were putting into this.

4 **AWERB MEMBERSHIP**

It was reported that a couple of AWERB members were stepping down. AWERB reviewed the current membership to decide whether there was a need to do a call for new members.

The areas that there were gaps were for external and internal lay members and student members. It was noted that there was currently a call out for new student members and it was agreed that there should be a College wide call for new internal lay members. The Chair of AWERB would speak to the Establishment Licence Holder about identifying new external lay members.

The Chair added that she was keen to encourage the animal technicians to attend these meetings on an adhoc basis as observers in order to get a flavour of what was discussed and to see how the AWERB functioned and to also do short presentations on their work.

5 **HOME OFFICE**

5.1 **Update on ASRU Change Programme**

A meeting had been held on 22nd September. It was clear that the Home Office would be a lot more process orientated in the future, so that was the area that was being focused on (covering NACWOs, NTCO and training). The processes were being formalised in SOPs and ensuring that there were standard harmonised approaches.

It was noted that in the recent ASRU operational newsletter they had provided details about the proposed audit process and the checklist they would be using.

6 **3RS**

- New panel members: It was reported that NC3Rs were currently recruiting new panel members. One of the areas of expertise that they were looking for were animal welfare and behavioural observations, so this might be of interest to RVC researchers.
- [RSPCA: All about the AWERB – week 2:](#)
This “week’s” activities related to Induction and Engagement. In particular the following questions were being asked:
 - Is there a structured induction and training programme in place for all AWERB members?
If so, do members feel it prepared them adequately for their roles?
 - Who does, or should, organise training and induction?
 - How does the AWERB promote itself, and understanding of its work, internally to all staff? Are communications clear, engaging and accessible?
 - Does the AWERB engage and communicate with the scientists whose work it oversees, to see how they feel about their interactions with the committee?
 - How does the AWERB ensure that animal technologists and named persons are aware of the AWERB and its tasks, and are motivated to support these?
 - Are there any obstacles to better communications and engagement with staff fulfilling different roles, and if so how could these be overcome?

AWERB were encouraged to take a look at this.

7 **AWERB TERMS OF REFERENCE**

AWERB reviewed the Strategy & Planning section of the terms of reference and agreed that no changes were needed.

A query was raised in relation to the dissemination of information in relation to best practice in experimental research: how did AWERB know that this advice was being taken into account or looked at? Were there any measures that could be done to see if this advice was being implemented? It was noted that user groups were held which were good for two way interactions and providing information. For example at a recent meeting, users had asked for a workshop in relation to completing condition 18 reports.

8 CAMDEN NACWO REPORT

- There were ongoing building issues that were being chased
- Ponies' enrichment: it was important to ensure that this did not slip off the radar. What things could be done to enrich the ponies' environment further? Possible solutions needed to be looked into and quotes obtained.
- Estates were looking into options for floor coverings and were having discussions with various companies.

9 HAWKSHEAD NACWO REPORT

- Sheep: there had been a veterinary unforeseen issue in that one of the sheep had a hidden part foetus sitting in the pelvis. It had not been possible to detect until the sheep was under anaesthesia.
- Dog unit: there had been whelping over the weekend. A whelping training session would be arranged for the new technicians, to make sure they knew about the triggers that required a vet to be contacted and to ensure they knew the technical terms for these triggers.

10 NVS REPORT

- ASPeL: several project licences had now been returned by the Home Office with comments. It would be useful to be able to download these comments so that AWERB could review them to see if there were any basic trends or patterns in the Home Office advice. Currently though there did not seem to be a way to do that. The only way to access them was to go into ASPeL and review the comments directly on the licence. This would be raised at the next meeting with the Home Office.
- Condition 18 training workshops: The Home Office had mentioned that they would be updating the project licence application form as the advice provided on adverse effects was not quite accurate. There had been no mention made about when these changes would be made by.
- Following the condition 18 training, the Home Office were asking that mortality rates for survival curves for different mice strains that were going to be used, be put into future project licence applications. This was so that instead of reporting each mortality, a check could be done to see whether it was in line with the normal mortality rates. There did not seem to be published mortality rates for all the strains that the RVC held though, so this could be difficult to put together.

11 AMENDED PPLS

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

12 CONDITION 18 REPORT

AWERB noted that one condition 18 report had been submitted to the Home Office. A litter of pups had been IV injected, but had been found dead in the morning. An autopsy had been carried out but the deaths did not seem to be procedure related. It had been reported as a condition 18 though as the animals had been under procedure and had not been expected to be found dead. There was concern that the pups might have been attacked by their mum when they were returned to her. The Home Office had raised some questions: clarification of when the pups had last been checked and

what was sort of check was done and by whom. The Home Office had since come back to say they were happy with what was in place.

13 STUDY REQUESTS

AWERB noted that 3 study requests had been approved since the previous meeting.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was scheduled for 27 October at 2pm.

Secretary

6 October 2021