
Summary Minutes: AWERB

Status: Chair approved

Meeting held: 9 June 2021 at 11am via MS Teams

Present:

Attendees: 10, plus 1 in attendance and 7 apologies.

1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/ACTION LOG

2.1 Item 1: New project licence review (26 May 2021 meeting)

The AWERB Chair had contacted the project licence applicant to ask to arrange a meeting to go through the licence.

2.2 Item 1: Discussion on DMD dogs (11 May 2021 meeting)

The first official Dog Colony meeting had been held. These would be held on a monthly basis. For this initial meeting they had focussed on the format of these meetings; biosecurity within the unit; whelping of the puppies and the ongoing studies and future plans. Having these meetings meant that the technicians would be kept informed about how the study was progressing and the results that were being obtained. It should also make it easier in terms of communication and would provide a forum to air any concerns. It seemed to be a very productive first meeting.

2.3 Item 4.6: Enrichment for the dogs (7 July 2020 meeting)

The position of Deputy BSU Manager had been offered and the person was scheduled to start the following week. The Deputy BSU Manager would take over responsibility for this action

2.4 Item 3.1: Virtual BSU (5 November 2019 meeting)

Discussions had re-started about putting together videos for both sites that could be incorporated into a virtual tour.

2.5 Item 9: Companion Animals query (4 June 2019 meeting)

This would be taken forward by the new Deputy BSU Manager at Hawkshead.

3 3RS

The following was reported:

3.1 [New Zebrafish welfare hub](#)

The NC3Rs have put together in one place their resources and outputs that relate to zebrafish welfare. Topics covered included refinements for common procedures, welfare monitoring and anaesthesia. This resource would be highlighted to the relevant researchers.

3.2 [Rat playpens for improved welfare](#)

There was now a webinar recording available which highlighted how playpens could help improve the welfare of animals.

3.3 [Blood sampling](#)

These pages had been updated and reviewed by LAVA. Information was provided on blood sampling from common laboratory animal species and the information was intended to help laboratory staff choose the most appropriate technique for blood sampling in a humane and efficient manner. This resource would be highlighted to researchers.

3.4 [RSPCA: severe suffering website](#)

The RSPCA were leading an initiative, in collaboration with the scientific community, to end “severe” suffering in animals used in research and testing. As part of that they had updated their website to provide advice for scientists on how to reduce severe suffering. There was a section that provided guidance relating to specific animal models and procedures that would be useful for when reviewing project licences. There was also a road map that set out the severe steps that should be thought through when writing a protocol including identifying what they were and how to control them to reduce severe suffering. This would be a nice exercise to promote to someone to do when they were writing a project licence as it really made it clear what should be considered.

It was agreed that this resource should be highlighted to scientists who were writing project licences.

3.5 **Breeding and Colony Management Discussion Group**

AWERB noted the report from the Breeding and Colony Management Discussion group that had met in April and contained a summary of their discussions. The group had identified several areas for potential improvement. One of the outcomes was that there would be an agenda item at the next Users group meeting to discuss implementation of staggered tick-over (intermittent breeding).

4 **CONCORDAT ON OPENNESS ANNUAL REVIEW 2021**

AWERB noted that the annual review had been submitted.

5 **ARRIVE COMPLIANCE REPORT**

AWERB were reminded that a small sub group had been tasked to identify how well publications from the College were adhering to the ARRIVE guidelines. This group had reviewed a selection of papers that had been recently published and assessed compliance against the full ARRIVE 2.0 checklist. This had identified gaps in compliance in the following areas:

- Experimental design
- Animal characteristics and experiences

The sub-group had been surprised about the gaps in sample size calculation as this needed to be demonstrated when writing project licence applications, so the researchers should already have this information. It was recognised that the information could have been missed out due to word count limits however it could still be included within supplementary material. The researchers needed to be made aware of the importance of including this information. They needed to consider when writing papers what information would be needed if another researcher wanted to reproduce the same study.

After discussion it was agreed that a series of short user-friendly workshops should be set up for researchers that focused on each topic. The sessions could start by highlighting these omissions and the researchers asked why they thought this information had been omitted. One of the exercises could include attendees reviewing sample papers to critique them and to assess if they would have

enough information from what had been provided to reproduce the study. This would be a good way to demonstrate why this information needed to be included.

It was also agreed that once the workshops had been created, discussions would be held with HR Training about making this training mandatory for researchers and to also include it in the training provided to new researchers.

6 AWERB TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

AWERB agreed that from now on they would review several items from the Terms of Reference at each Standard Agenda items meeting. This would provide opportunity to refresh themselves of their responsibilities and to make sure that they were being met or whether changes were needed.

AWERB reviewed the following at this meeting: Frequency of meetings and Committee composition.

- The format of now holding the meetings fortnightly was working well, with one meeting focusing on standard agenda items and the other on project licence reviews.
- Meetings would continue to be held virtually with occasionally meeting on site as required, as the format was working well with all being given the opportunity to contribute.

The Committee members were thanked for their valuable input into the meetings.

It was agreed that it would be useful to obtain feedback from PPL applicants that attended AWERB to ask how they found the process and whether there were areas that could be improved upon. Had they felt supported and listened to and had it been a comfortable forum for them to attend? AWERB were reminded that RSPCA had put together some potential questions that could be asked.

7 FEEDBACK ON THE PPL REVIEWS GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

AWERB reviewed the PPL Reviews guidance document that had been put together and discussed how useful they had found it:

- The PPL reviews guidance document was a good training document for new people that joined AWERB on things to consider when reviewing project licences.
- The document should also be sent to PPL applicants so they knew what they should be considering when writing their licences.
- The document would also be placed on the intranet.

8 SCHEDULE 1 REVIEW

8.1 Camden

The schedule 1 register had been reviewed and updated.

8.2 Hawkshead

This register was in the process of being updated.

9 NACWO REPORTS

9.1 Camden

- New ferrets from the new supplier: these were being monitored carefully for any outbreaks or exposure to the ECE virus. Eight of the previous batch of ferrets in May had shown symptoms but the team had been quick to activate the ECE treatment plan and policy.
- Anatomy ponies: The ponies had now returned to Hawkshead following their recent stint at Camden. The boots for the pony that had been lame seemed to have helped: they had been easy to put on and did not appear to rub her feet. She had seemed happy and very approachable whilst at Camden and had been eating well. The other pony's temperament had changed slightly

so the cause for this was trying to be identified. It could be that he had got used to being at Hawkshead for such a long time and so had not been happy about being back in Camden.

- Ear tags: one of the ear tags in one of the cows kept coming out. There were no welfare concerns though.
- New anatomy pony: Equine have confirmed that they were happy to give the new pony a trial when it arrived. The contract for the new pony was currently being arranged.

9.2 Hawkshead

- Chicken study: two of the chickens in a recent study had died unexpectedly. A post mortem had been carried out but there was no indication that the deaths were due to the procedure they had undertaken. A condition 18 report was in the process of being reported.
- Dogs: A litter of pups had been born the previous weekend. There had been no problems or welfare issues.

10 NVS REPORT

- There had been an outbreak of Infectious Tracheobronchitis of Dogs in the unit. Bio security was therefore being reviewed. It was not known how the infection entered the unit. The dogs had a few days of coughing but had recovered well.
- A frog had to be euthanised following sepsis.

11 STUDY REQUESTS

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

12 NEW PROJECT LICENCES GRANTED BY THE HOME OFFICE

AWERB noted that there had been one project licence that had been granted by the Home Office since the May meeting. This licence had additional availability at the RVC.

13 CONDITION 18 REPORT

AWERB noted the Condition 18 report. A sheep had been in surgery longer than had planned which had resulted in several complications. Following a review, a number of areas had been identified where the scanning procedure could be refined. The Home Office Inspector had confirmed that he was happy with the report and the actions that had been put in place.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for 29 June 2021.

Secretary
22 June 2021