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**Minutes:** AWERB: Standing Agenda Items meeting

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**Status:** FINAL

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**Meeting held:** 6 February 2024 at 10am via MS Teams and F17 Camden

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**Present:** 13 plus 1 in attendance and 12 apologies

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## 1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record.

## 2 MATTERS ARISING

### 2.1 Item 7.2: Rehoming of dogs (20 December 2023 meeting)

The PhD student representative had reviewed the animal rehoming policy and related paperwork and supported the approach taken. She was also happy to be involved in this area going forward.

### 2.2 Item 3.2: Training database (20 December 2023 meeting)

The Chair had joined the training database working party. The first meeting would pin down what was needed from the system.

### 2.3 Item 3.3: Pest control contracts (20 December 2023 meeting)

Recent issues of fox cubs trying to establish territories within the barns used for farm animals have been happening. This would need a specialist approach to handle.

### 2.4 Item 3.5: Reviewing AWERB practice (18 October 2023 meeting)

It was agreed that for the April meeting the topic would be enrichment.

### 2.5 Item 3.3: Website case study (18 October 2023 meeting)

Case studies were being put together.

### 2.6 Item 5.2.2: Fields (01 November 2022 meeting)

A query was raised by a lay member about the proposed cutting down of trees. It was explained that this was required as some of the oak trees were unsafe as they had been dug out by rabbits; and there were fields that could not be used by horses as they were lined with sycamore trees. The cutting down of the trees was on Estates list, but there were more high priority items that needed addressing first.

## 3 3RS

### 3.1 Update from NC3Rs on 3Rs provision to research institutes

AWERB noted that NC3Rs were launching a new training webpage in relation to 3Rs and would proactively be offering training in several areas. AWERB looked forward to receiving further information about the training being offered and getting involved.

### 3.2 NC3Rs and LASA HOLTIF survey of Named Information Officers (NIO)

AWERB noted the NIO's response to this survey.

### 3.3 DISCUSSION ITEM: Question from external report on the role of review and regulatory approvals process:

*This month's question was "The expectations of the NIO role should be set out clearly at each establishment in line with ASPA and LASA/IAT guidance: (See <https://www.lasa.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Guiding-Principles-for-Named-Persons-2016.pdf>). What steps can we take to ensure that all those dealing with animals at the RVC have access to the information they need about the species held and the procedures being performed. What records do we need to keep and do we keep them?"*

It was noted that the following records were kept:

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were in place to help routine operations be carried out, including how to house and look after different species and their care and welfare.
- Hawkshead was a Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) facility so there was a set of principles in place to ensure the quality and integrity of non-clinical laboratory studies.
- Each large animal at Hawkshead has its own health record that was kept with the animal and documented everything about the animal such as health changes, medication given, any need for veterinary intervention. Each addition of a record was signed by the person responsible for that action.
- For the dogs, as the intention was that they would be rehomed, a detailed review of their behaviour was also kept and if there were any issues so that they could be matched with families that would be most suited to their personalities.
- Detailed stock books were kept at Hawkshead.
- At Camden an electronic system was used to store animal health records, notes and procedures on it for each individual animal
- For both Hawkshead and Camden there were training and induction programmes in place. If someone wanted to work with a new species, there were steps in place to introduce this.

## 4 CULTURE OF CARE

### 4.1 Questions from a report from a AWERB Hub Workshop

AWERB were reminded that a series of questions had been discussed at this workshop and it had been agreed that it would be useful to consider these questions at these meetings.

This month's question was: "**What questions can members ask about replacement?**". Did AWERB feel whether enough questions were asked.

The following comments were made:

- Replacement was one of the hardest areas to look at as AWERB members were dealing with areas of science that they did not necessarily have a detailed background in. Thus, it was difficult to understand and know what other models there were that could be used to replace the proposed model.
- PPL Holders should be asked about what other models they have looked at and not just accept an answer that indicates that the model they wanted to use was the only one available. They needed to specify what they had considered and explain why it was not possible to use those alternative options. The PPL Holders should actively be researching these options. It should not be down to the AWERB to do this.

- The advice provided by the previous NC3Rs Regional Programme Managers had been invaluable, particularly as they were able to highlight 3Rs developments. It was hoped that the proposed training and workshop by NC3Rs would be useful in this area.
- It was noted that there was a budget for 3Rs which could be used to engage experts to come and provide updates on what was happening in their areas, but the issue was identifying these experts.

## 5 NVS REPORT

### 5.1 Camden

- The ferret that had experience swelling post operation had healed.
- Ferrets: Following skin reactions to the injections, the provision of anti-parasitic medication had been changed to spot on cream.
- Ferrets: previously ferrets had been given hormonal injections to control their oestrous cycle, but these were no longer available. Instead, hormonal implants would be used. They would be closely monitored to make sure there were no side effects from the implants.

### 5.2 Hawkshead

- Dogs: For the new study the trialling of the new drug was now being undertaken through subcutaneous injections rather than the oral therapeutic that had proved to be very bitter.
- A sheep that had undergone a CT in the equine hospital had to be euthanised after it started to experience problems whilst under anaesthesia.
- Genetically Modified Pigs: a condition 18 report had been submitted following a 7-day old pig being found dead. The pig had been sent for postmortem which had identified fibrinous peritonitis/pleuritis/pericarditis, a condition unrelated to its genotype. Cultures were being tested to establish the cause of disease. The NVS had subsequently discussed and decided that an amendment to the project licence was needed so that it provided better provision for naturally-occurring sporadic neonatal/herd health issues.

## 6 NACWO REPORT CAMDEN

### 6.1 To note the concerns raised about environmental controls at Camden

Although concerns have consistently been raised about the intermittent compliance of the building with respect to environmental controls, and these had been looked into, the issues were still not resolved. It was reported that there were discussions for the Air Handling Units to be refurbished and adjustments made to make the building management system function more effectively but there was no timescale for that work to be done. Reassurance was provided that the fluctuations of environmental conditions had not resulted in any animal health issues but a comprehensive maintenance plan was needed which could then be monitored by the NACWOs and reported to AWERB. These concerns would be raised with the Principal and Vice Principal for Research and Innovation as well as the Director of Infrastructure Services.

## 7 NACWO REPORT – HAWKSHEAD

- Dogs: Although the dogs were handling the subcutaneous injections better than the oral dosing, it was clear they did not like being injected daily. It was confirmed that they received treats afterwards and were then fine.

AWERB were informed that capsules were now being developed, with the outside capsules being flavourless. They would be kept informed of progress.

**8 NTCO REPORT**

**8.1 Camden**

- A new NTCO was in the process of being trained.

**8.2 Hawkshead**

There was nothing to report.

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

AWERB noted that two licences had been amended by the Home Office.

**10 STUDY REQUESTS APPROVED SINCE DECEMBER 2023**

AWERB noted that three study requests had been approved since December.

**11 AWERB TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW**

AWERB reviewed the delivery section of the AWERB Terms of Reference and confirmed that no changes were needed.

**12 CONDITION 18 REPORTS**

AWERB noted that three condition 18 reports had been submitted to the Home Office.

**13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

This was scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> February. It would be a PPL review meeting. [Secretary note: this meeting was subsequently cancelled].

Secretary  
19 March 2024