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**Summary Minutes:** AWERB

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**Status:** Chair approved

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**Meeting held:** 24 November 2021 at 2pm via MS Teams

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**Present:**

Attendees: 9 plus 1 in attendance, 2 by invitation and 7 apologies.

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**1 PROJECT LICENCE AMENDMENT (SECONDARY AVAILABILITY).**

The project licence holder was welcomed to the meeting. She explained that she was seeking to make an amendment to her project licence to increase the numbers of sheep used to assess novel agents. She had initially received a request to carry out a larger study under her licence before it expired in July 2023. The numbers required would have taken her over the numbers specified in the licence, so it was decided that she would submit an amendment to increase them. However, this study was not now going ahead. She had though been advised that she should still submit the amendment but for a smaller increase. The proposed increase was now for 40 animals (from 20) and the work under this protocol was only carried out at the primary establishment.

The other required change was to include adverse effects in relation to hindlimb paresis. This wording had now been agreed as: *Animals showing unilateral hindlimb paresis must show improvement within 4 days from surgery and animals with a bilateral hindlimb paresis must show an improvement within 24 hours otherwise they will be killed using a method described at the end of this protocol.*

Upon hearing that the increase in animals would now just be 20 rather than the previously suggested 100, RVC AWERB confirmed that they were happy with this. There had been concern about the disparity between the numbers that had been submitted and the actual planned changes, but this now seemed to have been resolved. An updated version of the project licence amendment was needed though with the finalised numbers so that there was clarity on what was being submitted. The NTS also needed to be adjusted to reflect the requested increase in numbers.

The project licence holder was thanked for attending the meeting.

**2 MINUTES OF MEETING**

The minutes of the AWERB meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November were confirmed as an accurate record.

**3 MATTERS ARISING**

**3.1 Item 1: Rehoming of one of the dogs (9 November 2021 meeting)**

An update on the dog that was to be rehomed was given. Since being fostered the dog's behaviour had really improved. Her nesting and anxiety behaviour and the release of milk had all stopped and she was now settled. She had now had her cherry eye surgery which had gone well and she had returned to her foster family. She had also had her stitches out from the cosmetic vulvoplasty and no problems had been reported. The plan was still to rehome the dog but there would be strict

requirements set for the new home: she needed companionship so there should be another dog in the family; and the family should be frequently at home.

**3.2 Item 4.1: Condition 18 training (9 November 2021 meeting)**

Some of the documents had now been received following the workshops that the Home Office had held on condition 18. There were a few more documents expected but these were being updated by the Home Office. Once these had been received then the training workshop would be formulated.

**3.3 Item 4.5: Workshops (9 November 2021 meeting)**

The proposed workshops for PPL Holders had been discussed with the Establishment Licence Holder. He had agreed to endorse them and push for people to attend. He agreed they should be sharp and short, and numerous sessions arranged, so all had the opportunity to attend.

**3.4 Item 4.5: ARRIVE compliance report (9 November 2021 meeting)**

The Sub Group were still working on the training content for the proposed workshop. They were looking for suggestions of papers they could use as examples of underreporting of the ARRIVE guidelines. They had thought about anonymising a paper however they were worried that someone might recognise it.

The following suggestions were made:

- Use snippets from different papers where the ARRIVE guidelines hadn't been followed, rather than just the one paper.
- Find an old paper (pre ARRIVE guidelines) and get the authors permission to use it to demonstrate how things have changed since the ARRIVE guidelines have been introduced.
- Write an example paper.

One of the AWERB members taught aspects of the ARRIVE guidelines as part of the Comparative Models of Disease module for BSc3. He had a few papers that he used for that which had bits of the recommended ARRIVE information missing. He would forward details of these papers to see if this was the sort of thing they were looking for. As the papers were in the public domain they should be ok to be used for this type of exercise.

It was suggested that a copy of the workshop slides should be provided to AWERB so they could provide feedback. They were also happy to take part in a practice run if that would help.

**3.5 Item 4.6: AWERB membership (09 November 2021 meeting)**

The call for new internal lay members for AWERB would be circulated once the student membership had been finalised. There had been a lot of interest in the AWERB call and a shortlist of 6 students had been drawn up. There were discussions taking place about how many students to have on AWERB as due to the number of meetings, it would be good to have several involved to share the workload. The aim was to have a mix of students from different years and to also have PhD and undergraduate students.

**3.6 Item 4.8: HOI comments on project licences via ASPeL (9 November 2021 meeting)**

At a recent meeting involving the Home Office, the issue of whether it was possible to download HOI comments made on project licences had been raised. The consensus was that it was not possible. As a workaround people were paraphrasing the comments made or copying the comments directly into a Word file.

The question of being able to download the HOI comments had also been raised at a separate meeting, where it was confirmed that this would be looked in to.

**3.7 Item 5: Camden and Hawkshead Schedule 1 registers/assessors lists (9 November 2021)**

Reassessments were being arranged for those people who wanted to remain on the schedule 1 list at Camden. The assessors list had also been reviewed and several gaps identified.

A similar process was also being undertaken at Hawkshead.

Once both schedule 1 lists had been reviewed at Camden and Hawkshead, a meeting would be arranged to go through and consolidate the lists to see if there was cross over between the sites, such as for the cattle and ponies.

**3.8 Item 3.7: Establishment Licence – updating the room names (27 October 2021 meeting)**

A query had been submitted to ASRU about how best to update the Establishment Licence with the correct room names. In the interim, the site plans and the establishment licence were continuing to be reviewed, to make sure the names of the rooms matched between the two.

**3.9 Item 3.8: Air handling units at Camden (05 October 2021 meeting)**

The BMS Specialist report had now been received and a meeting scheduled to discuss the report, the next steps and any impact that might have on the risk register.

**3.10 Item 8: Camden – Floor coverings for the stable area (05 October 2021)**

The current focus with Estates was on sorting the BMS system. Once that had been done, the floor coverings would be raised again.

**4 AMENDMENT TO PROJECT LICENCE**

AWERB were reminded that a condition 18 study had been recently submitted for a pony that had suffered from impaction colic post-surgery and had to be euthanised as it had not improved following treatment. The Home Office had recommended that the project licence be amended to include impaction colic as a potential adverse effect. The Home Office were keen that all adverse effects that an animal could have should be included in project licences as well as details of potential treatments and the humane end points.

Another project licence that used ponies had been reviewed that morning. It was noted that these ponies could also run a risk of developing colic but that it had not been listed as a potential adverse effect. To pre-empt the risk of a similar incident happening, it had been agreed that there should be a discussion at this meeting about submitting an amendment to cover this. The Project Licence Holder explained the background that colic could occur in the ponies. She added that she had put together a draft amendment with some proposed wording that had been circulated that lunchtime. This wording was reviewed and the following queries were raised:

- Colic wasn't necessarily a result of the procedures undertaken - it was generally due to the change from coming off pasture into a different dietary routine? This was confirmed.
- The treatments that were being proposed to be given to the ponies, were they the same as what would be provided by vets to ponies that suffered from this condition? It was confirmed that standard medical therapy would be provided. There was usually 95 to 98% success rate with this treatment.
- If clinical signs did develop in the horse, did it need an NVS to be physically on site to examine the pony or could it be done by an equine vet? It was confirmed that this could be an equine veterinary surgeon with the NVS contacted by telephone to see if they were in agreement with the proposed treatment.
- It was suggested that the amendment should include endoscopy of the ponies. This was to cover the scenario that if it was suspected the colic was related to diet change and had caused gastric ulcers, then the pony could be endoscoped to identify the ulcers so they could be treated with standard medication.

AWERB confirmed that they were supportive of the proposed approach. The wording would be finalised and then circulated for final approval.

**5 ALL ABOUT THE AWERB: WEEK 3**

This item was deferred to the following meeting to give AWERB opportunity to read the “ethics learning outcomes document”.

**6 END OF PROJECT LICENCE REPORT**

The end of project licence report was noted. AWERB’s comments had been forwarded on but no response had yet been received.

**7 RETROSPECTIVE ASSESSMENT FOR THE HOME OFFICE**

This report had been returned by the Home Office who had advised that all the original aims needed to be listed and after each one, a statement provided explaining what had been achieved including the scientific detail. Once this detail had been added it would be circulated to AWERB for comment, before being resubmitted to the Home Office. It was suggested that the Home Office add this guidance to the template so it was clear that this should be included. This would be fed back at the next Operation Relationship Management meeting scheduled for February.

**8 NACWO REPORT - CAMDEN**

**8.1 Skin related issues with rats**

It was reported that some rats (who were on an altered diet study) were exhibiting alopecia skin related issues. Samples had been sent off which indicated that the cause was a superficial bacterial infection. Skin scrapes had now been sent off to see if it was mites causing this issue. The skin issues did not seem to be affecting the rats as they were not excessively scratching and were not creating ulcerated sores or showing any signs of pain or discomfort. Not all the rats were affected either and it had not spread to other cage members. There had been two diets used and there had been hair loss in both groups. Could it be due to overgrooming? It was a possibility and that this was causing lesions and then infections but at this point there was no proof. The main concern had been mites but there was no obvious evidence of that, however that did not mean they were not there. None of the other rat groups had been affected.

Checks were being done to see if it could be linked to the diet but this side effect had not been reported previously. None of the rats have had to be euthanised due to the skin issues. A review would be carried out to try and identify the cause in case it had an impact on a possible adverse event. It was felt that a condition 18 report was not needed as there was not a strong enough link to the diet and if it was it was a very mild adverse effect. The rats had all come from the same supplier and were in the same weight range.

**8.2 Humidity and BMS system overhaul**

Monitoring was still being done, including the initial monitoring of ammonia levels in the rooms.

**8.3 Ponies**

A couple of health issues had been encountered in the ponies. They were not major, just ongoing health monitoring for some of the older ponies and ensuring that they received treatment for their hooves and sensitivities to the surface in Camden.

**8.4 Penile prolapses in mice**

An increase in penile prolapses of mice had been seen in one of the groups. They were going back to the supplier for the background strain to see if there was any correlation. A number of the male mice had shown signs of cystitis, followed by penile prolapse. There were also two that had a

bladder stone found on post mortem. These were being analysed to see what the underlying cause was and whether it was related to diet or the strain. This had not previously been reported as an issue in the strain though.

## **9 NACWO REPORT – HAWKSHEAD**

### **9.1 Sheep orthopaedic study**

An update on the sheep orthopaedic study was given. This was a study that involved creating a defect next to the tibial tuberosity which was then reconstructed. Initially the procedure had been carried out on two sheep, with a single plate used to fix and hold the defect together. The plates that were stabilising the fractures however had bent within 48 hours of recovery. A further procedure was done on another sheep using two traditional plates across the surgery site to provide further stability, however there had been plate movement failure. The sheep had become lame and as it did not improve had to be euthanised. Advice on the placement of the plates and the procedure had been provided by veterinary orthopaedic surgeons who had research experience of working with sheep.

Surgery was then carried out on a cadaver sheep using biplanar external fixators. This seemed to go well and after approval from the Home Office a 3<sup>rd</sup> surgery was carried out on a single recovery animal. The animal had shown an initial recovery but 8 days post surgery lost its appetite, declined, did not respond to the increased analgesia and ended up having to be euthanised. Analysis of the leg showed that the pins (which were proximal pins that went all the way through the leg) had bent so that the bones were no longer aligned as they had been previously. No further surgeries using the large 4cm defect model were planned. The PPL Holder had previously done a defect model with a 2cm gap with an external fixator, which had been carried out successfully on 5 out of 6 animals, so this would be tried instead. They were therefore going to go back to using this 2cm defect with exactly the same surgery to test this new article. One animal would be done initially with x-rays taken at 4 to 5 weeks to assess. A decision would then be taken about whether to continue with the next set of animals. It was confirmed that all this work was covered in the project licence.

It was noted that only one condition 18 report had needed to be submitted, despite several sheep having been euthanised. The Home Office had been kept updated of all the subsequent plate failures but as they were within the limits of the licence, no further condition 18 reports had been required.

### **9.2 Camden teaching ponies**

A report was given on one of the teaching ponies, who was 28 and had been a teaching pony since 2015. She had a history of severe equine asthma. When she had most recently returned from Camden, it was noted that she had a relatively high respiratory rate. She was put into a paddock to settle with a companion but did not settle. As trying to catch her had led to an even higher respiratory rate, it had been decided that it was safer to leave her to the next morning. The next morning she was more amenable to being caught. As she still had a high respiratory rate and nostril flare it was decided that a sample was needed from the trachea. She was transferred to the equine hospital and a scope taken. Her mouth was also examined as she seemed to having problem eating. It was found that the pony had multiple slab fractures of her teeth as well as diastema (where teeth drift apart, so that feed can become trapped between them). She had several of these including one that was very bad and she was also under treatment for periodontal disease. She was therefore now on pain relief and antibiotics for her lungs; had been provided with more dental surgery and was due a follow up dental check up. If this was a client's pony, the recommendation would be that the pony was put out in a long grass pasture and placed on easy to eat food. At Camden this was not possible as there was no long grass pasture plus would be on hay. The recommendation therefore was that the pony was not returned to Camden as it was not the right environment for her.

A discussion was needed about what was the best thing for the pony. Discussions had been held with the Equine Teaching Hospital but they did not need another teaching pony at the moment. Her owner had to visit but was unable to take her back as they were no longer involved with horses and also had their own health issues. The owner was keen that the animal stayed under our care, as she had heard about previous bad experiences of horses being rehomed. It was suggested contacting Redwings (horse sanctuary) to see if they would be interested in taking her. As it was a horse sanctuary, the pony's owner might be happy for her to be rehomed there. There was also a question though whether the pony would require further dental work. If she did her teeth would need to be removed which would result in a hefty vet bill.

### **9.3 Puppies**

Another litter of puppies had been born. Some of them required extra milk bottle feeds so the Technicians were working through the night to provide these.

## **10 HOME OFFICE**

### **10.1 Meeting with the Operation Relationship Management Lead at ASRU**

Meetings would be held with the Home Office Operation Relationship Management Lead on a 3 monthly basis to discuss any concerns that the College might have following the changes to ASRU. The next meeting was scheduled for February and an update would be provided at the following AWERB.

### **10.2 ASRU Change Programme**

The ASRU Change programme was focussed on processes. The working party were therefore going through and reviewing and formalising these. The current focus was on NTCO training. A SOP was being drafted for the steps to follow when applying for a personal licence and the training and how it was done. This would be circulated to AWERB once they had been finalised. If the Home Office did want to come in and assess our processes, then the paperwork would be readily available.

## **11 HOME OFFICE PROJECT LICENCES**

AWERB noted that there had been one new project licence granted and one amended since the previous meeting.

## **12 CONDITION 18 REPORTS**

AWERB noted the two condition 18 reports that had been submitted to the Home Office. A query was raised about what the turnaround time of responses was from the Home Office? It depended on the licence. Those that required no further action did not take very long, but those that needed further action could take up to 3 weeks to a month to receive a response.

## **13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

This was scheduled for Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November and would be the standing agenda items meeting.

Secretary  
27 November 2021