



ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY

The 75th meeting of the AWERB was held on 30 April 2024 in Sussex House Committee Room and on MS Teams

DRAFT MINUTES

PART I – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Apologies for Absence

Present: [REDACTED]

Apologies: [REDACTED]

2. Minutes (AWERB/74/M)

The Body APPROVED the Minutes from the previous meeting held on 30 January 2024 with one amendment. [REDACTED] suggested that 5.3 should specify that 'we remain committed to maintaining the highest standard of animal welfare.'

ACTION: Secretary to amend 5.3 in the Minutes.

3. Matters Arising (AWERB/75/01)

3.1 The Body noted the Matters Arising from the previous meeting. [REDACTED] confirmed that they have met to discuss 'Culture of Care.'

3.2 The Chair suggested that number 7. 'Non-ASPA Training Provision' is put on hold for now.

3.3 The Chair confirmed that [REDACTED] is interested in being involved in the 3Rs working group.

PART II – MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION

4. Home Office feedback on PPL Applications (verbal)

4.1 [REDACTED] noted that we have had a number of PPLs returned with significant comments from the Home Office.

4.2 [REDACTED] used [REDACTED] project as an example and noted that he is proposing a refined approach to injecting the test subjects but this was not clear in the application which resulted in feedback from the Home Office.

4.3 [REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] received feedback that the protocol was severe and noted that we are perhaps not communicating well enough with the inspectors and answering their questions adequately. When further discussions took place with the Home Office a moderate severity category was agreed. [REDACTED] suggested that future PPL applications are reviewed by either AWERB or ARG.

4.4 [REDACTED] suggested that we have some proper administrative structures around these processes and confirmed that she will discuss this with the new Senior Research Ethics and Integrity Officer.

ACTION: [REDACTED] to add this item to this discussion on AWERB administration processes.

5. Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer report [REDACTED] (AWERB/75/02)

- 5.1 [REDACTED] confirmed that we received good feedback from the Home Office on the fish facility during the recent Home Office audit. Sussex staff were able to show the Home Office the kill register, training records, study plans, and the rodent unit. The inspector was happy with the CO2 equipment and the recovery rack. The inspector shared study design tips for next steps.
- 5.2 [REDACTED] confirmed that the inspector did provide us with some feedback on the chick and zebra finch housing as part of the proposed refurbishment. [REDACTED] will be picking up discussions on creating a pre and post-surgery rooms in the refurbished facility design.
- 5.3 The Home Office noted that the room numbers on the floor plans do not match those on the PEL. For example, the numbers should read 3.08 rather than 308. In addition, all except one of the cage labels are correct.
- 5.4 The Home Office also noticed that we do not currently have PEL authorization for rehoming live sentinel animals to the diagnostic facility. We have submitted the request to have this added to our Establishment Licence.
- 5.5 The Home Office recommended that we ensure all PPL applications are complete before submission.
- 5.6 [REDACTED] confirmed that we must confirm by 15 May 2024 that we have funding to proceed to the next stage of refurbishment. The Home Office are otherwise happy for us to continue as we are as long as we agree to the minor amendments. [REDACTED] confirmed that we have had the business case approved for refurbishments.
- 5.7 [REDACTED] confirmed that he has advertised for two grade 5 positions for compliance and operations and interviews will take place next week. [REDACTED] has been appointed as the Senior Technical Manager.
- 5.8 [REDACTED] noted that the Home Office inspectors noted that all interactions with Sussex staff were positive.

6. Feedback on Friday Surgery (AWERB/75/03)

- 6.1 [REDACTED] noted that the policy to not do surgery on Friday is in place but is not documented. [REDACTED] confirmed that longer surgeries (3 hours or longer) should not take place on Fridays. However, the decision not to perform surgeries on Fridays can delay research projects, particularly around bank holidays and minimum service days. After surgery, the animals will spend three days in the recovery room except animals which are housed in reverse lighting rooms. These animals will remain in the light room.
- 6.2 [REDACTED] asked whether post-op care will change; [REDACTED] confirmed that post-op care will remain the same over Saturday and Sunday. Researchers will need to participate more in post-op care. If there are any concerns following surgery over the weekend, the researcher will be notified immediately. In addition, the surgery will not take place if there is not a sufficient amount of staff present over the weekend to carry out post-op care. This will be documented as part of the new process.
- 6.3 [REDACTED] asked whether the researcher has to be present over the weekend. [REDACTED] confirmed that, yes, they will need to be present in-case difficulties arise.
- 6.4 [REDACTED] confirmed that he will pass on AWERB's guidance to those amending the policy.

7. New AWERB Administration Processes (including review of non-ASPA applications and ethical review applications)

- 7.1 [REDACTED] confirmed that we have appointed a new Senior Research Ethics and Integrity Officer and that we will now be able to align AWERB processes with those in place for the other ethics

committees. [REDACTED] will meet with the Chair and [REDACTED] to discuss processes on 17 May 2024.

- 7.2 The Chair asked, how will the new processes impact AWERB? [REDACTED] stated that we will be able to document application processes for non-ASPA projects and feedback on applications. Feedback will then be shared with the PI following ARG. These processes will also feed into the new Infonetica programme. We have begun tracking applications on a spreadsheet and are in the process of adding past applications.
- 7.3 [REDACTED] confirmed that non-ASPA applications that are high risk will not be approved immediately but will be sent to ARG for review. This will be included in the new process.
- 7.4 [REDACTED] provided a brief update on their fish project relating to the feeding of rotifers which seems to account for a significant growth of between 5 to 15 DPS (days post fertilisation). They do not yet know if this will cause health issues later in life, so they will be running a trial by using different foods with different densities in each tank. [REDACTED] will report back to AWERB in the next meeting. [REDACTED] noted that we have had issues with fish in the past and are now collecting more data on the environment that they are kept in.
- 7.5 [REDACTED] also noted that we have seen a decrease in tumours in adult fish.

PART III – MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

8. Feedback from [REDACTED] (AWERB/75/04)

- 8.1 [REDACTED] confirmed that staff have always been encouraged to attend CPD events and after these activities being difficult to arrange due to staffing issues, BRF staff will be encouraged to attend more training events around CPD and welfare. Technicians will also be able to attend London branch meetings to attend talks and to meet suppliers.
- 8.2 The Chair asked whether there is sufficient budget for staff to travel to events. [REDACTED] confirmed that the technicians do have budget for travel and meeting attendance.
- 8.3 The Chair suggested that once have established the 3Rs Group, we can begin to reach out to other institutions and form further connections on specific areas of research.
- 8.4 [REDACTED] asked whether they are any actions for the 3Rs Group. [REDACTED] confirmed that the 3Rs will be included in the 'Culture of Care' discussion.

9. BRF Refurbishment Update

- 9.1 AWERB NOTED the update.

10. Concordat on Openness in Animal Research (AWERB/75/05)

- 9.1 [REDACTED] noted that we are continuing with the activities listed in the Concordat, but that we need to improve our communication with the wider University and general public as this is one of the four commitments. [REDACTED] suggested that he pick this up with [REDACTED] as he used to work on the Concordat with the previous Director of RES.
- 9.2 The Chair and [REDACTED] agreed to meet to discuss ownership of the Concordat tasks.
- ACTION: The Chair and [REDACTED] to meet to discuss ownership of the Concordat.**

PART V – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10 Dates of future meetings

- Friday 14 June 2024.