

Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

20/18 A meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) was held via teams on Wednesday 9 September 2020 at 9.30 am.

Present: [Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]

[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]

[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]

[Redacted. Sec.40]

Apologies: [Redacted. Sec.40] and [Redacted. Sec.40],

20/19 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 14 May 2022 were approved as a correct record.

20/20 Matters Arising

20/12 Discussion on ethics of service licences

[Redacted. Sec.40] informed the AWERB that he had been due to discuss this matter at an AWERB hub meeting at Harwell in April. Unfortunately, the meeting had been cancelled and had not yet been rearranged.

Given possible sensitivities it was felt that discussing this matter in person with hub members rather than via email was prudent. However, if it took too long to rearrange the meeting then consideration would be given to garnering views by different means.

20/21 Membership

AWERB received and noted a copy of its membership. Members were asked to comment on the membership, in particular whether there was any representation missing. The following comments were made:

- Although not required by the guidance on membership some AWERB's included representation from the University community not involved in animal experimentation.
- Some institutions also included student representation or, in the spirit of openness and transparency, allowed colleagues to observe certain meetings each year.
- Members were mindful of the demands on colleagues time in joining additional committees, and also commented on the technical nature of some of the discussions which could be incomprehensible to those working outside the field.
- There was a need to ensure continuity and often this took time to build.
- It would be desirable to include more representation from Project Licence Holders.
- Rotating terms of office would be helpful – but these would need to be long enough in order to ensure continuity.
- There was no desire to make the AWERB bigger.

[Redacted. Sec.40] thanked the AWERB for their comments and agreed to reflect further on the comments raised.

20/22 Plan for Mid and End Term Reviews

[Redacted. Sec.40] informed the AWERB that no mid/end of term reviews were scheduled for this meeting. A copy of the schedule for the next year would be reviewed and circulated in due course.

Action: [Redacted. Sec.40]

20/23 Update on the welfare of animals during the lockdown period

In respect of animal welfare during the lockdown period the AWERB noted that:

BRU:

- Because of the planned move to the HLS, animal numbers in the BRU were already at a lower level and stock levels had remained low throughout the lockdown.
- The breeding of animals only occurred if required to maintain lines.
- The [Redacted. Sec.40] was the only group which continued procedural work.

- [Redacted. Sec.40] worked in small teams to complete all daily husbandry tasks and upkeep of the unit.
- There was a major fault with the boiler that controls the heating to the main mouse holding room. [Redacted. Sec.40] managed to move all the animals out to other areas of the unit while the fix took place over several weeks.
- There were two [Redacted. Sec.40] visits and a remote [Redacted. Sec.40]v inspection during lockdown.
- With the easing of restrictions small numbers of researchers have begun to return to the BRU and restart procedural work. A booking system had been developed for this.

Farm

- Work had carried on largely as normal during the lockdown period and there had been no issues with animal welfare.
- Discussions were in hand with [Redacted. Sec.40] in regard to a COVID study.
- As a number of colleagues lived on site there had been adequate staffing throughout.
- It was noted that a number of colleagues lived in shared accommodation (bedsits with shared kitchen areas). This could pose a risk should a colleague test positive for COVID-19. It was reported that mitigation had been put in place in regard to staggered use of the kitchen. During the day, most colleagues were on spread shifts and nearly all of the work could be undertaken with social distancing. Contingency planning allowed for staff isolation should any positive cases occur.
- The Farm had developed contingency plans in case of an outbreak that would prioritise welfare provision of the animals.

Members of AWERB thanked all those colleagues involved in maintaining animal welfare.

20/24 Update on transition to the BRU

The AWERB noted that the latest handover date for the Health and Life Sciences Building had now been handed over to the School and the job of moving in had begun.

The contractors were finishing off some jobs in the BRU and these were due to be completed by Monday the 14th of September. The [Redacted. Sec.40] was scheduled to come on Wednesday the 16th of September to see the completed BRU. If she was content with the unit, and the planned uses for each room then the University could apply for the Establishment Licence to be amended to include the HLS BRU. Once the contractors had left the site equipment could be moved in and set up properly.

There were a number of activities that BRU staff would need to undertake in the following weeks to ensure the BRU was ready for receiving animals. This included: Testing and trialling all the new equipment; Ensuring that staff were

familiar and comfortable with the building systems and how these operate; Setting up rooms for use; Training and familiarisation of the unit for users and stakeholders of the facility.

If no issues were discovered or delays happen in this period, then it was thought this process would take 4-6 weeks. At the end of this process the unit would have a deep clean and sterilisation from an outside company. This would take about 1 week. After this the entry and use of the unit would be restricted to those who required access and follow the entry procedure guidelines.

It was noted that it was now time to start thinking about the return of animals from Harwell to be moved straight into the HLS BRU. Discussions were currently happening with them about the process and timelines for this.

[Redacted. Sec.40] enquired whether SOPs had been circulated to users. It was noted that the Implementation Group had received these. It was suggested that as part of the induction that numbered SOPs should be issued to users.

AWERB noted that any urgent requests for new work in the short term would be directed to the old unit. If the work could wait until November, then it would be directed to the new unit.

AWERB asked [Redacted. Sec.40] and [Redacted. Sec.40] to consider a communication to users around the timeline for opening.

Action: [Redacted. Sec.40] and [Redacted. Sec.40]

AWERB noted that prior to COVID-19 a launch event would have been planned for the opening of the building. The [Redacted. Sec.40] team were now considering other means of publicising the opening including a video tour. [Redacted. Sec.40] asked members whether they wished to tour the building and if so to let [Redacted. Sec.40] know as soon as possible.

20/25 LASA Review of lessons learnt from COVID19

AWERB received a copy of LASA's Review of lessons learnt from COVID-19 and noted that [Redacted. Sec.40] and [Redacted. Sec.40] had reviewed the questions raised.

It was intended that these comments would now be sense checked by other colleagues. [Redacted. Sec.40] agreed to circulate an updated version in due course.

Action: [Redacted. Sec.40]

AWERB noted that specific bespoke business continuity plans had been produced for both the BRU and the Farm at the start of lockdown and that these would be reviewed.

20/26 Any other business

[Redacted. Sec.40] informed AWERB that UAR were now offering a kitemark type award around openness in understanding animal research and he enquired whether it would be helpful to produce a plan to apply. AWERB agreed that it wished to see a plan.

Action: [Redacted. Sec.40]

20/27 Dates of meetings in the Session 2020-21

Thursday 4 February 2021 at 10.00 am

Thursday 13 May 2021 at 10.00 am