

Research Management Board Meeting – 17 February 2003 at NRS

Present: Dr P Freer-Smith
Mr W Mason
Mr T Cornwell
Mr K Charles

[cc: Head of Internal Audit
Professor J Lynch]

Minutes of Last Meeting

1. Accepted

Matters Arising

2. FR's new Chief Executive, Professor Jim Lynch, will take up his post on 1 July on a 5 year contract. **Noted**
3. Woodland Surveys move from Silvan House to NRS, P&AO to ensure that they are in a position to move by 31 March. **Action: KC**
4. Nematode Unit, casual FTA staff to be extended over summer. P&AO to check dates with Hugh Evans. **Action: KC**
5. Fountain Forestry building, P&AO has offered an inducement to AAIS to move from the main building which will be put to the Board of the Tree Advice Trust. **Noted**
6. Purchase of Servers for GIS, need for more co-ordination with regard to the usage of servers purchased within FR. CEO to speak to Sam Evans and Jane Smyth about creating a plan for the better co-ordination of IT systems. **Action: PF-S**
7. P&AO to remind Steve Smith, Woodland Surveys, that he is to let P&AO know the amount of funds needed for the training aspects of GIS. **Action: KC**
8. P&AO reported that following the additional expenditure on the 'Valuing People, Supporting Change' initiative, enough additional money had been found to allow planned training to continue up to the end of this FY. **Noted**
9. CEO wishes to have a final look at our Business Plan before HoF issues it to HoBs. **Action: TC, PF-S**
10. Corporate Plan for 2003/06 has been accepted by Commissioners. **Noted**
11. RMB meeting with Heads of Technical Support Units agreed for 18 February. **Noted**
12. Some performance management standards meetings have been held at Alice Holt and NRS. CEO to meet with Mensuration, TSU(S), Stats & Computing and ERB, H of NRS to meet with TSU(N), Admin and TDB. **Action: PF-S, BM**
13. Funds have been made available and the widening of FR's broadband is proceeding. **Noted**

Reports

14. RMB agreed that schedules for 03/04 to be called in at the beginning of April 03 for collation and to ensure that outputs proposed and their cost are in line with the Corporate Plan. **Action: PF-S**
15. P&AO hopes to finalise the arrangements for this year's research promotion boards with the TUS today. **Noted**
16. HoF reported that a new Government Procurement Card contract had been signed with our present supplier, Barclays Bank. **Noted**
17. HoF intends to do a spot check on invoices to ensure that the delegated amounts for the authorisation of invoices are not being exceeded. **Action: TC**

Finance

18. Budget 2003/06, CEO to speak to Tim Rollinson/Bob Selmes before speaking to Duncan Macniven about Duncan's minute of 18 February reducing our budget allocation from £10.4M to £10M. **Action: PF-S**
19. HoF reported that in our current FY we are looking at an operating surplus of +/-£90K. He will speak to David Goldie about the procedure for carrying forward any surplus to next FY. **Action: TC**
20. RMB approved the purchase of FPXRF system for ERB at a cost of +/-£40K, subject to full tender procedures being followed. **Action: TC**
21. HoF will send list of Capital Bids to RMB members. **Action: TC**

Staffing

22. CEO to discuss Sandwich Student allocation with HoBs for next year. **Action: PF-S**
23. Analyst/Programmer, NRS, Stats & Computing. H. of NRS to discuss at next RMB. **Action: BM**
24. PB4 Statistician, Alice Holt, recruitment to proceed when FDR clearance given. **Action: KC**
25. PB5, SSRB, replacement agreed on a permanent basis. **Action: KC**
26. PB6b, Seed Analyst, SSRB. CEO to discuss the possibilities of an internal move to cover this job. **Action: PF-S**
27. The RMB agreed that our response to David Taylor's call for bids for new entrant Forest Officers would be 'nil'. **Action: KC**

Risk Management

28. P&AO presented his paper. Agreed that P&AO would send present Risk Management paper to RMB members and would co-ordinate the updating of it in time for it to be presented to the FC Management Board. RMB members to feed their comments to P&AO. **Action: KC/All**

Temporary Responsibility Allowance (TRA)

29. RMB gave this careful consideration and decided that the current arrangements that Cost Centre managers discuss potential TRA cases with P&AO before it is awarded should continue. **Noted**

AOB

30. Health & Safety, following premature publication of a new structure indicating that our part time Health & Safety Advisor now reports to Safety, Health and Environment at Silvan House the RMB took the view that while FR is happy to adhere to centrally decided H&S policy and is happy to buy into centrally provided common H&S services it wished to retain Martin Jukes (50%) and Colin McEvoy (10%) as its own internal advisors. FR would welcome Safety, Health & Environment providing an auditing service for our field based activities. CEO has a meeting at Silvan House on 5 March to discuss this. **Action: PF-S**

Country Liaison Officers

31. Scotland – Bill Mason
Wales – Chris Jones
England – Alison Melvin

with Alison Melvin co-ordinating, these arrangements will be reviewed after 1 July 2003, CEO to put out a note to this effect. **Action: PF-S**

Wales

32. CEO is meeting Simon Hewitt and Steve Gregory on 25 March. FR, Wales will be on the agenda for discussion. **Action: PF-S**
33. CEO to speak to Simon Hewitt about greater FR representation in Wales. **Action: PF-S**

Date of next meeting: **19 March 2003 by AH/NRS video link** (to be followed by Audit Committee).