

Research Management Board Meeting – 21 May 2003 (Alice Holt)

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

Copies To: Head of Internal Audit, Silvan House
Professor J Lynch

Minutes of Last Meeting

1. Accepted

Matters Arising

2. Remit and membership of IS/IT Committee is being reviewed. CE has written to present members. CE will copy papers to H.of NRS and will schedule the next Committee meeting.
Action: PFS, TC
3. CE has a complete set of schedules and will copy these to the FR Liaison Officers for information and discussion with National Offices.
Action: PFS
4. FR is waiting for the Forestry Group to organise the first meeting of the FC Publications Committee.
Noted
5. P&AO to finalise the draft to Director Personnel setting out FR's stance with regard to Forest Officer end-of-tour policy.
Action: KC
6. FR's Risk Management paper has been presented to Audit Committee. P&AO to follow-up with Silvan House and circulation to HoBs.
Action: KC
7. Staff Survey – P&AO has had discussions with the Change Management Team (Bill Maclachlan) who is willing to facilitate meetings at Alice Holt and NRS to discuss the issues raised during the staff survey. It was agreed that this should wait until our IiP assessment had taken place (23/24 June).
Noted
8. CEO will invite new Welsh Assembly Ministers to visit Alice Holt. H.of NRS has already invited their Scottish counterparts to visit NRS.
Action: PFS

Reports

9. We are awaiting outline report from Silv(N)/SSRB Visiting Group.
Noted
10. Corporate Plan customer satisfaction ratings have now been received. Target has been exceeded. CE to inform HoBs of Key Performance Indicator results.
Action: PFS
11. Membership of FC Service Boards agreed. 'Finance' – Tony Cornwell. 'Personnel & FTS' – Ken Charles, 'ICT' – Sam Evans, 'External Communications' – Alison Melvin.
Noted

12. H.of NRS to discuss with Kate Fielding the ‘Operational Support Service Board’ and whether we need representation on this. **Action: BM**
13. CE to put the new Framework Document, Corporate & Business Plan and the 2003 Report on Forest Research on Intranet. **Action: PFS**
14. H.of NRS to remind NRS HoBs about the European Working Time Directive (EWTD). **Action: BM**

Finance

15. HoF reported that in 2002/03 we ended with less than expected (£50K) in two areas which was offset by exchange rate gains in Finance of £32K. **Noted**
16. Capital investment in 2002/03 was £551K. **Noted**
17. Outturn, overall, was within £15K (0.1%) of forecast. Net contribution fell short of target by £16K giving a cost recovery rate of 99.9% (against a target of 100%). **Noted**
18. HoF’s Finance Report for 2002/03 to be issued to HoBs. HoF to draft a covering note for the CE to the 2002/03 report advising HoBs that they should be actively seeking additional income and to be prudent with regard to expenditure. **Action: TC**

Staffing

19. Recruitment of a permanent PB5 Woodland GIS Officer approved for Woodland Surveys. To be trawled internally. **Action: KC**
20. Hydrologist, ERB. TUS and ERB HoB comments have been circulated to RMB. CE to meet with Andy Moffat and Tom Nisbet to discuss the location of the post. **Action: PFS**
21. In connection with this, the question of a ‘Welsh Centre of Excellence’ was discussed. The RMB agreed that we would make a proposal for a partnership relationship. CE to lead with support from Chris Jones, Bill Mason and Alison Melvin. **Action: PFS**
22. HoBs are to be advised of para 24 above. H. of NRS to draft a minute for CE. **Action: BM**
23. 3 x Posts at Talybont. RMB agreed to the trawling of 1 x PB5 (Survey Forester) and 2 x 12 month FTAs (PB6a Survey Assistants). FTAs will be offered with the possibility of extension and/or permanency. **Action: KC**

Data Charging Transfer – Update

24. RMB noted Tracy Houston as ‘Coordinator for Charging’. HoF will ask her to provide a written report to the next RMB. **Action: TC**

Corporate identity

25. (George Gate attended for this item). Examples of suggested layouts for letterheads, business cards and compliment slips were shown. These will be shown to Professor Lynch

for comment and passed through the DG's Office to ensure we are complying with FC's Corporate Image. The RMB made suggestions for improvement. **Action: TC**

Review of Technical Support Units

26. The RMB acknowledged the effort put into a very comprehensive report. **Noted**
27. The RMB acknowledged that staff and the TUS were awaiting the publication of the report. It was agreed that the report be issued to HoBs and Field Station managers and to be made available, through them, to all staff. A covering minute to Norman Day and Kate Fielding will be copied to all staff announcing the availability of the report. **Action: KC**

Capital bids

28. Time constraints did not allow the RMB to discuss capital bids in detail. It was agreed that any urgent requests should be sent to HoF who will approve if minor or circulate around RMB members if major. An urgent application for cryostorage (£15K) was approved for TIB. **Action: TC**
29. £15K approved for the conversion of the new meeting room and purchase of new video conference facilities for Alice Holt. If sufficient cash is left, new video conference to be purchased for NRS. **Action: KC**

Woodfuel at Alice Holt

30. The RMB decided that there was no economic case for woodfuel to be adopted as the source of heating at Alice Holt. Other factors could be taken into account. Woodfuel is considered a sub-set of the site development review. **Deferred**

Health & Safety Accident Reports – 2002/03 – Results of Asbestos Survey

31. P&AO reported that there had been a slight increase in Accident Book entries from 42 – 47. Entries indicated a decrease in strains and sprains with an increase in cuts. Students accounted for 6 of the 19 Alice Holt entries. Reportable Accidents had decreased to 2 in 02/03 (5 days lost at a cost of £1050), 01/02 (6 incidents with 72 days lost at a cost of £12930), 00/01 (5 incidents with 74 days lost at a cost of £15390). P&AO to circulate report to HoBs with a recommendation that staff who are involved in repetitive cutting are instructed in safe methods of cutting and to ensure, in particular, that students, young staff members and new recruits are adequately trained and supervised for the activities they are expected to undertake. **Action: KC**

Results of Asbestos Survey

32. The Asbestos Survey identified asbestos on the Alice Holt site and categorised it from 3 – 9 in hazard order. Items graded up to 5 are to be inspected 12 monthly. Over category 5, every 6 months. Immediate action will be taken for matters graded over 5 to remove the risk completely or to take appropriate action to increase the inspection category to 12 months. The P&AO will present the report to the Alice Holt H&S Committee in June who will be asked to consider the best way of carrying out the 12 monthly inspections. **Action: KC**

Any other business

33. Report of Forest Research proceeding to plan. **Noted**
34. Quality Assurance – HoF to check compliance with Defra policy and produce a revised draft for next RMB. **Action: TC**

Date of next meeting – 23 June 2003 at Alice Holt

Future dates agreed as – 15 August (Alice Holt)
3 24 September (Alice Holt)
13 November (NRS) (pm. Audit Committee)