

Research Management Board Meeting – 24 September 2003 - Alice Holt

Present:
Prof J Lynch
Dr P Freer-Smith
Mr B Mason
Mr T Cornwell
Mr K Charles

Copies to: Head of Internal Audit, Silvan House

Minutes of Last Meeting

1. Accepted

Matters Arising

2. CE is working on invitations for the Forestry Ministers representing England and Wales to visit Alice Holt and for the Minister representing Scotland to visit NRS. CE will be attending the next but one regular meeting of all the Forestry Ministers and will be giving a presentation on FR. **Noted**
3. CE and CRO will continue to liaise regarding main chapters for next year's Annual Report and Accounts. **Action: JL, PF-S**

Reports

4. CE has a meeting shortly with Defra (Chief Scientist Group) and the BBSRC (Chief Executive); and has met with the following: Tricia Henton [Chair, Commissioners Advisory Committee]; NERC (Science and Innovative Group); BRE (Managing Director); Rothamsted; EFI; Swedish Forestry Institute; Danish Forestry Institute; University of Wales, Bangor; University of Sussex and University of Surrey. **Noted**
5. CE and H. of NRS to arrange for Tricia Henton to visit NRS. **Action: JL, BM**
6. Good feedback from FR's meeting with Rothamsted which may lead to further cooperation as their skills are complementary to our own.
7. The need for alterations to Talybont Fieldstation to accommodate additional staff was highlighted by CRO. Carl Foster to let HoF know the estimated alteration costs. **Action: PF-S**
8. CRO to discuss PSD accreditation with Hugh Evans **Action: PF-S**
9. Connect/IiP Workshop at NRS. H. of NRS and P&AO to discuss and consider holding towards the end of the year. **Action: BM, KC**
10. Hugh Evans to provide a briefing paper on Hylobius M.S.S. by the end of October. **Action: PF-S**

Proposals for FR Reorganisation

11. CE presented his draft proposals. Following discussion he will re-consider and incorporate some of the suggestions. A joint HoB meeting will be convened on 14/15 November with TUS involvement at an appropriate stage. **Action: JL**

Finance/Capital

12. HoF reported on our operating performance to date. The FY started with an expected shortfall of £195k which he considered a comfortable position. This shortfall has deepened to £300k due, mainly, to increased TSU[N] projections of staff and contractor costs mainly on the nematode project. **Noted**
13. HoF will do a full review at the end of September and will come back to the RMB with recommendations about how to bring the Agency's finances in line. **Action: TC**
14. CE to write to Branches asking them to revise their forecasts 6 months into the FY and to notify HoF, by mid October, in writing, that their figures have been revised. HoF to draft minute for CE. **Action: TC**
15. The RMB agreed that nothing could be spent on capital except a small amount (less than £10k) on building alterations at Talybont. Other, minor, capital items could be bought by branches out of current allocation, funds permitting. HoF to provide CRO with an up-date on our financial position. CRO to speak to HoBs at next NRS HoB meeting. **Action: PF-S, TC**
16. HoF to speak to Keith Gliddon about reducing our requirement for the present level of cash surplus and whether we can utilise some of the money for capital building refurbishment. HoF to explore with Keith the possibility of having a separate funding programme for building refurbishments. **Action: TC**

Staff

17. Assistant Statistician. Decision deferred **Action: KC, TC**

Any other Business

18. Policy for Data Charging. The RMB thanked Tracy Houston for her work in drafting the policy and agreed the main recommendations subject to minor amendments noted by HoF. **Action: TC**
19. CE briefed the RMB, following his meeting with Geoff Hatfield and David Williamson. **Noted**

Date of Next Meetings

13 November 2003 at NRS to be followed by a FR Internal Control Committee.
9 December 2003 [noted as a provisional meeting date].