

Forest Research Executive Board Meeting (FREB)

Minutes of the meeting held at Alice Holt on 6 December 2004

Present: Prof. Jim Lynch
Dr Peter Freer-Smith
Dr Hugh Evans
Prof. Sam Evans
Mr Bill Mason
Dr Andy Moffat
Dr Chris Quine
Mr Tony Cornwell
Mr Ken Charles

Dr Janet Dutch, Head of Technical Services Unit attended, Ms Kim Lardge, FC, HR Director attended for part of the meeting.

Copies to: Head of Internal Audit
Head of Technical Services Unit
Director of Communications
Director of Corporate & Forestry Services

Agenda Item 1

Minutes of the last meeting

1. Accepted.

Agenda Item 2

Matters Arising

2. Xanthe Christophers (XC) to circulate details of the revised Gazette to FREB members and invite their comments. **Action: XC**
3. JL's draft paper suggesting a more effective way of addressing the strategic direction, supervision and monitoring of our research will be refined before presenting to the DG in its final form. **Action: JL**
4. Agreed that XC be asked to organise the first scientific meeting between FR and FCEB to link with the May/June GBEB. Consideration to be given to inviting OST. HoDs to nominate representatives to serve on a small scientific committee to advise XC. SE and AM offered to be members. Climate Change was chosen as a first topic and there will be a need to emphasise to GBEB that this is an area that OST is keen on and one that we should continue to work on. XC to co-ordinate speakers and location (Barony?). XC to give a short progress report at next FREB. **Action: HoDs, XC**
5. BM is waiting for suggestions from colleagues as to how best to take forward the meeting between FR and senior staff of the Macaulay Institute. **Action: HoDs, BM**
6. KC to amend major agenda items on proposed FREB timetable to allow discussion around the FREB February meeting to discuss the Technical Services Unit report and to allow a slot, later in the year, to discuss Business Planning and Development. **Action: KC**

Agenda Item 3

Reports

7. BM and Ian Murgatroyd have discussed the FCS Technical Seminars programme for 2005 with Douglas Wright. A provisional date of 10th March has been agreed for the annual FCS/FTA/ICF research seminar. BM welcomes suggestions for topics from HoDs by 7 January. **Action: HoDs**
8. TC agreed to hold a financial awareness seminar at NRS for programme managers around 8/9 March 2005. **Action: TC**
9. BM raised the issue of the lack of a FR or FC 'Publications Officer'. XC to be asked to raise this matter at the next Communications Service Board. **Action: XC**
10. It was confirmed that the FREB is fully committed to Forestry Commission "Values". **NOTED**
11. There is a need to identify for staff the senior management roles and the relationship and functions of HoDs, Research Director and Chief Executive. KC to draft a note to staff. **Action: KC**
12. HE reported that both FR and FC management is concentrating on *P. kernovii* with the accent on the eradication of rhododendron within specific areas. **NOTED**
13. SE reported his interaction with the ad hoc Defra Working Group shaping definition of "Strategic Research for Plant Disease Modelling". **NOTED**

Agenda Item 4

Feedback from the GB EB

14. JL reported the main issue at the moment for the FC was finance. **NOTED**
15. The development of the Alice Holt site will be discussed by the Commissioners this week. It is hoped that a statement can be issued to all staff shortly after. **NOTED**

Agenda Item 5

Future Scientific Meetings

16. Verbal report given earlier. **NOTED**

Agenda Item 6

TSU Role and Strategy

17. Janet Dutch and PF-S introduced the paper which was discussed in general terms. It was acknowledged that the matter is of such importance that a specific date for a meeting to deal solely with this be identified around the February FREB where feedback can be given to Janet and decisions made. In the meantime, HoDs were asked to provide Janet with details of their proposed usage of TSUs in detail for 05/06 and outline for 06/07 and 07/08 indicating the amount of money to be spent and the TSU locations where that money will be spent. **Action: JD, HoDs**

Agenda Item 7

Human Resource Strategy and Business Priorities

18. KC presented his paper in which he asked HoDs to discuss with their managers and to give him views at the January FREB on the direction and type of HR strategies that need to be taken forward to support our business needs and our workforce strategy. HoDs were also asked to consider whether current HR policies help or hinder us or where lack of current policies lead to difficulties. **Action: HoDs**

Agenda Item 8

Time Recording

19. TC presented his paper. It was agreed that Time Recording be universally adopted across FR. Where staff have routine duties, the default function of E-TRACK will enable timesheets to be recorded automatically. Implementation date; 1st April 2005. **Action: TC**

Agenda Item 9

Confirmation of FR Structure and Divisional Titles

20. The organisational chart (attached) indicating FR structure and divisional titles as prepared by XC was accepted by the FREB. **NOTED**
21. FC, HR Director, Kim Lardge joined the meeting at this point and confirmed, in response to a question from JL that the initial Business Improvement programme that she is working on will concentrate on shared service areas and that TSUs can be included in this. **NOTED**

Agenda Item 10

Finance

22. TC distributed a paper indicating savings that are required to be made from 'Research and Technical Services' and 'Corporate Services' to enable FR to meet its financial objectives for the year. He felt it was unrealistic to consider the winning and delivery of additional income at this time of year. HoDs supported the proposal and will prioritise their work and come up with cash savings in line with the schedule. **Action: HoDs**

Agenda Item 11

Staffing

23. KC presented his paper which indicated an end of FY forecast of 274.4 FTE staff which was in line with the Corporate Plan figure of 275. **NOTED**

Agenda Item 12

AOB

24. AM asked about progress made on the revision of "FR Supplement to Grading Guidance" in time for research promotions in 2006. KC is working on this and will consult with FREB members before finalising. **Action: KC**

Date of next meetings: 11 January 2005 (informal meeting by video conference)
8 February 2005