

## Forest Research Executive Board Meeting – 7 June 2005

**Present:** Dr Peter Freer-Smith  
Dr Hugh Evans  
Prof. Sam Evans  
Mr Bill Mason  
Dr Andy Moffat  
Dr Chris Quine  
Mr Tony Cornwell  
Dr Xanthe Christophers  
Mr Ken Charles  
Mr Chris Jones (for item 4)

**Apologies:** Prof. Jim Lynch

**Copies To:** Head of Internal Audit  
Head of Technical Services Unit  
Director of Corporate & Forestry Services  
Liaison Officer [Wales]

Before opening the meeting, the Chairman welcomed Dr Xanthe Christophers as a full member of the FREB and gave Prof. Lynch's apologies for his absence. The Board recorded their best wishes to Prof. Lynch for a speedy recovery.

### **Agenda Item 1 – Minutes of the last meeting**

1. Accepted.

### **Agenda Item 2 – Matters arising**

2. The first 'split' FREB meeting will take place on 5/6 September at NRS. The meeting will be in two parts; routine business and strategic issues. PFS would also like to meet with HoDs, TC and possibly JL for an hour following the FREB meeting. Claire Holmes to note. **Action: CH**
3. KC is in the process of preparing a discussion paper covering Research Promotion procedures and FR's Annex to FC's Grading Guidance. **Noted**
4. It is the FREB's intention to hold Standards Meetings in January before end of year reports are finalised. **Noted**
5. HoDs, TC, XC and Janet Dutch to let KC have a list of their staff with reporting/confirming officers shown against each name. **Action: HoDs, TC, XC, JD**
6. PFS updated FREB with regard to the TSU review. An indication is needed about the level of investment that can be allocated for restructuring the TSU. PFS, TC, KC and JD to meet and come up with costed options. KC reminded FREB that full consultation has to take place with the TUS/TSU staff before any decisions are taken. **Action: PFS, TC, KC, JD**

7. FREB requested that the July meeting should include an agenda item allowing FR's input to the Commissioners' September meeting to be discussed. **CH**
8. HoDs to let PFS have nominations for a replacement member for the Advisory Committee on Forest Research. **Action: HoDs**

### **Agenda Item 3 & 4 (Reports and Update from Wales)**

9. PFS to send the re-drafted Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CFS/FR to HoDs. **Action: PFS**
10. HoDs requested that formal minutes of CFS/FR meetings should be produced in the future. **Action: PFS**
11. Other points arising from the meeting were:-
  - a. HE and CQ (on behalf of FR) and Jim Dewar and Sallie Bailey (on behalf of CFS) to meet to look at ROAME mechanisms and procedures. **Action: HE, CQ**
  - b. It is the intention that outline funding from CFS to FR would be identified by Autumn each year. **Noted**
  - c. Funding allocated for the two Regional Liaison Officer posts is considered sufficient only for part of this year but will be inadequate in subsequent years. **Noted**
  - d. Technical publications will be included in the MoU and a Technical Publications Group will be established. **Noted**
  - e. There are plans to hold a joint planning meeting with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) to discuss sustainability. **Noted**
  - f. While Intellectual Property Rights are owned by FC they are assigned to FR and their exploitation should be part of FR's agenda. **Noted**
12. Draft CFS performance ratings were circulated by PFS to HoDs who asked HoDs to alert him (by 13 June) if any of the comments caused difficulties. **Action: HoDs**
13. Research Strategy Management Board, chaired by Victoria Edwards, will meet again on 27 June at Silvan House. **Noted**
14. Tree Health, on behalf of FR, are building links with FR New Zealand with a view to establishing regular exchanges and sabbaticals of staff at the two institutes. **Noted**
15. Surveys of *P.kernoviae* are continuing in Cornwall and Wales and are being managed in line with the emergency Executive Board decision. **Noted**

16. Chris Jones gave the FREB an up-date from Wales. WEFO has approved an Objective 1 bid of £2.2 Million for a project to increase PAWS management (over 3 years). Whilst this is not directed at FR, Chris will liaise with HoDs to arrange a suitable date to discuss FR's possible involvement in this. **Action: CJ**
17. The Corporate Plan from FC Wales was tabled. This included subject areas of interest to FR. HoDs who are interested in taking forward any of the identified research needs should contact CJ. **Action: HoDs**
18. CJ will speak to Ruth Jenkins (who edited the Corporate Plan) about her research priorities and areas where FR could get involved. **Action: CJ**
19. FREB agreed that any research agreements as a consequence of discussions between CJ and Ruth Jenkins will have to go into CFS/FR schedules unless there is specific, separate funding. **Noted**
20. FREB agreed, in general terms, that direct approaches for research to Project Leaders should be discussed on a Project Leader/HoD basis before a commitment is given. **Action: HoDs**
21. Concern was expressed about the definition of outcomes as a result of the Scottish Native Woodlands Survey. Further discussion will take place after the Pilot Study. **Noted**
22. BM has met with Simon Hodge (acting Head of Policy and Development, FCS) to discuss areas of interest/concern to FCS. The following are worth noting:-
  - a. an expanding urban forestry, as well as a health and forestry agenda,
  - b. increasing interest in forest policy and practice in relation to climate change. **Noted**
23. Discussions are proceeding regarding the appointment of Research Liaison Officers in England and Scotland. **Noted**

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Finance**

24. TC reported that the final result for the year 2004/05 is confirmed at a cost recovery of 99.7% against the target of 100% representing a net deficit of £44,000. In view of the projected deficit at the turn of the year, this result is considered satisfactory. **Noted**
25. TC also reported that our external income, last year, was the highest ever at £2.2M. **Noted**
26. For 2005/06, if the capping of the TSU plan to a net loss of £322K is included, the FR plan is now in balance delivering a healthy net surplus of £351K. Capital expenditure has been released on priority and urgent project related requirements with a reserve of £250K in place to cover for emergencies, unforeseen replacements and other contingencies during the year. **Noted**
27. TC distributed an updated Risk Register measuring impact against likelihood. TC will be contacting HoDs regarding risks identified in their areas. **Action: TC**

### **Agenda Item 6 – Staffing**

28. KC reported that current staffing levels are running at 274 against a Corporate Plan figure of 278. Successful recruitment exercises had recently been held to fill the Head of Surveys post and a Social Scientist post. All the Divisional Administration Officer posts have now been filled and once pre-employment enquiries have been concluded, candidates will be in place. **Noted**

### **Agenda Item 7 – Any Other Business**

29. A paper entitled 'Rigour, respect and responsibility: a universal ethical code for scientists' will be tabled by JL at the next FREB. **Action: JL**
30. CQ felt that there was room for improvement in communications within the organisation especially between Alice Holt and NRS and that feedback is given to staff as soon as possible following meetings such as FREB. **Action: All**
31. KC is to consider points that could be used to assess the effectiveness of the organisational changes within FR and to discuss at the next FREB. **Action: KC**
32. XC stressed the need for articles for submission to publications, including the FR Annual Report, to be timely and of suitable length.
33. KC was concerned that FR did not appear to have a policy interpretation for Homeworking and will present a paper for discussion at the next FREB. **Action: KC**
34. Date of next meeting – 26 July 2005 at Alice Holt.

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