

University of Leeds, Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Committee

Minutes 8 April 2021

13 members of the Committee joined the meeting with one person in attendance.

Minutes

20/80 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2021 were received and approved.

Matters arising

20/81 Arising on Min 20/60, the Chair reported that he had communicated the Committee's thanks to a retired member.

20/82 Arising on Min 20/74, a student member, recently invited to join the Committee, was welcomed to the meeting. Two Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers (NACWOs) had agreed to attend on a regular basis to represent and present reports from all the NACWOs. A newly appointed NACWO would be invited to attend meetings when matters relevant to his position were on the Agenda. A member reported that Faculty restructuring was underway and the Committee agreed that representations should be made, if needed, to ensure continued Faculty support for the Committee. Taking into account forthcoming retirements, the establishment licence (PEL) holder was considering how to secure ongoing scientific representation. A lay member who advised of retirement later in the year was asked if staying on as a member could be considered afterwards.

20/83 Written reports had been requested from sub-groups and professional members.

PEL holder and Named Veterinary Surgeon's (NVS) update

(Received paper AWERC/20/17)

20/84 The PEL holder drew attention to the Condition 18 reports and advised that Redacted was still on sick leave.

20/85 With regard to the compliance incident, reported to the Committee (min 20/38 and 20/62) the Home Office (HO), having conducted an investigation and taken into account changes to standard operating procedures, had issued a letter of reprimand to the University. The letter had been shared with all those concerned with the incident. The type of sanctions it was possible for the HO to issue were discussed. The letter would be shared with Committee members who expressed an interest and in addition it was agreed that all licensees should be made aware of the incident and the additional risk associated with further non-compliance or infringement. ACTION: PEL holder.

Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers' (NACWOs) Report

20/86 The NACWOs advised that there had been no animal welfare or other issues to report. However, low humidity on one of the sites was being monitored. The Animal Care and Welfare sub-group was being re-started and would involve staff from all facilities. The

Sub-group would consider matters concerning animal care and welfare and with promoting the culture of care amongst technical staff.

Project licence application A370

20/87 The applicant delivered a presentation and it was observed that there was a clear need for the proposed work.

20/88 Discussions of the application were concerned with planning, statistics, the number of animals requested and the assessment of results. Comments received from members in advance of the meeting had been addressed and the application amended to incorporate these. With regard to assessment of results it was confirmed by the applicant that unless two-fold effect is seen between treatment groups, the project will not proceed further. A number of suggestions were made for amendment including clarification that the study was a pilot project; avoidance of the use of potentially misleading terms; and consistency and clarity regarding the method of killing at the end of the protocols.

20/89 The applicant was asked to review the lay summary explicitly to incorporate the 3Rs and members were invited to send suggestions for amendment to the applicant. The revised application would be sent to commenters prior to submission to the HO. ACTION: Administrator.

Culture of Care

(Received paper AWERC/20/18)

20/90 A lay member reported on the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Lay Members' Forum event which had largely focused on culture of care and steps establishments had taken to promote this with regard to technical staff wellbeing. It was reported that the development, publication and use of a policy for culture of care to incorporate the welfare of staff who care for animals was seen as a natural progression within an organization operating under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act. It was considered to be the role of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB), starting with the staff who work directly with animals, to think about how to express culture of care to the organization as a whole. It was proposed that consideration should be given to how emotional support could be provided to animal care staff as part of a support structure with the AWERB bringing in other areas of the organisation as appropriate. An example of the information on culture of care provided by another academic establishment was shared with the Committee for information.

20/91 Following discussion the PEL holder agreed to review policy and related statements to consider how best to underline the University's commitment to the nurturing of a culture of care. Actions would be included in the annual report. ACTION. PEL holder to liaise with the Communications team.

Annual Statistical Report

(Received AWERC/20/19)

20/92 Matters discussed included the high percentage of procedures that had been below threshold and the significant decrease in animal use during 2020 due to Covid19. Surplus animals were also discussed and the Committee was told that it was difficult to reduce the number of unused animals due to the effects of breeding genetically altered mice. For the benefit of lay members a NACWO explained how not all offspring would have the genetic alteration of interest so could not be used. Similar issues also occurred in cases where only male or female animals were required for a particular study. The NACWOs confirmed that efforts were made to plan, as far as possible, to limit over-breeding and to encourage the use of surplus animals, when possible, by other research groups.

Schedule of Business

(Received AWERC/20/20)

20/93 The Schedule of business was received for information.

Other business

Report from the [Redacted] Veterinary Surgeon

(Received paper AWERC/20/21)

20/94 The report from the veterinary surgeon at the [Redacted] was received for information. For the benefit of the Chair and new members the PEL holder explained the background to the report, which was concerned with animals not used under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act. The report would continue to be requested on an annual basis and information included in the annual reports to the Council of the University.

Understanding Animal Research (UAR)

20/95 The Committee was told that the UAR survey had been requested. UAR had asked for agreement from the University to share, with the Norwegian 3Rs Centre (Norecopa), how the University promoted use of the ARRIVE and PREPARE guidelines. The Committee agreed that the information should be shared. ACTION: NVS

Northern Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) Hub meeting

20/96 The Committee was told that a virtual meeting of the Northern AWERB Hub would be held on 5 May. The Chair confirmed that the meeting was in his diary.

Date of next meeting

20/97 The next meeting would be held on 8 June at 1400 on Microsoft Teams. [The date was subsequently changed to 15 June at 1430.]