

## University of Leeds

### Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Committee

#### Minutes of meeting of 23 May 2023

11 members attended the meeting with three people in attendance. Two NACWOs were welcomed to the meeting and introduced. Apologies were received from 4 members.

#### Minutes

22/100 The minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2023 were received and approved.

#### Matters arising

22/101 Min 22/89 and min 22/94 would be covered on the Agenda. Concerning membership (min 22/98) it was agreed that a proposed academic member should be invited to join the Committee and that the Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) and Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers (NACWOs) would seek a new student member. ACTION: NVS and NACWOs

22/102 The Chair reported that a note had been sent to project licence (PPL) holders and principal investigators about their participation in the new PPL application review system which was introduced following the meeting in January.

22/103 Due to the complexities involved in producing a statement for Research Ethics Committee Chairs, which was originally raised in November, it was agreed to carry this over to the meeting in September. ACTION: Chair and member concerned

#### Establishment Licence (PEL) holder and NVS's update

(Received paper AWERC/22/21)

22/104 Matters to note in the report had been that responses were awaited from the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) on the Standard Condition 18 reports which had been submitted since February. ASRU had been happy with the University's response following incidents with the heating supply on one site. A minor PPL amendment to change study groups on an application considered in September 2022 and since granted by the Home Office had been received. Severity and animal numbers on the project would not change.

#### Animal facilities update

22/105 A document prepared by the Deans of Medicine and Biological Sciences would be presented to the University Executive Group (UEG) in early June. The Committee noted that this was not produced by the Programme Board. The NVS had provided important information relating to this paper, which would be appended so that crucial aspects of animal welfare and regulatory framework would be included and considered. This paper was circulated as an addendum to the PELh/NVS report, on this occasion at the request of the PEL holder, to inform the Committee. The Committee was assured that all the questions and points raised in relation to proposals for the animal facilities would be considered by the UEG. Since the proposals would present potential risk for the University, the PELh would need to be assured that the risks were weighed before any decision was made.

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22/106 The Committee noted that what was being proposed would not be sufficient to accommodate the animals currently housed in the SBS barrier facility. Also, any decontamination of the CBS facility was unlikely to succeed in keeping out unwanted pathogens in the long term due to transfer of animals into the facility. There was some concern from members that the Programme Board had not met recently, had not seen the document being presented to the UEG and that recent meetings had been cancelled. The members concerned were not confident that the next meeting in June would go ahead. Potential deadlines were also discussed.

22/107 Comments were invited and members were asked to notify the NVS of anything that had missed and should be added to the appended document.

ACTION: ALL

22/108 The Chair, PEL and NVS agreed that a meeting should be arranged with the two Deans who prepared the paper for the UEG.

ACTION: NVS

**NACWOs' report**

(Received paper AWERC/22/22)

22/109 The NACWOs highlighted an ongoing issue with lighting in CBS. An electrician had been to resolve this but since the issue had remained ongoing in one room they had agreed to return, dismantle the system and check each component.

22/110 The Committee expressed concern that with plans still unclear there was a risk that plant and equipment in SBS might not be maintained. It was agreed that the Committee should receive regular reports to remain apprised of the situation. The facilities manager advised that the purchase of an air conditioning unit was being considered. The facilities manager reported that the doors to two goods lifts were to be replaced. These would be replaced one at a time to maintain access but the risk of noise was acknowledged. Engineers would be supervised and noise levels kept under review. In view of these issues it was suggested that an appropriate member of Estates Services staff could be identified and invited to meetings when maintenance issues were to be discussed.

ACTION: NVS and facilities manager

**Farm veterinary report**

(Received paper AWERC/22/23 and 24)

22/111 The Committee acknowledged the two reports as being generally positive with some clear action points. It was agreed that reports following the next visit should be brought to the meeting in September to keep the Committee updated. ACTION: NVS and administrator

**Animal Care and Welfare Sub-group report**

(Received paper AWERC/22/25)

22/112 The Committee was told that the meeting involved the NACWOs getting together informally to discuss initiatives and any matters relating to animal welfare. Three NACWOs had attended a PIL refresher course which was both interesting and valuable and other PIL holders would be encouraged to attend. Breeding of the black 6 mouse colony and the rat colony had been reduced to avoid wastage due to the uncertainty of users awaiting details of the planned merger of facilities which had led to a reduction in demand for the animals.

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- 22/113 The sub-group had agreed to meet more frequently to pick up on actions and gain momentum by following up every two months. This would contribute to improving culture of care and with the increase in meetings it had been agreed to rotate the chair of the group to foster enthusiasm and increase involvement of each of the NACWOs.
- 22/114 One of the NACWOs had attended a recent NC3Rs meeting to discuss the role of 3RS champion which had been discussed widely within the animal care community in recent months. The NC3Rs were considering how they would like the role to operate in academia and industry and the experiences of two people, a NVS and NACWO who had been in the role, were shared to stimulate discussion. It had been agreed that the role would need support, for example a percentage of fte, to have strength and meaning and that more than one individual might be involved. The Committee agreed that a small number of members should meet to discuss the initiative further and report back.  
ACTION: NVS, NACWO and NIO

### **Environmental enrichment**

(Received paper AWERC/22/26)

- 22/115 After discussion with the PEL holder and NACWOs the NVS agreed to bring a paper about environmental enrichment and present to the Committee. During discussion it was agreed that it would be good for the animal facilities to reach an equivalent to the positive examples shared. Although space might present some challenges, it would still be possible to introduce more items to add interest and hiding places for the animals. The NVS agreed to discuss options with the NACWOs to identify which items would be suitable. Following this interested parties should develop minimum standards for environmental enrichment, develop SOPs for each of the species and monitor what is provided to ascertain whether the items provide what is needed for the animals.  
ACTION: NVS, NACWOs and facilities manager
- 22/116 Points raised in discussion included reproducibility concerns, the need to involve researchers in decision making and that improved welfare should lead to good quality research were all noted.

22/117 Two NACWOs were thanked for the images supplied.

### **PPL applications reviewed by sub-committees**

- 22/118 The Committee received the short lay paragraph and non-technical summary for the first project licence application considered by a sub-committee on 20 April (A391). Although the meeting had taken slightly longer than anticipated positives were that another licensee in the same area of research had been involved and that the review was more rigorous. The application has since been amended to incorporate changes requested by the sub-committee and submitted to the Home Office.
- 22/119 Arrangements to consider another new PPL application were in progress.

### **PPL mid-term review schedule**

(Received AWERC/22/27)

- 22/120 The Committee received the proposed PPL mid-term review schedule and agreed to proceed on the basis presented.

### **Schedule of business**

(Received AWERC/22/28)

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22/121 The schedule of business was received for information and the administrator agreed to update the schedule according to the action points for the next meeting.

ACTION: Administrator.

### **External meetings**

22/122 Since the last meeting the NVS had attended a workshop run by Red Kite Veterinary Consultants, the LAVA spring conference on managing pain in multiple laboratory species, both in April and an RSPCA event "maximising the effectiveness of your AWERB" in May. One of the NACWOs had attended the NC3Rs 3Rs champion workshop in May as previously reported.

22/123 Upcoming meetings which would be attended by the NVS and NIO were the Laboratory Animal Science Association (LASA) Home Office Liaison, Training and Information Forum/ASRU meeting on 24 May (advance dates also scheduled in July and October), the LASA 60th anniversary conference 21 – 23 November; and the PEL holders' Forum 17th October which the PEL holder would attend. The NACWOs and NTCO would be encouraged to attend the LASA conference. Members would continue to be notified about meetings relevant to the AWERB as soon as they are publicised.

### **Other business**

22/124 Advance meeting dates for the next session would be scheduled in due course and an in-person meeting would be arranged to take place in September around lunch. The Chair advised that further consideration would be given to the meeting timetable going forward once the impact of sub-committees on the workload could be assessed.

22/125 A retiring member was thanked for his contribution to the Committee.

22/126 The PEL holder and a member would remain involved in the complex cross-faculty discussions about work loading and the Committee would be updated as soon as a position was clear.

### **Date of next meeting**

22/127 The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 12 July 1400 – 1600 via MS Teams.