

# Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)



**14:00 – 16:00, Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025 PHRI Meeting Room J1.42 and by Teams**

## Draft Minutes

Present:

[Redacted]	Chair
[Redacted]	PEL Holder
[Redacted]	NACWO, NIO, NTCO, HOLC
[Redacted]	NVS
[Redacted]	NACWO, NTCO
[Redacted]	Scientific Member
[Redacted]	Lay member
[Redacted]	Lay member
[Redacted]	Lay member
[Redacted]	Scientific Member
[Redacted]	Lay member
[Redacted]	Scientific Member
[Redacted]	Scientific Member
<b>Apologies:</b>	
[Redacted]	Statistician

### STANDING ITEMS

- 1. **Apologies for absence**  
Apologies were noted as above.
- 2. **Quoracy**  
The quorum was met.

### 3. Minutes

Considered and approved: Paper A - the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

The committee approved the minutes, except for one amendment regarding legal advice provided on the rehoming of fish. It was agreed that this clarification should be included in the revised minutes.

**Action:** ■■■ to amend the minutes to include the legal advice received regarding the rehoming of fish.

### 4. Action tracker updates – Paper B

#### Actions completed:

- ■■■ to prepare PowerPoint template for PPL applications.
- ■■■ to submit application to Home Office for approval.
- ■■■ to invite ■■■■■■■■■■ to join AWERB.
- ■■■ to submit application to Home Office to amend PEL.

#### Actions outstanding:

- ■■■ to agree communication plan with Director of Communications.

## REVIEWS AND UPDATES

### 5. Minor changes to ToR (■■■)

Received and considered/approved/noted: AWERB ToR – Paper C

The committee reviewed proposed minor amendments to the Terms of Reference, primarily focused on updating membership roles and clarifying responsibilities. These changes were approved, and it was noted that additional discussions regarding broader amendments would take place under Item 8.

**Action agreed:** ■■■ to update the Terms of Reference to reflect the approved changes.

### 6. Presentation PPL Application Review (■■■)

Received and considered/approved/noted: Paper D

A standardised template for PPL applications was introduced to streamline and improve the consistency of submissions. The committee agreed that implementing this template would facilitate a more structured approach to evaluating applications and ensuring compliance with relevant guidelines.

### 7. Review of NON-ASPA Research Projects Involving Animals (■■■)

Received and considered/approved/noted: Paper E

The committee engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the newly proposed policy for the review of non-ASPA research involving animals. It was emphasised that any research involving animals, regardless of whether it falls under ASPA regulations, should undergo ethical review to maintain best practices in animal welfare.

### 8. City St George's Use of Animals in Research Policy (■■■)

Received and considered/approved/noted: Paper F – Use of Animals in Research Policy

The updated policy on the use of animals in research was reviewed and approved with minor amendments. Concerns were raised regarding the oversight of collaborative and international

research projects.<sup>5</sup> It was agreed that this was a procedural matter rather than policy and it was agreed that a clear procedural framework should be established separately. A key recommendation was to enhance the internal audit processes beyond the inspections conducted by the Home Office. This measure aims to strengthen oversight and ensure adherence to high standards of ethical research.

The policy will now be sent to academic governance and nomination committee, Senate, and Council (in that order) for approval.

**Action agreed: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to develop a structured process for monitoring and approving non-ASPA research projects and projects that include collaborations with colleagues that include the use of animals (ASPA or non-ASPA), ensuring alignment with ethical and regulatory requirements.**

#### **9. Report from NIO/HOLC ([REDACTED])**

Received and considered/approved/noted: Paper G - NIO/HOLC report

- The establishment licence holder has been officially updated ([REDACTED])
- The regulated procedure numbers for 2024 have been published on the institution's website for transparency.
- The Home Office has introduced new designated email inboxes for specific queries related to regulatory compliance. Members were advised to direct all such communications through the Named Information Officer.
- Emphasis was placed on the importance of promoting a strong Culture of Care within AWERB, with additional resources provided to support this initiative.

#### **10. Report from NACWO/NTCO ([REDACTED])**

Received and considered/approved/noted: Paper H - NACWO/NTCO report

- They attended a Congress conference in November, where research posters were presented, and received positive feedback. An upcoming presentation at the IIT Congress in March will focus on sustainability.
- The [REDACTED] audit provided very positive feedback about the program of training and competency, and new video SOPs have been developed to enhance training resources.
- Animal welfare remains stable, with a recent technical issue in the facility now fully resolved. A diet change for the fish has led to noticeable improvements in health and behaviour.
- The team continues to uphold the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement), implementing enrichment strategies to support animal well-being.
- The zebrafish unit has received a Gold Leaf Award under the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF), recognizing its sustainability efforts.

#### **11. Report from NVS ([REDACTED])**

Received and considered/approved/noted: NVS verbal report

- System occupancy: System 1 still not fixed, all WT are on system 2 and System 3 has a mix of WT (Wild Type) and GA (Genetically Modified).
- Water parameters: Systems 2 and 3 are busy with well-fed growing fish. Hence the nitrate scores were reaching above 80ppm and the water renewal was therefore increased.
- Breeding: Fish are being moved to the Sparos diet to try to reduce the kinky tail issue.
- Drugs supply: The main topic of discussion at the moment is the drugs supply for fish analgesia and anaesthesia, and for the rodent room in development. For rodent euthanasia, some Controlled Drugs (pentobarbital) will be required. This adds a little complication to the process, but the main issue is to set an account with a veterinary drug wholesaler. This might

require to register as Veterinary Premises with the Royal College of Veterinary Services and undergo an Veterinary Medicine Directorate inspection, all linked with costs and demanding processes.

**Action agreed:** ■ to identify a veterinary drug supplier to support operations in the new facility.

## 12. Report from ■ audit (■)

Received and considered/approved/noted: Paper I - Biological Research Management

- The audit provided an overall assurance rating of "acceptable," indicating compliance with key regulatory and governance standards.
- The governance processes were found to be robust, demonstrating effective oversight mechanisms.
- However, auditors raised concerns about the potential for unauthorised access to the zebrafish facility due to access authorisation procedures in Estates and Facilities. The Estates and Facilities Department has been assigned the responsibility of investigating and resolving security concerns.

## Other business

\*Starred items not discussed unless notified to the Chair or Clerk in advance of the meeting.

### 13. \*Dates of Future Meetings

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025 14:00 – 16:00, Hybrid**

### 14. Any Other Business

The board discussed the development of a new room for rodents:

- A detailed business case is being developed to support the establishment of a holding/procedure room for rodents.
- Final approval from both the university and the Home Office is required before the room can be operational.

**Action:** ■ & ■ to finalise and submit the business case for the room for approval.

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