



**The James Hutton Institute**

**BOARD MEETING**

The Board Room, Dundee

**24 July 2013, at 09:00**

**Chair:** Ray Perman (RP)

**Board members:** Laura Meagher (LM)  
Brian Clark (BC)  
George Thorley (GT)  
David Boxer (DB)  
George Salmond (GS)  
Allan Stevenson (AS)  
Alan Werritty (AW)

**Apologies:** Julia Brown (JB)  
Bob Ferrier (BF)  
Sandy Morrison (SM)  
Wayne Powell (WP)

**Attendees:** Iain Gordon (IG)  
Colin Campbell (CC)  
Beth Corcoran (BeC)

**Secretariat:** Anne Pack (AP)

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b> Apologies were received from Sandy Morrison, Wayne Powell and Bob Ferrier.
<b>2</b>	<b>Register of Interests</b> GS said that he would complete his annual Register of Interest form after the meeting. This will conclude the returns from the Board.
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of 22 May 2013</b> Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May were discussed and agreed.
<b>4</b>	<b>Matters arising</b> All matters were completed.
<b>5</b>	<b>Minutes of sub-committee meetings since last Board meeting</b> <b>5.1 ACS – 23 July</b> BC provided a verbal update on the meeting held the previous evening. The main work of the committee, currently, is the Group review processes. All are at different stages. The Information and Computational Sciences (ICS) Group, the third of six, was reviewed at the beginning of June. The panel was very impressed with the Group, and initial feedback

	<p>was favourable. The written report is awaited.</p> <p>The Cell and Molecular Sciences (CMS) Group will be reviewed in November. The Social, Economic and Geographical Sciences (SEGS) Group will be reviewed in early December. The Biomathematics and Statistics Scotland (BioSS) Group will be reviewed in January. Individual terms of reference are being developed with BioSS.</p> <p>The report from the Environmental and Biological Sciences (EBS) Group review panel has been received.</p> <p>The Ecological Sciences (ES) Group has responded to their panel's recommendations, some of which have been incorporated in the Implementation Plan.</p> <p><b>5.2 Audit &amp; Finance</b></p> <p>AS said that the draft minutes of the A&amp;F meeting held on the 27 June, closely integrates the subsequent financial papers at this meeting, and that they would be dealt with together under 8.2 – 8.6.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Minutes of commercial subsidiary meetings &amp; reports</b></p> <p><b>6.1 MRS</b></p> <p>RP apologised that there were no minutes for the MRS meeting, and provided a verbal update. The Agrinos contract got off to a good start. Discussions have been held about the implementation plan. The Lipid laboratory has been awarded FDA (Food and Drugs Administration (US)) accreditation.</p> <p>The last financial year was extremely good for MRS, with a profit well above budget.</p>
	<p><b>6.2 MSC</b></p> <p>A note on MSC was received from Bill Donald, Commercial Director, for information. RP added that MSC had a very good year last year, and that this year has started strongly.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Macaulay Development Trust</b></p> <p>CC gave a verbal update. Macaulay Development Trust (MDT) has agreed to fund four fellowships and four studentships. The recipients will be known as MDT Fellows and MDT students. The value of the funding is £1.2m over three years. The Board had a discussion on how to ensure it gave adequate recognition and thanks to MDT for providing large tranches of funding. IG said that the Institute values a close working relationship with MDT. For example, working closely with MDT to jointly host the T. B. Macaulay annual lecture. Additional Trusts, closely associated with the Macaulay legacy, are administered and celebrated by the Institute. LM said that MDT would be pleased to receive feedback from the fellows and students, and generally maintain continuity.</p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Regular Reports</b></p> <p><b>8.1 Chief Executive's report</b></p> <p>IG highlighted two points in the report. Firstly, the finalised agreement with the Centre of Ecology &amp; Hydrology (CEH) which has already led to a joint engagement on tree and plant health, as well as discussions with the Chinese Academy of Science, and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science.</p> <p>Secondly, the launch of Scottish Food Security Alliance – Crops at the Royal Highland Show, representing the relationship that we have with the University of Aberdeen and the University of Dundee. This initiative has been well received, and IG has written a piece for The Scotsman about the Alliance, which is due to be published shortly.</p> <p>Applicants for the Director of Corporate Services post have been short-listed. Applications came from a broad range of backgrounds; industry, government, and charity sectors.</p>

	<p>Interviews will take place on the 21 August. In advance of that, interviewees will tour both sites on the 1 August.</p> <p>IG asked that the Board's congratulations be given to the students who participated in the Inter-Institute PhD student competition in May. This is a national competition, and all four students were a credit to the institute. Sebastian and Dionne, who were both placed, were very good speakers and all students presented very well. The Board was pleased to send its congratulations.</p> <p><b>Action: IG to send congratulations to Hazel Bull, Dionne Turnbull, Sebastian Eves-Van Den Akker and William Deasy, for their performance and success at the Inter-Institute PhD student competition on 23-24 May.</b></p>
	<p><b>8.2 Finance Report – final accounts</b></p> <p>AS suggested that the final accounts be bound separately, in order for members to maintain a set of accounts for future reference. BeC said that she would circulate a signed set of accounts to all Board members.</p> <p><b>Action: BeC to circulate a signed set of accounts.</b></p> <p>AS presented the final accounts for approval by the Board. They have the approval and recommendation of the Audit &amp; Finance (A&amp;F) committee.</p> <p>BeC spoke to the Key Audit Findings of Johnston Carmichael.</p> <p>BeC also highlighted increases in MRS, MSC and external contracts.</p> <p>The Board gave its approval of the accounts for the Group and the amendment to the MRS accounts to reflect Gift Aid to the Mylnefield Trust.</p> <p>IG wished to record the Board's acknowledgement of the amount of effort put in by BeC, the finance team, and Johnstone Carmichael, in getting the accounts to their current state.</p>
	<p><b>8.3 Annual Report A&amp;F</b></p> <p>This was received for information. AS said that a decision had been taken at the A&amp;F meeting to approve internal audit resource of '18' days to provide assistance to BeC and the finance team to bring up to date and consolidate the finance system, for the future.</p> <p>AS said that he would take comments on the A&amp;F draft minutes at this point.</p> <p>BeC said that the amendments recommended to the Code of Practice and Treasury Policy have been completed, and are on the system as final versions.</p> <p>BeC highlighted the report by Henderson Loggie, who note the improvement in internal audit practices since their last annual report.</p>
	<p><b>8.4 Outline Finance Plan</b></p> <p>BeC included this plan to demonstrate how the finance team would address issues in the internal and external audit reports.</p>
	<p><b>8.5 Finance Recruitment Plan</b></p> <p>BeC invited the Board to note the paper. In drawing attention to the last line, BeC said that following a discussion with Head of HR, an adjustment to the date had been agreed, and it is hoped to have the majority of posts filled by September 2013.</p>
	<p><b>8.6 Management Accounts</b></p> <p>BeC said that Period 1 and 2 were combined, due to pressures on issuing the statutory accounts. There is nothing of major concern to report. There is a budget meeting scheduled to take place on 31 July, which will consider capital expenditure in the financial year.</p>

	<p><b>8.7 Media Digest</b> This was received for information.</p>
	<p><b>8.8 Health &amp; Safety</b> This was received for information.</p>
	<p><b>8.9 Fracking Statement</b> The policy statement on fracking was approved by the Board. The Institute does not take a position on the desirability or otherwise of fracking, but stands ready to offer impartial scientific services if required.</p>
<b>9</b>	<b>Strategy Planning and Budget</b>
	<p><b>9.1 Scoping study</b> CC presented the scoping study received by consultants AMCA, for a new build at the Invergowrie site, and invited questions from the Board. The document provides a basis for ongoing discussions. One major issue is access to the site. Currently, the route into the institute is through Invergowrie village, and past the primary school. CC recommended to the Board that a professional is appointed to advance this project to the next level, including scoping out funding. IG pointed out the potential for developing a knowledge engine on the Invergowrie site, with agriculture and food based SMEs sitting around it. There is an opportunity around a food security brand for developing the site. The case for development should include a Scottish, UK, and international vision. <b>Action: CC to request a second draft of the study from AMCA and issue to the Board.</b> RP said that this project was of sufficient urgency, that any updates should be communicated to the Board before the next meeting.</p>
<b>10</b>	<b>AOB</b>
<b>Date of next meeting: 25 September 2013, Aberdeen</b>	