



The James Hutton Institute
BOARD MEETING
Macaulay B, Aberdeen
20 May 2015, 09:00h

- Chair:** Ray Perman (RP)
- Board members:** Brian Clark (BC)
Ian Gambles (ICG) by WebEx (part)
Stephen Hall (SH)
Deborah Keith (DK)
Laura Meagher (LM)
Marian Scott (MS) by WebEx
Allan Stevenson (AS)
Alan Werritty (AW)
- Apologies:** Joan MacNaughton (JM)
George Thorley GT
- Attendees:** Iain Gordon (IJG)
Colin Campbell (CC)
Beth Corcoran (BeC)
Bob Ferrier (BF)
- Secretariat:** Anne Pack (AP)

Closed Session

ICG left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

- 1 Apologies**
Apologies were received from George Thorley (GT) and Joan MacNaughton (JM)
- 2 Register of Interests**
LM is a Trustee of Macaulay Development Trust.
RP is a Director of the David Hume Institute.
ICG is a Director of the Forestry Commission.
JM is on the BBSRC Council, and is a board member of the John Innes Centre.
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2015.**
The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.
- 4 Matters arising**

All matters were either discharged or dealt with in the agenda.

Strategy Planning and Budget

5.1 Finance Report

The P11 accounts were provided.

The costs for VR were more than first thought due to the high number of longer-serving staff taking VE/VR, resulting in higher payments.

The HRIS system was purchased, as detailed in the Capital Projects breakdown. IT infrastructure purchases were made to reduce the risk to the organisation.

An EU audit took place last week. Three of the EU projects are ex-MLURI. The claims were audited, sent to the EU and been paid by the EU. The EU is entitled to revisit completed projects. Their auditors reviewed three of the accounts and could not match the time spent against payment and advised the EU to recoup the funds, from the Institute. It is believed the Institute has a reasonable defence, and the time recording system had been changed on the auditors' recommendation in 2012. However, the recommendation to the Board is to approve making provision for that amount in the budget because there is a chance that the money will have to be returned.

In relation to the Asset Register, a process has been implemented in line with good practice, where depreciation begins during the month of purchase.

5.2 Vision for the future and budget 2015/16

A presentation on the 'vision for success' of the organisation was made. This ties in with the development of the Corporate Strategy. With science at the heart of the organisation, there are three key building blocks: customer/stakeholder focus, our people, and operational excellence. This was discussed by the Senior Management Group at an Away Day at Glensaugh Farm on 4th May. The outputs (key strategic objectives) have gone for consultation and are being discussed with staff in organised groups.

The budget suggests having a Strategic Investment Fund to invest in the long-term sustainability of the Institute. The Institute is in urgent need to replace equipment to support current and future research. The fund will provide a mechanism for bringing capital requests from the Executive to the Board.

The Board approved the budget.

5.3 Invitation to Tender for Grant Funding (ITGF)

The Institute's tender for 2016-21 outlines the structure for expenditure, through Centres of Expertise, Underpinning Capacity and, a new approach, Knowledge Exchange. Time spent on ITGF has been tracked. A rough outline of contributions *per* MRP has been included. Of note, is that the James Hutton Institute is part of the entire programme, reflecting how much it delivers to SG. The programme also provides the opportunity to align to global opportunities.

It was questioned whether the statement on exploiting IP for the benefit of Scotland was an inhibition when trying to attract global players. This is part of the Centre for Knowledge Exchange, a new area that is currently being developed. The comment was noted, and will be brought back to the Board in due course for discussion.

All proposals will be externally reviewed. It is expected that SG will wish to have a discussion about indicative budgets, as some were over- bid. The Directors Executive Committee (DEC), comprising CEOs of the MRPs oversees the current programme, and will oversee the new one. It requires careful management to ensure each work stream can be delivered according

to the resource committed *per* MRP. The DEC has been impressed by the way the MRPs have worked together in an integrated way to prepare the bids. It is anticipated SG will honour the 'in principle' budgets they have allocated. Concern has been expressed over Theme 1 – Natural Assets – which has bid significantly below the investment SG wish to make. There is a risk that the agencies may be approached by SG to take up unallocated sums to help deliver what is required. The Institute was also asked to indicate what it would do in the event of a 3-5% cut in funding. The Institute's response was that it would have to remove areas of work. Results will be announced in March 2016. The Board asked that its thanks be given to those staff involved in the preparation of the tender.

5.4 Organisational Development Programme

This was covered under 5.2.

5.5 Barley Centre update

An outline business case is being prepared to take the project through Gateway One. Currently no funding has been received for the Centre from industry. Interest and support from distillers and maltsters has been around the agri-tech bid for equipment funding. Results from the agri-tech bid are expected around July or August. The Barley Centre will be dispersed within the Invergowrie site concentrating on barley, for which it has a strong reputation.

6 Regular reports

6.1 Chief Executive

This report was received for information.

Concern was expressed by the Board over the load on the rest of the Executive in covering the duties of the Director of Corporate Services during his absence. The Executive members feel they currently do not need an interim, that they are delegating down some tasks and these are willingly being taken up.

7 Minutes of sub-committee meetings since last Board meeting

7.1 ACS – 17 March 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2015 were received for information. A verbal report was given on the ACS meeting held on 19 May. The Themes Review report and the response from TLs were discussed. The report will be revised in light of the responses and re-circulated to the Board.

Outputs from the Themes review will inform the new strategy. When the new strategy is in draft format it will be brought to the Board for discussion in a workshop-style session.

a presentation was made to ACS on Developing an Interdisciplinary Culture of Excellence (DICE), a project for developing a culture and environment for interdisciplinary research within the Institute. It has been constructive and insightful for staff involved. An international workshop was held Earlier in the year and 'How-to' guides are being developed

7.2 Audit & Finance

There has been no formal meeting since the last Board meeting, other than a teleconference on budgeting. The internal audit report on Governance is currently being dealt with and will be tabled for approval at the July Board meeting after it has been back to

the Audit Committee in June with comments. The chair is required to formalise the individual appraisals with Board members, so asked that the corporate governance questionnaire he circulated in January is completed and returned. For ease of reference this will be circulated again.

7.3 Nominations & Remuneration (N&R)

The minutes of the N&R meeting held on 17 March 2015 were received for information.

8 Minutes of commercial subsidiary meetings

8.1 James Hutton Ltd

The minutes of the following meetings were received for information:

James Hutton Ltd, on 17 March 2015.

Mylnefield Research Services Ltd on 18 March 2015.

Macaulay Scientific Consulting Ltd on 18 March 2015.

9 Other reports

9.1 Media Digest

This was received for information.

9.4 Health & Safety

This was received for information.

10 Open session – for decision and approval

10.1 Budget 2015/16

The Board approved the budget.

10.2 Organisational Development Programme

The Board noted the Organisational Development Programme will be deferred to the July meeting.

10.3 Health and Safety

The Board accepted the Health and Safety Reports.

10 AOB

Dates of meetings in 2015:

July 22nd Dundee (with meeting at Glensaugh Farm)

September 23rd Aberdeen

November 18th Dundee