



**The James Hutton Institute**  
**BOARD MEETING**  
Craigiebuckler Room, Aberdeen site  
**18 November 2015, 14:00h**

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

**Closed Session**

There was nothing to report.

- 1 Apologies**  
Apologies were received from Stephen Hall, Joan Macnaughton and Allan Stevenson.
- 2 Register of Interests**  
JC informed the Board that he is an Honorary Fellow of Environment Link  
MS informed the Board that she is Vice-President (International) on the council of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2015.**  
The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.
- 4 Matters arising**  
Matters were either complete or dealt with in the agenda.

**Progress on research for new CEO**

The recruitment consultants, Perrett Laver, recently provided an update to the chair. They have identified 350 potential candidates and indicated that this list may yet grow. Of those,

230 people have been approached; some responded to say they did not wish to express interest. Ten people have expressed positive interest in the role and thirty applications have been received in response to the public advertisement.

At the Nominations & Remuneration meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> November it was agreed that the longlisting sift meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December will hone the list in preparation for the shortlisting meeting in January. Approval was sought from the Board for a shortlist selection panel who will also form the interview panel. It will comprise a chair and four of the newer Board members. It may be necessary to convene a Board meeting by video conference or phone after the interviews in February, to enable the panel make a recommendation to the Board. A briefing report for all staff will be prepared by the chair.

## **5 Strategy Planning and Budget**

### **5.1 Corporate Plan**

At a four hour discussion on the morning of 18<sup>th</sup> November, the Corporate Plan and future options were discussed. The Executive were asked to explore a number of options. These options will be revisited in January. The results of the spending review will be known by then.

### **5.2 Estate Strategy**

A comprehensive review of the estate was undertaken over a year ago. The strategy paper provided sets out a high-level vision and purpose of the estate. It is ambitious considering the poor condition of a large percentage of the buildings. Future needs have been identified and options for location are given. The paper recommends the status quo in terms of co-location options.

If the IBH goes ahead which it will house 100 people. This will alleviate some of the pressures on maintaining some existing buildings as staff would move into the IBH as a starting point and some of the older buildings could be demolished.

At present no elements of the Estate Strategy have been included in the Corporate Plan. Salient elements will now be added. Including social space on both sites is an important factor, to enable local community engagement and increase transparency.

Timescales will be added to the Appendix.

### **5.3 International Barley Hub**

An update paper was provided. This project has recently gathered pace. A strategic business case project team has been formed and together with consultants and Scottish Enterprise are developing the business plan. The Government Gateway 1 preparatory meeting has taken place and the review which will be undertaken in early December. The Business Plan includes the feasibility of generating revenue to build the hub. There are a range of options for realising the funding required.

Strong support for the proposal was received from several large organisations as it aligns well with them. The project must link with Agri-Tech Innovation Centres. There is strong support from UK funders for the idea. At an industry day for IBH in Edinburgh on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November there was representation from government, the whisky and beer industries, farmer's union et al. Strong support was expressed for the IBH across the barley value chain. There is some optimism going into the Gateway Review. Verbal feedback will be given on the last day of the review. A written report will be provided one week later.

This is a joint venture with the University of Dundee.

The Board noted the report. An update will be provided in January.

## **6 Regular reports**

### **6.1 Health & Safety**

An update report was provided for information. It includes a full history of accidents and incidents from the launch of the Institute in April 2011 to date. It was noted that there has been a rising increase in incidents. This is in part due to the successful campaign to get staff to report near misses as this is an effective way of preventing accidents.

### **6.2 Chief Executive**

This report was received for information.

Of note since producing the report is the good news that the first major grant from China has been received. The resubmission for the Invitation to Tender for Grant Funding (ITGF) was a major effort. SG is pleased with the resubmission. Thanks were given to everyone involved.

The Board was asked for comments on the new format of the lengthy CEO report. The Board commended the new format which was considered more integrated. The Board agreed to accept a slimmed-down version for the January Board meeting to allow for strategic discussions, and less frequent reports on slow-moving initiatives. The Executive is planning to make some parts of the CEO report available to staff.

The issue of non-completion of timesheets has moved to a phase where more staff are completing them, but all time is not being recorded accurately and this is being addressed in awareness-raising sessions. Inaccurate information causes problems for the finance team.

The dates for the 2016 Open House session have been confirmed and will be circulated to the Board.

### **6.3 Management Accounts**

The forecast for contracts has been achieved. Based on the profile of external contracts, most income is made in the second half of the year. Big EU contracts operate quarterly. Effort is being made to determine which contracts are behind, in order to generate payment. With 500 live contracts this requires a lot of staff time to identify who is not completing timesheets or completing them incorrectly.

In September a six-month report was sent to RESAS to show the Institute is on track, demonstrating the cuts made last year are gleaming benefit in terms of the correct amount of time going into the RESAS programme. This provides accurate figures for unallocated time.

A discussion of James Hutton Ltd finances took place. A meeting will be held on 18<sup>th</sup> November with the MD of James Hutton Ltd to discuss matters and he will attend the January board to present the Business Plan and discuss the finances further.

## **7 Minutes of sub-committee meetings since last Board meeting**

### **7.1 ACS**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September were received for information. A verbal update was provided for the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> November. The meeting

considered three main items:

- The new Centre for Knowledge Exchange and Impact (CKEI), which will co-ordinate KE throughout the new RESAS inter-disciplinary Strategic Research Programme. The PowerPoint presentation will be circulated to Board members for information.
- IP Management Strategy. ACS agreed this should be included in the CKEI report.
- Agenda planner. ACS agreed to spread strategic issues across several meetings. BC and CC will together populate the planner.

The Terms of Reference, prepared in 2011, was also discussed. It was decided that it was broad enough to cover what ACS does whilst remaining flexible.

A second round of science reviews is being planned with a slightly revised format.

Regular meetings with BioSS are in place.

ACS requested that information on its purpose be included in the website.

## **7.2 Audit & Finance**

- The Risk Register, approved at the A&F meeting in July, was received for information.

## **7.3 Nominations & Remuneration**

A verbal report was provided on the recruitment of new Board members.

## **8 Minutes of commercial subsidiary meetings**

### **8.1 James Hutton Ltd**

The minutes of the James Hutton Ltd Board meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015 were received for information. It had been a constructive meeting. Some things need to be ironed out, including the need for James Hutton Ltd Board and the James Hutton Institute Board to interact more. There was a question on the accountability of James Hutton Ltd to the Institute Board. Since the Institute wholly-owns James Hutton Ltd it is entirely accountable for it.

The Institute is also entirely accountable for BioSS, whose staff are employed by the Institute. BioSS has its own branding and provides services to all the MRPs.

## **9 Other reports**

### **9.1 Media Digest**

This report was received for information.

### **9.2 GM**

The Institute's position statement on GM was received for information. There is to be a workshop on GM to which all staff are invited on 24<sup>th</sup> November. The statement may be amended following that workshop.

## **10 Open session – for decision and approval**

### **10.1 Corporate Plan**

The draft corporate Plan was received for information and noted.

### **10.2 Estate Strategy**

The document was received and recommendations noted.

### **10.3 CAPEX update**

This report was received for information and noted.

**11 AOB**

The Executive were asked if they intended re-issuing the Institute's position statement on fracking. It was agreed this was not required at this time.

**Dates of meetings in 2016:**

January 20<sup>th</sup> Edinburgh

March 23<sup>rd</sup> Aberdeen

May 18<sup>th</sup> Dundee

July 20<sup>th</sup> Aberdeen

September 21<sup>st</sup> Dundee

November 23<sup>rd</sup> Aberdeen