



**Action 1.** CC to prepare a strategic discussion on positioning the Institute in a changing research landscape.

**Action 2.** BF to provide the International Strategy to the November Board meeting.

All other actions were either completed or covered in the agenda.

## 5 Health and Safety

The report was received for information. JC met with Frances Rowe (FR), Head of Health & Safety and invited members to note the following.

- There is significant activity taking place with regards to sustainability. Fifty per cent of a designated member of staff's time will be allocated to sustainability activity.
- The Environmental Review committee is now in place.
- The Travel Plan is in place.
- A review is underway of ISO14001 with a good representation of the Institute in the programme.

JC attended the Health & Safety meeting on 14 September and was impressed that it was chaired by the Chief Executive and that it was a good high-performing committee.

There was a query over the number of days lost in 2015 (208) and whether there was an issue the Board should be aware of. It was noted that this was mainly due to one individual who was off long-term. It was agreed that some narrative be added to show any action taken. A footnote will be added on anomalies.

**Action 3.** CC to provide Board comments to FR and ask her to provide additional information in the stats table going forward.

## 6 Strategy Planning and Budget

### 6.1 Statutory Accounts

Only a few minor changes were added to the report that was presented to the July Board.

The accounts were approved by the Board for sign-off by the Chair and Chair of A&F. They will be presented at the AGM in November.

### 6.2 Capital Plan

The capital plan presented to the Board is an updated version of that which went to the July Board. Comments were invited. There was general agreement that this was a big step forward and the report was good, though further refinement was required.

Once the Institute knows what funding cut it will receive from SG the Executive will be in a position to make decisions on priority areas. The Board asked if an analysis had been done on the expected impact on capital requirements should the IBH go ahead. It was noted this would make a big difference in the first four or five years over which income would be recognised and in the long term depreciation over 25 years. This detail and the costs are built into the plan.

It was queried why so much capital start-up money was needed to go into the Hutton Foundation. It was explained that the Institute needs to demonstrate there is already a credible investment and capital base if we are to ask others to contribute to it. A credible start up fund will also generate interest to fund running costs. There is a large constituency of people who admire the work of James Hutton and who it is believed would donate money.. A project plan is being developed for a detailed ten year plan. This year will be a slow burn as ideas are identified and launched. There are a number of ways of celebrating James Hutton

and this will help develop our brand. A plan will be provided to the Board later this operating year.

**Action 4. A Hutton Foundation Plan to be provided to the Board by January 2017.**

The Board requested regular updates on capital and when capital items come to the Board they should do so in the context of the plan.

The Executive was asked to explore solutions for funding assets other than seeking to do so from reserves.

**6.3 Terms and Conditions – update**

A progress update on the implementation of consistent terms and conditions was provided. TU officials have been consulted and the full-time Prospect Official will be involved in the negotiations on an ongoing basis from now.

The Executive is committed to ensuring the project is implemented effectively and in a timely manner. It will aim for implementation by 1 April 2017 although detailed planning will determine the final timetable. This will require bringing in additional resources due to the magnitude of the project. It was suggested announcing the change in a series of small groups rather than an all-staff session. The Institute will fund independent pension advice to staff members. Consideration needs to be given to European staff that may leave the Institute's employment after Brexit.

**6.4 International Barley Hub – update**

Momentum continues to grow on the IBH. The Tay Cities Deal remains the best opportunity to obtain funding. It was pointed out that it was important to include details in the funding request to the City Deal of the amount the Institute had spent thus far to reach this stage. Depending on how much funding is provided, the Business Plan can be adjusted to accommodate any scaling down of the project.

New staff recruited to work in IBH will be funded through new projects with industry. Planning risks are expected to be low - details of a required access road are built into the plan. The risk owner for the project is currently CC who said he will take a step back as the project develops and as the industry take more control. The project is well supported by the current project team.

**7 Regular reports**

**7.1 CEO Report**

The report was received for information. CC welcomed AC to his first Board meeting.

There was a comment on the feedback from RESAS on reporting and how future reporting can be enhanced. It was explained that this was linked to the delivery framework which is a new way of reporting our progress on the strategic research programme. It has taken a while to bed in across the MRPs. RESAS has provided helpful feedback following the first set of reports. They have given guidance on what they'd like to see more of/less of.

It was noted that James Hutton Ltd income was down and queried whether this should be a concern. It was reported that this is a key area that is being addressed with the aim of reversing the situation. The downturn in oil and gas related activity is more severe than first thought and recovery is expected to be slow, therefore it seems unlikely that the gap this has created will be filled this year. However in other analytical areas work is ongoing with a

campaign for Lipid Analysis work and five large tenders for other analytical work are in progress. On contract research an investigation is underway to understand better the phased work *versus* work done which creates a delay in income received. Additionally there are timesheet issues. Of good news is that as a result of the work done with the finance office there is now visibility of the contract research projects which provides a greater ability to report on them.

### **7.2 P4 Management Accounts, forecast**

P4 accounts were included in the paperwork and presented for information. A verbal update on P5 was provided. It was noted there were no major changes between P4 and P5. External contracts are slightly down. Year to date is still on target. We profiled external income this year based on the two previous years. Cost control is a major consideration and the executive are looking at ways of further reducing costs.

### **7.3 Risk Register**

There was a discussion on the need to develop a Brexit plan and how to distil into the RR. Currently there is a lot of uncertainty around Brexit and how this will affect research funding. A contingency plan is being prepared to refocus our efforts elsewhere.

There was a discussion around the new UKRI and funding. Currently the Institute is not eligible to apply to RCUK. It was suggested that the Institute think how an amendment to the UKRI Bill which is going through parliament, might help us e.g. requesting that they “make their decision on quality of the science and not discriminate eligibility based on non-relevant criteria”. A further option is to lobby the Science & Technology Committee ahead of the reading in the Lords.

**Action 5. CC to arrange for the Communications Coordinator-Public Affairs to discuss with DK and JM the steps that need to be taken to request an amendment to the Higher Education Bill.**

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

### **8.1 ACS**

The draft minutes of the ACS meeting held on 19 July were received for information. A verbal report of the meeting held on 20 September was provided. Three presentations had been given by:

- John Jones on the Postgraduate School.
- Ian Toth on the bid for the Centre of Expertise on Plant Health
- Bob Ferrier on the EPIC Centre of Expertise.

AP will provide a copy of any of the presentations at Board members’ request.

The Postgraduate School has the best completion rate among its contemporaries – in four out of five years it was 100%. The school comprises a good gender balance. There is a strong feeling that the impact in terms of bringing in new skills has to be seen positively. It also produces high-impact science which leads to new projects being developed and funded. It provides training of staff in areas that are difficult to recruit in by employing those students to fill the gap. The School makes a major contribution to the work of the Institute.

EPIC has a budget of £1m, of which the Institute receives almost 20%. It responds to disease outbreaks and maintains big data sets on environmental risk impacts.

The bid for the Plant Health Centre of Expertise has just been submitted to SG and it is

understood to be the only bid. It will be Scotland's knowledge hub on plant health. It has seven main partners and an additional pool of expertise to draw on. The outcome will be known in January 2017.

There was a discussion around the agenda planner which remains flexible enough to add *ad hoc* items. Science reviews are on the back burner for the moment.

## **8.2 Audit & Finance**

The minutes of the A&F meeting held on 8 July were received for information.

## **8.3 Nominations & Remuneration**

The minutes of the N&R meeting held on 20 July were received for information. The Board was updated on developments. Recruitment of Board members and chairs is on track. Nominations are welcome. The first of the new members are likely to be in place in January. GT, AW and LM had agreed to stay on until the November meeting, pending the likely appointment of new members.

## **Other Reports**

### **9.1 Media Digest**

This report was received for information.

## **AOB**

RP thanked members for completing and returning the Board questionnaire. He advised that the incoming chair will set the new objectives.

The Annual Review was tabled for comment. Members felt that it was a good document and made suggestions for minor changes but were otherwise content with it.

RP made a presentation to BeC, who will leave the Institute in November and thanked her for her work in making the finance function more efficient.

## **Dates of meetings in 2016:**

November 23<sup>rd</sup> Aberdeen

## **Dates of meetings in 2017:**

January 25<sup>th</sup> Edinburgh

March 29<sup>th</sup> Dundee

May 31<sup>st</sup> Aberdeen

July 26<sup>th</sup> Dundee

September 27<sup>th</sup> Aberdeen

November 29<sup>th</sup> Dundee