

- 5b** SD as Board contact for Sustainable Hutton (SH) provided an update on her meeting with the SH team. They are currently focusing on energy and have gleaned £17k income through the feed-in tariff. SH issued a climate report recently showing targets of emissions, waste etc. Several board members expressed interest in this.

Action: AC to send Climate Change Report to Board members

6 Strategy Planning and Budget

6.1 H1 financial review and full year re-forecast

DL reported that a full-year forecast has been undertaken and that there is now a process in place for checking each project monthly to identify any anomalies.

DL reported that on the cost side things were stable. One-off savings have been made in several areas *e.g.* insurance premiums. This, and other cost savings are a direct result of putting in place a professional procurement manager. Science pay is tracking slightly behind, but is close to budget. A key element is pay with cost pressures on wage inflation. The pay award this year needs to be modest.

6.2 Cost reduction

An update on the figures was received for information. It was noted that work continues on staff savings. The Board recognised it was a tremendous performance to be on budget at this stage and asked that credit be given to those concerned on progress achieved.

6.3 Farms Review – status update

The paper provided gave an update on the activities that have taken place since the July meeting. There have been significant developments and some short-term savings have been identified. DR/AC and the Head of Farms, met with farm managers individually. The planning application for the wind farm at Hartwood has been approved. It is anticipated that work will begin in 12 months' time and will take 9 months to complete.

A visioning workshop has been organised in December for science staff and farm managers. The aim is to identify the additional science, KE and demonstration potential of the farms.

A Business Plan for each farm will be provided to the April Board.

- DR to provide a Business Plan for each farm to the April Board.

6.4 Capital Plans: IBH, APGC, Craigiebuckler

IBH

A GCRF bid has been submitted called the Economic Development of Highland Ethiopia Hub. Barley is a staple food of Ethiopia which links in with the work of the IBH. The role of the Chair of IBH and senior people involved in the project is to push the project and target funders. It is understood other investors are keen to fund projects in the sustainability area.

APGC

The Government Gateway Review for the APGC which took place 13 – 15 November 2017 received an amber rating. The report was positive and included a number of recommendations. CC offered to arrange a tour of the Vertical Farm demonstrator when it is complete.

- CC to arrange a tour of the Vertical farm demonstrator for Board members when it is complete.

ILUSC

The initiative is still in the first phase of the scoping study. CC and DR are preparing the business case which will be presented to the MDT Board. It is hoped it will then move on to stage two - defined options. A final decision on the project is not expected until at least the 1st quarter of next year.

6.5 Foundation update

A situation update with suggested development timeline was provided for review. During discussion members felt this was a good idea but there was still uncertainty around some of the detail. The Chair suggested another paper be provided to the February or April Board outlining exactly how the Foundation might be strategically placed with other initiatives and how it will be resourced.

6.6 China update

An update paper was provided on the Institute's collaboration with China. There is a strong fit between the needs of China and the core competencies of the Institute.

As previously reported here a joint laboratory with various organisations in China has received verbal approval from Chinese authorities with written approval awaited. A further update on China will be provided to the next Board meeting.

7 Regular reports

7.1 CEO Report

The CEO report was received for information.

7.2 Risk Register

The Risk Register was received for information.

7.3 Management Accounts P6

The Management Accounts for P6 were received for information.

8 Updates from sub-committee meetings

8.1 ACS

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 September were received for information. SH provided a verbal update of the meeting which took place on 28 November. The meeting focused entirely on the readiness of the Institute for the outcome of the IRO submission.

The next meeting will welcome one of the Business Sector Leaders to learn more about his work and to set the tone for a strategic discussion at the April ACS. This may also feed into the Strategic Away Day in July.

8.2 Audit & Finance

Minutes of the A&F committee held on 26 September were received for information. IG provided a verbal update on the meeting held on 28 November. Progress was made on the PMO and income generation.

The internal auditors looked at cyber security and gave it an amber rating. Recommendations for improvement will require financial and time resource.

8.3 Nominations & Remuneration

Minutes of the N&R committee held on 26 September were received for information. JM provided a verbal update on the meeting held on 28 November.

Employee/Board relations was the main item of business. The two staff members and union representative who along with a member of the Executive, a Board member and a Head of Department have formed the Working Group (WG) and attended the meeting for that item. An interim report prepared by the WG was considered. The WG had carried out a staff survey with a 38% completion rate. N&R reported that it would aim to make a recommendation to the April Board. The WG will provide an updated paper based on guidance from N&R to the February N&R.

8.4 James Hutton Ltd

Minutes of the last two James Hutton Ltd meetings were received for information.

DK said that as with the sub-committees the James Hutton Ltd agenda will be provided to future Board meetings.

A new Board member has joined the committee. Another appointment has been made but has not yet been officially announced. A further member may be sought in about twelve months.

An options paper on how Hutton Ltd participates in analytical services has been finalised.

Other Reports

9.1 Media Digest

The Media Digest was received for information.

CC highlighted the new style newsletter and encouraged members to subscribe to it via the website.

AOB A Board member reported their attendance at the Annual Science Symposium saying it was very successful. The programme was comprehensive and the content of high quality.

Dates of meetings in 2018:

February 14th Edinburgh

April 11th Aberdeen

June 7th Dundee

July 18th Treetops Hotel, Aberdeen

October 3rd Aberdeen

December 5th Dundee