



The James Hutton Institute
BOARD MEETING
Calton Room, Apex Waterloo Hotel, Edinburgh
14 February 2018, 09:00h

MINUTES

Chair: James Curran (JC) (Chair)

Board members: Susan Davies (SD) George Lawrie (GL)
Ian Gambles (IG) Joan MacNaughton (JM)
Archie Gibson (AG) Iain Reid (IR)
Stephen Hall (SH) Alyson Tobin (AT)
Deborah Keith (DK) Elizabeth Wade (EW)

Apologies: Andrew Millar (AM)
Marian Scott (MS)

Attendees: Colin Campbell (CC)
Alasdair Cox (AC)
Bob Ferrier (BF)
Deb Roberts (DR)
Lesley Torrance (LT)
Derek Leslie (DL)
Anne Pack (AP) [Minutes]

Closed Session

There was no closed session.

1 Apologies

Andrew Millar, Marian Scott

2 Register of Interests

JM declared a new interest as a member of the Energy Savings Trust Board which had been notified to AP to add to the Register.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2017.

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

4 Matters arising

All actions were either completed or were in progress.

5 Health and Safety

The report on Health and Safety was received for information. It was noted that all members of the Executive were currently undertaking training workshops on Health & Safety.

With reference to the summary of recently reported incidents table, the suspected Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) has since been confirmed and is therefore reportable under RIDDOR.

GL reported that in conversation with Head of HSQE he was made aware that the H&S culture within the organisation is changing in a positive way. He had attended a session on Health & Safety for Board members the previous week and will provide an update to the Board in April.

- GL will provide an update to the Board on H&S training for Board members, in April.

The Health & Safety Strategy was received for information.

6 Strategy Planning and Budget

6.1 Draft 2018/19 budget

The draft 2018/19 budget was presented for the Board's approval.

On expenditure, the key cost pressure is the annual pay costs (including promotions; regrading) and 2% inflation has been included in the budget.

Efficiency targets of 2% will be implemented which the Executive is confident is achievable. One of the key differences from previous years is that the Science Group Leaders (SGLs) will take ownership of their budgets. At its meeting on 13 February, the Audit & Finance (A&F) committee considered the budget and agreed to recommend it for approval by the Board, in recognition of the Executive having delivered what it predicted for the current year, which gave A&F the necessary degree of confidence.

There is now a more methodical approach to identifying potential funding opportunities. The lists of contracts are scrutinised weekly, and applications are monitored to gauge success. Part of the response mode funding is set aside to do specific projects, under the 'seedcorn' banner. This continues to allow for novel and innovative projects and generates ideas from staff.

The Board approved the budget.

6.2 SEFARI

An update paper was provided for information. The Executive fully supports SEFARI as a vehicle for the partner organisations working together for better outcomes on SG-funded work.

It was agreed that it was important to get the KE component correct and to get the branding right.

6.3 International Strategy Update

An update was provided on the development of an International Strategy. It allows the Institute to put structure into decision-making around sourcing funding.

It was suggested that a medium-long term look at how the Institute positions itself in the international arena should form part of the discussion at the Strategy Day in July.

The Chair summed the discussion by saying its strategic approach provides confidence to the Board.

6.4 Capital Projects

The decision on the Tay Cities Deal is awaited with an announcement expected in June/July at the earliest. The soft start activities of the IBH are progressing.

The Government Gateway Review of the APGC resulted in an amber rating. Governance models for IBH and APGC are being developed and will be brought to the Board for approval in due course.

ILUSC – the stage 1 report is currently being reviewed by MDT who will advise which of the proposed schemes they wish to pursue in stage 2.

Three projects are underway in the renewables programme. There was a discussion about energy usage in the light of ageing assets and it was queried whether an energy survey of the facilities had been carried out. It was reported that an energy audit was undertaken over the Christmas holiday which reflects baseline usage. The results showed only a 20% saving over the two-week shutdown period, suggesting the baseline infra-structure e.g. glasshouses are the biggest energy cost. It may be possible to benefit from low-carbon transition schemes which is something that the Sustainable Hutton team is looking into.

Updates in the Capital Projects Risk Register since the last Board meeting have been highlighted.

In summing the various discussions, the Chair commented there was still much work to be done but that things were looking positive and the risk register was noted.

7 Regular reports

7.1 CEO Report

The CEO report was received for information. Board members said they appreciated the effort that goes into the compilation of the report and all found the information therein helpful.

A request was made for additional information on the scientific papers listed, to show how they link to the strategy, and what research area/project they were linked to. Also, what percentage of papers linked to specific topics.

7.2 Risk Register

The Risk Register was received for information.

It was noted that there are no major changes in terms of risks and agreed that the register continues to be a dynamic document.

7.3 Management Accounts P9

The Management Accounts for P9 were received for information. The key highlight is that the forecast is better than originally budgeted.

8 Updates from sub-committee meetings

8.1 ACS

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 28 November were received for information. The Chair of ACS provided a verbal update of the meeting which took place on 13 February, saying it had been a good meeting with lively discussion. It was recognised that the Institute has managed to progress the seedcorn programme to generate new ideas for projects. One of the Business Sector Leaders gave a presentation on circular economy, which included details of a work programme in India.

ACS received an update on the Science Group reviews, with two Groups, ICS and CMS being reviewed in October and November. The panels for both Groups have been confirmed and the programme is being developed. Looking further ahead early arrangements are in place for the Group reviews for SEGS and ES. Final recommendations for both panels will be presented to ACS in April.

ACS plans to meet with the Science Strategy Group (SSG) to identify topics for inclusion in the Strategy Day on 18 July.

8.2 Audit & Finance

Minutes of the A&F committee held on 28 November were received for information. The chair of A&F provided a verbal update on the meeting held on 13 February. A&F received a report from the Internal Auditors on travel and expenses. The Reserves Policy and the Treasury Policy were approved. The Fraud Register and the Hospitality Register were examined. A&F received an update on the Whistleblowing Policy.

8.3 Nominations & Remuneration

Minutes of the N&R committee held on 28 November were received for information. The Chair of N&R provided a verbal update on the meeting held on 13 February. The majority of the meeting focused on the Employee/Board relations item. The agreed main objective is better two-way information flow. The latest paper provided by the WG was helpful and set out five options proposing a range of actions. N&R agreed that it would make recommendations to the Board in April.

N&R received the People Strategy for information, noting previously-discussed points had been progressed.

8.4 James Hutton Ltd

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December were received for information. The Chair of James Hutton Ltd provided a verbal update on James Hutton Ltd activity since that meeting. Work continues on decisions and approvals, service agreements with the Institute and flash sales reports. Sales have been better than forecast. Analytical services are particularly busy. Work is being done on the blueberry/blackberry consortium. Crop science is doing well. In New Business Development there is a lot of activity but this is long-term development so nothing is expected in the short-term.

The focus for next year will be building on key customers.

Other Reports

9.1 Media Digest

The Media Digest was received for information.

10 Review of meeting

JC invited members to provide feedback individually after the meeting.

AOB

Dates of meetings in 2018:

April 11 Aberdeen
June 7 Dundee
July 18 Treetops Hotel, Aberdeen
October 3 Aberdeen
December 5 Dundee