

Minutes of the Board meeting

1 July 2014

Present:

Professor Stephen Holgate CBE (SH) *Chair*
Dr Phil Botham (PB)
Professor Maggie Dallman (MD)
Professor Jamie Davies (JD) *Deputy Chair*
Professor Ian Kimber OBE (IK)
Dr Tony Peatfield (ACP)
Dr Ian Ragan (IR)
Dr Vicky Robinson (VR)
Dr Carl Westmoreland (CW)
Mr Neil Yates (NY)

Apologies:

Dr Lesley Heppell

Observing:

Professor Ian Jackson (IJ)
Dr Merewyn Loder (ML)
attending for Dr Lesley Heppell
Mr Terry Priest (TP)
Professor Stefan Przyborski (SP)

Office:

Dr Kathryn Chapman (KC)
Dr Mark Prescott (MP)
Kayleigh Purdon (KP) *Secretariat*
Caroline Shriver (CS)

Attended for specific items:

Dr Natalie Burden (NB) *item 9*
Laura McGuinness (LMcG) *item 6*
Emma Stokes (ES) *item 6*

1. Welcome

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the NC3Rs Board meeting.
- 1.2 Members welcomed three [new Board members](#) - Professor Ian Jackson, University of Edinburgh, Mr Terry Priest, University of Manchester and Professor Stefan Przyborski, Durham University - who will formally join the Board in October.
- 1.3 SH congratulated the NC3Rs team on the success of the [event](#) at the House of Lords on 30 June.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 10 October 2013

- 2.1 The minutes from the October 2013 meeting were agreed to be an accurate record of the discussions.

3. Matters arising

- 3.1 Members noted and approved the previously circulated proposal for Board meetings to be held twice a year.

4. Annual review

- 4.1 Members reviewed the NC3Rs corporate risk register and discussed the following risks:

- Lack of funding (R-3100) – due to increasing demand for the NC3Rs funding schemes, services and projects but no increase in funding the Board suggested that the risk score should be upgraded.
Action: Upgrade risk score to likelihood 3, impact 4
- Infiltration of the NC3Rs (R-4098) – the Board suggested increasing the risk score as although there are robust control measures in place, the impact of an infiltration would be severe.
Action: Upgrade risk score to likelihood 1; impact 4
- The Board noted the remaining risks and existing control measures.

4.2 Members reviewed the Governance framework and agreed the changes to the Board terms of reference.

4.3 Members endorsed the policy on attendance at NC3Rs meetings. Members noted the importance of providing a safe environment for researchers to discuss their work openly at NC3Rs events.

5. Update on current activities and external environment

5.1 VR gave members an update on current activities including:

- Current projects and programmes in disease models and efficacy, safety and toxicology and technologies.
- The experimental design assistant which is currently in beta testing and will launch in the autumn.
- The collaboration with the MRC to improve experimental design in grant applications including a workshop for MRC Board and Panel members in October.
- The commissioning of an independent review on how the [ARRIVE guidelines](#) are being implemented in practice.
- Progress with CRACK IT:
 - The launch of the first products from the 2011 Challenges ([Rodent Big Brother](#) and [RETINAS](#)).
 - Timings of the Phase 2 interviews for the [2013 Challenges](#).
 - The selection of four Challenges (out of 12 proposals) for the [2014 competition](#).
 - Members asked to be updated on the progress of all Challenges at the next meeting.
- Extending the NC3Rs peer review service to [AMRC](#) and [EPSRC](#) and work with the AMRC to embed the 3Rs in their grants processes.
- The NC3Rs has signed up to the [concordat on openness](#).

6. Communications update

6.1 LMcG updated members on recent public engagement activities, including three NC3Rs-funded researchers' participation in the recent International Pint of Science events, the [NC3Rs Public Engagement Award scheme](#) and planned events for later in the year including a slot at the [British Science Festival](#).

- 6.2 ES updated members on social media and website usage which continues to grow steadily. ES presented a preview of the new website to members. The re-developed NC3Rs and CRACK IT websites will launch later this month.

7. Review of funding schemes

- 7.1 VR introduced this paper regarding the viability and sustainability of the NC3Rs funding schemes. Members noted the increased demand for NC3Rs funding schemes and the difficulty in funding all of the best applications.
- 7.2 Members discussed possible strategies to manage demand for the funding schemes:
- Limit the maximum value per grant
 - Introduce a formal outline stage
 - Only fund in priority areas
- 7.3 Members agreed that it was important to fund across the spectrum from basic to applied science. The range of schemes currently provided are vital to engage with the academic community and industry partners and to ensure that the NC3Rs builds capacity in 3Rs research.
- 7.4 Members agreed that in light of current budget levels the following measures should be implemented for 2014/15:
- Introduce a formal outline stage for project grants
 - Suspend the pilot study scheme for one year.

8. Forward planning

- 8.1 KC updated members on the collaboration with [Technology Strategy Board](#) (TSB) on non-animal technologies (NATs):
- There has been a [£4million investment](#) from the NC3Rs, TSB, BBSRC, EPSRC and DSTL through the emerging technologies funding call. 16 awards were made in June.
 - Two road mapping workshops with the Institute for Manufacturing, University of Cambridge and the TSB. The NC3Rs / TSB roadmap is due to be launched in October 2014. KC thanked members for their input and involvement in the workshops.
- 8.2 KC updated members on plans for the NC3Rs ten year vision. The vision will be launched at an event on 2 October 2014.

9. Strategy discussion

- 9.1 Members discussed future strategy as part of the development of the NC3Rs ten year vision. This was a closed session.

10. AOB

- 10.1 SH informed the Board that NY, PB and JD's term as Board members had ended and thanked them for their contribution to the NC3Rs.
- 10.2 The next meeting of the NC3Rs Board will be held on 14 October 2014.