

Minutes of the Board meeting

3 November 2015

Present:

Professor Stephen Holgate CBE (SH) *Chair*
 Professor Ian Jackson (IJ)
 Professor Ian Kimber OBE (IK)
 Professor Maggie Dallman (MD)
 Professor Stefan Przyborski (SP)
 Dr Ian Ragan (IR)
 Dr Vicky Robinson (VR)
 Dr Carl Westmoreland (CW)
 Dr Tony Peatfield (TP)

Office:

Dr Kathryn Chapman (KC)
 Dr Mark Prescott (MP)
 Kayleigh Purdon (KP) *Secretariat*
 Suzanne McArdle (SM)

Attended for specific items:

Dr Samantha Gan *item 4*
 Dr Anne Willis *item 6*

Apologies:

Mr Terry Priest
 Professor Blanca Rodriguez

Observers

Mr Paul Finnemore (PF)
 Dr Paul Brooker (PB)
 Professor Lucy Walker (LW)
 Professor Chris Denning (CD)
 Dr Jef Granger (JG)

1. Welcome

1.1 SH welcomed and introduced the new Board members:

- Mr Paul Finnemore, AstraZeneca
- Dr Paul Brooker, Envigo
- Professor Lucy Walker, University College London
- Professor Chris Denning, University of Nottingham
- Dr Jef Granger, BBSRC. JG is Lesley Heppell's replacement on the Board.

Professor Blanca Rodriguez from the University of Oxford has also been appointed to the Board but was unable to attend the meeting.

All new Board members will officially take up their appointment from January 2016.

1.2 MD's term has now ended. SH thanked her for her participation, support and contribution to the NC3Rs.

2. Minutes and actions from the meeting on 4 June

2.1 The minutes from the June meeting were agreed to be an accurate account of the discussions.

2.2 VR informed the Board that the NC3Rs Governance Framework and the risk register have been updated to incorporate the amendments discussed at the last meeting. The NC3Rs has also reviewed and updated its Disaster Recovery Plan.

3. NC3Rs summary of activities and updates

The Board noted the update on current activities. VR provided further details on:

Funding

- The NC3Rs would be informed of its funding levels from MRC and BBSRC (its core funders) after the comprehensive spending review.
- The NC3Rs had met with its chemical industry funders to discuss their continuing support. It was confirmed in principle that they will continue to provide funding on a five year basis.

Staff

- The NC3Rs has no plans to recruit replacements for vacant administrative posts. The roles and responsibilities have been subsumed into the Business Team following a review by VR and SM. This has provided staff with an opportunity to take on additional responsibilities and develop their roles.
- Anthony Holmes has been promoted to the position of Head of Technology Development.
- APBI have agreed to fund a second programme manager on the 3Rs in drug development.

4. Research funding schemes

4.1 MP provided an update on recent funding schemes.

Strategic awards

- The 2015/16 call has been announced focusing on refinements in cranial implants in non-human primate neuroscience studies. The deadline for outline submission is in December with full applications in January.

Infrastructure for impact awards

- The NC3Rs will run this scheme in 2015/16 and have allocated £1.5 million for this.

Studentships

- MP informed the Board that the British Heart Foundation is keen to collaborate again on the studentships.

4.2 Advice was sought from the Board on a post-award amendment proposal to transfer funds awarded as a Fellowship in 2013, following the early termination of the award. It has been requested that the remaining funds be used by the Fellow's Sponsor to complete the work. The Board noted the proposal but decided that it would be inappropriate to transfer the funds as this would breach the terms and conditions of the Fellowship award.

5. CRACK IT and Non-Animal Technologies (NATs) programme update

KC gave the Board a brief update on CRACK IT and the NATs programme. A new governance process for CRACK IT was outlined which included the establishment of an Advisory Panel.

6. Presentation from the MRC Toxicology Unit

Professor Anne Willis Director of the MRC Toxicology Unit presented an overview of the work being carried out within the Unit and its long-term strategy. It was agreed that the NC3Rs and the Unit should seek opportunities for collaboration given the synergies between the two organisations.

Action: KC to liaise with Professor Willis to discuss further.

7. Overview of the NC3Rs toxicology programme

KC gave an overview of the in-house toxicology programme which primarily focuses on data sharing and the collaborations with industry and regulators.

8. Update on experimental design and reporting activities and future plans

VR gave an update on the Experimental Design Assistant (EDA) which had recently been launched to help scientists improve the design of animal experiments. It was agreed that there would be an update at the next Board meeting.

9. Measuring 3Rs impact

As agreed at the previous Board meeting, MP gave a presentation outlining the current approaches to measuring impact and how they linked to the previously published NC3Rs evaluation framework and ResearchFish. The Board agreed that the measures were comprehensive.

10. AOB

VR informed members that the NC3Rs 3Rs Prize event would be taking place on Monday 29 February. VR requested members please save the date in their calendars.