

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE
AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
HELD ON TUESDAY 18 JUNE 2024 AT 12.00 P.M.
HYBRID MEETING HELD AT AHDB HQ AND MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT:

Nicholas Saphir (NS) [Chair], Colin Bateman (CB), Stephen Briggs (SB), Lyndon Edwards (LE), Catherine MacKenzie (CM), Sarah Pumfrett (SP), Graeme Jack (GJ), Glen Nimmo (GN), Tom Clark (TC)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Graham Wilkinson (GW), Katie Davies (KD), Tony Holmes (TH), Colin Turner (CT), Ian Ascroft (IA)

AGENDA ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
No apologies received.
AGENDA ITEM 2 – FORMAL SIGN OFF OF ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
SP opened the meeting by noting that the ARAC Committee had met on 17 June to review the Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24 in detail and to recommend to the board to approve this. All Committee members were invited to comment upon the Annual Report & Accounts at this meeting.
SP further noted that as all comments provided at ARAC were minor proof-reading elements, the Committee had agreed to recommend to the board, subject to the closure of the audit, that it approve the ARA 2023/24. In addition, as ARAC Chair, SP would request that authority for any minor changes be delegated to the AHDB CEO, Finance Director and Chair of ARAC. In the event that any material changes were to arise, these would be referred back to the Committee, and AHDB board.
IA noted that a couple of inaccuracies on the page listing all sector council members details had been picked up in the ARAC meeting, so IA requested that CB, LE and TC check this page to ensure the details of all their Sector Council members were correct. GN confirmed he has fed back his corrections already.
NS noted that the ARA states that 50% of the AHDB Board are levy payers. He felt this was incorrect and requested that this is checked, and the wording corrected. NS himself has not been a levy payer from before he became Chair of AHDB so the word recent could not be used in relation to him.
Action: CT/IA/TH to amend the wording of this section slightly to ensure it is correct.
SP then handed over to TH to obtain the board’s approval on signing off the Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24.
TH asked the board to formally approve the AHDB Annual Report and Accounts 2023/2024 so it can be submitted to Ministers for approval. Once approved by Ministers, it can be signed by the Chair and CEO before then being sent to the Comptroller & Auditor General for final signature prior to laying in Parliament.
Decision: The Board were all in agreement.
TH further asked that as all comments provided at ARAC were minor proof-reading elements, the board agreed that subject to the closure of the audit, for any minor changes be delegated to the AHDB CEO, Finance Director and Chair of ARAC. In the event that any material changes were to arise, these would be referred back to the Committee, and AHDB board.
Decision: The Board were all in agreement.
SP closed this item by thanking TH, CT and the rest of the finance team for their work in getting the ARA finalised and with such speed. TH noted their next challenge is to get the report laid in parliament around the election and possible change in Government.

GJ asked if for future years, could we look at making the ARA work harder for our levy payers. The ARA should be seen as another communications channel. TH noted that this is a really good suggestion and something him and the team had already been considering so would definitely look into this for future years. He did note that the one caveat around this is that anything contained in the ARA must be evidenced to NAO. He further commented that there is a large amount of people involved in compiling the ARA, so finding a tool that helps the finance team with doing this would be really helpful.

NS followed up this suggestion by saying we didn't have to wait until the next ARA, we could very easily look at the one pager that goes out to all our levy payers with the ARA and how this could help AHDB land messages with each individual sector.

GW noted that he has been invited to attend and speak at a number of events over the coming months, and as part of this, he is looking to produce one version of a slide deck around AHDB and the work we do. Some of the content from our ARA could definitely be used within these slides.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

3.1 DIGITAL GRAIN PASSPORT

NS noted that following a series of emails over the weekend regarding DGP and ARAC's involvement in this work, a call had gone into the diary with the ARAC committee for Friday 21 June to get updated on DGP work. He wanted to make it absolutely clear to the Board that there is a correct process and this must be followed. A clear business case with options, risks and recommendations must be produced and reviewed by management. They should then present this to the Board for approval, and only if the Board felt there was a risk, should they recommend it is then presented for review at an ARAC committee. NS noted that we must ensure the correct process is followed with any proposals, not just DGP.

SP concurred with NS comments and further noted that GW as CAO has final sign off after he has been advised by the Board on their recommendation.

TC noted that as DGP funding would come from our levy payers, there were conversations happening as to whether AHDB are seen as the most suitable and the most capable of delivering this work. TC noted he had a nervousness around going into the 8 July C&O Sector Council meeting without a clear view on DGP and was only requesting some clarity from the Board. He needs to have a clear understanding of the role of the C&O council and noted that the industry will be expecting a decision to come out of the Sector Council meeting on 8 July.

SB confirmed that the call schedule for Friday 21 June was a pre-call with the ARAC committee prior to when DGP is going to formally be presented at the 4 July ARAC meeting. He said this is due to the DGP work being so fast moving.

NS noted that TC and the C&O Council will have a view, once it receives a proposal from management. Following the call on Friday, the decision on whether to proceed or not must come from GW with input from TC.

CM noted we have to be very careful that any sub-committee or Sector Council don't overstep into management territory. GW said there needs to be a broader conversation around roles and responsibilities for each Committee/Sector Council, and once his new Company Secretary is recruited and in role, they will ensure this happens and everyone is aware of the roles they should be playing.

Following this conversation, SP felt it was necessary to make Friday's call on DGP open to all members of the Board, not just ARAC members.

Action: KD to amend the meeting invite to include all members of the Board, GW, KB and David Eudall. KD also to join to minute this meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 14 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of next meeting is Tuesday 23 July 2024 at AHDB offices in Coventry.

