

AHDB Horticulture Board meeting

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE 55th MEETING OF THE HORTICULTURE BOARD HELD AT 9AM ON 19th JANUARY 2021

Teleconference

PRESENT: Hayley Campbell-Gibbons (HCG), Mark Eves (ME), Roma Gwynn (RGw), Rob James (RJ), Keston Williams (KW), Michael Barker (MB), Rob Saunders (RS), Peter Judge (PJ), Robert James (RJ), Jamie Dewhurst (JD)

APOLOGIES – Ruth Ashfield (RA)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lee Abbey (LA) - Chief Adviser (Horticulture & Potatoes) – NFU, Will Jackson (WJ) – Interim Chief Strategy Officer, Nicholas Saphir (NS) – AHDB Chair, Jennifer Morgan (JM) – Senior Marcomms Manager, Rebecca Geraghty (RG) – Chief Technical Officer, Lenka Rihova (LR) - Minute taker

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Apologies for absence

The Chair opened the meeting at 9am and welcomed those in attendance.

Apologies received from RA.

HCG welcomed Lee Abbey from NFU, WJ and RG.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Declarations of interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Minutes from the meetings held on 5th November 2020

The minutes of the last meeting held on 5th November 2020 were accepted as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair.

AHDB have appointed Promar International, as the consultants that are going to work with AHDB and levy payers on the options for changes to the levy mechanism (ref. item 12, Hort Levy Reform). The first meeting had just been held.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Actions from the meetings held on 5th November 2020

HCG confirmed all actions were completed.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Chair’s report

All current matters were on the agenda. The Chair will keep the Board informed of any significant activity in relation to the ballot and governance changes. NS will join for the Governance session. The Chair encouraged the Board to ask questions, seek clarification, and feed in their thoughts and priorities for Governance.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – SSD update

The report was taken as read.

RG reported on the postcard that went out from petitioners and the correction of some of the misinformation that was in there. Petitioners have been asked to correct key points and contact recipients. The Board requested details on the timeline of the correction.

A series of advertorials will go out into the media from next week talking about what a yes/no vote means. With the message that A vote for YES is a vote for change.

More information was requested on the £18K spend on advertorials and whether is it coming out of the Horticulture budget. RG clarified that there is forecast to be a £100K underspend in communications this financial year and the cost of the advertorials will be covered from existing communication budgets. RG clarified that underspends for communications activity will not be carried over into the next year. The Hort Board would have expected those funds to be authorised, RG confirmed that this authorisation process will be followed in future.

The Board had previously agreed that regardless of the Ballot, the technical work would continue. Some concern over the SSD report in relation to the technical work, deferred work (missing details) and mistakes in relation to EAMUs (Potatoes). A concern over losing time on the season.

The Chair clarified that as soon as we went into Ballot, the main AHDB Board decided that there would not be any further spend in Horticulture, or any sector that is balloting without the main Board approval.

RG offered to share a summary of the quarterly research project RAG analysis with the Board (technical projects) so that Board members could see if there are any areas of concern.

Comments were made regarding a Spotted Wing Drosophila annual review meeting and funds for further research (discussed under AOB).

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Management accounts

The report was taken as read. Board members to contact RG to pick up any specific queries.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – Communications

JM joined the meeting and presented on Ballot communications.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair expressed her gratitude towards the Communications team and the huge impact on our communications in this sector.

Positive feedback (also via NFU) on the development of the website. Increased time on the Hort page, behaviour changes, and a good spike in visits. The aim is to keep the website interesting, keep the content fresh. Also an increase of visits on the strategy pages.

Some concern over the format and the technology platform of the Town Halls meetings. AHDB have listened to the feedback and are trying to address for the remaining three Town Hall meetings.

LA from NFU left the meeting and re-joined after the Governance session (item 9).

AGENDA ITEM 9 – Strategy & Change Plan

Item discussed under agenda item 9.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – Ballot

Item discussed under agenda item 6.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – AOB

- Appointments & Board dates 2021

It is a period of transition. HCG will update the Board following the main Board meeting on the proposals for Sector Board and panel appointments and recruitment.

There is a proposal from the Soft Fruit and Tree Fruit panel for one-year extension to our Spotted Wing Drosophila programme which is due to finish in March 2021. Funds are available to support the extension.

The Board was supportive of the SWD one-year extension. It is going to the main AHDB Board for approval on 26th January 2021.

Signed:

Hayley Campbell-Gibbons, Chair

Date: