

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE SIXTY THIRD MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURE AND  
HORTICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
HELD ON TUESDAY 31 JULY 2018 AT 8.30 A.M. AT STONELEIGH PARK**

**PRESENT:**

Sophie Churchill (SC), Gwyn Jones (GJ), Peter Kendall (PK) (Chair), Will Lifford (WL), George Lyon (GL), Adam Quinney (AQ), Mike Sheldon, Janet Swadling (JS), Paul Temple (PT)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ken Boyns (KB), Martin Evans (ME), Tom Hind (TH), Rebecca Geraghty (RG), Jane King (JK), Richard Laverick (RL), Sue Walker (SW), Christine Watts (CW)

**AGENDA ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Tim Mordan (TM)

**AGENDA ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

GL declared that Hume Brophy had taken on a new client and were working with the European Phosphate Fertilizer Alliance, fertilizer manufacturers.

**AGENDA ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 MAY 2018**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 31 May 2018 were accepted as a correct record with one exception relating to industrial strategy. WL asked for it to be recorded that it was important to avoid any duplication of effort between the initiative and AHDB, and that it did present an opportunity for the organisation.

**AGENDA ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 31 MAY 2018**

**Levy Payer Satisfaction Survey**

The headline analysis of the levy payer satisfaction survey had been circulated to the Board.

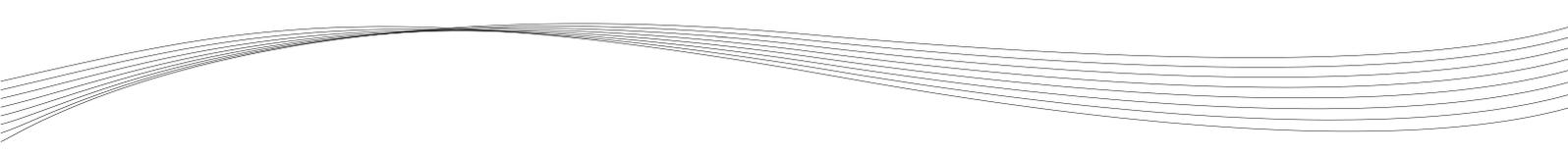
**Review of questions being asked of levy payers at events**

This work was ongoing. A new Event Feedback Form had been developed which enabled better target questions to gather evidence of “intention to change” as a direct result of attending an event. The data collected from the form is being fed back to the KE managers who are using it as part of evaluation projects being led by MI.

**Cross-sector technical work**

A paper providing opportunities for cross-sector working in research and KE will be available for the September Board.

**Action: A paper on cross sector working in research and KE will be prepared for the September Board meeting**



## **Evaluation**

The first annual evaluation report is nearing completion and will be sent to the Board. The report contains an internal review of all programmes of work that have been evaluated, have completed an evaluation plan or have estimated ROI based on investment test submission.

## **Health and Safety**

It has been proposed that the Board have IOSH Leading Safety Training, dates have been identified for later this year. MS agreed to be the Board representative on the Health and Safety Committee.

## **Disease Management**

A disease management paper will be brought to the September Board meeting.

**Action: Disease management paper will be prepared for the September Board meeting**

## **AGENDA ITEM 5 – MLCSL SALE**

KB provided the Board with an update on the sale of MLCSL.

KB commented that the amount of stakeholder concern regarding the sale had abated.

An oversight body had been established which had received a lot of industry support.

The staff consultation had commenced on 7 July 2018 and will run until 7 September 2018. Five regional meetings had taken place with MLCSL staff with one more this week and one next.

KB provided the Board with information relating to the Due Diligence process.

It is anticipated that the approvals process will begin in September when the AHDB and MLCSL Boards will be asked to provide their approval for the final deal package. If approval is received, a multi-stage government approvals process will begin which will last approximately two months. If this is successful then a 90-day handover process of the company to the proposed buyer will begin.

PK commented that he was conscious of all the amount of work that the team were putting in to this activity and expressed his thanks.

## **AGENDA ITEM 6 – LIVESTOCK INFORMATION PROGRAMME (LIP)**

RL provided the Board with an update on LIP.

George Eustice and John Bourne had signed the Heads of Agreement on 14 June. RL provided the Board with a progress update since the last meeting.

The Defra Investment Committee had approved the programme at a meeting held on 27 July.

A Project Board, which will be chaired by WL, has been established and will meet for the first time on 5 September. MS commented that it was important that a pig industry user was appointed to the Board. RL agreed to follow this up. AQ requested that regular feedback from the Project Board was provided.

WL/RL were having discussions with the AHDB procurement team looking at options. A supplier day will take place at the beginning of September. A study tour to Canada will take place w/c 7 August as part of a learning from others exercise.

A day will be arranged for the livestock sector boards to meet to discuss the programme.

**Action: A meeting will be arranged with the livestock sector boards to discuss LIP**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 7 – AHDB COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2018-2021**

Matt Catlin (MC) and Anna Farrell (AF) joined the meeting for this item.

CW presented a paper setting out a proposed AHDB Communications Strategy for the period 2018-2021.

CW commented that the results of customer analysis over the past 18 months had indicated that there had been improved recognition and awareness of AHDB and the work that is done. The next stage will be to build a reputation that clearly defines AHDB as adding value to levy payer businesses.

A detailed CRM plan will be prepared for the Board to approve. In addition, an enhanced levy payer satisfaction survey, which will include processors, will be undertaken at the end of the year. A regular cycle of focus groups and customer panels to test messaging, use of plain English and potential uptake of products and services will be established. WL commented that it was important to ensure that the right messages were getting through to key stakeholders and influencers and to keep reminding them of the work that AHDB is doing.

JS asked how the effectiveness of the strategy was going to be monitored and requested that the Board received regular updates.

**Action: Regular updates on the effectiveness of the Communications Strategy should be provided to the Board and a paper on monitoring and what good looks like will be developed for the September Board meeting**

MC demonstrated the new website, which was in a 4 week beta phase will be launched on 8 August. Board members were asked to provide feedback in advance of the launch.

PK commented that communicating with the industry was fundamental and it was vital to keep monitoring how AHDB is progressing.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 8 – REVIEWING THE ACTIVITY PLAN – THE MI EXAMPLE**

Phil Bicknell (PB) joined the meeting for this item.

PB commented that over the last two years the activity planning process had become fundamental in turning AHDB's strategy into operational detail outlining income, costs and staff time for specific tasks across the organisation. The Activity Plan showed the link back to sector strategies and corporate priorities. It was clear that new work had been taken on across the organisation as part of the new strategy but a significant proportion of existing activity had continued. MI had undertaken a review of the relevant lines in the activity plan to understand if the plan could help highlight activities that should be further scrutinised as not directly linked to a priority or supporting core work.

The Board gave its support to reviewing the areas outlined in the paper for further consideration of the value for money provided to inform discussions/decisions at the next activity planning cycle.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 9 – AMR**

Mandy Nevel (MN) joined the meeting for this item.

MN gave a presentation to the board on AMR which outlined the role and strategic priorities to significantly increase the impact AHDB has in this field for the livestock and dairy industry. AHDB activity is being restructured to take forward new opportunities and address weaknesses and threats, including a focus on the collation of data. Sector board support will be key to ensuring success. The presentation was in advance of the September Board meeting where a decision will be needed on resourcing the new strategy.

AQ commented that this was a huge issue for the industry and engagement with stakeholders and the veterinary professions was very important. AQ felt that a discussion should take place at all livestock events to highlight the challenges of AMR.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 10 – AHDB HEADCOUNT**

KB had circulated a presentation on AHDB headcount to the Board. The proposal to have a cap on headcount was approved with the proviso if there were reasons to exceed the proposed cap then a justification should be made to the Board. PK asked that headcount information and workforce planning be provided to the Board on an annual basis.

**Action: Headcount information and workforce planning should be provided to the Board on an annual basis as part of the budget approval process**

ME requested that information on how many staff were allocated to sectors should be circulated to the sector boards. In addition ME requested information on agency spend. JS asked what was the required total human resource budget including agencies.

**Action: Information relating to staff allocated to sectors should be circulated to sector boards. In addition the Board should be provided with agency spend**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 11 – SECTOR REPORTS + DASHBOARDS**

##### **Beef and Lamb**

AQ commented that there were risks for the sheep sector from rising imports of sheep meat from New Zealand.

The Cheeky Beef Campaign had generated some positive responses from the industry. A lamb campaign will commence in the autumn.

##### **Cereals and Oilseeds**

PT commented on the arable events which had taken place and had received positive feedback, consideration was being given to running some of them again.

Owing to the recent weather conditions, it was likely that the harvest could be down by 10-15%.

PT commented on the recent ruling by the European Court of Justice that organisms obtained by mutagenesis plant breeding technique are GMOs and should fall under the GMO Directive.

##### **Dairy**

GJ commented that the current weather conditions were causing difficulties for the sector. If this continues expectation would be for a drop in milk volumes, an increase in spot prices and milk being diverted from cheese and butter/powder towards the liquid market.

##### **Horticulture**

ME commented that crop protection was still a priority.

ME informed the Board of a piece of work that had taken place in developing a soil management system which would be a benefit to levy payers in other sectors.

### **Pork**

MS commented that the mood of the pork sector was somewhat gloomy with seasonal demand being quite subdued. The likely rise in the cost of straw and feed was also a concern.

The threat of African Swine Flu was a concern for the sector. There was a risk that it would spread west from Poland into Germany, which could lead to large amounts of pig meat coming on to the EU market.

### **Potatoes**

Prices for old crop potatoes have remained sluggish but are likely to rise owing to the drought.

As had been mentioned at the previous meeting, it was likely that the sprout suppressant (CIPC) would be discontinued in the near future.

TH commented that a note on the drought had been sent to the Board. A drought team had been put in place to provide technical information to help producers.

### **AGENDA ITEM 12 – CORPORATE REPORT**

JK asked for the report to be taken as read.

### **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY WORKING GROUP – UPDATE JULY 2018**

TH provided the Board with an update on the Food & Drink Sector Council and in particular the Agricultural Productivity Working Group for which AHDB provides the anchor point.

JK alerted the Board to AHDBs involvement with the Senior Leadership Skills Group.

### **ANNUAL STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY**

RG provided an overview of the recent annual staff engagement survey. This survey had been undertaken by Gallup rather than use the in house survey. JS commented that this was a really important piece of work and the survey should be taken seriously, there was a need for action plans and regular monitoring. PT asked what percentage of staff met levy payers. RG commented that there was a new induction programme which included half a day out with the industry. JK commented that there were some “star managers” whose teams were very engaged with the organisation and they should be asked to demonstrate their ways of working. JS said that she would be happy to provide input in taking the survey forward.

### **AGENDA ITEM 13 RISK**

KB provided an update on VAT. HMRC had requested more information which is required by 14 September. KB will keep the Board informed.

JS expressed concern about the number of items that were showing as a high likelihood of impacting the business.

**Action: A discussion will take place at the next ARAC meeting regarding risk profile**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 14 – CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

PK asked for his report to be taken as read. He reiterated to the Board the need to be engaged during the Defra call for views which would commence in a few weeks.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 15 – FINANCE UPDATE**

KB provided an update on financial performance to June 2018.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 16 – BOARD GOVERNANCE AND FORWARD PLANNING**

RG presented the Board Governance Schedule outlining items coming to forthcoming Board meetings. Board members were encouraged to provide items for discussion. JS enquired about Board training. KB commented that the Board needed to undertake a refresher course on bribery and corruption regulations.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 17 – HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

The Board was provided with an update on health and safety matters in AHDB and MLCSL.

RG commented that there had been 43 accidents reported in the rolling 12 months to the end of June 2018 across AHDB and MLCSL. Of the accidents, there had been three of a nature serious enough to require reporting to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR regulations two had been previously reported and one since the last Board meeting.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 18 – AHDB SUB COMMITTEES**

##### **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2018 were noted.

##### **Remuneration and Nominations Committee**

Nothing to report.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 19 – ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REPORT TO WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER**

The Board noted the annual report and AHDB’s commitments under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 20 – REVIEW OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY REGISTER**

KB asked for the gifts and hospitality register to be noted. He commented that there was significant improvement in declarations being submitted.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 21 – PROPOSED DATES OF 2019 AHDB BOARD MEETINGS**

The dates for the 2019 AHDB Board meetings were approved.

- Tuesday 29 January 2019
- Tuesday 26 March 2019
- Thursday 30 May 2019
- Tuesday 30 July 2019
- Tuesday 24 September 2019

- Tuesday 19 November 2019

#### **AGENDA ITEM 22 – MLC PENSION SCHEME EMPLOYER NOMINATED TRUSTEES**

The Board approved the proposal that MS is appointed as a Director of MLC Pension Trustees Limited.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 23 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board agreed that KB look at software to enable electronic board packs to be sent to the Board that could be annotated in future. It is likely that this will commence from November.

**Action: KB will look at software to enable the Board to receive Board packs electronically**

Following a question from PT, RG will provide the Board with information relating to language capabilities within AHDB.

**Action: RG will provide the Board with information relating to language capabilities within AHDB**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 24 – CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

JK asked for her report to be taken as read.

The Leadership Team left the meeting at 1.00 p.m. to enable JK to have a private discussion with the Board about performance and proposed changes in job roles on the Leadership Team.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 25 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on 25 September 2018.

#### **Dates of future meetings**

- Tuesday 20 November 2018
- Tuesday 29 January 2019
- Tuesday 26 March 2019
- Thursday 30 May 2019
- Tuesday 30 July 2019
- Tuesday 24 September 2019
- Tuesday 19 November 2019

