

THE UNIVERSITY *of* York
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

Resources Board
Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 25 January 2007

Present: Dawn Cartwright (DC), Peter Crosby (PC), Peter Hogarth (PJH), David Nelson (DN), Janina Pirozek (JCP), Duncan Rotherham (DR), Chris Teeling (CT)
Apologies: Lorna Evans (LE), Jim Hoggett (JGH), Ian Jennings (IJ), John Pillmoor (JBP),
In Attendance: Andrea Johnson (AJJ)

07/001 Minutes of the meeting of 30 November 2006 were agreed.

07/002 Matters Arising from Resources Board, 30 November 2006

(i) 06/081 (i) Zone Funding

DC reported that John Street had asked a consultancy firm to come and re-assess all the fire exit routes in the Department. An initial visit has taken place and Norman Beach will supply the company with any additional information that they require.

It was noted that the problems arising from the J0 door have been reduced, mainly because the introduction of additional security means that the area is no longer used as a thoroughfare. John Street had previously suggested incorporating a second returner on the door itself. However, the joiners have advised that they have tried this before without success, and now they are thinking again about how to best solve the problem. It was agreed that it would be sensible to await feedback from members of the Department who are based in the vicinity, and Sally Raines has agreed to keep an eye on the situation.

(ii) 06/081 (ii) Car Parking

DC reported that she had met with Ken Batten who had confirmed that the Transport Working Party had been disbanded. Ken Batten had further advised that whilst a Steering Committee will be formed to look at strategic matters, the day-to-day issues will still be dealt with directly by him.

DC had wanted a route to discuss the situation relating to Emeritus Professors, and Ken Batten had advised that information was normally available on the website, but acknowledged that there had been problems with the website last year. Subsequent to the meeting, DC reported that the web site was still incorrect, and advised that she would prepare a letter to send to Ken Batten accordingly.

DC

(iii) 06/081 (iii) Portable Generator and Back-up Freezer

DC had circulated academic staff who had responded to her original request about irreplaceable material. Most had responded that they would like to rent space in a back-up freezer. However, DC was concerned that if an emergency generator was purchased, it would need testing every week and this would take manpower. DC also felt that as there is an emergency generator in the BSF, purchasing another would be a waste of resources. DC suggested that there was no reason why an emergency freezer could not be connected to the BSF generator, and it was agreed that this was a better way to proceed.

Estates staff would be meeting at the end of February to discuss the issue further, and it was felt that in the interim DC should submit a bid to Research Committee for the purchase of an emergency freezer at an estimated cost of £5800 DC would progress the bid accordingly.

DC

(iv) 06/083 (i) Lone Working

DN reported that a communication has been circulated round the Department advising that people should re-assess their risks for lone working.

DN had also emailed Ken Batten to advise that the Department was trying to get individuals to undertake risk assessments, and that people may contact Security to alert them to when they would be undertaking lone working, so that Security can maintain a record of who is in the workplace on their own, and also when they leave. However, Ken Batten had felt that no policy should be put in place before contacting him, as his staff would be unable to maintain these records. However, it was felt that as a minimum logging in and out with Security is essential.

It was noted that this was a University-wide issue, and DC reported that lone working had been discussed at the Laboratory Safety Sub-Committee, and that she would raise the security aspect back at that Committee.

DC

(v) 06/084 Safety Showers in Laboratories

DN reported that he and Norman Beach had targeted wings L and M for the removal of standard safety shower units. JBP had requested that the TF keep their showers due to the nature of work undertaken. Otherwise there had not been any groups within L or M who had objected to the showers being removed as there were pull-out ones that could be used instead on these corridors. DN advised that the next step is for Len Brindley to finance the removal of the showers, and DN reported that Norman Beach would liaise with Estates and arrange a programme of removal accordingly.

(vi) 06/085 Biology PO Box

DC had investigated what would happen to mail still addressed to the PO Box if the PO Box was dispensed with, and had discovered that such items would be "returned to the sender".

It was noted that having a PO Box makes the mail a lot easier to sort. The Mail Room could potentially deliver mail addressed to the Biology PO Box number to the Department for 9.00 am, and indeed DC had arranged with the Senior Porter for the Biology mail to be delivered earlier in the morning.

It was agreed to continue paying for the PO Box as the cost is not excessive and it could mean greater flexibility with mail delivery in the future.

(vii) 06/086 Mobile Phone Invoice List

The listing that had previously been circulated direct to DC will in future be split up and details of the calls will be sent directly to the mobile phone user (or, if this is not a PI, to the budget holder). DC will retain a summary list.

(viii) 06/087 L1 Space Issue

DC outlined the situation about project space, and the possibility of more students undertaking project work in the Teaching Laboratories to PJH.

It was felt that the Department would be able to encourage more students to do this if suitable equipment was in place in the Teaching Laboratories. As space is particularly critical on L1, PJH agreed to take the issue to an appropriate Teaching Committee.

PJH

Action

It was pointed out that the situation on L1 is at critical point partly because there are so many different groups working there, which in turn puts pressure on central facilities. It was also acknowledged that it is not easy to alter facilities without additional funding. It was noted that the issue will be discussed at Strategy Group in the near future, particularly as sooner or later the critical situation will apply to other space-deprived areas of the Department.

PC reported that the issue relating to the room modification on L1 to incorporate an extra cabinet (James Moir's group) had been settled. The room would in future be kept locked and used only by James Moir's group, or by negotiation with him. Unfortunately this had meant that the users will not be able to do everything that they had wanted to do at this moment in time, but was the best solution under the circumstances.

(ix) 06/089 Equipment in Lecture Theatres

DC reported that not only is equipment not being switched off, but in some cases equipment is missing from lecture theatres altogether.

The issue is tied in with portering in general, and CT advised that he had passed the matter to the new Senior Porter. CT asked for feedback from DC when this happens so that he can take the issue to the porters as and when it occurs. It was pointed out that portering is now covered by the Mail Room and lock-up from Security. Furthermore, the portering staff are currently under considerable pressure due to staff reduction.

The Service Level Agreement lists each room and what equipment should be in it, which should be checked by the portering staff at the start of each day. If the correct equipment is not in place then this should be reported to the Senior Porter. In relation to equipment being left on, DC advised that she had also been reminded that there is a two-page lock-up procedure that should be followed - DC would try to get 'switching off equipment' incorporated into this lock-up procedure to see if this happens. If problems still occur, then DC asked for any complaints to be addressed to her in the first instance so that they can be passed on.

DC/CT

07/003 Matters arising from Infrastructure Committee, 6 December 2006 and 11 January 2007

(i) IC6/065 Induction for new members of the Department

DC reported that Stores staff had felt that new members of staff have a lack of knowledge about Stores information, but they had not known how to practically increase this. It had been noted that new academic staff meet Stores staff in person, and information on Stores is verbally disseminated to them at that meeting which helps. However, the meetings are only arranged for academic staff and other staff groups do not have the same personal connection.

DC advised that the issue would be further discussed at the next Infrastructure Committee meeting, and JCP agreed to attend so that she could be involved in the discussion accordingly.

DC/JCP

07/004 Matters arising from Information Committee, 13 December 2006

(i) ICDB 06/22 Staff Database

DC reported that the suggestion of having one staff database which amalgamated all the various lists in the Department had been discussed previously. Some work had been done on this, but unfortunately Paul Waites had not been able to start work on the database until early in 2007 due to other commitments and priorities. Subsequently, and because of the University Computing Service IDM Project, Richard Firn had felt that the Department should not proceed with work on a separate database at that point.

DC proposed that the formation of the Departmental database should be reinstated. It was suggested that Paul Waites could be asked to provide an assessment of how much work would

be required to get this operational, and also an assessment should be obtained as to how soon the Computing Services project could meet the Department's needs. If this was likely to be within 3 months, then work on the Departmental database could be postponed. However, it was thought to be unlikely that the Computing Service project would be up and running in so short a timeframe. DC agreed to discuss with Ian Jennings.

DC

07/005 Advertising the Information Systems Developer Post

DC advised that IJ has asked for this post to be reconsidered. It was acknowledged that as the Department has grown IT services have become increasingly stretched and there is a limit as to what can be achieved.

However, DR reported that the post had not previously been included in the Department's financial plans, and in view of this it was suggested that the issue should be discussed at the next meeting so that IJ could be involved in the discussion. Funding for the post would need consideration and JCP suggested that a list of 'priorities for funding' should be drawn up and IJ could then make a case for how high up the list the Information Systems Developer Post should be. It was agreed that the list of staff priorities should be debated at HR Committee in the first instance, and that IJ should be asked to re-submit a case for the post based on the current situation.

JCP/IJ

07/006 Update on the Biosciences Business Centre

DC advised that the Biosciences Business Centre (BBC) initiative is in its final stages, but the funding has not yet been received. Additional information has been supplied by JBP, but it was noted that the work was essentially a two-stage plan.

One part of this related to the Bioinformatics Suite, and it was acknowledged that the work relating to this has to go ahead anyway since it was previously agreed to move the Bioinformatics Suite from Wentworth. Sue Johnstone has set aside £10K for the move, but it was anticipated that more funding will be required. Once the re-costing has been received then the work will need to go ahead and it will be funded at that stage either from the BBC funds or the University if the BBC funding has not been received.

The rest of the plan hinged on awaiting the go-ahead to proceed with the BBC. It was felt that this will be a useful asset for the Department in the future.

07/007 Fire Inspection

There was a Biology Fire Inspection on 17th January. DC reported that the Department had received a couple of weeks notice that this was to take place and had been advised that the inspectors would be looking for evidence that Biology satisfied the new regulations.

The inspection had taken 3¾ hours, and the inspector had seemed content with the paperwork. The Department had been able to provide evidence of various audits, so the process could easily be seen. Certificates were missing, but as long as these were held centrally, the officer was satisfied. He had brought up various issues, but these were mainly advisory - ie outlining what should be included in risk assessments and suggesting that the open hatch next to the fire door at Stores be closed when the fire alarm sounds. A report will follow in the near future.

07/008 Date of next meeting: Thursday 22 February 2007 in B/K/126 at 9.00am.

AJJ – 02/02/2007