

THE UNIVERSITY *of* York
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

Resources Board
Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 30 November 2006

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

06/080 Minutes of the meeting of 26 October 2006 were agreed.

06/081 Matters Arising from Resources Board, 26 October 2006

(i) 06/071 (ii) Zone Funding

DC reported that John Street (JS) had visited the Department to look at security and fire safety issues. In relation to fire safety, JS had felt that Biology should have a full review of fire doors, etc and he is going to set this up. It was noted that Estates will carry out the review, and JS hoped that the review would provide him with current information in relation to Biology's fire safety.

DC pointed out that the Chemistry Department had recently had a fire inspection by the Fire Brigade, and that Biology may be next in line for an inspection. She advised that the Chemistry inspection had been rigorous, particularly in relation to documentation.

DC also advised that she had discussed fire exits with JS, particularly in relation to students exiting the teaching laboratories. In relation to the security of the door on J0, JS had suggested incorporating a second returner, which would be more cost-effective than replacing the door. JS had agreed to contact the joiners accordingly. However, since JS' visit to the Department, the issue has been passed to Estates by Sue Johnston, and she is now chasing progress as Biology is due to be inspected by the University Insurers.

DC advised she would report back with further information in due course.

DC

(ii) 06/071 (iii) Car Parking

DC reported that the Transport Committee has been disbanded. Ken Batten is now the person to whom car-parking queries should be addressed, and DC advised that she would be arranging a meeting with him to discuss the issue of parking for Emeritus and Honorary Professors and would report back once the meeting had taken place.

DC

(iii) 06/072 (i) Portable Generator

PC advised that if it was deemed necessary to have something available to back up the -80°C freezers, the power required would be 3 kilowatts per -80°C freezer. A generator of this capability would cost between £1,000-£2,000 depending on how quiet and efficient it was. Another issue would be where the generator would be sited because of the exhaust.

Resources Board agreed to the purchase of an emergency generator and suggested circulating research groups to ask if they wished to be allocated space within a back-up freezer that would be powered by the emergency generator. It was further suggested that it would be viable for the Department to buy standard size boxes for use in the emergency freezer, and then rent these out to groups wishing to partake in the scheme. This was deemed a good idea as it would

Action

prompt research groups to think about what critical samples and material they needed to store and would go some way to recovering the cost of the purchase of the generator long-term. It was noted that there would need to be a system in place to ensure the renting of safe boxes was paid 'up-front'. DC would circulate an email to the appropriate research groups, and if the feedback on the proposal was positive it was agreed that the Department should proceed on that basis.

DC

PC reported that the Department currently has two spare -80°C freezers, one on E0 and one on F0. However, one of these is often used as decant space for defrosting, and the other for dire emergencies (i.e in case of individual freezer breakdown). It was therefore felt that a further -80°C freezer would need to be purchased, especially if the emergency back-up was going to be permanently full, so that the number of available freezers for decant or use in a breakdown was not reduced. DC and PC agreed to do some more work on the issue and discuss the purchase with Ottoline Leyser, as it could be seen as communal equipment. The site location for the back-up and emergency generator also needed some further thought. DC and PC to report back in due course.

PC/DC

(iv) 06/071 (iv) Science City York

JBP reported that the proposal to generate a Biology Business Centre is ongoing. It is looking positive that the initiative will go ahead and the proposal is now in it's final stages. The Biology/Chemistry Planning Group have requested setting up a sub-group, which will be Chaired by DC.

06/082 Matters arising from Infrastructure Committee, 31st October 2006

(i) IC6/056.5 Autoclave drainage

It was clarified that this issue related only to horticulture, as it was the drainage required for the GM glasshouse that was affected.

(ii) IC6/058.3 Stores

DC clarified that a defined number of additional hours had been agreed in Stores, and that the minutes should have reflected that arrangement.

06/083 Matters arising from Safety Committee, 22nd November 2006

(i) B.S.C. 06/18 Lone Working

The process for lone working was queried by the membership of Resources Board, and DN explained that the updated departmental lone working policy was a re-enforcement of existing policy whereby safety protocols depended on the type of work being done by the individual. However, in future there will be a more formal process whereby high risk activities require assessment, and there will be an assessment form to identify such activities. DN reported that he would be sending a note round about this accordingly.

DN

The Departmental policy will be updated in relation to safety inspections, (ie risk assessments carried out prior to safety inspections), and with the inspections moved to a slightly more 'audit' basis. It was acknowledged that this would change the overall emphasis, but it was suggested that lone working would be considered during inspections, and accordingly the policy needed tightening up and researchers made aware.

DC advised that the issue of lone working had been taken to the Laboratory Safety Sub-Committee.

(ii) B.S.C. 06/24 Appointment of New Chair & Secretary

The process for appointing a new Chair of Safety Committee was queried, and DC advised that the appointment was the remit of the Head of Department, in conjunction with the Safety Advisor. DC further confirmed that she would be Chairing Safety Committee in future.

06/084 Safety Showers in Laboratories

Norman Beach had circulated an email advising that standard safety shower units would be taken out unless advised otherwise.

DN reported that there was an issue whereby some groups currently had access to both safety showers and the pull-out hoses, and in those areas where the need for a shower is low and where hoses were in place, it would be appropriate to remove the standard shower units.

Whilst groups in L and M wings were happy for the standard shower units to be removed, JBP reported that both types were in place in the TF, and that he wanted to keep both due to the nature of work done in this area. Accordingly it was acknowledged that individual areas should be looked at on an individual basis.

DC reported that she was in discussion with Estates, who are responsible for the maintenance of safety showers. It was noted that these needed to be regularly maintained due to the risk of legionella.

It was suggested that before any safety showers were removed, DN looked at the area with NB to assess whether the alternative arrangements that were in place in that area were satisfactory.

DN

06/085 Biology PO Box

DC reported that she had just received the bill for the Biology PO Box, which was £168 pa (VAT exempt).

It was debated whether Biology still needs its own PO Box. The Biology PO Box was originally used so that the Post Room does not have to sort Biology mail, although DC reported that the message she has received from the Post Room was that all mail goes via the Post Room and they didn't know why Biology had their own PO Box.

It was agreed that if the Department did dispense with having its own PO Box, notice would need to be given to staff, to ensure that letter headed paper and other stationery was amended to reflect the change. DC also reported that she would need confirmation that mail addressed to PO Box 373 would still get to the Department, without any delay. DC agreed to investigate further and report back with her findings.

DC

06/086 Mobile Phone Invoice List

DC advised that she periodically received a pdf file with details of calls made from every Biology mobile over a given period. The last file was approximately 109 pages long. DC did not think that it would be possible for her to break this down into the individual users, and asked Resources Board for advice on what should be done with the listing.

It was queried whether Peter Jarvis sent individual reports to the various owners of Biology mobiles, detailing the calls made from their particular phone. If this did not already happen, then it may be possible for Peter to do this (and in which case the full listing sent to DC is probably only supplied as an oversight of all activity). DC agreed to check with Peter Jarvis accordingly.

DC

06/087 L1 Space Issue – Stationery Cabinets & Lockers

There are currently space issues on L1, and DC reported that she had spoken to Colin Kleanthous, who had suggested possible intermediary solutions to some of the issues.

Action

Accordingly, they are looking at long-term storage of Laboratory Notebooks and DC had suggested putting stationary cabinets (which the L1 occupants will pay for) in the L1/M1 link. The occupants of L1 are also paying for extra benching and shelving. Because of increase in numbers accommodated on L1, they had asked for 8 more chairs (four to be provided ASAP) - DC had agreed to find these.

There is currently a shift in undergraduate project work, which has resulted in more undergraduates undertaking project work in the Research Laboratories rather than the Teaching Laboratories. This is putting more pressure on the limited space and also means that there is often no place for the students to store their coats/bags, etc. Coin lockers have been investigated as a possible solution, to be placed just outside L1 corridor – it was agreed to purchase 4 blocks of 3 lockers from the administration budget at an estimated cost of £1005. It was agreed to alert the Board of Studies to the fact that the project students are placing more pressure on space.

DC

As a result of the HSE inspection, it was reported that there is a need to do some re-arranging and modification of existing space on L1. In one area, modification is required to the ventilation (the room concerned needs to have two cabinets instead of one, and there is no alternative to this at the present time). In the same vein, extra electrical sockets are required in an office space as there are too many extension leads being used to cram people into offices. DC reported that there is a cost of approximately £1200 to put the rooms right, and queried who should pay for the work to be carried out. It was felt that the Department should pay for offices and sockets but the other issue was not as clear. It was noted that James Moir's group has extended, which resulted in the cabinet issue, but this could have been included on the grant application. It was acknowledged that sometimes PIs were not aware of what is required in the way of facilities and how to manage these. It was suggested that the modification to the room to incorporate an extra cabinet should be covered on the grant and DC and PC agreed to look into this further.

PC/DC

DC asked for clarification on who should pay for additional chairs, which were required when groups expanded. It was agreed that if the Department had agreed to house individuals as part of a grant then the Department should provide chairs.

06/088 Costs of Sealability Testing

PC wanted to flag that an extra Health and Safety requirement was the need to have all the fumigatable rooms in the Department (currently 32) tested annually for their sealability. The current cost for this work to be carried out was £2,000 per year.

DR advised that the cost could be covered under the global communable charge, as it is a legal requirement that the testing be done.

06/089 Equipment in Lecture Theatres

DC reported that she had received an email from a Biology Lecturer, who had found all the equipment in one of the centrally booked lecture theatres, had been left on. This had caused problems for him when he was setting up for his lecture, and he had asked DC if the porters should have turned the equipment off after the previous user had finished with it in view of the fact that it was a centrally booked room.

CT reported that this should still be the case and agreed to look into it. DC would send the email she had received to CT so that he could progress it.

DC/CT

Action

06/090 Christmas Collection for Charity

DC suggested putting a collection tin in the Atrium, along with a general card, so that members of staff could sign and donate money to a nominated charity, rather than sending individual Christmas cards to their colleagues.

This was thought to be a good idea. DC agreed to arrange for the collection to be held at Reception, and for members of the Department to be alerted to the scheme accordingly.

06/091 Date of next meeting: Thursday 25 January 2007 in B/K/126 at 9.00am.