

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*
Department of Biology

BIOLOGY OUTREACH COMMITTEE: 4 December 2009

Present: John Pillmoor (Chair and Strategy Board Link)
 Caroline Calvert (CNAP)
 Adrian Harrison (Departmental Outreach Organiser)
 Chris Kelly (Technical Representative)
 Richard Swinnerton (Undergraduate Representative)
 Ottoline Leyser (Research Committee and Academic staff representative)
 Jasper Green (Postgraduate Representative)
 Sarah West (SEIY – OPAL item)
 Eoin Cassels and Thomas Brabbs (Discover and Explore item)

Apologies for absence:

Chikako Barlow (Secretary)
 Thorunn Helgason (Academic Representative)
 Peter Lillford (Honorary Member)

		Action
09/24	<p>Welcomes</p> <p>JBP welcomed Sarah West, Eoin Cassels and Thomas Brabbs as guests to the meeting.</p>	
09/25	<p>OPAL Presentation</p> <p>Sarah West provided a fascinating update on the activities of the Open Air Laboratory Project (OPAL) which was welcomed by all members.</p> <p>In view of the potential synergies between OPAL and the work of the Outreach Committee it was agreed that Sarah should be included in future agenda calls and minutes and feel free to attend the meetings whenever appropriate.</p> <p>A number of areas for further consideration were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Help with sourcing student volunteers, particularly for the next project in Hull involving hedgehogs – Inclusion of a link to OPAL from the Outreach web – Potential for adapting the CSI workshop for linkage with samples collected through OPAL as a follow-on activity. In a similar vein, ABH noted that consideration was being given to whether this could be applied to the mycorrhizal workshops being developed by TH – SW was encouraged to contact PIs in Biology who were specialists in appropriate areas. Even if they were unable to contribute themselves, they may well be able to recommend other experts or students who may be able to help. Making 	<p>CB</p> <p>ABH</p> <p>CB</p> <p>ABH</p>

	contact with the butterfly specialists was felt to be worthwhile.	
09/26	<p>Discover and Explore</p> <p>The topic for Discover and Explore (18+19 March) is the brain and two PhD students, Eoin Cassels and Thomas Brabbs, had volunteered to develop our contributions. Eion outlined the current plans which involve Biology, the York Neuroimaging Centre and Psychology. All sessions would be held in Biology to reduce travel time and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduction to the brain using neuroimaging pictures of brain activity (YNIC) – A maze activity looking at the learning process and influence of gender and left/right handedness (Biology) – Creating plasticine models of the brain (Biology) – Fooling the brain (Psychology) – Review of data from the maze (Biology) <p>The group very much welcomed Eoin and Tom's involvement and the proposed programme. It was suggested that consideration should be given to involving HYMS, particularly regarding the models of the brain and the possibility of sourcing preserved brain samples.</p>	
09/27	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting (13 June 2008)</p> <p>These were accepted as a true record and will now be posted on the web</p>	CB
09/28	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>a) 09/14d: Darwin events</p> <p>In the absence of TH, JBP reported that he understood progress was being made in developing the activities outlined previously with the "How to be a successful disease" currently the most advanced.</p> <p>b) 09/14c: Microbial loan kits</p> <p>ABH reported that the insurance issues had now been clarified but that any equipment must now be electrically tested (PAT) immediately before despatch and full training and instructions provided. The university also has to be notified of every loan. In view of this it was concluded that the proposed microbial loan kit was not suitable for further development given the inherent risks. The DNA fingerprinting equipment will continue to be offered but the new requirements and demands are likely to reduce uptake. It was therefore concluded that providing practical experience should concentrate on visits to our labs.</p> <p>c) 09/14d: Difficult to approach groups</p>	

	<p>CMC reported that options to include difficult to reach groups will be included in all future activities. However, there was currently insufficient resource to consider developing the Designer Centre exhibition ideas at present</p> <p>d) 09/14f: New outreach activities in the Term 5 Scientific Skills</p> <p>ABH reported that outline discussions had been started. It was agreed that ABH and HMOL should put together a proposal to take this forward. Consideration will be given to obtaining input from Hilary Jones, who has recently developed a communicating science session for the masters courses. CK also expressed a particular interest in being involved. The option of linking to developing a new activity to include in Science Week will also be considered. This would provide a clear output target for the work and also potentially create new material that could be re-used in the future.</p> <p>e) 09/14g: Undergraduate and post-graduate helper pools</p> <p>ABH reported that there was currently a good pool of helpers. He had been particularly pleased with the response to the Discover and Explore call with Eoin and Thomas taking on this project</p> <p>f) 09/22a: Promoting outreach to post-graduates</p> <p>JG reported that the profile of outreach was being promoted through Hilary Jones and the clear link to green card points had helped considerably.</p> <p>He felt that there was still scope to promote the “return to your school” and it was agreed that this should be undertaken through an email based on the new list of feeder schools from the centre asking for previous pupils who would be interested to return to give a presentation and emphasising that we will provide travel costs. It was agreed that the undergraduates should also be targeted at the same time.</p> <p>g) 09/22b: New post-graduate representative</p> <p>JBP reported that a call for a new post-graduate representative was outstanding but will be progressed in the New Year when CB returns.</p>	<p>ABH/ HMOL</p> <p>ABH</p> <p>JBP/CB</p>
09/29	<p>Science Engagement Event</p> <p>ABH reported on the Science Engagement Event held recently at the NSLC. The objective had been to promote our outreach activities both within the university as well as to external funders. He felt that</p>	

	the event had successfully promoted the outreach agenda internally and that this will hopefully result in a reinvigorated Science and Society group, ideally with a budget and market plan. He noted that the Science and Society group is hoping to hold this as an annual event.	
09/30	<p>Previous Events Update</p> <p>ABH reported that some 11 events had been held since June, mainly involving school visits. The key events are listed in Appendix 1 for information.</p> <p>JG reported that his bioinformatics workshop delivered through the Excellence Hubs had been successful. He noted that the details of the workshop are held by Emma Rand so the event can be repeated if required.</p>	
09/31	<p>Outreach Staff Census</p> <p>JBP reported that the census of academic staff had been successful with a good list of activities obtained. However, it was agreed that publishing the selection of events listed could be counter productive as it was not a comprehensive summary and therefore missed out many important inputs.</p> <p>A similar census call to other groups in the Department had not been progressed as being unlikely to obtain a good response. A discussion of how to obtain information from these groups ensued with the conclusion that a general call for examples of individual outreach activities should be sent out linked to obtaining examples (picture and text) for publication in the new BioLog quarterly magazine and, possibly, on the Outreach web site. JBP will contact James Chong and work with RS and JG with respect to targeting their constituents.</p> <p>Regarding general training for outreach activities, it was noted that the events provided by NSLC had been very good and it would be useful if an example of this could be obtained to help promote further interest in this opportunity in the future.</p>	<p>JBP</p> <p>JBP</p>
09/32	<p>Events Log</p> <p>It was agreed that the effort to publish a comprehensive list of all activities on the web in the current format had only minimal benefit in the context of the massive effort required to pull the list together. With the new academic staff census and other proposals to obtain examples of activities discussed above, it was agreed to abandon the old events log and this will be removed from the web site.</p>	CB
09/33	<p>Staff Workload Credits</p> <p>JBP reported that the workload credits are now being processed</p>	

	based on the information provided in the academic staff census. In the first pass, contact hours are being reported. The results will then be discussed with the HoD to determine the best way to link the contact hours to actual credits.	
09/34	<p>Next Major Events</p> <p>The Discover and Explore proposals have been reported earlier. ABH noted that a bid to BBSRC had been made for funding</p> <p>It was noted that the overall format for the next Science Festival had not so far been defined and CMC will contact Sarah Mitchell to ask for an update and circulate members of the group by email. ABH noted that a bid led by Chemistry had been made to RCUK for the Science Festival in 2011.</p> <p>ABH noted that a new joint event with Chemistry is being planned to target BTEC students from Oldham College.</p> <p>As noted earlier, ABH reported that the centre had provided a list of feeder schools to be targeted. One is already being taken forward and the proposed email to ask for previous pupils from these schools will hopefully help to identify other schools to be targeted.</p> <p>ABH also reported that April to July next year is already well booked with many repeat visits.</p> <p>JG reported that a bioinformatics event for school teachers is being planned through the NSLC.</p>	CMC
08/35	<p>Excellence Hubs</p> <p>ABH reported that good communications continues with 2 dates in the diary already. The annual meeting has still to be arranged.</p>	ABH
08/36	<p>Biology Matters</p> <p>JBP reported that the summer edition had been sent to 364 schools and a new edition is currently being planned. A call has been sent out for new members to join the editorial team and a questionnaire has been designed to obtain feedback on the summer edition.</p>	
08/37	<p>Budget</p> <p>ABH reported that the running budget had been fully utilised last year. The budget allocated for the current academic financial year was £3,231. £284 had been spent so far.</p>	
08/38	<p>BBSRC Excellence with Impact 2011</p> <p>JBP noted that an interim report was currently being produced, as required by the BBSRC. There is likely to be a further visit next year</p>	

	prior to the final report in December 2010.	
09/39	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) Professor Peter Lillford</p> <p>JBP reported that Peter Lillford, who holds an Honorary Professorship in the Department, had kindly agreed to provide advice and, where appropriate, input to our outreach activities. He will be copied into the agenda calls and minutes from the meeting in future and will attend the meetings when possible. The group very much welcomed this initiative.</p> <p>b) CII</p> <p>With the creation of CII it was felt that consideration should be given to having a member of CII join the committee. JBP will discuss with Paul Kaye.</p> <p>In this context, ABH noted that Mark Coles had contacted him regarding a possible joint application to the Wellcome Trust with NYBEP.</p> <p>c) CRB Checks</p> <p>ABH noted that the new CRB regulations may require changes to our procedures, especially regarding databases involving people under 18 years. He has requested further advice.</p>	<p>JBP</p> <p>ABH</p>

John Pillmoor
9/12/2009

Appendix 1: Summary of Recent Events

Date	Activity
17/6/09	Admissions talk @ Queen Elizabeth College Darlington
18/6/09	X Hub event
24/6/09	Morley School visit
3/7/09	Matlock School Sixth form visit
9/7/09	Elizabethan School Visit
15-16/7/09	Selby School visit
12/9/09	Wild about Wood
29/9/09	Durham Schools Aim Higher event
30/9/09	Easingwold School visit
16/10/09	Market Weighton School visit
19/10/09	Science and Society Celebration Event