

# School of Life Sciences

## Health and Safety Committee Meeting

### 17<sup>th</sup> May 2006

#### **Present**

Gail Alexander (GA; Chair), Magnus Alphey (MA), Irene Blair (IB), Donald Gardiner (DG), Lisa Grayson (LG; Minutes), Letty Gibson (LMG), Monica Lacey (ML), Bob MacKintosh (BM; attending on Aileen Watson's behalf), Fiona Mitchell (FM), Andrew Newman (AN), Kiran Oza (KO).

#### **Apologies**

Stella Mitchell, Janette Cordiner, Aileen Watson.

GA started the meeting by introducing Fiona Mitchell, the new PhD Student Representative, and thanking her for taking on the role in place of Andrew Ferenbach.

#### **ACTION**

#### **1. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes were approved

#### **Matters Arising**

**Item 2.** LG had not received any comments from the Committee on the H&S Portfolio. All SLS personnel were informed via email that the new version of the Portfolio was available on 30/3/06. LG confirmed that the H&S web site URL has been emailed to all personnel on several occasions and this will continue indefinitely.

**Item 3.** LG had not received any comments from the Committee on the Basic Training Checklist nor any suggestions for future H&S training. No progress has been made regarding H&S training videos and VLE. KO confirmed that converting the videos to a format suitable for VLE is a simple task. LG explained that it is the time/resources required to produce the training videos that is the main obstacle. LG to find out if Safety Services can help.

**LG**

**Item 4.** New "Lessons to be Learned" are now being brought to the attention of all personnel by email. Use of the LCD screens in the foyers was deemed inappropriate.

**Item 5.** LG has changed her part of the H&S Induction Seminar to focus on the Risk Assessment Databases and the H&S Web Site. LG acknowledged that more work has to be done on raising awareness amongst existing personnel. Stress risk assessment is covered in item 2 – see below.

**Item 6:** The Lone & Out-of-Hours Working Policy was approved by the H&SMC. It is now part of the H&S Portfolio and all personnel have been notified by email. AN did not support the proposal to remove the Out-of-Hours signing in books and felt it was unfair on those who have made proper use of them. LG explained that, because the vast majority of personnel do not use them correctly, the books are very misleading and of no use in an emergency situation. The H&SMC have already agreed to scrap them. IB/LG still to remove books and inform personnel. Electronic alternatives have yet to be fully investigated.

**IB/LG**

**Item 7i:** Lab coats - see item 3, below.

**Item 7iv:** The issue of increased traffic through the WTB labs was raised at the H&SMC meeting in Nov 2005. CPD's decision was communicated to the Committee. Committee members based in WTB said the situation was not improving, suggesting that CPD's decision is not being enforced. The issue of people carrying food through the labs was also raised. MA asked who has the authority to challenge people that are not obeying the rules. Committee members agreed that the H&SMC have to make a decision and agree on how to enforce it. LG to table this on the agenda of the next H&SMC meeting.

**LG**

**Item 7va.** Contrary to what was stated at the previous meeting, LG confirmed that there is a safety shower on CIR Floor 1. This is being regularly flushed through by the Above Floor Cleaner, as are all eyewashes, apart from those in restricted access areas which are done by Lab Managers. Since it is not practical to routinely flush and chlorinate the WTB safety showers, the H&SWG proposed that they be disabled and the WTB M and 2 regular showers used instead. BM suggested that the safety showers are removed completely to avoid confusion. IB/LG to discuss with IRL, Safety Services and E&B.

**IB/LG**

**Item 7vb.** LG informed the Committee that CPD has now decided to allow castors to be fitted to lab chairs at the discretion of the PIs. This will be formally announced at the next H&SMC meeting.

**Item 7vc.** Concerns about the perceived blasé attitude to H&S were raised at the H&SMC meeting in November 2005. The H&SMC's response was communicated to the Committee. See item 4, below, for information on H&S Inspections.

**Item 7iv.** LG has not yet received any hazard/risk information from IT. KO raised some safety key

concerns. LG and KO to discuss this further.	<b>LG/KO</b>
<b>2. Stress Risk Assessment</b>	<b>All MA/LM G/DG/ FM</b>
Committee members were asked to comment on the draft "Stress" policy. GA explained the generic stress risk assessment approach and current status. GA asked MA, LMG, DG and FM if they would review and comment on the draft assessments for their personnel group. All agreed to feedback comments to GA within 2 to 3 weeks.	
<b>3. Lab Coats</b>	<b>LG</b>
The lab coat issue was raised at the H&SMC meeting in November 2005. Committee members were informed that the H&SWG's draft policy was rejected. CPD's alternative proposal was communicated to the Committee. LG explained that there had been much debate about this amongst the GRE PIs resulting in the Division producing its own draft policy. The Committee members agreed that the H&SMC have to come to a firm decision and agree on how to enforce it. LG to table this on the agenda of the next H&SMC meeting.	
<b>4. General H&amp;S Inspection Program</b>	<b>LG</b>
Committee members were informed that the H&SWG has started a program of unannounced, general H&S inspections and were supplied with a copy of the checklist. GA explained why a photographic record was being taken. MA suggested that personnel should be told that this program was ongoing, and that a photographic record will be taken, but without giving specific dates. LG to action.	
<b>5. SLS H&amp;S Web Site Latest</b>	<b>KO</b>
LG demonstrated the changes to the H&S Web Site. KO to send LG instructions on how to retrieve the access logs for the site.	
<b>6. Latex Gloves</b>	<b>All</b>
Committee members were issued with the SLS policy on the Use of Disposable Gloves and asked to forward any comments to LG.	
<b>7. Accidents &amp; Incidents</b>	
IB gave a summary of the accidents/incidents that had occurred over the past 6 months. The importance of reporting near misses was stressed. IB asked the Committee members to let her know if they were aware of accidents/incidents going unreported in their areas.	
<b>8. Items from Committee Members</b>	
MA and FM raised a few issues on behalf of the Post Docs and PhD Students:	
i. Several complaints have been made about the number of personnel wearing gloves in non-lab areas. IB suggested posting signs on lab exit doors reminding staff to remove their gloves and wash their hands before leaving the lab. IB/LG to seek approval from the H&SMC.	<b>IB/LG</b>
ii. There was a query as to why Wash-Up staff do not wear gloves when collecting items from labs. IB to address.	<b>IB</b>
iii. There was a query as to why an account of the avian retrovirus spill appeared then disappeared from the H&S Web Site. LG explained what had happened and will endeavour to get the full account on line as soon as possible.	<b>LG</b>
iv. Some individuals fear that they will not be able to continue wearing latex gloves even though they prefer them to nitrile. LG explained that latex gloves will still be allowed providing their use can be justified in a risk assessment. Individuals concerned should contact IB/LG for further advice/assistance.	
v. A microscope user complained about not being able to get a suitable chair. IB said that they should report the problem to their Lab Manager. IB/LG would be willing to carry out an assessment if the user wishes.	
vi. The issue of whether it was acceptable to wear open-toed shoes/sandals and shorts in the labs was raised. The Committee agreed that the H&SMC have to make a decision and agree on how to enforce it. LG to table this on the agenda of the next H&SMC meeting.	<b>LG</b>
vii. There has been some concern over chemicals being stored at height in the CIR2 chemical prep area. LG said the H&SWG would look at this as part of their inspection program. In the mean time the Lab Manager should provide appropriate kick-stools or stepladders.	<b>H&amp;SWG</b>
<b>9. AOCB</b>	
There was no other business.	