CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY (AWERB)

3rd July 2025 via Teams

MINUTES

25/05-01	Apologies
25/05-02	Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 29th May 2025 were considered by the Committee and were approved.

25/05-03	Matters Arising 25/04-07-01 *Autoimmune diseases of the CNS and their treatments."* See Item 25/05-04
25/05-04	Chairperson's Items The Chair thanked one of the lay members who is leaving the University, for all their contributions to the committee.
25/05-05	Verbal Reports from the Director of BMSU, NVS and NACWOs Director: • There is a project licence holders forum being held on 4th July 2025, the purpose of which is to ensure that there is ongoing communication with the research community and provide an opportunity for questions and answers. • As the summer period approaches and staff take annual leave, the Director reassured AWERB that there is sufficient staff cover at all times, and animal welfare will not be impacted. Part of this will involve adjusting the amount of procedural support that is available from BMSU technicians. • A Home Office Facilities Audit will take place on 14th July 2025. Facility management are confident that they are in compliance with ASPA, with staff being supported and reassured that they should not feel any concerns about the audit. NVS: • All of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are being reviewed. This is to ensure that the procedures are as refined as possible. The anaesthesia SOPs have been evaluated, and refresher training will be provided to everyone who provides training in anaesthesia to ensure they are up to date with any revisions to the SOP. NACWOs: • No concerns from the NACWOs. Health screening will be undertaken and sent off for all areas again next week.
25/05-06	Report from the Fast-Track Procedure • All fast-track applications are uploaded to Teams for comments by AWERB. • The Deputy Director of BMSU has taken over responsibility for coordinating AWERB ethical review of the use of animals outside of the establishment licence. • When project licence amendments are required, if the amendment is to a severe protocol or a brand-new protocol is being added, these come to the main committee for review. Anything outside of that goes via the Fasttrack procedure. A request to add a mild breeding protocol to a pre-existing project licence has been submitted; it was agreed that this could be reviewed via Fasttrack, and clarified that only the addition of new experimental protocols or amendments to severe protocols needed to come to the main committee. • *Investigating the behavioural components of island syndrome in island populations of the Northern Wren Troglodytes troglodytes in the British Isles* (AWERB minutes 19th December 2024 Ref. 24/12-07). A written update has been provided on this study which was to take place on Saint Kilda amongst other sites. The written update had been provided and unfortunately the data collected on Saint Kilda was insufficient to achieve the scientific objectives due to an unexpected crash in bird populations (only 3 birds captured). Capture at further sites was not

	undertaken due to a lack of comparative data from Saint Kilda. Discussions are ongoing regarding the viability of this project going forward.
25/05-07-01	PPL Application for Consideration: *"Investigating the role of neutrophils in inflammation and thrombosis during COPD exacerbations"* Summary The project aims to: • Understand the role of neutrophils in driving inflammation and thrombosis in the lungs and heart during chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) exacerbations. • Chronic lung diseases, such as COPD, are characterised by a type of white blood cell called neutrophils that drive inflammation, which worsens during disease flare-ups (exacerbations). These episodes promote systemic inflammation and thrombosis (blood clot formation), increasing the risk of cardiac damage and heart attacks. • COPD is a progressive, incurable lung condition affecting ~1.2 million people in the UK. It ranks as the third leading cause of death globally, posing a significant health and economic burden. The most notable complication in COPD patients is heart attacks, which occur more frequently during disease exacerbations. • Neutrophils play a key role in both COPD-induced inflammation and thrombosis, yet their contribution to organ damage during exacerbations remains poorly defined. This project will investigate how neutrophils drive systemic inflammation and thrombosis, identify key mediators involved, and explore how these may contribute to cardiac damage. The following points were discussed: • The breeding protocol was discussed and it was proposed to breed 1000 mice over a 5-year period, with 750 animals then required on each of protocol 2 and 3. It was queried whether this was sufficient breeding animals to generate the required number of animals for experiments. It was stated that there are several strains of genetically altered mice described, and consideration should be given as to whether all these are required. • There are some minor amendments required, for example to clarify humane end points. • This model is set up at another UK-based establishment, where the PI has been involved at each stage of the study. Pilot studies will be undertaken to ensure that the model can be replicated at UoB. BMSU will work with the PI and researchers at the other Establishment to discuss the model and maximise knowledge transfer, prior to the model being performed at UoB. • It was queried as to what adverse effects the animals will actually experience over the course of disease progression based on knowledge gained at the other Establishment. It was stated that not all of the adverse effects listed in the licence application are expected to occur; typically, the animals lose some bodyweight initially but recover within 2 days. The adverse effects, timescales and humane end points written in the application need to be reviewed considering this. • It was stated that the humane end points are currently the same for both COPD and the exacerbation stage. It was queried whether the animals would be worse following the exacerbation stage. It was explained that there is a gap of 5 days between induction of COPD and the exacerbation stage. This allows the animals time to recover from the initial trigger before the disease is exacerbated, and so the humane endpoints can remain the same. • It was queried whether the rhinovirus is human or a mouse adapted virus. It was stated that this is a mild virus with minimal if any impact on humans. The appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the health and safety of those working with the infected animals, and work will be performed in containment to ensure the virus is not transferred to other colonies. • It was confirmed that the rhinovirus model in humans has been running over the past 10 years with over 1500 patients recruited. This will reduce the need to undertake these studies in animals. • The potential number of anaesthesia with recovery events for a typical animal under this licence was discussed. At the other Establishment, the animals are not sedated for introduction of the virus, however as this is a new model at UoB it was stated that the animals will be lightly sedated at least initially. Animals are expected to be anaesthetised twice for other procedures. • The funding for the project was discussed. Funding currently ends in 2 years. Animal numbers correlate with the 2-year timeline at present, but additional funding is being sought. • The power calculations were discussed, and it was requested that standard deviations be included in the application.

	• The training and competency requirements were discussed and reassurance provided that compliance can be maintained whilst bringing this new model to UoB. **Decision: The Committee agreed that the application should be amended following discussion between the NVS, BMSU, NACWO and PI and reviewed via Fasttrack prior to being sent onto the Home Office.**
25/05-07-02	*"Autoimmune diseases of the CNS and their treatments" (resubmission)* Summary This application was considered on 29th May 2025 (25/04-07-02). The Committee requested that the application be updated and amended and returned to the Committee for review. Following resubmission and consideration by the committee, the applicant advised that funding for the larger project had not been successful at this stage, and the project student who was going to perform a small amount of work under one protocol could undertake this work at another UK-based establishment. **Decision: The applicant withdrew the application and will re-submit it if the work is to go ahead later.**
25/05-08	3Rs Update • Two researchers will speak at the project licence holders forum. One speaker will introduce the chick embryo facility available at UoB; this represents a partial replacement utilising chick embryos prior to their inclusion under ASPA. The second speaker aims to encourage use of the IVIS imaging equipment. Use of this equipment contributes to both reduction of the number of animals required and also refinement as disease development (such as tumour burden) can be detected and monitored at earlier stages than via conventional methods.
25/05-09	Condition 18 Reports • There has been one Standard Condition 18 report submitted to the Home Office since the last meeting. One rat has been injected with a drug that had been used a long time previously, and the rat unexpectedly demonstrated ataxia. Due to the gap between injections, only one animal was affected and the remainder of the cohort were used in different ways following discussion with the NVS. An amendment to the permitted adverse effects will be sought prior to the drug being used further. This was reported to the Home Office within 72 hours as required and the automated response received. • The non-compliance reported at the meeting on 29th May has been considered by the Home Office and the personal licence holder involved has received a letter of reprimand. This is the lowest level of action and the case is now closed. The correspondence will remain on the licence holder's record for 5 years in case of a repeat event.
25/05-10	Retrospective Review There has been one licence that has expired which legally requires a retrospective assessment. This is currently being reviewed by AWERB prior to submission to the Home Office. The UoB retrospective review process for all licences remains in place with the reports uploaded to the AWERB Teams site for awareness.
25/05-11	Any Other Business The NC3Rs have been contacted to identify a new representative to join AWERB following the departure of the previous person.
25/05-12	Date of Next Meeting - please note the amended dates for 2025. Updated calendar invites have been sent. 7th August 2025 via Teams 18th September 2025 venue TBC 30th October 2025 via Teams 18th December 2025 venue TBC All will be from 10am until 1pm.

GLOSSARY

3Rs	Replacement, Reduction and Refinement
ARRIVE	Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments
ASPA	Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986
ASRU	Animals in Science Regulation Unit
AWERB	Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body
BMSU	Biomedical Services Unit
CNS	Central Nervous System
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
EAE	Experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis
NC3Rs	National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research
NCTO	Named Competency and Training Officer
NACWO	Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer
NIO	Named Information Officer
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
NVS	Named Veterinary Surgeon
PEL	Establishment Licence
PI	Principal Investigator
PIL	Personal licence (Procedure Individual Licence)
PPLs	Project licence (Procedure Project Licence)
RS	Ramen Spectroscopy
UoB	University of Birmingham