

**MEETING OF FARMER AND GROWER BOARD
TUESDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2012
at
South Plaza, Marlborough Street, Bristol BS1 3NX**

Present: Guy Dibble, Pauline Dixon, Adrian Dolby, Haydn Evans, Graeme Matravers, Pete Richardson, Alan Smith and Charles Weston.

In attendance: Sandra Bartolomeu-Rook (minutes), Helen Browning, Molly Conisbee (part), Tom MacMillan, Peter Melchett, Tim Perrett (part), Rob Sexton (part) and Jim Twine (part).

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Graeme Matravers welcomed Tom MacMillan, Director of Innovation, to his first Board meeting since joining the organisation back in November 2011.

Apologies were received from Oliver Dowding, Ruth Mason, Ian Noble, Alan Schofield, Tom Rigby and Nick Walton.

2. GOVERNANCE

Graeme confirmed that Alan Schofield had been formally elected for another three-year term of office. After discussion, it was **agreed** that co-opted places should be offered to Gillian Butler, Chris Walton and Kate Edwards.

3. FARMER AND GROWER BOARD MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Farmer & Grower Board meeting on 4 November 2011

The minutes of the last meeting were **agreed**.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE UPDATE

4.1 Head of Farming recruitment

Helen announced that Martin Davies had been appointed as Head of Farming working alongside Ben Raskin, our Head of Horticulture, to engage with the farming community.

4.2 Strategy for our work in Wales

There was some discussion following the Welsh Government's decision not to continue core funding Organic Centre Wales (OCW). It was noted that the Better Organic Business Links (BOBL) project which provided opportunities, information and training for businesses in the Welsh organic sector would run until the end of 2013. The Board **agreed** to keep an eye on future developments and discuss further in due course.

4.3 Organisational strategy – implementation plan

Helen spoke of the implementation plan for The Road to 2020 which showed how our activities under each theme will deliver our mission.

Good food for all - we want everyone to be able to access food that is good for them and good for the planet.

Facing the future - Tom MacMillan explained that we had grouped together Producer Support, Standards, Best Practice (AssureWel and Low Carbon Farming programme) and Farming and Land Use policy work under one team focused on:

- Advocacy and winning public and policy support for fair, humane and ecological food systems.
 - Supporting producers and the public to adopt better practices in a tough market.
-

- Defining, advancing and piloting better practice through the delivery of our Low Carbon Farming and AssureWel programmes.
- Implementing standards and other tools to drive continuous improvement..

5. **SECTOR BY SECTOR BRAINSTORM**

Board members were asked to share their thoughts on opportunities and challenges to be fed into sector plans.

Helen was keen to keep on drawing on the Board's expertise on big themes, issues and potential solutions.

6. **CERTIFICATION**

6.1 **Report from SA Certification –**

Rob Sexton gave a quick overview of SA Certification and where it fitted into this new strategy as well as some key highlights.

6.2 **Catering Mark**

Jim Twine gave some background to Food for Life (FFL) which was coming to an end of phase 1 in England and the Catering Mark, highlighting successes to date and the benefit for the organic sector and organic producers.

7. **ANNUAL CONFERENCE – Molly Conisbee**

Molly reported that a roundtable organised by the Soil Association, the Organic Research Centre and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Agro-Ecology would be taking place the day before (invitation only event for scientists and decision-makers working in relevant fields, chaired by Tom MacMillan).

It was noted that our conference will focus on "Facing the Future: Innovation in food and farming" with speakers such as economist Ann Pettifor, author of *The Real World Economic Outlook* and a Fellow of the new economics foundation (nef), Professor Hans Herren, President of the Millennium Institute and Phil Bloomer, Director of Policy and Campaigns for OXFAM.

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Away days (15-16 May)

After discussion, it was **agreed** that the Board should travel to Cumbria for their away days.

SA Certification fees

It was noted that fees would go up slightly for the next financial year (the first time in 4.5 years) with a new fee sheet going live in April.

CLOSE OF MEETING

Next meetings:

- away days on Tuesday 15 and Wednesday 16 May, Cumbria
 - Tuesday 11 September, South Plaza
 - Tuesday 27 November, South Plaza
-