

AHDB Horticulture Board meeting
SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HORTICULTURE BOARD
ON 2ND AUGUST 2022
TELECONFERENCE

CONFIDENTIAL

PRESENT: Peter Judge (PJ), Rob Saunders (RS), Keston Williams (KW), Robin Squance (RS), Mark Eves (ME), Jamie Dewhurst (JD), Michael Barker (MB)

APOLOGIES: Roma Gwynn (RGw)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ken Boyns (KB) – Divisional Director – Services
Rob Clayton (RC) - Sector Director
Lenka Rihova (LR) – PA, minute taker

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Introduction / meeting objective (no formal agenda)

1.1 RC opened the meeting at 8.30am and welcomed those in attendance.

1.2 Apologies were received RG.

1.3 The aim of the meeting was to give the Hort board an update on the position and progress made. The aim was to get the board's feedback, no decisions were required.

1.4 Some administrative issues were reported on distribution of the board papers.

1.5 The previous minutes will be formally reviewed and signed off at the next meeting.

1.6 RC provided a verbal update on the progress that has been made up to date and reported on the outcome of the main AHDB board meeting. The AHDB board members were presented with 2 major options:

- 1) Set the team as a 'bid team' that would be tendering or seeing out work in the area of EAMUs
- 2) Various speeds and forms of wind down for the team

The AHDB board's preference was to start winding down the team at the end of September. The ideal scenario would be to hand over the team along with the liabilities and the assets to BGA (British Growers Association), who are now starting to set up their own working group and their administration.

1.7 The AHDB board rejected the first option due to various reasons. The opportunity to transfer services to BGA was being explored.

1.8 A session with AHDB staff took place on 2nd August to inform them about the outcome of the AHDB

board meeting and give details on the new BGA model.

1.9 A meeting with BGA (Jack Ward and John Chinn) and Defra had been held to discuss the one new model, which will be based around voluntary subscription.

1.10 BGA are endeavouring to communicate with all their memberships from 3rd August. BGA had shared a draft paper with AHDB (alignment).

1.11 There was a request for a public press release with a commitment from all the producer organisations. A clear demonstration of public support is required. RC reported that BGA are doing interviews rather than a press release.

1.12 The board discussed whether there were other groups which wanted to get involved and continue the EAMU programme. AHDB are liaising with BGA. The aim is to treat everybody fairly and equally. AHDB are putting together a video on how EAMUs' work and will be posted on the legacy website. The information is to be available to all.

Deadlines are required for transferring it to the industry. The aim is to have plans in place for September.

1.13 The board discussed the potential staff implications (possibility of consultation, ability to accommodate the team and outstanding work within AHDB). HR are looking at this (a legal process to follow). The key focus is on the team being taken over by someone else. AHDB to be as supportive as possible.

1.14 There was a request to transfer some of the surplus funds with the team. AHDB to support the transition. AHDB looking at the legacy royalties.

1.15 The board discussed the timeframe for the transition. BGA are moderately happy, it is with them to drive this forward, AHDB to be supportive.

1.16 Some concern was expressed over the detail around how this is going to work (lack of detail), the EAMU legislation and the gap in funding. It was felt that the basic problems still exist.

1.17 BGA will explore taking on the assets and the liabilities of the team (no pension liabilities). HR are looking into this. The liabilities are more around obligations to report to CRD and the assets refer to IP (how to do it). There is the surplus reserve. The plan is not to load financial liabilities onto someone else. That is covered in the wind down cost. RC reported on various work which might be transferred to BGA (discussion to be held).

1.18 Regular meetings with BGA in place.

1.19 RC reported on the issue of the size of the residual reserves. AHDB are working on this and will address when it comes to any financial commitments.

1.20 RC reported on the situation in Potatoes. There is a sub organisation 'seed potatoes' which had been set up and they will take on any EAMUs agenda.

1.21 Key is to get clarity on how this is going to work. The industry wants the service. AHDB to keep the team motivated, focus on the team's transfer. A managed transition desired.

1.22 The meeting finished at 10.35am.

ACTION: To set up a meeting in September.