

**9<sup>th</sup> Recommended List  
Project Board Meeting (RLP09)**

at 13:15 on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2012

at The Priory Business & Conference Venue, Grantham

**Minutes**

**Present:**

Prof Graham Jellis (Chairman)  
Dr Susannah Bolton (HGCA)  
Dr Thomas Jolliffe (BSPB)  
Dr Penny Maplestone (BSPB)  
Mrs Heather Peck (Wheat Crop Committee Chairman)  
Mr Gary Sharkey (nabim)  
Mr Guy Smith (HGCA)  
Mr Paul Taylor (AIC)  
Mr Andrew Ward (Oilseeds Crop Committee Chairman)  
Mr Robert Jackson (BSPB – alternate for Nigel Moore)

**In Attendance:**

Mr Bill Handley (RI Technical Manager)  
Ms Denise Lawson (RL Project & Finance Administrator)  
Mr Andrew Newby (for item 09/07 only)

**09/01 Attendance & apologies for absence**

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

Apologies were received from Mr David Houghton, Mr Bob King and Mr Nigel Moore. Mr Robert Jackson was attending as an alternate for Mr Moore. Dr Oxley and Dr Cranstoun had encountered travel problems and were unable to complete their journeys so also offered their apologies.

Mr Newby was thanked for attending to present the nabim/breeders' proposals on the proposed changes to the testing.

Mr Handley was attending to present the trials update and stayed in the meeting to offer technical support in Dr Oxley's unplanned absence.

**09/02 Chairman's Introduction**

The Chairman reported that it was an interesting season, particularly regarding the new virulent disease races, and varieties which were demonstrating clear susceptibilities.

The main event since the last meeting had been Cereals, where a lot of interest in the Recommended List had been demonstrated.

**09/03 Minutes from the previous meeting**

a) Confidential

The minutes were checked by page.

Page 5 Item 08/05, paragraph 1 – the wording will be changed as the damage has not conclusively been tied to the application of bifenox (Fox).

With this change, the minutes were agreed as correct.

b) Non-confidential

Page 5 Item 08/05, paragraph 1 – the wording will be amended as detailed above.

Page 5, Item 08/05, paragraph 2 – this paragraph will be removed.

Page 7, Item 08/08 – a brief summary of the proposal would be supplied by Dr Maplestone for inclusion in the minutes.

With these amendments the minutes were agreed as correct.

Amended copies of both the confidential and non-confidential minutes will be prepared and signed following this meeting.

**09/04 Matters arising not covered elsewhere**

a) Tenders for seed handling, quality and pathology

Mr Handley advised the Board that the Seed Handling contract for the balance of the RL Project (until June 2016) had been awarded to NIAB-TAG.

The applications for the Quality tenders had been assessed and were at the required 'stand still' stage which was a legal requirement before being awarded. This was the opportunity for applicants to make comments.

The tender had been a successful exercise and produced no surprises with regards to the budget.

AHDB Procurement was currently in the process of producing the letters in response to all candidates advising them of the successful applicant. When this process was complete, the Board members will be advised by e-mail of the successful application.

The closing date for applications for the Pathology tenders was 29<sup>th</sup> June.

b) Crop Committee handbook

The amendments to the crop committee handbook following the last board meeting had been completed and the handbooks distributed to the crop committee members, for use and guidance for them and the Board. If any issues and/or queries arise, they will be discussed and changes made as required.

This will be a public document and a copy with the updated appendices will be sent to Dr Maplestone for distribution to the Breeders. The handbook will also be loaded onto the extranet.

Additional crib sheets for the specific criteria and appendices for each crop will be produced and added to the extranet. These will also be sent to Dr Maplestone for forwarding to the Breeders.

c) National List trials (update)

Dr Maplestone confirmed that she had just attended a further meeting with Fera on the possible transfer of competence of aspects of the administration associated with applications for National Listing, at which there were more positive signs of progress than at earlier meetings. There had been discussions surrounding the arrangements for official supervision and a meeting with HGCA would be arranged for further discussions in July.

d) Preliminary results from Oilseed Rape survey

Dr Bolton reported on this item, and summarised the preliminary results which had so far been collated. There were approximately 57 additional forms completed at Cereals and the data will be added to the results with a more complete analysis presented at the next Board meeting.

From the preliminary results the spread of stem canker in the North and light leaf spot in the East/West had been clearly indicated.

The results of the survey of establishment techniques and seed rates might be useful in identifying possible changes to trials protocols that would result in trials being more representative of current agricultural practice. The results would be considered initially by the Oilseeds Crop Committee.

Following the Oilseed protocols meeting, wide rows had been discussed and Mr Jackson agreed that, in principal, BSPB had no objection to using wide rows in the 2013 season.

Additional items from the previous meeting:

Trials costs by crop – Dr Bolton presented a summary of trials costs by crop, not including the co-located RL trials or sundry trials run by BSPB (e.g. Spring Linseed trials).

AHDB Planting Survey results – Dr Bolton presented the preliminary summary which showed the percentage area planted by variety. Prof Jellis queried the potential of using previous years' data for research, and asked whether it would be possible to show results by nabim group. He welcomed suggestions from the Board as to how the data may be used, but qualified that the data was collected by the AHDB Market Intelligence team and the level of variety detail was confidential and for internal use only. The full results and analysis will be presented at the August/September Crop Committee and Board meetings. A summary will be available on the HGCA website, but without the detail.

New Members meeting – Prof Jellis reported that although this meeting was sometimes small, it was worthwhile for the new members and should be continued. It should be made clear to them at interview that they are expected to attend and the date will be set in time for the new member interviews.

RL Training day – this had been well received and a similar meeting will be arranged in the future. The Peterborough area was considered suitable.

#### **09/05 RL Project Managers report**

Mr Handley reported that he was continuing with the trials validation. He had been seeing a lot of lodging in oilseed rape, and thought that this may cause issues at harvest for some trials.

The cereals crops are looking good, but lodging is developing and there is a lot of disease.

Mr Andrew Kirk has returned to the RL Team as the Database Developer.

Interviews have taken place for the Data Analyst and Field Trials Assistant posts and there were two good candidates for each post. Job offers will shortly be made to the successful applicants.

Cereals went well and feedback will be gathered from nabim and MAGB on the success of their stands. Dr Jolliffe passed on a request from BSPB that Spring Wheat varieties be included in the plots in 2013 and that candidate varieties should be shown as treated and untreated. Mr Handley reported that the plan was to sow candidates with an unsprayed strip at the end of the plot and that spring wheat varieties would be included if there was room as these were becoming of more interest as farmers sought to tackle blackgrass problems through rotation.

Some comments had been received that there were too few demonstrators on the plots, particularly for oilseed rape and Ms Lawson asked the Board to put forward names of potential candidates who might be willing to act as demonstrators next year. The crop tours had been well attended with a lot of interest being shown.

#### **09/06 Reports from crop committees**

##### **a) Oilseeds Crop Committee**

Mr Ward summarised the minutes and the proposals which required discussion and/or ratification by the Board.

There had been a long discussion surrounding the moving of the regional border and it had been proposed that the border would remain as is for this season, and any issues arising from this harvest would be discussed at the 2013 Planning meeting. This was agreed by the Board.

BSPB had proposed that a Descriptive List only should be produced for the North, but this had met with no support.

Winter hardiness scores were discussed and it was proposed that these should be discontinued. The Board agreed.

Plant populations set in the trials protocols still required further investigation. Currently this was set as a range and the breeders preferred that this range should remain but the top of the range should be lowered. Mr Ward stated that the plant population could be affected by sowing techniques and the oilseed rape survey would give an understanding of the methods currently used by growers and the plant populations they were trying to achieve.

Dr Oxley and Mr Handley will arrange a meeting with the trials managers and the trials host farmers in January/February 2013 to clarify the trials protocols which should be in use.

The committee had proposed no changes to the specific criteria. Minimum standards for light leaf spot and stem canker had been discussed and it was concluded that, as these are already accounted for in the agronomic merit rating, they should remain the same.

Details of the preliminary proposals for sowing varieties in trials had been supplied and were agreed by the Board.

BSPB had proposed that varieties sown in the East/West region trials should be included in the North region trials, provided that the variety meets the gross output and/or agronomic merit target for that region. The committee had discussed this proposal and recommended that this should be the case. The Board agreed and the Crop Committee handbook will be amended to include this specification.

The Project Board discussed the observed damage to some oilseed rape trials. Mr Handley summarised that differing levels of damage had been seen at trials sites which had received an application of a particular herbicide. This herbicide could be used on oilseed rape under an extension of authorisation at the grower's risk. The observed damage was linked with variety; its cause was unexplained and the extent of the damage varied between and within sites. It could relate to a combination of factors but the common factor in affected trials was treatment with this herbicide. BSPB members had been asked to look at trials and, so far, this type of damage had been seen only at sites where this herbicide had been used.

Mr Handley asked the Board for guidance on how the results from the affected trials should be addressed. Mr Jackson reported the views from BSPB members following a discussion about this issue at a meeting held the previous evening.

Mr Handley confirmed that he had sought advice from the statisticians and they had advised that not using the data from the affected sites would be preferable to the selective removal of varieties from affected trials. This would mean that results from a large percentage of trials would be discounted, but, overall, the statisticians had recommended not including the data would be the right decision.

Following further discussion and very careful consideration of the range of opinion, and taking account of the independent statistical advice, the Board proposed that the data from the five affected trials should be discounted from this year's results for RL purposes. They stated that it was impossible to identify the full cause of the damage. If affected candidates achieved recommendation, a caveat will be added to the Recommended List to make people aware of any potential problems.

The decision on whether data from any affected trials should be used for National List purposes would have to be taken by the National Authorities.

b) Wheat Crop Committee

Mrs Peck summarised the minutes and the proposals which required discussion and/or ratification by the Board, and she started by thanking Syngenta for their hospitality and the site tour which had followed the meeting.

Prof Tapsell had requested that comparisons across market segments (i.e. across nabim groups) should be permitted and the crop committee had discussed this but been unable to

reach a conclusion so the matter had been referred to the Board for guidance. This request had arisen from a decision made in 2011, when a high yielding variety had failed because it did not meet the required quality standards. The board confirmed that a breeder was able to make a presentation to the crop committee using a different comparator than the one specified and the crop committee would discuss whether this was a relevant comparison. However, this must be done at the crop committee and an alternative comparator must not be used as the basis of an appeal.

The crop committee had proposed that zeleny testing should be discontinued and the Board agreed.

Following the notice given at the Planning meeting in 2011, the crop committee proposed that the minimum standard for lodging without PGR for Winter Wheat should be increased to 5, and lodging with PGR for Autumn and Spring Wheat should be increased to 6 for decisions autumn 2012. Dr Maplestone commented that this had not been discussed at BSPB, and she will consult with the members to garner their opinions. This issue will be confirmed either way by e-mail before the Planning meeting.

In response to BSPB, the RL team had agreed that there was sufficient early sowing data for it to be included on the web and Dr Oxley will write a related Topic Sheet for distribution. The Board agreed.

Mrs Peck summarised the comparator varieties which had been proposed.

Two varieties had been proposed for use as comparators for Group 3 varieties. However, signs of increased susceptibility to yellow rust had been seen in one variety, and if this was confirmed following harvest only one comparator would be used. Two varieties had been proposed for use as comparators for Group 4 varieties, one of which had previously shown high disease resistance. However, there were signs that one variety had become more susceptible to brown rust and, if this was following harvest, only one comparator would be used. Dr Oxley will report on the effect of disease on both the affected varieties at the next Board meeting.

The Board noted that the Wheat Committee and the Board would potentially have to decide in November how to deal with recommended varieties where the disease ratings had fallen significantly, possibly below minimum standards, including whether they should come out of trial or be removed from the Recommended List. The Board had a responsibility to consider this taking into account a situation in which a large proportion of the national crop could be in highly susceptible varieties,

There were no other issues arising from the wheat crop committee.

c) Barley, Oats & Other Cereals Crop Committee

The minutes were not available as the meeting had only just taken place. Dr Bolton summarised the proposals and discussions.

Barley:

An issue had arisen due to the incorrect reporting of some net blotch scores in November 2011. Some net blotch scores should have been bracketed in the committee papers as only limited data was available. This had been raised with the RL team by the breeder before the meeting, and the breeder had been assured it was correct as reported. However, on the

2012/13 Recommended List the net blotch rating was bracketed, and the breeder suggested that, had the question of limited data been made clear to the crop committee, the decision for recommendation may have been favourably affected. He requested that the affected variety be reconsidered as a candidate in 2012.

Prof Jellis confirmed that he had apologised for the error and that the system allowed for varieties which had been grown in trials but not recommended to be available for consideration the following year, with the additional year's data being taken into account. All other varieties which had not been recommended in 2012 but had been re-sown were also open to re-consideration in the current year. Dr Jolliffe had been keen that the Board be made aware of the issue and asked that data be double checked in future before release to the crop committees or breeders.

The committee discussed whether sufficient data was now available to set a minimum standard for Ramularia in 2013. There was an ongoing research project and advice was being sought to whether there was sufficient data available with a differentiation in the scores being seen. Prof Jellis requested that Dr Oxley should make a presentation on the Ramularia data at the next Board meeting, and they could then consider whether it would be suitable to set a minimum standard of 3 for 2013, giving the required 12 months' notice.

Dr Bolton reported that there had been a long discussion on how the yield targets and comparators for the market segments should be set following a request from Syngenta to consider abandoning the current policy of setting targets and comparators separately for 6 row hybrid, 6 row non-hybrid and 2 row feed varieties. Syngenta made the case that this prevented the recommendation of new hybrid varieties and proposed a single target and comparators across all crop types within the feed segment, also observing that in their opinion the current trialling system did not allow the full yield potential of hybrids to be realised. After considerable discussion the Committee voted to maintain the status quo but noted that more thought should be given to different ways of dealing with hybrids in trial and in presentation, for example establishing separate trials outside the RL trials to provide additional information on hybrid varieties or a Descriptive List for hybrids. The discussion raised a larger more general concern about how to deal with the increasing number of specialist crop types both in trialling protocols and in decision-making and a presentation on the list and more discussion was needed by the Project Board on this topic. Prof Jellis proposed that the Project Board confirm the Crop Committee view that continuing with the current system would be the best solution but noted that the whole area of changing protocols to best suit crop types needed to be addressed, with detailed discussions to include all issues and all crops. Further discussions will take place at the next Board meeting.

The crop committee had proposed that BaYMV importance at Candidate Selection should be changed from high to medium, to match the level at Recommendation. The Board agreed with this proposal.

The minimum standard for Rhynchosporium will be maintained at 3 for 2012 but reviewed again at the 2013 Planning meeting.

Dr Bolton summarised the proposed changes to criteria and these were agreed by the Board.

#### Oats:

There had been a presentation from the Quoats group and it was agreed that it was too early to incorporate any results from the project into the criteria.

It had been raised that a crop type, Dwarf Oats, would be required in the future and this would be discussed when varieties started to come forward in the system.

Naked Oats were a small segment so the crop committee proposed that a Descriptive List would be more suitable. The Board will consider this at the next Board meeting.

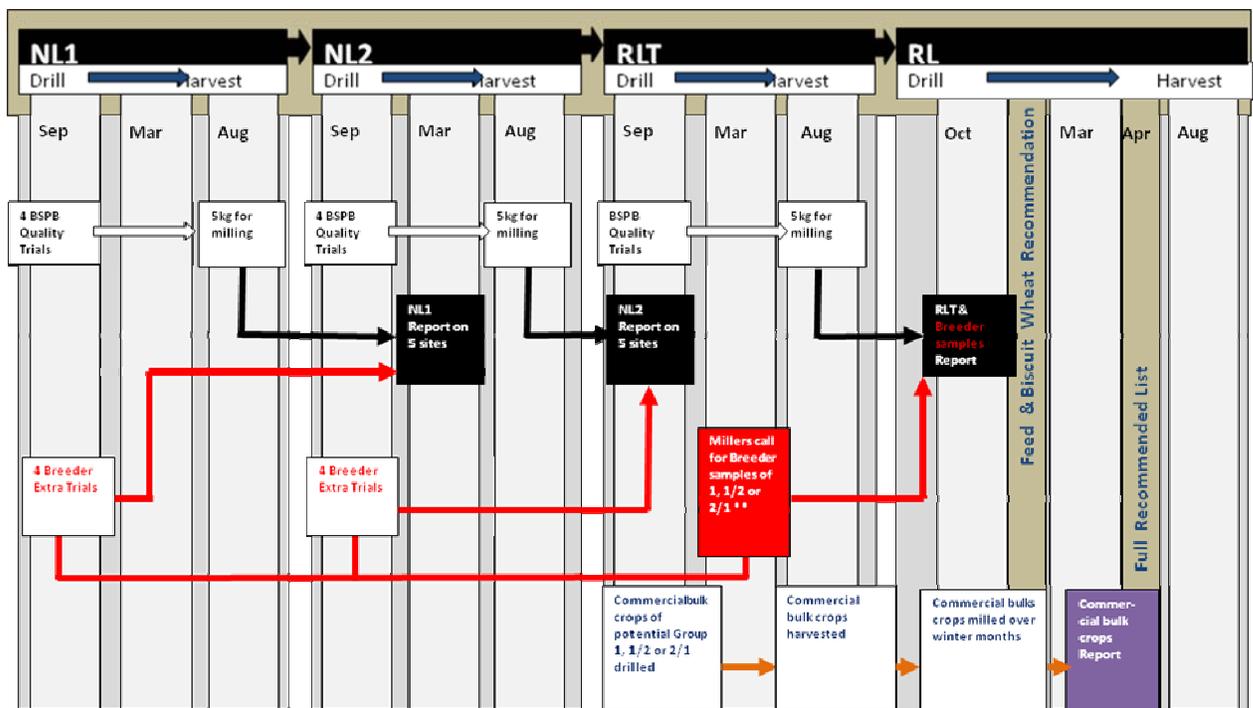
The proposed yield targets and comparators were summarised and the Board agreed with the proposals.

**09/07 Proposed changes to nabim testing**

Mr Andrew Newby made a presentation on the proposed changes to nabim testing. This had been presented to the Wheat committee, and although its direct implications would concern wheat, there are wider implications which would affect decisions made by the RL Project Board.

Prof Jellis thanked Mr Newby for the presentation and opened to the Board for questions. He stated that initially the principal of the enhanced testing should be considered and, if it proved positive, then the timing could be discussed.

The changes to timing are detailed below:



\*\* Millers do not have to mill all samples, only the selected varieties they call for.

Dr Jolliffe clarified that the four additional breeder trials will be run as part of the BSPB Quality trials.

Although only four breeders had been involved in the discussions, all plant breeders had shown support for the proposal.

Mrs Peck confirmed that the Wheat Crop Committee had been interested in the proposal, in particular that the new system had allowed for an improvement in the robustness of data.

However, they were concerned about the timing of the data release. The committee had also questioned the statement that the release of two Recommended Lists would result in less confusion. She was also concerned over how the pool of growers required to grow the commercial bulk crops for testing would be selected and/or managed; whether the system would allow other growers to be considered for the commercial trials; and also whether the objectivity of the decisions could be affected. She also stated that the appeals meetings needed to take place before the List was released.

Dr Jolliffe asked whether there would be a way for the RL to verify the nabim testing and Mr Sharkey confirmed that the variety testing would follow the same protocols as currently and that most of the current work was being completed by four millers. Dr Bolton mentioned that she had been invited to attend the nabim technical meetings to as an observer. She further reported that there had been a change in how the milling and baking tests were procured which would result in the report being sent to HGCA in the first instance, who would be able to check and validate the robustness of the report and data. Dr Jolliffe confirmed that the Recommended List was technically robust but the basis upon which the end users may make their variety decisions was a separate issue. This will lead to a more open system with HGCA having seen all the data.

Mr Taylor was concerned that the publication of two Recommended Lists may diminish the perceived importance of the November decision making meetings.

Prof Jellis confirmed that increasing the amount of data and its validity would result in a more robust Recommended List. The Group 1 varieties being affected only made up circa 15% of the market and were a very small proportion.

Mr Newby underlined the similarity between the proposed new system and the malting barley decisions, and confirmed that there would be no commercial advantage available to growers selected to host the commercial crop trials.

Prof Jellis expressed some concern that releasing data on more than one occasion in a single season may result in confusion and asked whether the barley malting quality tests could be bought forward. However, the quality work was not started until January and the new decisions would not be available until just before Cereals in June. It would have to be made clear that the quality data for both barley and wheat would be released later in the season.

Mr Newby confirmed that the system being proposed had been in use by the Breeders for the past three years, and this was an attempt to get it formalised and make it part of the system. He suggested that varieties not on the Recommended List which commanded a large market share might result in undermining its credibility.

Mrs Peck was concerned that it was difficult to separate the principal of the suggested changes from the timing of the publication of the Recommended List. If the RL Project Board agreed to adopt this proposal, it would be necessary to either split or delay the release of the List which might not be perceived as the best solution for either breeders or the industry.

Dr Bolton asked whether the suggested relationship between the millers and the breeders concerning the Group 1 varieties, might run counter to the competition laws but both Dr Jolliffe and Mr Sharkey considered that the volumes involved would not be significant, there was no pricing aspect involved which may cause issues in this area, and only quality information was being managed. Dr Jolliffe clarified that the proposition would only affect a small number of varieties and these would be the exception to the rule.

Mr Newby suggested that if the system worked well for Group 1 varieties, the working group could begin to consider how it might be applied to include Group 2 varieties, and the increased confidence in the results could prompt more potential Group 1 varieties to come through the system.

The Board considered the suggestion that the web based list included milling varieties which were undergoing testing with the caveat 'to be confirmed', against the group, and judgement would be made on the 'pending' varieties before publication of the final Recommended List. This would follow the same model as the barley malting varieties which encompassed two levels of approval within one year.

Mr Taylor suggested that the varieties 'awaiting approval' would not be purchased by the seed merchants until they had received full approval, and this would effectively undermine the data initially published. The opportunity to hold a wide-scale launch for the new varieties would also be lost.

Prof Jellis clarified that there was support from the Board for the additional data and trials but dispute over whether two versions of the List should be published. Mrs Peck suggested that the List published in November should not include the milling wheat varieties, and these should only be included in the April list when they had gained full approval.

Dr Bolton was concerned that the new system would not work when making candidate selections, because targets and comparators were set from within the market groups and it would not be possible to do this if using a list which included varieties which had not been fully approved.

The discussions continued surrounding the inclusion of varieties on the List which had not been fully approved and for which the data had not been ratified. There was also general concern over the publication of two differing lists in one season. There was certainly some discontent about postponing publication of the final List until April and it was suggested that this would not be agreeable to farmers. However, it was suggested that this List could include detail of new barley varieties which would be fully approved at this stage. The on-line version of the List was a dynamic document and subject to change when new data becomes available, for example when barley malting varieties were approved, so the updated decisions for wheat varieties could be publicised in the same way.

Prof Jellis proposed that nabim should make 'provisional' approval for potential Group 1 varieties, and it would need to be made very clear that the situation could change once tests had been completed. There was concern that wheat varieties which had received provisional approval would be downgraded into a lower group if not fully approved. This did not happen with barley varieties as the judgements were all made within the malting segments. This would require strict guidelines on how these varieties were managed when the full List was published in the Spring. Mr Smith suggested that the proposal be referred to the AHDB Stakeholder Communications team to identify any issues which may arise.

Following some further discussions, Prof Jellis summarised the Board's conclusions as follows:

- The Board were in favour of the additional trials and for trying to obtain more information on which to base decisions and breeders should be advised to sow the additional trials this Autumn;
- There were implications for publishing the List. At the next meeting, the Board will discuss the proposal that that recommendations be made as usual in November

except that Group 1 and borderline Group 1/Group 2 varieties should be given a provisional recommendation which would be confirmed the following spring when the nabim testing was completed and data available;

- Dr Oxley would be updated with the discussions and asked to liaise with the AHDB Stakeholder Communications team on the most effective way of publishing and clarifying the data;
- Mr Taylor was asked to gather feedback from his industry sector;
- Mr Sharkey would liaise with nabim to discuss whether they would be willing to make 'provisional' approvals;
- The wheat crop committee would be given guidance on how targets, varieties and comparators for Group 1 should be handled.

All feedback should be given to the Board at the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

**09/08 Update on Cereals 2013**

This was discussed under item 09/05.

**09/09 Crop Committee rotation**

Dr Bolton had supplied a draft advertisement to recruit for the crop committee vacancies and this was approved by the Board.

**09/10 Publication of minutes for breeders**

The Board agreed that an extra section would be added to the RL Extranet for the minutes to which breeders would be given access and the crop committee minutes would be proof read to identify any confidential issues which would need to be deleted before posting for public viewing.

**09/11 RL Project accounts**

Dr Bolton presented a budget paper showing the detailed expenditure for the project so far, and a projected expenditure until the end of the project term.

**09/12 AOB**

Ms Lawson drew the Board's attention to the tabled list of HGCA publications, and invited members to complete the forms and return them to her should they require any publications they were not already receiving.

The meeting closed at 16:50

Signed..... Date.....