

# UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

## SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY

### *Minutes of the School Safety Committee Virtual Meeting held from Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup>–Saturday 26th August 2017*

**Invited to participate**

Alan Aitken [RAA] (Chair)  
Eli Zysman-Colman [EZC]  
Chris Goodsell [CG]  
Magnus Alphey [MA]  
Paul Connor [PAC]  
Iain Smellie [IAS]  
Brian Walker [BW]  
Iona Hutchison [ILH]  
Carolyn Busby [CMB]  
Andrea Burke [AB]  
Terry Smith [TKS]  
Garry Muir (GM)

#### 1. Apologies

Eli Zysman-Colman, Andrea Burke.

#### 1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

(RAA)

(3a) Sharepoint – The system should soon be available to us and RAA is passing to Fraser Kirk a list of the information we would wish to hold on each person with a view to hopefully having the system up and running by the end of the calendar year.

(RAA)

(3b-ii) - RAA had provided a large plastic drum for PAC to use in the PGB glove box disposal.

(PAC)

Drum is being filled and will be ready for collection soon. Care needs to be taken as some samples are pyrophoric.

(3c) Syringe disposal – Confirmation has been received from EHSS that there is no longer any need to dispose of syringes via sharps and an email to this effect was sent to all personnel by RAA on 7th August with the Section 11.7 of the Safety Handbook altered at the same time.

#### 2. Roof fire on 6th July

(RAA)

A serious electrical fire occurred on the NE wing roof in the early hours of 6th July. This was fortunately spotted by a security patrol and extinguished by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, advised and assisted by RAA and Helen Mackie (Estates). Various important points have come out of the resulting enquiries. (1) Out of hours janitors need to be able to unlock every door in the University in case of emergency. In this case two separate doors had to be forced open by the Fire Service resulting in a waste of precious time. This includes any commercial companies who may occupy rooms in our buildings. (2) Out of hours janitors need to be made aware of the location of all sign-in books in each

building so they can notify the Fire Service of personnel present in the event of a fire (this is being followed up on a whole-university basis). (3) The emergency contact numbers held by Out of hours office were out of date and for example REM was called in because of his former position as Director of Operations. This has hopefully now been resolved and the new contact details provided by Head of School's Office.

Although there was no damage within the building, fume cupboard ducts were completely destroyed serving rooms 164 (RJMG), 223 (JTSI) and SASOL (463, 475) so these are out of action until replacement can be completed. In addition FC service to rooms 165 and 166 (NJW) was off as a precaution due to minor damage but this has been repaired allowing them to be switched back on on 9th August.

(PAC)

Is there a time frame for the repairs to the extraction systems? We need to plan lab space and ensure COSHH forms have the correct rooms etc.

(CG)

To update, Estates are still acquiring costs for the replacement of the roof and extraction equipment. Although the extraction equipment has been costed the roof has to go out to tender by instruction of the insurers. Prospective roofing companies have been to inspect the roof and tender returns are expected soon. Once all the costs have been agreed by the insurers the work can begin. Although there was regular maintenance on this equipment, it has become clear that a more formalised maintenance regime is needed. I am working on this alongside proposals for enhanced training on Local Exhaust Ventilation. We have learnt several valuable lessons from this incident and steps are being taken to rectify these weaknesses. Unfortunately I am unable to give a timescale on this work until such time as the insurers authorise it.

### **3. Gas Monitors**

(BW)

I wish to add Gas alarms in the dept to the agenda of the next safety meeting. I have installed a number of Fixed Gas Alarms (mainly oxygen depletion) and have also been asked to take a look at a number of faulty portable units and fixed gas alarm systems

Contractors have also installed many of these fixed units and the I am aware that a number of these have been modified to perform automatic shut down by closing valves which feed the gas - PAC can advise. At a previous meeting John Smith advised that Estates should be responsible for arranging maintenance and servicing of all these systems – so wish to ensure CG is aware of this

I also wish to discuss the subject of periodic testing and use by dates etc on the gas alarms.

(RAA)

This seems to be clearly an Estates issue, which should be pursued by CG, assisted where necessary by BW and PAC.

(PAC)

The fixed systems are usually looked after/tested by estates. The portable ones are not, but still require regular testing and replacement. The users may not know or care about this.

(CG)

I have spoken with Brian and we have agreed to do an audit of existing fixed systems and to reconcile this with the list held by estates. We can then determine if we are properly maintaining all of the systems.

### **4. Annual safety inspections**

(RAA)

I must apologise for the fact that the detailed reports have not yet been sent to supervisors. Any items of immediate concern (there were very few) have been acted upon but compiling the large number of hand-written sheets into a report for each supervisor will be completed by the end of September.

## **5. Composition of committee**

(RAA)

Would it be useful to have representatives of Postdocs, PG students, or even UG students on the committee? If so how should they be chosen?

(suggestions welcome)

## **6. Poster Boards in corridors**

(RAA)

Following a suggestion at the PG Committee RAA and Suzanne Duff had completed a survey of the chemistry buildings and have prepared a complete list of the location and content of each poster board. The provision of these is already above what is strictly allowed by fire regulations and there is no prospect of installing new ones.

## **7. AOCB**

(MA)

Just a brief note about ensuring external doors are properly closed. Specifically, I found the fire door near the Westwood/Goss groups open the other day. It is in a quiet part of the complex. Coincidentally the Annex and Purdie had an intruder on that day. The door/intruder were not related, but highlights the importance of ensuring that the buildings are kept secure. I expect the intruder got into the building by tailgating someone.

(RAA)

These security matters will be emphasised in the upcoming annual Safety Talks that have been arranged for 15th and 29th Sept.

(end of discussion).