

# ASTON UNIVERSITY

## HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009

|                      |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| <b>Present</b>       | Mr Richard Middleton (in the Chair for Items 09/001-09/016)<br>Mr Jeremy Batt<br>Dr George Drahun<br>Ms Jane Filby<br>Dr Joanne Gough<br>Mr Kevin Hughes<br>Mr Mike Kirkman<br>Mr Steve Ludlow<br>Dr Nick Smith<br>Mr Keith Thomas<br>Mr Andrew Williams | Mr Gareth Evans (in the Chair for Items 09/017-09/021)<br>Miss Darnette Cowan<br>Mr Garry East<br>Mr Jim Finucane<br>Mr Alan Hawkesworth<br>Ms Rose Hunt<br>Mr Adrian Lowe<br>Mr Gary Moulder<br>Ms Kerstin Taylor<br>Mrs Elaena Wells |
| <b>Apologies</b>     | Ms Lynnette Jones<br>Ms Michele McGrath<br>Mr Malcolm Tonks<br>Mr Andrew Vickers   | Ms Di Lacey<br>Dr Ann Morton<br>Ms Karen Toon<br>Mr David White  |
| <b>By Invitation</b> | Prof Peter Lambert (in connection with Item 09/010)  |  |
| <b>In Attendance</b> | Mrs Megan Jones  |  |

### APOLOGIES

- 09/001 Noted: 1. Apologies were received from the Head of Health & Safety (HHS) who was absent on paternity leave. Members offered their congratulations to him on the birth of his son.

### MEMBERSHIP

- 09/002 Noted: 1. An individual had been identified as a potential lay member of the Health & Safety Committee (HSC). This proposal was to go before Council on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009, with approval expected to be in place before the next meeting of the HSC.  
**[Action: Deputy Secretary]**

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 27<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2008

- 09/003 Resolved: 1. The Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

## MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

### Waste Skips

- 09/004 Noted: 1. Functionality of the East access gates had been improved through reducing the weight, and consideration was being given to provision of a pedestrian gate or an assisted drive mechanism.
- Noted: 2. There are many smokers who use this route rather than the designated building exits, which is a potential hazard if cigarette stubs are thrown into or near the skips.
- Resolved: 1. Further improvement to the functionality of the access gates, will be investigated and a report made at the next HSC meeting. **[Action: Estates Manager]**
- Resolved: 2. The non-smoking policy should be enforced effectively in all areas of the University by any member of staff who observes a breach of regulations; in particular, an investigation to be made into limiting use of this exit, and no-smoking signs to be put up near the waste skips. **[Action: Estates Manager]**

### Noticeboards

- 09/005 Noted: 1. The revised policy document had now been circulated to members. This matter is now closed.

### University Radiation Safety Policy

- 09/006 Noted: 1. The revised policy had been distributed among relevant members of staff by the Site Radiation Officer (SRO), and a monitoring system was in place to record that they had read and accepted it. This matter is now closed.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- 09/007 Noted: 1. A detailed procedure had been drafted for waste auditing, recycling and waste streams, and the Environmental & Sustainability Manager would report this to members prior to the next HSC meeting. **[Action: Environmental & Sustainability Manager]**

## AUDIT OF SPORT AND RECREATION

- 09/008 Noted: 1. Issues outstanding on the audit report had been actioned and completed, with one item of work in progress for relocation of the diesel storage tank, whilst ongoing discussions on lone working had been taken up on a University-wide basis. This item was now complete with the exception of these two issues and detailed feedback had previously been given to the Health & Safety Audit Group (HSAG).
- Noted: 2. The Head of Sport & Recreation had obtained a quotation from Estates & Facilities for moving the diesel storage tank, and this work should be completed within the next four to six weeks.
- Noted: 3. An interim solution to issues of lone workers had been found through reporting procedures, pending the outcome of a bid for increased funding for additional staff.
- Noted: 4. The only risk assessments outstanding were for specialist grounds areas, and these would be completed by the end of January 2009. **[Action: M Kirkman, M McGrath]**
- Resolved: 1. Issues relating to lone working also arose in other Schools and Departments, and this would be considered as a specific agenda item at a future meeting of the HSC. **[Action: Safety Office]**
- Resolved: 2. Reports on progress in relation to moving the diesel storage tanks to be given at the next meeting of the HSC. **[Action: M McGrath]**

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- 09/009 Received: 1. A progress report from the working group on the introduction of an emergency incident management system (Agendum 5.3a).
- Received: 2. A progress report from the Risk & Insurance Officer (RIO) on 'flu pandemic planning.
- Noted: 1. Nominations had been received for a total of 26 senior staff to act on the rota of Emergency Incident Managers. This would equate to 2 periods of duty per year, with a robust hand-over procedure to be organised through the Chief Operating Officer's Office.

- Noted: 2. The Emergency Incident Management System was planned to take effect at the start of the summer term, subject to Executive approval and training for the staff involved. This was to be an additional out-of-hours central contact responsibility, and the normal security procedures would continue to be followed at all other times.
- Noted: 3. An initial meeting of the working group on 'flu pandemic planning had taken place on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2009, to consider guidance from regulatory bodies and produce a draft procedure. The draft procedure would be discussed with the Safety Office and the working group would then prepare a further report for the next HSC meeting, to include a timetable for finalisation of the procedure. **[Action: RIO]**

## STUDENTS' GUILD HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT

- 09/010 Received: 1. The final report from the HSAG audit team on the audit completed in December 2008 (Agendum 5.4a).
- Noted: 1. The HSC recognised the efforts made by the Guild General Manager (GGM) and sabbatical staff, and also the support contributed by the HHS, which all had a huge impact in turning round a previously embarrassing and potentially dangerous situation.
- Noted: 2. A comprehensive health & safety system has been put in place, with 2-monthly meetings, an annual plan and a new health & safety policy which is now being finalised. Membership of the local Health & Safety Group had been expanded to include all areas of activity within the Guild, particularly the catering operations.
- Noted: 3. Safe operating procedure assessments were being produced, with final completion expected by the end of February, and the "techie" training was being updated to reinstate the technical test.
- Noted: 4. An inspection by Estates & Facilities had confirmed that there was no concern about asbestos in the ceiling panels, and quotations had been obtained so that work could now be carried out to make the ceilings complete and improve the lighting.
- Noted: 5. Now that the Catering Operations Manager had been formally included in the Guild's health & safety structure, he would be able to play an effective part in ensuring risk assessments were completed appropriately for Guild events.

- Resolved: 1. A quotation for £13k had been obtained for resurfacing the carpark, and if Birmingham City University (BCU) did not respond promptly to a request for repairs then Estates would have the work carried out and charge it to BCU.  
**[Action: Estates Manager]**
- Resolved: 2. Further investigation would be made into the work needed for the 1<sup>st</sup> floor disabled fire refuge, and a report circulated to members prior to the next meeting.  
**[Action: Estates Manager]**
- Resolved: 3. Support would continue to be provided to the Guild by the HHS, with the deadline extended to the end of the current Spring Term (sooner if this can be achieved). This matter would remain as a standing item on the agenda until the HSC is satisfied that full responsibility could rest with the GGM and staff.  
**[Action: HHS, GGM]**
- Resolved: 4. The Guild Health & Safety Group should continue to meet every two months with feedback presented to the HSC and HSAG.  
**[Action: GGM]**

#### **HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT GROUP (HSAG)**

- 09/011 Noted: 1. The HSC expressed appreciation to Professor Peter Lambert for his outstanding efforts as Chair of the HSAG, including his valuable contribution in implementing much-needed reforms to the work of the Audit Group as a whole, and in particular its reporting systems.
- Noted: 2. Dr Andrew Sutherland will take over as Chair of the HSAG for one year in the first instance, with effect from the meeting scheduled to take place on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009. He has a letter from the Vice-Chancellor giving him full authority from the University Executive to fulfil his responsibilities in this role, and members are to take this message back to their individual Schools and Departments.  
**[Action: HSC Members]**
- Noted: 3. As it would be inappropriate for the new Chair of the HSAG to oversee the imminent audit in Engineering & Applied Sciences, Professor Peter Lambert will continue to oversee completion of that particular audit.



- Noted: 2. A student had suffered a minor injury through spillage of sulphuric acid, while not wearing the correct personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Noted: 3. Two incidents in the maintenance department may have been through inadequate guards on machinery, or inappropriate behaviour in using machinery.
- Resolved: 1. The LHS Health & Safety Technician would investigate this specific incident of acid spillage, and all HSC members should check in their respective areas that accidents and incidents are recorded locally, so that causes could be investigated and any remedial action or preventive measures taken. **[Action: J Gough, HSC Members]**
- Resolved: 2. Investigation would be carried out in Estates to identify the background of the accidents to maintenance staff, and take any action required. **[Action: Estates Manager]**
- Resolved: 3. The accident reporting system would be extended to ensure that all incidents logged in the Safety Office were reported back to the designated health & safety representative in the relevant School or Department. A flow-chart would be presented at the next meeting to demonstrate the accident and incident reporting procedure. **[Action: Safety Office]**

## **ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

- 09/014 Received: 1. The final draft of the 2007/08 Health and Safety Annual Report to the Council (Agendum 5.8a)
- Noted: 1. This report had been passed by the Executive and was endorsed by the HSC, with thanks to the Safety Office team for their efforts in preparing it. The report was now to be presented to the Council meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009. **[Action: Deputy Secretary]**

## **ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY VISITS/CORRESPONDENCE**

- 09/015 Received: 1. An update on the arrangements for space heating within the University premises.
- Received: 2. A verbal report from the SRO regarding disposal of open source material.

- Noted: 1. The revised space heating policy had been reviewed by Estates & Facilities, in consultation with the HHS, and was now ready to sign off. This matter was now closed.
- Noted: 2. Full information had now been collated to identify which open source materials would be retained for a further 12 months and which were due for disposal.
- Noted: 3. Disposal of sources would be carried out under a Variation of the University's existing Authorisation, once a radiological assessment had been completed and a time-frame given by the Environment Agency.
- Resolved: 1. Estates & Facilities would provide the SRO with details of waterflow in the University to complete the radiological assessment, and the SRO would seek confirmation from the Environment Agency on a final date for completion of disposal under the Variation to the existing Authorisation. The full disposal process should be complete by November 2009, and would be monitored closely by the Safety Office, with progress updates provided to the HSC at future meetings.

**[Action: Estates Manager, SRO, Safety Office]**

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING**

- 09/016 Received: 1. A verbal report from the ASA on the current arrangements for provision of health and safety related training to staff.
- Noted: 1. The HHS had now been accredited as an Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) trainer, and a programme would be prepared in advance of the next meeting outlining delivery of the IOSH "Working Safely" course to internal staff. **[Action: HHS]**
- Noted: 2. EAS had produced a report on their generic and specialist training requirements for staff.
- Noted: 3. There was an additional need to offer the IOSH "Managing Safely" course, particularly in Conference Aston where a number of staff were due to undertake the refresher training before validity of their qualification expired.
- Noted: 4. Training for the University Executive Team, concerning its health & safety responsibilities, was still in progress. A review will be made once it has been completed, and presented to the HSC at a future meeting.

**[Action: Safety Office]**

- Resolved: 1. Remaining Schools and Departments would establish what levels and types of training are required and report back to the next meeting. While guidance on generic topics could be made available through the Safety Office, it was recognised that there would be specialist topics in individual Schools and Departments, who should investigate and identify these locally. **[Action: HSC Members]**
- Resolved: 2. Information would be obtained from IOSH on their requirements for accrediting staff to deliver the “Managing Safely” course and refresher training. **[Action: Safety Office]**

### **REPORT OF THE RADIOLOGICAL SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE**

- 09/017 Received: 1. The Minutes from the last meeting of the Radiological Safety Sub-Committee (RSSC), held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008 (Agendum 6).
- Noted: 1. An invitation would be made to Estates & Facilities to recommend a member to join the RSSC. **[Action: HHS]**
- Noted: 2. There was incomplete data available on the required annual testing of fume cupboards.
- Noted: 3. Remedial work was in progress on the leaking pipework from MB324A where damage had resulted in offices below on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. This was ahead of schedule and should be completed in February 2009.
- Noted: 4. The HSC commended the revised format of the Minutes, which included a summary Action Plan, which would be presented, by way of a standing item, at each future meeting of the Committee, to include an update on items outstanding. **[Action: SRO]**
- Resolved: 1. Details of fume cupboard tests already completed in radiation-areas by Estates & Facilities in 2008 would be provided to the SRO, who would combine these with details from any School or Department who had arranged testing independently and produce a report for the next HSC meeting to demonstrate that the required standards in such areas were being met. **[Action: Estates Manager, SRO, G Faulks, J Gough, S Ludlow, A Richardson]**

Resolved: 2. A programme of future fume cupboard testing in all relevant areas across the University would be co-ordinated through Estates & Facilities, with a maintenance check carried out in advance and test results issued to the relevant School or Department and, where appropriate, copied to the SRO. This programme would be presented to the HSC at the next meeting. **[Action: Estates Manager, G Faulks, SRO]**

Resolved: 3. An inspection would be undertaken by Estates & Facilities of sinks/pipework in areas other than those involving the disposal of hazardous materials, to identify any areas which might require attention, and a progress report made to the HSC at the next meeting. **[Action: Estates Manager]**

#### **NEW HSE STRATEGY**

09/018 Received: 1. A new HSE Strategy document and UCEA consultation paper (Agendum 7).

Noted: 1. There was a unique aspect of health & safety to be addressed, as the University was not simply a normal workplace but also a living community, with recreational activities as well.

Resolved: 1. Individual Schools and Departments would submit their comments to the Safety Office team, who would co-ordinate a response by 13<sup>th</sup> February 2009. A formal representation of the University sector with the HSE would also be recommended. **[Action: HSC Members, Safety Office]**

#### **REPORTS FROM SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS**

09/019 Received: 1. Minutes of local Health and Safety Committee/Group meetings from the following Schools/Departments:-

Conference Aston/catering@aston  
Human Resources  
LIS  
LHS

Resolved: 1. Conference Aston/catering@aston:  
(a) Hotel regulations require night staff to have 6-monthly fire safety training. This would be reviewed by the University Fire Safety Adviser (UFSA) on his return to work.

**[Action: UFSA]**

(b) Essential gas equipment repairs were required in the main University kitchens on Main Building 6<sup>th</sup> floor, at a cost of £12k. The HSC strongly recommended that this work be carried out, with budget allocations to be discussed between Estates & Facilities and the Chief Operating Officer's Office. **[Action: Estates Manager, COO]**

Resolved: 2. Human Resources:

A review of the communication system for lone workers in the basement was in hand and the HHS had been invited to attend the next meeting.

**[Action: Director of Human Resources, HHS]**

Resolved: 3. LHS:

A small working group would consider the safety implications of personal media players, in line with the procedures followed at other institutions, and issue appropriate guidance. **[Action: ASA, J Gough, R Hunt]**

Resolved: 4. LIS:

Actions arising out of the Chubb fire safety assessment and recent fire drill reports would be reviewed with the UFSA on his return to work. **[Action: UFSA, LIS Director]**

Resolved: 5. Those Departments which had not submitted reports from their local Health & Safety Committee/Group were to be reminded that this is now a requirement for every HSC meeting. The Safety Office would maintain a register of local health & safety group meeting schedules, including a record of when minutes are due to be submitted to the HSC, and this would be presented at each future meeting of the Committee. **[Action: HSC Members, Safety Office]**

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

09/020 Noted: 1. The new "EasySite" version of the Safety Office webpages is now online at <http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/safety/>. Further development work is being undertaken and a formal launch of the webpages is planned for 1<sup>st</sup> March 2009.

Noted: 2. A procedure has been established by the Head of Security to ensure that Matthew Boulton College students are only permitted to use the Gem Sports Hall facilities for tutor-led activities.

Resolved: 1. As part of the ongoing investigation into risk assessment software, consideration will be given to implementing a library of standard risk assessments and safe operating procedures. **[Action: Safety Office]**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

09/021 The next meeting will be held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at 10.00am in the Council Room.

### ACTION SUMMARY

| <b>Topic</b>                | <b>Minute</b> | <b>Resolutions</b>   | <b>Actions</b>   |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--|--|
| Membership                  | 09/002        | Proposal for the appointment of a lay HSC member to be submitted to the University Council on 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009.   | Deputy Secretary   |
| Environmental Issues        | 09/007        | The Environmental & Sustainability Manager will circulate the draft procedure for waste auditing, recycling and waste streams to members prior to the next meeting.  | Environmental & Sustainability Manager                     |
| Waste Skips                 | 09/004        | Improved functionality of the East access gates (to the "A" corner, lower ground), such as installing a postern gate, will be investigated further.<br><br>Limiting the use of this exit will be investigated, and no-smoking signs put up near the waste skips.   | Estates Manager<br><br>Estates Manager                     |
| Audit of Sport & Recreation | 09/008        | Risk assessments outstanding to be completed by the end of January 2009.<br><br>Issues relating to lone working also arose in other Schools & Departments, and this is a priority area which needs to be addressed at a future meeting.<br><br>Report on progress of ongoing work in Relocating the diesel storage tanks to be made at the next meeting.   | M Kirkman, M McGrath<br><br>Safety Office<br><br>M McGrath |
| Crisis Management           | 09/009        | Report on the 'flu pandemic planning to be made at the next meeting, to include a timetable for finalisation of the procedure.   | RIO  |
| Students' Guild H&S Audit   | 09/010        | Further investigation to be made into provision of a 1 <sup>st</sup> floor disabled refuge, and a report circulated to members prior to the next meeting.<br><br>Support from the HHS to be provided to the Guild until the end of the spring term and this item to remain on the agenda until the HSC is satisfied that full responsibility can rest with the GGM and staff.<br><br>The Guild H&S Group should continue to meet every 2 months with feedback presented to the HSC & HSAG. | Estates Manager<br><br>HHS, GGM<br><br>GGM                 |

|  |        |   |   |
|--|--------|---|---|
| Health & Safety Audit Group                  | 09/011 | Members are to advise their respective Schools and Departments of the appointment of the new Chair of the HSAG, Dr Andrew Sutherland, and reinforce the message that he has the full authority of the University Executive in fulfilling his role.  | HSC Members   |
| Fire Safety                                  | 09/012 | <p>Fire warden training to be delivered to new volunteers in CEAC during February, followed by an unannounced fire drill.</p> <p>An email is to be sent to all staff who have not yet undertaken the fire awareness course, and a further reminder to Heads of Schools and Departments reminding them that attendance is mandatory; members to reinforce this message locally.</p> <p>A plan is to be produced for fire emergency procedures between ABS and Conference Aston, including co-ordination with existing security-supported procedures, and reported to the next meeting.</p> | <p>HHS</p> <p>HHS, HSC Members</p> <p>Conference General Manager, ABS Secretary</p> |
| Accident & Incident Reports                  | 09/013 | <p>All members to check in their respective areas that accidents and incidents are recorded and investigated locally; the LHS H&amp;S Technician to investigate the incident of acid spillage.</p> <p>Estates will investigate the accidents to maintenance staff and take any action required.</p> <p>The accident reporting system will be revised to ensure that the designated H&amp;S representative in the local School or Department is notified; a flow-chart of the full revised procedure will be presented at the next meeting.</p>  | <p>HSC Members</p> <p>J Gough</p> <p>Estates Manager</p> <p>Safety Office</p>       |
| Annual Health & Safety Report                | 09/014 | Annual Report to be presented to the University Council on 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009.   | Deputy Secretary  |
| Enforcement Authority Visits/ Correspondence | 09/015 | Estates to provide the SRO with details of waterflow within the University, to complete the required radiological assessment.   | Estates Manager   |

|   |        |  |   |
|---|--------|--|---|
|   |        | The SRO will seek confirmation from the Environment Agency for the final date for completion of disposal under the proposed Variation to the existing Authorisation, and the disposal process to be monitored closely by the Safety Office with progress updates to the HSC at future meetings.  | SRO<br><br>Safety Office  |
| Health & Safety Training                        | 09/016 | <p>Review of training for the University Executive Team to be considered at a future meeting.</p> <p>With the exception of EAS, who have already submitted their requirements, Schools and Departments would report back to the next meeting on levels and types of training required.</p> <p>The IOSH "Working Safely" course programme will be prepared in advance of the next meeting. Information to be sought from IOSH on requirements for accrediting trainers for the "Managing Safely" course.</p>  | Safety Office<br><br>HSC Members<br><br>HHS   |
| Report of the Radiological Safety Sub-Committee | 09/017 | <p>Estates will be invited to recommend a member to join the RSSC.</p> <p>The action summary from the minutes will be presented at future meetings with an update on items outstanding.</p> <p>Fume cupboard test results in radiation-areas for 2008 will be provided to the SRO, who will combine these with independent test results from LHS, and report back to the next meeting to demonstrate that the required standards are being met.</p> <p>A programme of future fume cupboard testing in all relevant areas will be co-ordinated through Estates, to include a maintenance check carried out in advance, and test results issued locally and, where appropriate, copied to the SRO; this programme will be presented at the next meeting.</p> | HHS<br><br>SRO<br><br>Estates Manager, SRO, G Faulks, J Gough, S Ludlow, A Richardson<br><br>Estates Manager, G Faulks, SRO |

|                                    |        |  |   |
|------------------------------------|--------|--|---|
|                                    |        | Estates will inspect sinks/pipework in areas other than those involving the disposal of hazardous materials, to identify any areas which may need attention, and a progress report made to the next meeting.   | Estates Manager   |
| New HSE Strategy                   | 09/018 | Individual School and Department comments on the new HSE Strategy and UCEA consultation paper to be submitted to the Safety Office by 6 <sup>th</sup> February; formal representation of the University sector within the HSE to be recommended.   | HSC Members, Safety Office  |
| Reports from Schools & Departments | 09/019 | <p>Conference Aston:</p> <p>Fire Safety training for night staff to be reviewed, in the light of hotel regulations.</p> <p>Essential gas repairs to the MB 6<sup>th</sup> floor kitchen equipment to be carried out immediately, and budget allocations discussed with the COO.</p> <p>Human Resources:</p> <p>Communication system for lone workers in the basement is in hand, and the HHS has been invited to attend the next meeting of the HR H&amp;S Group.</p> <p>LHS:</p> <p>The safety implications of personal media players will be investigated by a small working group and appropriate guidance issued.</p> <p>LIS:</p> <p>Actions arising out of the Chubb fire safety assessment and recent fire drill reports will be reviewed with the UFSA on his return to work.</p> | <p>UFSA</p> <p>Estates Manager, COO</p> <p>Director of Human Resources, HHS</p> <p>ASA, J Gough, R Hunt</p> <p>UFSA, LIS Director</p> |

|                    |        |  |                            |
|--------------------|--------|--|----------------------------|
|                    |        | <p>General:</p> <p>Departments which had not submitted reports from their local H&amp;S Committee/Group are to be reminded that this is now a requirement for every future HSC meeting; the Safety Office will maintain, and present at each future meeting, a register of local H&amp;S group meeting schedules, including a record of when minutes are due to be submitted to the HSC.</p> | HSC Members, Safety Office |
| Any Other Business | 09/020 | As part of the ongoing investigation into risk assessment software, consideration will be given to implementing a library of standard risk assessments and safe operating procedures.  | Safety Office              |