

Protein and Peptide Science Group of the Royal Society of Chemistry

Minutes of a Committee meeting held at 1 pm on Wednesday 29 August 2007, UEA, Norwich

Present

Brian Austen (Chair), Brent Irvine (Secretary), Parvez Haris (Treasurer), Weng Chan, Roger Epton, Robin Leatherbarrow, John Offer, Steven Ratcliffe, Lindsay Sawyer, Ram Sharma, John Wade. The Chair welcomed Dr John Offer to his first meeting.

1. Apologies

Kevin Howland, Jennifer Jamieson, Corinne Kay, Gordon Roberts, Paul Sheppard, Alethea Tabor.

2. Minutes of the last Committee meeting (7 April 2007)

The numbering in the minutes should be corrected to read items 9 and 10 rather than 9 and 9. The corrected minutes were accepted.

3. Matters arising not on the agenda

PS had sent a detailed email along the lines of the following comments (*italics*) followed by our discussion thereof (*plain text*):

Item 3/12 Artwork based on the PPSG banner has been prepared as a bookmark, only requiring final tweaking and committee approval prior to printing. The cost for a print run of 2000 is £400 (a lesser number of copies will be no cheaper).

It was thought that if the RSC can selectively add the bookmark to its mailing to group members we might need to order more than 2000 – perhaps 5000 - as this would be relatively cheaper. The list of members is available to the Group Secretary but mailing might be difficult to arrange - BI to find out.

Action BI

Item 6 Having attended both of the peptide meetings that Peter White and Weng Chan have organised under the auspices of Merck/Novabiochem, PWS firmly believes that this meeting should continue and is exactly the sort of meeting that the PPSG ought to be arranging and funding irrespective of any Merck involvement. With attendance at around 100 this is a very successful little meeting that should be encouraged to continue as it demonstrates the continued interest in peptides at the synthetic level. In the absence of Merck sponsorship PWS has suggested that BIOMOL might provide funding so that the meeting could continue with Weng Chan as organiser. PWS wished to encourage fellow committee members to discuss what possibilities there are for the meeting to be taken over and run by the PPSG thereby raising the profile of the group and demonstrating its value and contribution to the peptide community within the UK as a whole.

WC spoke about this. He was keen to build on PS's suggestions and to keep the meeting going under whichever of these arrangements was feasible. The committee agreed that this was desirable.

Item 9(e) PWS had not communicated with John Wade about the PPSG banner being exhibited at the Oz Peptide Meeting but will sort something out with him prior to the meeting. The cost for shipping the banner via courier to/from Cairns is of the order of £90.00.

RS volunteered to take the banner to Australia, to the first satellite meeting. JW would then take it to the main meeting and could have it shipped back for a reasonable cost.

Action RS/JW

Item 10 Omission - There is no such item appearing in the minutes.

Minutes have been corrected.

Item 14 - part 1 PWS reiterated his feeling expressed at a previous meeting that the PPSG committee needs to clearly define its purpose in life via the development of a clear

strategy and provided his thoughts on the matter. PWS sought the consideration of this matter by the Committee.

BA reminded the committee that at the last committee meeting PS had broached the topic of a clear strategy for the Group, and had suggested meeting for a day to develop this. However, BA did not believe this would be easy to organise or be well attended, and suggested that, as a starting point, he should write a vision statement and a mission statement and circulate these to the committee members for their input. RE suggested that PS might have valuable input into this as he had already put forward good ideas in his email.

Action BA

Item 14 - part 2/Item 11 on Agenda PWS felt that a meeting on PTMs other than phosphorylation could be hugely attractive; however, expressed concern whether such a breadth of subject matter could be covered in a single day symposium. As he is deeply immersed in this subject area he is able to provide information and assistance if required but cannot dedicate time to the organisation of such a meeting at this stage.

This was discussed under item 4.

4. Chairman's Business

BA reported on the Biochemical Society Theme Panel II meeting in Glasgow in July. This meeting would be the last big annual Biochemical Society summer meeting. In future they would be seeking more topics for focussed meetings. One area that was up-and-running was the next Annual Symposium on "Structure and Function in Cell Adhesion" in December 2007. We need to fit peptides into this and GR was taking this forward. Other possible topics include "Enzymes that operate in association with lipids", for example gamma-secretase and signal processing enzymes.

RL discussed arranging a meeting on Post Translation Modifications, as suggested by PS (see above under item 3). Focussed meetings can run for 1 to 3 or even 4 days, but here was also a possibility of running several one-day meetings, each on a separate type of modification. These had the advantage of requiring much less organisation for accommodation etc. RL would discuss this with AT and report back. A possible venue would be UCL.

Action RL

RS suggested a meeting on Peptide Inhibitors of Signalling Pathways. BA suggested he should fill in the Biochemical Society application form by their October deadline.

Action RS

5. Finances

BI had contacted the RSC about non receipt of our subventions for the past two years, and PH reported that he had now received these (about £2000 per year). We currently have a balance of £1823.

6. Web Matters

BA had recently sent an email to RE about putting a self-registration form to be put on the PPSG webpage, but RE had been away and not yet seen it.

BI reported that he had prepared the Group's Annual Report for 2006 and put it on the RSC website.

7. New Handbook for RSC Groups

As Group secretary, BI had been sent a copy of a new RSC handbook with information on how Groups should operate. He passed this on to BA to give to KH, who will take over at the end of the year as the new Group Secretary. The handbook is also available on the RSC website at <http://www.rsc.org/Membership/Networking/InterestGroups/handbook/>

8. Election of representative to attend CBF Annual Meeting 10.30 to 12.30 on 21 September in Burlington House.

RL agreed to go to this, and BI is to forward his name to Pip Bell.

Action BI/RL

9. Reports from Past Meetings

BA noted that the Group has been very active this year with the following five meetings having been organised:

a) New Approaches for Elucidating Protease Biology and Therapeutic Opportunities, 4-6 January, 2007, RAC, Cirencester Report on web at <http://www.ppsg.org.uk/cirencester.htm>

b) Cell penetrating peptides, 9-11 May 2007, Telford
BA had already circulated a report on this meeting.

c) Chemistry & Biology of Peptides 2007, 6 July 2007, Oxford
WC had not yet finished writing the one-page report but the meeting had been successful with 100 delegates and 9 speakers, most of whom presented new but unpublished work. WC is keen to continue this meeting (see also item 3 above), possibly moving to Nottingham next year. He would like to get funding to bring a US speaker such as Tom Muir from the Rockefeller University, New York.

d) Protein-protein interactions: latest advances in biophysical and theoretical approaches, Glasgow, 11 July 2007. See item 4 above.

e) *9th International Symposium Solid Phase Synthesis: Complementary Solution Methods & Combinatorial Libraries*, in U.E.A, Norwich 28 Aug -1 Sept 2007

The committee congratulated RE on his organisation for the Norwich meeting, at which our committee meeting was currently being held. RE reported that all the invited speakers had come and there were about 110 delegates. The meeting was going well and UEA had proven to be a good campus.

10. Forthcoming Meetings

a) 4th International Peptide Symposium & 7th Australian Peptide Symposium
21 - 26 October, 2007, CAIRNS

JW reported that this had required a lot of organisation as it involved several different international societies. 700-800 delegates are expected to attend and 600 have already registered so far. The main meeting is supplemented by 4 satellite meetings, on Protein Misfolding, Solid Phase synthesis and Chemical Ligation. The fourth, on Peptidomimetics, may have to be incorporated into the main meeting. The proceeding will be published online rather than as hardcopy. For the future, there are ongoing discussions with a number of countries in Asia and the Pacific to enable a rotating 3-year cycle of peptide meetings in America, Europe and Australia/Asia.

b) A draft proposal on Peptides as contrast Imaging agents for MRI and PET for the IUPCA Congress in Glasgow on 3-7 August 2009 had been circulated by BA.

11. Suggestions for Future Meetings

This had already been discussed under item 4 above.

12. Committee Membership

Not discussed

13. Any Other Business

None

14. Date of Next Meeting

LS suggested having this in the Wellcome Building at 215 Euston Road to coincide with an exhibition on Molecular Structure in Artistic Design being held in April/May 2008. It was agreed to hold the meeting on Friday 2 May 2008. Booking the Wellcome Building and organising catering arrangements would need to be done by the secretary.

Action KH