

# BANGOR UNIVERSITY

## HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**Meeting:** 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016

**Present:** Prof. P Spencer (Chair), Miss S Barnes, Mr M Day, Mr A G Jones, Mr W Jones, Mrs M Lake, Dr J Latchford, Ms C Monks, Dr K Mundy, Dr L Murphy, Mr D Owen, Ms E Riches, Dr H Roberts, Mr D Williams, Mr G W Jones (Secretary).

**Apologies:** Mr D Fordham, Mrs T Hibbert, Dr C Gwenin, Mrs E Parry Williams, Mr A Jones, Dr L Jones, Mr S Roberts.

### 488. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 taken as read, confirmed and signed.

### 489. MATTERS ARISING

All matters arising addressed as Agenda items.

### 490. INCIDENT REPORT – ALUN ROBERTS TOWER

A Paper was tabled, and a verbal report given, of the Alun Roberts Tower incident, which occurred on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016. This included details of the incident, the incident causation and the action taken by the University, the School of Chemistry and the Emergency Services to respond to the immediate incident and the post incident evaluation.

The following key points were noted:

- a. The Emergency Services handled the incident as a “major incident”, as per the Fire Service’s own protocols for responding to a chemical incident. Paramedics were first to arrive and were informed there were no injuries.
- b. School of Chemistry staff supervised the calm and safe evacuation of the building and liaised with the Emergency Services, providing relevant information to ensure their safety whilst handling the incident.
- c. Fire & Rescue Service personnel donned Chemical Suits to investigate the incident and confirm a safe environment. The Fire & Rescue Service handed the building back at approximately 1pm.
- d. The subsequent BU investigation found that the probable cause was waste chemicals placed in the wrong glass vessel (Winchester) and with the wrong cap. This resultant chemical reaction released fumes that caused a pressure to build up inside the bottle, causing the Winchester to violently shatter. The shattered Winchester broke other glass vessels within the fume cabinet and shattered the fume cupboard sash, punctured the automatic fire extinguishing system, resulting in the high-pressure release of dry powder extinguishant.
- e. There were no injuries as the laboratory had been evacuated sometime prior due to a sulphur smell emanating from a nearby experiment.
- f. Subsequent to the incident, the Fire & Rescue Service audited the fire safety arrangements and undertook a building inspection. All actions contained within their

Report have been, or are in the process of being addressed.

- g. The School of Chemistry has considered the cause(s) of this incident, alongside historical information for other incidents at the School, and has instigated a number of significant changes and initiatives to raise awareness of good health and safety practice, and thereby reduce the likelihood of similar incidents and mitigate the potential consequences of any poor practice.

#### **491. UNIVERSITY H&S POLICY REVISION (Responsibilities & Arrangements)**

It was confirmed that the University Council has approved the new Health and Safety Policy Statement.

To complement the new Policy Statement and to reflect the updated *UCEA / USHA Leadership and Management of Health and Safety in Higher Education Institutions* Guidance, a significantly revised Health and Safety Policy Responsibilities & Arrangements section has been developed.

The revised Responsibilities & Arrangements section seeks to provide greater clarity on the duties and responsibilities of Council, Committees, key senior staff, through to wider management of health and safety at the University.

The revised Responsibilities & Arrangements section of the Health and Safety Policy was considered and after due consideration **it was agreed** to recommend that Council adopt the section.

To assist in the implementation of the new Policy voluntary “Executive Health and Safety Training” has been arranged for senior staff, to help make them aware of and understand their duties and responsibilities as outlined in the Policy Statement, the Responsibilities & Arrangements document and in legislation.

#### **492. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STANDARDS**

##### **492 (a) Driver & Vehicle Safety (Revision)**

The Policy has been reformatted to offer greater clarity to Colleges, Departments and staff and students about their responsibilities to ensure owned, leased, hired and private vehicles are operated and maintained safely.

The key revisions are:

- a. All drivers have to confirm, upon submission of each financial claim, that they are legally entitled to use their own vehicle, for business activity and that they have the appropriate insurance cover to do so. *The onus remains on the driver to ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy and that they are legally entitled to drive.*
- b. The driver’s own personal responsibilities are more clearly stated:
  - i. Monitor own health; notifying the Line Manager and / or Occupational Health Practitioner (if required) immediately of medical conditions that:
    - o Cause sudden ill health and / or affect vision, consciousness or concentration that could place them or others at risk when driving.
    - o Medical conditions the DVLA must be informed of eg diabetes, heart and neurological conditions, sleep disturbance, vision problems, alcohol and drugs, mental health issues.
  - ii. Not drive under adverse influence of prescribed or other medication.

- iii. Never drive under the influence of alcohol.

The revised Policy was discussed and after due consideration **it was approved**.

#### **492 (b) Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs / Drones)**

The new Policy will enable the University to operate UAVs (by appropriately trained staff and students) for the purposes of teaching, research and for other University activities.

It was noted that the Policy is supported by a detailed Operations Manual, that has been submitted to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as part of the CAA Permission for UAV Aerial Work.<sup>1</sup>

Currently the School of Ocean Sciences has one member of staff who has the appropriate qualification to fly specific UAVs as permitted by the CAA and the Policy.

The new Policy was discussed and after due consideration **it was approved**.

#### **493. REPORT FROM THE SAFETY EXECUTIVE TASK GROUP**

Since the last meeting of the Health and Safety Committee, the Task Group has met on three occasions, with the following areas noted for information:

- a. New H&S Policy: Responsibilities and Arrangements: The Task Group has spent much of its time considering the integration and local adoption of the National Standard for Leadership & Management of Health and Safety in HE within the University's own Health and Safety Policy's Responsibilities & Arrangements.
- b. Audit Package and Audit Priority: To complement the new Health and Safety Policy a revised audit package has been agreed. The audit package will directly reflect requirements stated under the "Deans of College and Heads of Service Departments" section.

A revised audit priority schedule has also been agreed, reflecting perceived risk exposure.

College and Departmental auditing should recommence early in the next academic year and following approval of the revised Policy Responsibilities & Arrangements section by Council.

#### **494. INTERIM H&S STATISTICAL REPORT**

Due to changes in the reporting period from the Calendar to Academic Year, the Annual H&S Report will be presented at the November H&S Committee. The following key items, from the Interim Annual H&S Report (based on the 2015 Calendar year) was noted:

- i. 52 training courses were provided or facilitated by HSS, with over 570 attendees.
- ii. The number of Staff and Student accidents reported in 2015, which involved injury as a result of their University work or studies, was 67<sup>2</sup> (47 in 2014). Of this total, 49 (36) accidents related to Staff and 18 (11) to Students.
- iii. During 2015, there were 4 Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Reportable Accidents and Incidents, all relating to staff: two of whom were absent from work for over seven

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<sup>1</sup> The CAA Permissions for Aerial Work was received immediately after the H&S Committee

<sup>2</sup> Does not include subsidiary companies

- days, and two related to fractures; 1 wrist and 1 shoulder, caused by a slip and trip.
- iv. The majority of the 67 injury related accidents involved either, a handling incident (26 = 39%) or were due to a slip, trip or fall (19 = 28%). Of the other 22 incidents, most related to *being hit by a moving / falling object and coming into contact with something fixed / stationary*.
  - v. A total of 7 staff lost-time incidents occurred in 2015. All lost-time incidents were categorised as either a “Slip, Trip, Fall”, or “Manual Handling”.
  - vi. During 2014/2015 there were 123 Fire Alarm activations in University buildings. The North Wales Fire & Rescue Service attended on 94 occasions (62 visits to Halls and 32 to Academic & Admin buildings), a reduction on 116 in 2014.

**495. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The Students’ Union (SU) reported that two SU Sections were to be merged and requested that once embedded, HSS audit the revised structure.

**496. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No items were raised.