



**Minutes of a meeting of the Directors of Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC) held at 10am at Tŷ Rheidol, Aberystwyth on Wednesday 8 November 2023**

**Present:** Cath Smith (Chair)  
Gareth Wynn Davies, John T Davies, Rhys Davies, Jack Evershed, Hugh Hesketh-Evans (Teams), Mike Humphreys, Emlyn Roberts, Caroline Sanger-Davies (Teams), Vicki Spencer-Francis (Teams)

**By Invitation:** -

**Executive in attendance:** Julie Davies-Jones (Secretariat)  
Rachael Madeley-Davies (Head of Sustainability & Future Policy)  
Laura Pickup (Head of Strategic Marketing & Connections)  
Bryan Regan (Head of Finance & Corporate Governance)

**1. Welcome and Chair's Comments**

The Chair welcomed all to the Board meeting.

The Chair gave an update on the key events and meetings she had attended since the previous Board meeting:

During September 2023, the Chair partook in the recruitment exercise for the Welsh Government's Food and Drink Wales Industry Board.

28 September 2023 – The Chair and the Head of Sustainability and Future Policy attend the NFU Cymru Sustainable Farming Conference held at Mynytho, Pwllheli.

5 October 2023 – HCC Board Teams update meeting.

11 October 2023 – HCC Farmer Forum meeting, Glynllifon, Caernarfon with the Executive.

17 October 2023 – HCC Remuneration Committee.

19 October 2023 – The Chair and the Head of Sustainability and Future Policy partook in a Teams update with NFU Cymru Officials and Executive.

23 October 2023 – The Chair attended the FUW Annual Eve of Welsh Dairy Show Function, Carmarthen Livestock Market.

24 October 2023 – The Chair and the Head of Sustainability and Future Policy attended the Blas Cymru / Taste Wales Gala Dinner hosted by the Minister for Rural Affairs, and North Wales, and Trefnydd.

25 – 26 October 2023 – The Chair and the Executive attended the Blas Cymru / Taste Wales exhibition held at the ICC, Newport.

11 November 2023 – HCC Remuneration Committee.

22 November 2023 – The Chair attended a Welsh Government / HCC Governance virtual meeting along with the Executive.

Regular Teams meetings continued to be held with the with Head of Finance and Corporate Governance with regard to business continuity.

2. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies noted from Board Member Prys Morgan, Maria Richards, Welsh Government and Gwyn Howells, CEO. who remained on sick leave.

In the absence of the CEO, it was noted that the Head of Finance and Corporate Governance continued in the role of acting Accounting Officer.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no new Declarations of Interest declared.

4. **To approve the minutes of:**

a. *The Board meeting held on Thursday 7 September 2023 (HCC 1155)*

The minutes of the above meeting were taken as read, approved by the Board and signed by the Chair.

b. *The Board Teams update meeting held on Thursday 5 October 2023 (HCC 1156)*

The minutes of the above meeting were taken as read, approved by the Board and signed by the Chair.

5. **Matters arising**

*From Item 4a above*

*New Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) for Wales, Dr Richard Irvine – Introduction to the Board*

It was noted that confirmation had been received that Dr Irvine would attend the Board meeting scheduled for the 11 January 2024.

*Levy*

Work was in hand with the Executive with regard to presenting a proposal to the Board for consideration at the 11 January 2024 meeting on the Welsh Red Meat Levy Rates for 2024 / 2025.

*Levy Returns*

The Head of Finance and Corporate Governance had communicated with AHDB and QMS regarding the verification of Levy returns.

*HCC – HMRC VAT Status*

Item 9a below refers.

*From Item 4b above*

All actions had been met and there were no matters arising.

6. **To consider the 6-month review of the HCC Operational Plan 2023 / 2024 Performance against KPIs (HCC 1157)**

The above was taken as read and summarised by the Head of Sustainability and Future Policy.

The document outlined HCC's performance against targets (where appropriate to measure) against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the first 6-months of the 2023 / 2024 financial year.

Explanations and updates on KPIs were highlighted in the notes section and noted by the Board.

7. **Planning process for the HCC Business Plan 2024 / 2027 and HCC Operational Plan 2024 / 2025**

The objective of the workshop was for the Board and Executive to discuss and agree objectives and priorities (in the form of outcomes) for each of HCC's themes and strategic areas of work for the next financial year.

8. **HCC Reports**

a. **Delivery report (HCC 1158)**

The above was taken as read with key HCC activities highlighted by the Senior Leadership Team.

**Funding**

An update was given on HCC's work on funding submissions.

- Arfor Challenge fund workshop – development of ideas amongst staff ready for funding application.
- Land Use for Net Zero (LUNZ) Hub – group application had been submitted and HCC was included in this.
- LUNZ Project – HCC had engaged in activity pertaining to full applications for three LUNZ projects including one with Queens University Belfast, and two separate applications by IBERS.
- Shared Prosperity Fund (Powys County Council) - Sustainable Beef Project – HCC's submission was unsuccessful (funding was over - subscribed).
- Horizon Europe – Discussions ongoing with Welsh Government to determine funding calls and partnering research organizations as well as assessing the possibility of establishing HCC as a recognized independent research organization.

**Anuga Trade Fair. Cologne 7 – 11 October 2023**

HCC's presence at this world leading international trade event for food and beverages had been successful.

HCC had a good stand location for networking purposes and a number of meetings had been held with current and potential new customers between the Executive and also the processors.

Developing Markets

HCC would be represented at the annual Meat Importers Council of America (MICA) conference in Phoenix, Arizona from the 6 – 8 November 2023. The conference would provide a platform to highlight Welsh red meat and to network and develop further export business opportunities.

Blas Cymru / Taste Wales 25 – 26 October 2023

It was noted that HCC had sponsored the PGI Welsh Lamb served at the Taste Wales Gala Dinner.

HCC's presence at the above had worked well in terms of a trade aspect and being part of the brokerage area. The Executive had identified a number of opportunities which were in the process of being followed up from contacts in the public and food service sectors. In addition, contact had been made with a potential customer from the USA and this would be followed up.

HCC Consumer Campaigns

The PGI Welsh Lamb campaign had received positive comments in particular in relation to the new TV advert. The campaign would be evaluated in due course and the Board informed of outcomes.

Work in relation to the PGI Welsh Beef campaign was in its final stages ahead of going live. The Board was shown the final creatives which were commended.

HCC's Advocacy and Defence Plan

The Head of Strategic Marketing and Connections presented on the above.

The Board was informed of HCC's objectives, target audience, key messages and delivery plan on this area of work.

b. Market Bulletin Summary (HCC 1159)

The above was taken as read.

c. Financial – Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet to 30 September 2023 (HCC 1160)

The above was taken as read and summarised by the Head of Finance and Corporate Governance.

- It was noted that Sheep slaughterings were down 2.1% compared to 2022. The Executive would look at projections and keep this under review.

**Action: Head of Finance and Corporate Governance**

The Board noted the current financial situation.

d. To receive an update on HCC's Annual Conference – Thursday 9 November 2023

The Head of Strategic Marketing and Connections gave an update:

- All arrangements had been finalized.
- The programme for the day was summarised.
- The Board Q&A was discussed and themes delegated. The Board was requested to arrive at the Members Centre by 2.30pm for a pre-conference meeting.
- 160 delegates had registered to attend.

e. To receive an update on HCC's presence at the Winter Fair – Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 November 2023

The Head of Strategic Marketing and Connections gave an update on the above.

The Board would be kept updated on arrangements.

**Action: Head of Strategic Marketing and Connections**

f. Forthcoming events (HCC 1161)

The above was taken as read.

9. **HCC Committees**

a. To receive a verbal report of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on Wednesday 8 November 2023

The Chair of the Committee gave a verbal update on key matters from the above.

- The Committee meeting was joined by Audit Wales and Azets (Internal Auditors) representatives.
- The Terms of Reference of the Committee was reviewed with only one minor change, to update the document to show the title of Head of Finance and Corporate Governance.
- An update paper in relation to HCC's VAT position was presented to the Committee by the Head of Finance and Corporate Governance.
- The impact of this matter would be discussed during the Planning Session and the Board would be kept updated on developments.

**Action: Head of Finance and Corporate Governance**

- HCC's Governance document was reviewed with no changes proposed.
- The Internal Audit Report was presented by Azets. A review of stakeholder management had been undertaken and a Substantive Assurance opinion provided. A review of HCC's IT function was underway and would be completed in due course.
- HCC's Risk Register was reviewed by the Committee. Proposed amendments and updates were agreed and the document would be updated accordingly.
- There were no issues to report in terms of Credit Control.
- The Committee agreed that in order to allow sufficient time to discuss matters in detail, future Committee meetings would be re-scheduled and held on different days to the Board meetings.
- The Head of Finance and Corporate Governance presented the changes to the Committee on the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2022 / 2023 since the previous meeting (12 June 2023). It was noted that the financial situation remained the same. Following review and discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2022 / 2023 to the Board for approval.
- The Committee also agreed for the Letter of Representation to be presented to the Board for approval.

b. To receive a summary of key points of the Financial Statements 2022 / 2023 (HCC 1162)

The above was taken as read and presented by the Head of Finance and Corporate Governance.

The Board (Non-Executive Directors) confirmed that there was no further relevant information coming to light of which the auditors had not been made aware.

c. To receive and approve the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2022 / 2023 (HCC 1163)

The above was taken as read and presented by the Head of Finance and Corporate Governance.

Following consideration, the Board approved the Financial Statements for 2022 / 2023 and the Letter of Representation which would be signed by the Chair.

HCC Sustainable Innovation and Research Working Group

d. To receive an update on the formation of the Working Group

The advert to recruit members was currently live with a positive interest to date.

The closing date for applications was Friday 17 November 2023.

An update would be given to the Board at the 11 January 2023 meeting.

**Action: Head of Sustainability and Future Policy**

10. **Papers for information:**

a. *Australian Lamb Market (HCC 1164)*

The above was taken as read.

b. *Current Financial Performance of Farms in the Welsh Red Meat Sector (HCC 1165)*

The above was taken as read.

11. **Any other business**

There was no other business raised.

12. **Dates of forthcoming meetings**

HCC Board meeting – Thursday 11 January 2024 at 10am  
Board Teams update - Thursday 1 February 2024 at 9.30am

**HCC CLOSED BOARD SESSION FOLLOWED**

**HCC Board and SLT Planning Session for 2024 / 2025**

The above was postponed and held by teams on Thursday 30 November 2023 and removed the detail before it (due to an unforeseen and confidential matter).

**Signed.....**  
**Chair of HCC**