



**Minutes of a meeting of the Directors of Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC) held at 10am at Tŷ Rheidol, Aberystwyth on Thursday 2 May 2024**

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

**By Invitation:** Maria Richards, Welsh Government (WG)

**Executive:** Heather Anstey-Myers, Interim CEO  
Julie Davies-Jones, Secretariat (up to agenda item 5)  
Pip Gill, Campaigns Executive (agenda item 6f)  
Jo Horder, Secretariat (from agenda item 6)  
Gareth Jones, Head of Finance and Corporate Governance  
Rachael Madeley-Davies, Head of Sustainability & Future Policy  
Laura Pickup, Head of Strategic Marketing & Connections  
Eleri Thomas (item 6g)  
Russ Thomas, Policy Development Lead (item 6g)

**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 meeting:

18 March 2024 – HCC and NFUCymru update meeting, Builth Wells attended by the Chair and Head of Sustainability and Future Policy.

20 March 2024 – The Chair and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) virtually attended a meeting of the WG and HCC Quarterly Governance meeting.

4 April 2024 – HCC Board Teams update.

18 April 2024 – The Chair represented HCC at the Extreme Weather Summit organised by Welsh Government. A number of key stakeholders were virtually present.

30 April 2024 – The Chair attended an introductory meeting with Denise McQuade, Consul General of Ireland in Cardiff.

Regular Teams meetings continued to be held with the Interim CEO.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies noted from Board Member Rhys Davies and Gwyn Howells, CEO (who remained on sick leave).

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no new individual Declarations of Interest declared.

**Outstanding Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest and Anti Bribery Letter**

The Head of Finance and Corporate Governance reminded the Board of the requirement to sign and return the above.

**Action: Board**

**4. To approve the minutes of the Board meetings of:****a. The Board meeting held on Thursday 7 March 2024 (HCC 1191)**

The above was taken as read and approved by the Board.

**b. The Board Teams update held on Thursday 4 April 2024 (HCC 1192)**

The above was taken as read and approved by the Board.

**5. Matters arising from Items 4a and 4b above****Item 4a**

It was noted that all actions from the minutes had been undertaken.

**Item 4b**

It was noted that actions from the minutes had been undertaken other than the following which was ongoing:

**Review of KPIs for Strategic Marketing and Connections**

The above remained as work in progress as target results continued to be received. These results would be utilised to establish baseline data for the KPIs.

**6. HCC Reports****a. Delivery report (HCC 1193)**

The above was taken as read.

The above was taken as read with key HCC activities highlighted by the SLT.

**b. Market Bulletin Summary (HCC 1194)**

The above was taken as read.

The concerning aspects presented in the report regarding sheep throughput was discussed under Item 6c.

c. Financial – Management Accounts to 31 March 2024 (HCC 1195)

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

Key matters for the Board to be aware of were highlighted.

The SLT would continue to identify opportunities to deliver efficiencies by reducing expenditure where appropriate and increasing and maximising income.

It was reported that the external audit work had been scheduled for two weeks at the end of July, beginning of August 2024. This will ensure sufficient time to finalise accounts before presenting to the Audit and Risk Committee in October 2024 and the Board in December 2024.

Work outstanding and in progress was noted. This included valuation of HCC's buildings which is expected to remain at £600k in line with current financial statements.

Regarding the contingent liability in relation to the MLC pension scheme, a formal review was not scheduled this year (triennial valuation). Based on the performance of financial markets over the last 12 months, any potential review at this stage would likely result in the liability figure reducing further. However, the cost of requesting a valuation out of cycle would be excessive and a summary should suffice with auditors to keep the liability at the same level for 2023 - 2024.

The above was noted by the Board.

**Action: Interim CEO**

A discussion followed on the volume figures shared in the report, showing a 9% reduction in sheep throughput for the year, and the implications of this downward trend for HCC and the wider industry in Wales. The situation was felt to be significant in that this reduction had occurred before the effects of changes to Welsh Government policies such as The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations, bovine TB and Single Farm Payments, have fully impacted farmers, factors which could exacerbate a decline in sheep numbers in the future. The Board voiced genuine concern for the industry going forward.

The key role of HCC and the Board in raising these concerns with WG was discussed and the opportunity to meet with the Cabinet Secretary at the earliest opportunity to discuss these matters was felt to be crucial.

Maria Richards, WG, acknowledged that these were all valid points that had been raised and assured members that a meeting with HCC and the Board is on the Cabinet Secretary's agenda. A roundtable which will involve key industry stakeholders, including the HCC Chair was also being established and would provide further opportunity to engage with the Cabinet Secretary on these matters.

It was acknowledged that a proposal outlining the key overarching messages to be raised with the Cabinet Secretary should be developed.

d. To receive a paper on the Year-End Review of the HCC Operational Plan 2023 / 2024 (HCC 1196)

The above was taken as read and presented by the Head of Sustainability and Future Policy and the Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications.

It was noted that the KPI results not included in the paper would be collated for the next Board.

e. Forthcoming events (HCC 1197)

The above was taken as read.

The Head of Marketing and Strategic Connections updated the Board on the plans for HCC's presence at the Royal Welsh Show, taking into consideration the reduced budget for this year.

The stand would be smaller than previously and be more corporate facing, with the aim of influencing stakeholder awareness and perceptions of the work HCC is undertaking.

There would be less focus on the consumer elements, with no cooking taking place on the stand. Instead, HCC was looking at partnering with retailers to provide cooking demonstrations on their stands. This will have the added benefit of strengthening relationships with retailers.

HCC would also host a range of seminars with the industry, as well as working with WG on their trade stand.

Overall, these plans would provide HCC with a more visible presence across the showground and enable greater collaboration with industry partners than in previous years.

It was felt that the plan demonstrated good innovation and was well received by the Board.

f. To receive a presentation on the evaluation of the HCC Welsh Beef campaign 2023 / 2024

Pip Gill, Campaigns Executive presented on the above:

Overall, the campaign had been very successful, with the key results being presented:

- Consumer awareness of the Welsh Beef brand name increased from 70% in 2023 to 85% in 2024 and a baseline for awareness of the brand logo was established at a high level of 73%;
- Consumer perception / attribution of the brand in terms of:
  - High quality - increased from 47% in 2023 to 50% in 2024 (target 48%)
  - Great taste – decreased from 41% in 2023 to 38% in 2024 (target 42%)
  - Sustainable ethos – maintained at 24% (target 25%)

- Healthy product – baseline established at 20%
- Versatile product - baseline established at 6%;
- Consumer propensity to purchase increased from 44% in 2023 to 65% in 2024 (target 45%).

The Board congratulated the Executive on the work undertaken on the campaign and the positive results achieved.

g. To receive a presentation on HCC's funding opportunities and current projects

Russ Thomas, Policy Development Lead and Eleri Thomas, Future Policy and Project Development Executive presented on the above:

The key points highlighted were:

- The funding landscape had changed and was becoming more challenging;
- HCC was currently running two funded projects;
- AberInnovation project to explore the meat-eating quality of fresh and frozen PGI Welsh Lamb, testing for eating quality, colour and drip loss. This was a six-month project running to October 2024 and would be undertaken using AberInnovation facilities and IBERS staff.
- Arfor Challenge Fund project researching decarbonising PGI Welsh Beef. This was a twelve-month project running to December 2024, involving Welsh speaking beef farmers within Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion.
- HCC will continue to explore all funding opportunities, build on its expanding networks and enhance collaboration with industry partners.

The Chair thanked the team for their presentation and the opportunities and issues identified.

h. To receive a paper on the dairy beef sector (HCC1198)

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

A discussion was had on the points raised in the paper, the potential opportunities dairy beef could bring to the beef sector versus the logistics involved within Wales.

It was agreed to consider the content of the paper further for possible discussion at a later date.

7. **HCC Committees**

Audit and Risk Committee

a. To approve the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on Monday 26 February 2024 (HCC 1199)

The minutes were taken as read and approved by the Board.

Sustainable Innovation and Research Group

- d. To approve the minutes of the Sustainable Innovation and Research Group held on Tuesday 27 February 2024 (HCC 1200)

It was noted that the minutes had not yet been formally signed off by the Group.

It was agreed that the minutes would be presented to the Board for adoption at the 4 July 2024 meeting after being signed off at the next Group meeting on 16 May 2024.

**Action: Secretariat**

- 8. **Paper for information: Welsh Lamb Consumer campaign trends data (HCC 1201)**

The above was taken as read.

- 9. **Any other business**

EIDCymru

A discussion was had in relation to progress on the introduction of the new multispecies traceability system.

It was agreed that it would be helpful for the Board to receive an update on both the multispecies system and Bovine EID at a meeting in the near future.

**Action: Chair / Maria Richards, WG**

- 10. **Dates of forthcoming meetings**

Board Teams update - Thursday 6 June 2024 at 9.30am  
HCC Board meeting – Thursday 4 July 2024 at 10am

**HCC Board Closed Session**

A separate and confidential meeting of the Board followed.

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