



Minutes of the 155th meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Board
Held on Thursday, 20 January 2022 at 10:30 am
Teams

PRESENT:

Dr Eddie Rooney (ER) (Chair)
Damien McCallion (DMcC) (Vice Chair)
Dr Sinead McCarthy (SMcC)
Mr Alex Attwood (AA)
Ms Teresa Canavan (TC)
Prof Elizabeth Keane (EC)
Irene Collins (IC)
Dr Kenneth McKenzie (KMck)
Alan Lewis (AL)
Prof Maeve Henchion (MH)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Ray Dolan, Chief Executive (RD)
Dr Gary Kearney, Director, Food Science (GK)
Ms Patricia Fitzgerald, Director, Corporate Operations (PF)
Dr Aileen McGloin, Director, Marketing and Communications
(AMcG)
Ms Joana Calderia Fernandez da Silva (JCFDS)
Ms Alison Dries (AD) Secretary.

APOLOGIES:

1. Meeting of Advisory Board members – without Executive present

Noted: The Board met without the Executive present.

2. Matters arising from meeting of Advisory Board members – without Executive present

Noted: There were no matters arising.

3. Introduction and apologies

Noted: The Chair welcomed members of the Advisory Board to the meeting held via Teams. A special welcome was extended to those members who had recently been appointed to the Board and whose first meeting it was (DMcC, EC, IC, KMcK).

Noted: ER informed of housekeeping procedures during meetings.

Noted: The CEO informed there are two vacancies remaining on the Board.

Noted: Round the table introductions took place

Noted: No apologies were noted.

4. Conflicts of interest

Noted: The Chair asked members if there were any conflicts of interest relating to the agenda. No conflicts of interest were raised.

5. Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 2 December.

Proposed: SMcC

Seconded: TC

6. Matters arising from the minutes

Noted: No matters were arising.

7. Presentation from each of the Directorate.

Noted: Each director gave an overview of the work of their directorate.

Dr Gary Kearney – Food Science

Ms Patricia Fitzgerald – Corporate Operations

Dr Aileen McGloin – Marketing and Communications

Ms Joana Caldeira Fernandez da Silva (represented) Human Health and Nutrition.

8. Chief Executive's report

Corporate

Noted: **safefood** was informed that Dr. Gary Kearney will be formally appointed as CEO at a forthcoming meeting of the NSMC and that this should take place early in 2022. Ray Dolan will remain on as CEO until Gary is appointed.

Noted: The transition of **safefood** staff back to the workplace will begin again on the 6 February. **safefood** offices remain open, and staff who are well and who are not close contacts can attend the offices for essential business purposes.

Noted: The landlord of the **safefood** Dublin office confirmed their willingness to extend our lease, which expired in December 2021. The landlord wishes to renovate the offices and is prepared to offer alternative offices to **safefood**. **safefood** has set out requirements and awaits further details from the landlord.

Noted: Recruitment commenced in December 2021 to fill the vacancy created in October by the resignation of the HR Executive to take up employment elsewhere.

Noted: A vacancy in the position of Data Protection Officer has existed since October 2021 and a tender was issued in early January 2022 to fulfil this role and Data Protection responsibilities pending the outcome of further discussions between the CEO, Chairperson and Director of Corporate Operations and the sponsor departments on this matter.

Noted: **safefood** has previously raised concerns regarding its inability to attract suitably qualified and experienced staff to fill our IT Executive and IT Assistant positions. Most recently, this was discussed with both sponsor departments on 6th December 2021 and will be discussed again with the Sponsor Departments in January 2022 to seek approval for regrading one or both positions. In the interim, Paradyn were the successful applicant in **safefood**'s tender to procure a Manager IT Service Provider. Negotiations are ongoing to finalise a contract with Paradyn so that work can commence in February 2022.

Campaigns/Communications

Noted: AMcG updated on the following:

- Benchmark evaluation of the latest phase of the START campaign is currently in progress with Ipsos MRBI. This is conducted through a quantitative survey with results due early February.

- Evaluation of the Rufus handwashing campaign is currently in progress through an online survey questionnaire with pre-school and primary school education professionals. Findings will inform campaign development for 2022.
- The Christmas campaign is being evaluated in January through a quantitative omnibus survey as well as analysis of advertising, PR, social and digital traffic.
- There was extensive media coverage of the Christmas campaign with two interviews on television, multiple radio interviews on national and regional stations, and articles in print and online media. Full analysis of the media coverage is currently in progress.
- There were 331,995 recorded pageviews in December where the majority was to Christmas content – this was a 300% increase in visitors on November. The turkey cooking time calculator accounted for 52% of recorded traffic. Christmas dinner and turkey leftover recipes had 80,674 recorded page views.
- A fully accessible version of 101 Square Meals now available on the NCBI's bookshare (accessible digital library) and on **safefood** website where it can be read on eBooks and through text-to-speech software.
- Two nutrition podcasts covering the cost of a minimum food basket and tracking research to resources.
- There were 2,245 subscribers to the newsletter at the end of 2021. The Christmas newsletter had an open rate of 37% and a click rate of 4.9%.
- **safefood** completed the tender process for a new **safefood** fulfilment agency. As part of the service an online ordering platform will be developed to allow consumers to order and receive **safefood** publications and materials directly from the fulfilment agency stockrooms.

Health promotion and nutrition

Noted: JCFDS informed on the following work taking place in health promotion and nutrition.

- Evaluation of the community Food Initiative 2019-2021 programme is currently underway.
- Recruitment of CFI leaders for the 2022-2024 programme has begun and recruitment is being managed by SECAD. The launch of the new programme is planned for the 9th of March 2022.
- **safefood**, on behalf of the Department of Health in Ireland, managed the food photography work for the Healthy Eating Guidelines for Older Adults. The guidelines are currently being finalised and will be published in the coming months.
- The Nutritional Standards for Health and Social Care Settings in Northern Ireland are hoped to be launched in March. **safefood**, together with the Public Health Agency and Food Standards Agency hosted a workshop with catering representatives from the five Health and Social Care Trusts on the 10th of January. The aim of this workshop was to look at barriers for implementation and finding solutions to these barriers to help support implementation of the standards but also to give caterers an opportunity to share examples of good practices and strategies for implementation.

- The three funding organisations approved the continuation of the National Diet and Nutrition Survey project at the end of 2021 and the field work for this project will start in March 2022.
- A consumer blog entitled 'Healthy habits during Christmas' that discussed healthy eating in the run up to Christmas, was published in December.
- **safefood** participated in a virtual meeting of the SuHe Guide research project on 9th Dec 2021. The SuHe project aims to tackle the dual priorities of health and sustainability within a comprehensive, integrated framework. There will be two further meetings with stakeholders during the lifespan of the project.
- Two new episodes of the **safefood** Nutrition Podcasts were launched in December. 'Barriers to physical exercise' and 'From research to resources - the importance of science'.

Knowledge Network

Noted: GK informed of the following activity taking place in Knowledge Network.

- Membership to The Knowledge Network currently stands at 3,604 members.
- Twelve editions of the 'Network News' e-zine were published in 2021, with the first edition for 2022 due at the end of January. The first edition of The Food Chain magazine for 2022 will be published in early May.
- A tender process for the provision of the **safefood** Knowledge Network Magazine 'The Food Chain' for the next three years is ongoing.
- An update on upcoming Knowledge Network events
 - o An overview of foodborne virus's webinar 8 February.
 - o Shelf-life training 13, 14, 25, 26, 27 and 28 January 1 and 2 February
 - o Expert Witness Training 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 31 January 1, 3, 4, 17 and 18 February
- Following the **safefood** research tender call in September 2021 successful candidates have been found to carry out the following research
 - o Reducing the exposure of children and adolescents to digital marketing of unhealthy foods
 - o Communicating food poverty – understanding the current discourse on the island of Ireland.
- The research project title 'Prepared convenience foods and associated food safety risks' has recently completed and is currently being evaluated by **safefood**.

10. AOB

Noted: No other business.

Date of next meeting: Thursday, 24 March 2022