

Minutes of the 109<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Board

Held on Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2015 at 10:30 am

Waterways Ireland office Enniskillen

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**PRESENT:**

Mr Paul Gibbons (PG) (Chair)  
Ms Jane Wells (JW)  
Mr Brendan Kehoe (BK)  
Mr Thomas Burns (TB)  
Ms Helen O'Donnell (HOD)  
Ms Hannah Su O'Callaghan (HOC)  
Mr Alan McGrath (AMG)  
Mr Campbell Tweedie (CT)  
Ms Julie Andrews (JA)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Ray Dolan, Chief Executive (RD)  
Ms Patricia Fitzgerald, Director of Corporate Operations (PF)  
Dr Gary Kearney, Director of Food Science (GK)  
Mr Richard Murphy, Manager of Information & Communications Technology (RM)  
Ms Aileen McGloin, Communications Manager, Digital & Health (AG)  
Ms Alison Dries (secretary) (AD)  
Ms Colette O'Shea (secretary) (COS)

**APOLOGIES:**

Ms. Darina Allen (DA – Vice chair)  
Mr Edward Spellman (ES)  
Dr Mary Upton (MU)  
Ms Fiona Gilligan (FG)  
Dr Cliodhna Foley-Nolan, Director of Human Health and Nutrition (CFN)

## **1. Introduction and apologies**

**Noted:** The Chair welcomed all members of the Advisory Board to the meeting.

**Noted:** The apologies of DA, ES, and MU were noted.

**Noted:** The Chair thanked members of the Advisory Board for travelling to Enniskillen to attend the meeting.

**Noted:** The Chair thanked Waterways Ireland for hosting the meeting

**Noted:** The Chair congratulated Hannah Su O'Callaghan on her recent wedding

**Noted:** The Chair congratulated Campbell Tweedie on his OBE award.

## **2. Minutes of meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

**Agreed:** The minutes were adopted with no amendments.

## **3. Matters arising from the minutes**

**Noted:** No matters were arising from the minutes

## **4. Review of the Code of Conduct for Advisory Board Members**

**Noted:** PF advised that following a recommendation in the 2015 Internal Auditors report; **safefood's** existing Code of Conduct for Advisory Board members has been reviewed. A revised draft was issued to both Sponsor Departments and following their approval, copied to the secretariat of the North/South Ministerial Council.

**Noted:** A copy of the Revised Code of Conduct was issued to all Members of the Advisory Board at the meeting.

**Noted:** PF advised that the main changes related to;

- Paragraph 27 clarifies that the register of members' interest will now be published on **safefood's** website
- Paragraphs 9, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20, 21, 36, 39 and 40 have been added to the revised Code.

## 5. Presentation **safefood's** weight loss App

**Noted:** RM presented on **safefood's** weight loss App which is currently in development.

**Noted: safefood** is developing an app that should support behavioural change and help overweight consumers to lose weight and develop and sustain a healthier lifestyle.

**Noted: safefood** is undertaking this innovative initiative in a further effort to address the obesity problem and believes an App will provide another support mechanism to a large proportion of the population due to the high stats on smartphone usage.

**Noted:** the App will contain;

- Recipes – will provide consumers with healthy recipes for individuals and families
- Shopping lists – an assistant facility for adding to the consumers weekly shopping list for healthy choices
- Planning and tracking tools for food and physical activity
- Compatibility with Health kit – this will allow monitoring of consumers steps/movement to track calories burned
- Exercise tips – as part of a daily plan for consumers
- Motivational messages – to influence behavioural change
- Social Networking – groups can easily be created to assist consumers during their weight loss journey; local walking groups or organisational group to help motivate
- Gamification – this will provide awards for consumers when certain milestones are reached this will build on consumer momentum
- Personalisation – the app will provide a tailored made diet plan depending of each consumer's demographics

**Noted:** the App will be available on the web and to download free from the Apple store and for android.

## 6 Presentation on **safefood's** Folic acid campaign

**Noted:** As indicated at previous meetings **safefood** was asked by the Sponsor Departments to run a campaign outlining the importance that women of childbearing age take folic acid due to the increase of Neural tube defects (NTD) at birth.

**Noted:** AG gave an overview of the background to the campaign and the preliminary results to date.

**Noted:** background showed;

- 70% of NTDs are preventable

- 80% of women take folic acid when pregnant and only 25% take it before pregnancy, half of pregnancies are unplanned. The spinal cord forms in the first few weeks of pregnancy so it may be too late to take folic acid by the time a woman knows she is pregnant
- It has been 15 years since the last public health campaign

**Noted:** The target audience was;

- Young women – sexually active but not considering pregnancy (approx. aged 18-30)
- Women considering pregnancy (age 25-35)
- Women who already have a child/children who may have become complacent about taking folic acid (age 30-40)

**Noted:** The advertising mediums for the campaign were mainly digital because it provided;

- access to the Key channels that younger women use
- Potential for reach & engagement
- Value for money
- Speed
- Relevancy
- Longevity

Digital elements used were;

- Folic acid 'Hub' on **safefood**.eu
- Search marketing
- Partnerships with key women's' & parenting portals
- Display advertising
- Social media content via **safefood's** channels (Facebook, twitter)
- Social advertising

The campaign also had a strong PR element and support from Manufacturers and pharmacies including;

- Dissemination to health professionals with HSE, PHA
- GP –surgeries
- In-store activity
- PR activity
- Print media

**Noted:** The preliminary results of the campaign showed;

- Visits to the site up 43%

- 33,325 visits to the various folic acid pages
- 3,366 views of our animated videos on YouTube
- Lloyd's pharmacies reported a 30 per cent rise in the sales figures of folic acid compared to the same period last year.

**Noted:** In summary **safefood** concluded;

- High exposure for the campaign was achieved
- PR was particularly successful
- There was excellent reach and exposure on social media
- Good support from key stakeholders.

## 7. Discussion around calorie content in alcohol

**Noted:** Due to the boards interest in tackling the high levels of alcohol consumption AG facilitated a discussion.

**Noted:** AG advised alcohol abuse is not part of **safefood**'s remit, it is therefore difficult to tackle alcohol consumption but **safefood** can raise the issue as part of calorie control.

**Noted:** **safefood** plan to address the issue through their App where consumers will be encouraged to think of alcohol as a 'treat' and also through an infographic that will show comparisons between the calories in alcohol and food items. Drink aware has very good resources so it is **safefood**'s intention to duplicate these.

## 8. Chief Executive's Report

### Financial statements 2014

**Noted:** **safefood** continues to seek a copy from the Controller and Auditor General's and is awaiting receipt of the signed audit report.

### Business plans 2015 and 2016

**Noted:** **safefood** continues to monitor its performance against the 2015 Business plan and remains on track to achieve the targets set out in our plan. The 2016 Business Plan was finalised in August and it is planned to issue this to the Sponsor Departments in September.

### HR Issues

**Noted:** CFN and FG are both on sick leave at the moment, the CEO and Board wishes them well.

**Noted:** The re-grading issue that has been mentioned at previous meetings has been rejected by the DHSSPS Minister in the North; this decision was conveyed to **safefood** by letter.

**Noted:** After discussing the issue the Board decided the best course of action would be for **safefood** to respond to the letter seeking clarification as to why the regrading was rejected. When this clarification is received the Board will review the matter.

#### Cork Facilities

**Noted:** At the June Board meeting the board were advised that **safefood** had received verbal agreement from the landlord to sub-let part of the ground floor space to the Office of Government Procurement (OGP). Subsequent to that Board meeting representative for NAMA advised that consent was withheld. With assistance from our colleagues in OGP Nama has reversed its decision. Our solicitors are preparing a lease agreement.

#### Revised Terms or Reference for the Audit committee

**Noted:** It was envisaged to circulate the revised Terms of reference (TOR) for the Audit Committee at the Board meeting however to avoid confusion with the TOR for Advisory Board which were circulated it was decided to defer these to the next meeting.

#### Folic Acid campaign

**Noted:** This was a very successful campaign. The CEO congratulated all members of staff who were involved.

#### Food Authenticity: Protecting your business from food fraud

**Noted:** This event took place on 26<sup>th</sup> June and was attended by 120 delegates from across the food industry. The event was deemed a great success so much so Queens University Belfast plans to replicate the event in November.

### **9. AOB**

**Noted:** AMG commented that a consumer had posted on **safefood's** Facebook page in relation to Lynn Boylan's MP anti GMO stance. He asked is there a need to look at the ability for trolls to post on **safefood** media sites?

**Noted:** AG responded that **safe food** do allow consumers to interact freely on the sites in order to have a two way communication process and build trust but do monitor the content and will remove anything that is not suitable.

**Date of next meeting:** Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> October, Dublin