

**Minutes of Assembly Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021 – HELD VIA VC**

**Present:** Claire Anderson (CA) – Chair, Sibby Buckle (SB), Martin Astbury (MA), John Marriott (JM), Mike Hannay (MH), Lynne Smith (LS), Andre Yeung (AY), Thorrun Govind (TG), Tase Oputu (TO), Alisdair Jones (AJ), Andrew Carruthers (AC), Kathleen Cowle (KC), Ruth Mitchell (RM). Cheryl Way (CW)

**Staff In attendance:** Paul Bennett (PB), Karen Baxter (KB), Jeremy Macdonald (JM), Robbie Turner (RT), Rick Russell (RR), Gail Fleming (GF), Elen Jones (EJ), Alison Douglas (AD), Corrinne Burns (CB), Claire Morrison (CM), Amandeep Doll (AD) – Item xx only

**Observers:** 14 Members registered to observe the meeting

**Apologies:** None

Item	Paper	Notes and actions	Action by
<b>Item 01</b> <b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>		CA, as the newly elected President, welcomed all to the meeting. She went on to inform members of the very sad news of the passing of Prof Peter Kopelman. Peter began working with the Society as Chair of a newly established Faculty Board in 2012 and was instrumental in the creation of a UK Pharmacy Education Governance Oversight Board which he went on to chair admirably. He worked very closely with elected members and staff, particularly in the Education and Professional Development Team and will be missed on both a professional and personal level.  There were no apologies.	

<b>Item 02</b> <b>Code of Conduct &amp; Remit of Assembly</b>		The Code of Conduct and remit of Assembly were noted.	
<b>Item 03</b> <b>Declarations of Interest</b>		Declarations from all members were noted. AD informed members that an update had been received from CW.	
<b>Item 04</b> <b>Minutes of last meeting</b>		Minutes of the meeting held on 17 <sup>th</sup> March were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
<b>Item 05</b> <b>Matters Arising</b>		None	
<b>Item 06</b> <b>President's Report</b>		The final report from the immediate past-President was noted.	
<b>Item 07</b> <b>Treasurer's Report</b>		The latest report from the Treasurer was noted.	
<b>Item 08</b> <b>CEO's Report</b>		<p>PB assured members that the Society continued to run effectively via remote working conditions without any negative impact on support to members. The third floor of 66ES had been opened for a very limited number of staff to return to work in the office under strict COVID compliant measures and this system would continue to run until September, as per the organisation's COVID roadmap. He confirmed that attendance at the office was by a bookable desk system which must be done in advance and there was no compulsion on any staff member to travel to the office at present if they did not wish to.</p> <p>Although meetings had continued to run well under remote conditions, PB appreciated the need to ease into some form of hybrid attendance in the coming months and will be considering how best this might work.</p> <p>He noted the continued good financial performance of the organisation over the year to date, with significant investment in a number of key areas such as RPS Connect, Foundation Curriculum development, CMS &amp; CRM upgrades. He emphasised that the importance of supporting members remained at the top of the priorities for the Society.</p> <p>PB had been pleased with the reception of the RPS's Anti-Racist Statement and the Workforce Pledge and went on to speak about his recent response to an incredibly offensive</p>	

		<p>article recently published on the Guido Fawkes website about Taiwo Owatemi MP and Community Pharmacist. The Society had also joined with other health care providers to participate in a media blackout but PB was disappointed that no change had been seen in on-line behaviour and felt the CEOs of the relevant platforms were clearly not doing enough to tackle on-line racism and abuse and re-affirmed the Society's commitment to call out racist behaviour where ever it occurred.</p> <p>TG added that she had spoken about I&amp;D in her recent PJ profile interview and hoped that continually speaking out would eventually have an impact across society as a whole. She had also called for roundtable talks with other medical Royal Colleges around the value of Community Pharmacy. AL asked for all Board Chairs to be able to be included on future comms from any individual Chair where appropriate.</p>	
<p><b>Item 09</b> <b>Education &amp; Professional Development</b></p>		<p>GF echoed the President's sadness at the loss of Prof Kopelman who had been a huge personal support to her when she first joined the Society.</p> <p><b>a) Education Update</b> The latest update on the work of the Education &amp; Professional Development team was noted and GF gave a brief update on the meeting of the Education &amp; Standards Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussion held on proposed draft of Post-Reg foundation curriculum, which will hopefully be published by the end of August</li> <li>• credentialed the first Consultant Pharmacist</li> <li>• student placements within the pharmaceutical industry – GF will contact MH after the meeting to discuss further</li> </ul> <p>ACTION – GF</p> <p><b>b) CPCS Training Contract</b> GF informed members that over 5000 individuals had now been trained but finding attendees for the courses had proved to be challenging, especially with lower numbers of GP referrals than expected.</p> <p>Feedback from attendance at the events has been consistently high and people have successfully taken the skills gained into everyday practise. CA recommended anyone who hadn't had been on the courses to register.</p>	<p><b>GF</b></p>

		<p>GF was asked if any feedback had been received from NES on the Post-Reg training programme in Scotland. She replied that the RPS is working closely with NES. The NES Post-Reg programme will utilise the RPS Post-Reg Foundation Curriculum from this autumn with the Independent Prescribing section being delivered by universities in Scotland and the other components by NES. The programme will be accessible across sectors including community pharmacy.</p>	
<p><b>Item 10</b> <b>2021 AGM</b></p>		<p>Members discussed the following motions, passed at the 2021 AGM:</p> <p><i>i) Publicly commit to encouraging activity by RPS Locals, where they do or can exist, and cease the de facto prohibition of locally run events (potentially on-line and in due course face-to-face).</i></p> <p><i>ii) Urgently restore some autonomy to RPS Locals via their Steering Groups, including provision of an effective way for them to contact RPS members in their area.</i></p> <p>RT explained that the Society was already undertaking a significant amount of work in this area, most notably through RPS Live (a series of CPD webinars) and RPS Connect (a new digital networking platform that would go live towards the end of the year) but stressed that this would not mean the end of RPS Locals, rather it would complement and enhance their offer to members in the regions.</p> <p>All three National Boards had been presented with a number of options on the future of RPS Locals and members of all three Boards had unanimously agreed to progress with a number of changes, including new operating models for RPS Locals, that would sit alongside RPS Connect &amp; RPS Live going forward.</p> <p>RT requested that any RPS Locals wishing to hold an event do so through the RPS Live process, as this would help increase content sharing across locations etc, and noted it would be beneficial to the RPS Live programme if RPS Locals feed in any intelligence on what members would find useful and propose any good speakers they might be aware of.</p> <p>SB stated that a number of RPS Locals would like to be able to contact all members in their areas but had been told by the Society that GDPR prevented them from being able to facilitate this and asked if this was still the case. RT confirmed that the Society must work within the GDPR framework to manage members' data and could not simply release this to</p>	

		<p>the Locals but that the central comms team were always happy to discuss options with Locals to help distribute and promote items via the central mechanisms where appropriate.</p> <p>He also explained that once RPS Connect had been introduced, any RPS Local that wished to would be able to create their own regional RPS Connect group and communicate directly with any individuals who joined the group.</p> <p>MA asked what might happen where RPS Locals still had some level of funds connected to their groups and if they might then be able to use this money to fund events etc. RT explained that this would be explored as part of the work being doing to finalise the new operating models for the Locals and there is no intention to remove funding.</p> <p><i>iii) Where votes are held in Board and assembly business these should be recorded against individual board or assembly members and recorded in the minutes</i></p> <p><i>iv) When officers and assembly members are elected, votes should not be by secret ballot. Votes should be recorded against individual board or assembly members and recorded in the minutes.</i></p> <p><i>v) All votes should be recorded against individual board or assembly members and recorded in the minutes of the open business</i></p> <p>RT noted that, for both Board and Assembly meetings, there was an expectation that decisions would be made by consensus, and indeed this tended to be the case for the vast majority of items. However, should a vote need to be taken current Standing Orders for both Assembly and Boards dictated that the voting numbers, rather than names, be recorded unless a vote was taken prior to the vote on the matter in hand to record names.</p> <p>After discussion members agreed that in future names would be recorded for all Assembly votes as a matter of course, with numbers only being recorded if a vote was taken prior to the vote on the matter in question to suspend Standing Order for that part of the meeting.</p> <p>AD clarified that it would be for the Boards to agree whether they wished to similarly change their current standing orders and Assembly members strongly recommended that this be accepted by all three Boards at their next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION – RT</p>	<p>RT</p>
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	<p>PB clarified that it would not be possible to record any information about a vote on a confidential matter in open business.</p> <p>It was further clarified that, once a vote had been taken on a matter, those Assembly members who might have been outvoted on an issue would, under the Collegiality clause of the Society’s Code of Conduct for Governance Members, need to then be outwardly supportive of the Society’s position only in exceptional circumstances should any Assembly member publicly oppose a decision. Even then this would need to be done under the very specific process outlined in the Code.</p> <p>In the case of votes for the election of Officers, Chairs/Vice Chairs and Assembly members, after discussion members agreed that this should remain by secret ballot. However, members felt a number of amendment to the existing process could be introduced to help improve transparency such as publishing the names and addresses for Presidential candidates ahead of the election, requiring candidates for Assembly and Vice Chair roles to declare in advance of the day of the election and be required to produce an address in advance.</p> <p>AD confirmed that she would be undertaking a review of the election processes for all positions over the summer and would ensure these suggestions were incorporated into a final paper outlining a suite of recommendations that would be brought to Assembly for approval.</p> <p><b>ACTION - AD</b></p> <p><i>vi) Allow members to contribute to all responses to consultations from the RPS, and to publish views of members to understand how the response was formulated.</i></p> <p>RT explained that external consultation responses were often formed in line with the Society’s existing policy positions and confirmed that there was already an existing mechanism which allowed members to comment which EJ then went on to outlined in detail. She explained that the sheer volume of requests to provide a response to a consultation meant it was not possible to reply to all of them and some requests would be assessed by the team, in consultation with the Board Chairs, as not being suitable for response.</p> <p>The team will however look at ways to better publicise the channels for members to participate in the process and it was felt that the introduction of RPS Connect and increased</p>	<p><b>AD</b></p>
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		<p>use of new and existing Expert Advisory Groups would also help. However, it would not be efficient or appropriate to publish the views of all members on external consultations.</p> <p><b>b) Update on 2020 motions</b></p> <p><i>i) RPS AGM should always be conducted remotely so that members from all geographical locations have the reasonable opportunity to attend</i></p> <p>RT noted that members had been able to successfully experience the remote 2020 and 2021 AGM and the option to participate remotely would be continued for future meetings.</p> <p><i>ii) Pharmacist members of the consultant approval panels must be RPS members</i></p> <p>This proposal was considered at the Education &amp; Standards Committee at the end of 2020 where it had been noted that the composition of the panels was set out in NHS guidance which the Society must follow. This meant there was a very limited pool of people who could sit on any of the Panels and the ESC had therefore agreed that the primary requirement must be that individuals with the appropriate knowledge and experience were appointed.</p> <p>GF informed members that when the team looked at the existing composition of the panel, the members were actually members of the Society and would therefore be very happy to add the requirement to be an RPS member as a top level 'desirable'.</p> <p>MA suggested that it might be possible to go further and state it would be 'as an exception' that a non-member would be appointed and that a discussion should be had with any non-RPS panel members as to why they were not members of the Society. GF felt this might be possible for the competency committees but would not be appropriate for the post-approval panels/committees.</p>	
<p><b>Item 11 Inclusion &amp; Diversity</b></p>		<p>Amandeep Doll, Head of Professional Belonging, joined the meeting for this item.</p> <p><b>a) EDI Data Collection</b></p> <p>The paper providing results from the 2021 EDI data collection exercise was noted. RT explained that the return rate of just 7%, meant that data available to the Society was not perfect. The results should therefore be read with a degree of caution and were very</p>	

		<p>difficult to compare directly to other organisations' EDI results eg GPhC. The disparity around Asian/Asian British in particular seemed anomalous when compared Registrant data.</p> <p>The data did however give an initial snapshot and benchmark to use for future returns to help gauge the impact the Society's I&amp;D work is having.</p> <p>Members were happy with the direction of travel overall and the team were commended on their work with the ABCD Group in particular. TO however noted the need to engage with those members who were not part of the ABCD work and to reach members who may not be that engaged with the I&amp;D agenda so that I&amp;D considerations became more routine. She felt it was vital to get the EDI composition of all members and questioned whether or not this could be made mandatory by incorporating it into existing processes such as renewals.</p> <p>RT acknowledged there were pros/cons to voluntarily collecting the data and explained the implications of trying to hold this information as a formal part of a member's data on the Society's CRM but felt the question was certainly work re-visiting periodically. It was acknowledged that I&amp;D and a sense of belonging needed to stretch further into the higher levels of leadership with the Society. RT was also asked to circulate the results of the survey broken down into results for Eng/Scot/Wales.</p> <p>RT confirmed the data had been made public on the Society's website as part of the open papers for the Assembly meeting and would now be more formally released to the pharmacy press.</p> <p><b>ACTION – RT</b></p> <p>The following recommendations, outlined in the paper, were then agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explore possible strategies to address the findings, including how to improve reach and engagement across the different groups represented in the profession and encourage them to engage proactively</li> <li>• engage with the RPS ABCD members, and the wider pharmacy audience, to discuss potential solutions in increasing numbers completing the EDI data collection survey and explore these results further</li> <li>• engage with the RPS Early Careers Pharmacist Group to explore the possible lack of engagement from early career members.</li> </ul>	<b>RT</b>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop and submit a business case as part of a long term solution in collecting EDI data through our membership database</li> </ul> <p>SB asked if it might be possible for the Society to undertake some form of outreach work with economically disadvantaged communities to promote pharmacy as a profession. RT will take this away as a concept to feed into the work GF and her team are already doing around careers in pharmacy to ensure this is as inclusive as possible.</p> <p>ACTION – RT/GF</p> <p>b) Inclusion &amp; Diversity Workstreams The latest update work was noted.</p>	RT/GF
<p><b>Item 12 Fellowship Review</b></p>		<p>PB introduced a paper proposing a number of recommendations to the existing RPS Fellowship process which fell broadly into four categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• governance</li> <li>• assessment</li> <li>• Inclusion &amp; Diversity</li> <li>• operational</li> </ul> <p>The recommendations were the outcome of a review undertaken by AD (Governance Manager), Amandeep Doll (Head of Professional Belonging), Kate Hopkins (Membership Manager) and Joseph Oakley (Head of Assessment &amp; Credentialling) and a number of discussions with the outgoing Chair of the Panel of Fellows and the outgoing President.</p> <p>Members were asked if they were happy to approve the recommendations ‘en masse’ or whether there were any that they would like to discuss further, summarised below:</p> <p><b>R1 – current requirement for a minimum of 12 years of membership</b> AJ felt this seemed to be entirely arbitrary and noted that if the main criteria was a significant contribution to the profession individuals would probably have been a member for quite some years anyway.</p> <p><b>R11 – advice from Head of Professional Belonging</b> PB clarified that whilst it was hoped that the changes being recommended would have a significant impact on the diversity of Panel members appointed, it would never be possible to cover all aspects of diversity and this proposal related to the ability for the Panel to be</p>	

	<p>able to call on advice from the Head of Professional Belonging or other appropriate individual if necessary.</p> <p><b>R12 – Unconscious Bias Training</b></p> <p>TO questioned the value of a requirement to undertake unconscious bias training as this has increasingly been shown not to work. RT acknowledged that the team were aware of the latest studies on the effectiveness of UBT, and that it could sometimes simply be used as a tick-box exercise, but noted that internally at RPS it wasn't seen in this way and had led to helpful conversations and discussions within the organisations. He clarified that it was not intended to use this in isolation but as part of a suite of other I&amp;D training and workshops.</p> <p>TO asked how it might be possible to measure success following implementation of any agreed recommendations. RT explained that it was not possible to measure any increase or set targets in this area per se as the Society did not have enough existing EDI data on current Fellows. As the process involved nomination by a third party it was also not possible to collect this data on application, hence the proposal to request the information following notification of a successful award. TO suggested the need to keep a nomination confidential from the nominee themselves might be re-considered.</p> <p>RT stressed that there was no evidence at all there has been any bias in the decisions of the Panel. Rather, the key to increasing diversity of Fellows was felt to be the need to encourage individuals to nominate members from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible which was something the Society needed to do centrally. TO suggested the Society could work with other external organisations such as NAWP and BPA on this to help encourage increased nominations form.</p> <p>Agreed that these suggestions above would be taken to the first meeting of the newly constituted Panel for discussion.</p> <p><b>ACTION - RT</b></p> <p>CW asked if it might be possible to circulate an EDI survey to existing Fellows to better understand the current levels of diversity. RT however explained that this had in fact already been done by default as Fellows were included in the main membership EDI survey issued earlier this year.</p> <p>Members then agreed to implement all the recommendations as listed in the paper, with the exception of R1 and R12 which would be implemented as follows:</p>	<p><b>RT</b></p>
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		<p>R1 – need for any length of membership before being eligible for Fellowship to be removed completely</p> <p>The required amendment to the existing Regulations will now be gazetted before taking effect.</p> <p>ACTION - AD</p> <p>R12 – I&amp;D workshop for Panel members to be mandated and complemented with unconscious bias training.</p> <p>ACTION - RT</p>	<p><b>AD</b></p> <p><b>RT</b></p>
<b>Item 13</b> <b>Update from National Boards</b>		The latest update from the National Boards was noted.	
<b>Item 14</b> <b>Science &amp; Research</b>		The latest Science & Research update, and the minutes of the Science & Research Committee held on 15 <sup>th</sup> June, were noted.	
<b>Item 15</b> <b>2022 Schedule of Meetings</b>		The list of Assembly & Board meetings for 2021 was noted.	
<b>Item 16</b> <b>Any Other Business</b>		None.	
<b>Item 17</b> <b>Date of Next Meeting</b>		The next Assembly Working Day and Meeting will be held on 16 <sup>th</sup> /17 <sup>th</sup> November.	

## ACTION SHEET

Item	Action	Who by	When by
Item 09 Education	GF to contact MH re student placements	GF	As soon as possible
Item 10 Voting in Meetings	Recommendation to amend Standing Orders re recording of votes at meetings to be taken to National Board meetings	RT	Next Board meetings
Item 10 Elections	Paper outlining recommendations for elections to be brought to next Assembly meeting	AD	November Assembly meeting
Item 11 EDI Data	Results of the EDI member survey to be formally published	RT	As soon as possible
	Outreach work with economically disadvantaged communities re pharmacy careers to be considered	RT/GF	As soon as practical
Item 12 Fellowship	Possibility of working with external organisations to promote Fellowship to be considered	RT	Next Panel of Fellows meeting
	Amendment to Regs re removing 12 years of membership requirement to be gazetted	AD	Immediately
	I&D workshop & unconscious bias training for Panel members to be implemented	RT	Once new Panel composition finalised