

Minutes of Assembly Meeting held on 12th July 2023

Present: Claire Anderson (CA) - Chair, Andrew Carruthers (AC), Ciara Duffy (CD), Thorrun Govind (TG) via vc – part meeting, Brendan Jiang (BJ), Alisdair Jones (AJ), Sorbi Khattak (SB), Geraldine McCaffrey (GMc), Gino Martini (GM) Tase Oputu (TO), Lynne Smith (LS), Audrey Thompson (AT), Cheryl Way (CW)

In attendance: Paul Bennett (PB), Karen Baxter (KB), Neville Carter (NC), Avril Chester (ACh), Rick Russell (RR), James Davies (JD), Elen Jones (EJ), Alison Douglas (AD). Katie Burlison-Rush (KBR) – Items 1-3 only, Emer Bellis (EB) – Items 1-3 only, Tony Scully (TS) – Item 06 only, Ben Randall (Firetail)

Observers: 2 Members attended as Observers

Apologies: Ruth Edwards (RE)

Item	Paper	Notes and actions	Action by
Item 01 Welcome & Apologies		CA welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Ruth Edwards. Ben Randall from Firetail was welcomed as an observer as part of the work being undertaken for the Constitution and Governance Review.	
Item 02 Items for Noting		The following items were noted: a) Code of Conduct & Remit of Assembly and COG b) Declarations of interest c) Minutes of the Open Business Assembly Meeting 29 th March – noted and approve d) National Pharmacy Board Reports e) President's Report f) Treasurer's Report	

		<p>g) Science & Research update & minutes of the Science & Research Committee 5th June</p> <p>h) Education update & minutes of Education & Standards Committee 24th May</p> <p>i) PMED update</p> <p>j) Inclusion & Diversity update</p> <p>k) Schedule of Assembly meetings 2024</p> <p>l) Panel of Fellows list of Fellows appointed in May - CA congratulated all the new Fellows.</p>	
Item 03 Matters Arising		<p>a) EDI Strategy & Action Plan</p> <p>The paper updating members on progress made by the People Team on the Society's internal EDI Strategy since the March meeting was noted.</p> <p>EB informed members that the whole Executive team would be supporting the work under the Strategy and that NC would lead on the topic, working with EB and other stakeholders.</p> <p>She explained that questions in the last staff Workbuzz survey had included 'people of all cultures and backgrounds have the same opportunities here', 'I am treated fairly, equally and with respect' and 'what should RPS focus on to become a more inclusive and diverse organisation?'. A summary of the survey response on EDI topics was then discussed at the Employee ID Group meeting in May, with an English Board member attending the meeting as a guest to take part in the discussion. A staff drop-in session run by and for women of colour was also held in May to look at why some aspects of our employee survey responses are less positive for this group.</p> <p>Two meetings specifically to discuss EDI have now been held with the Exec team and NC & EB are currently working through actions from these meetings, with additional input from Aman Doll (Head of Engagement & Professional Belonging) in order to finalise action and work plans for the next 6-18 months and to ensure that all strands from internal and external work in this area link up.</p> <p>TO thanked EB for the update and the work done over the last three months. She noted, however, that she was now in her third year on Assembly and had yet to see any completed strategic action plan for EDI which was frustrating. Although she could see that steps were being taken towards completing this and was heartened to see NC designated the Executive lead for this work.</p> <p>She noted the Executive oversight of the Strategy and that it was being looked at in a number of different forums as well as aligning with the external work being done for members but stressed the Society not only needed to be seen as the leader in this area externally for the profession but also needed to be seen to be leading on this within the organisation itself. She therefore strongly hoped that the final completed version</p>	

		<p>of the Strategy would be provided for Assembly at the November meeting as this was now vital to have. AJ echoed this and EB confirmed that this would be the case.</p> <p>ACTION – EB</p> <p>PB stressed this was a very high priority agenda item for the whole Executive team and added that it was important all Assembly members pushed the Executive on this matter, not just TO especially. The external EDI challenge faced by the profession and the messages the RPS issued publicly to the profession in this area made it all the more important to change and address these issues internally.</p> <p>NC echoed this and emphasised that it was essential for the credibility of the organisation that what happens internally echoes what the Society is calling for the wider profession externally.</p> <p>LS informed members that if they had the chance to attend one of the Society’s externally focussed ABCD Group meetings that it would be very rewarding.</p> <p>BJ noted that he would have expected the organisation to have a more detailed understanding of the internal staff EDI data. EB replied that good data did exist on protected characteristics but that the team struggled more with identifying the best courses of action to take to be most effective.</p> <p>EB was asked how the team might best prioritise the work on the numerous different strands covered by EDI. She noted that some areas were immediately obvious as the team had been reporting and working on them for a number of years but had not been able to make any progress to date e.g., gender and ethnicity pay gaps and ethnic diversity within upper-level staff roles in the organisation. There were also some areas where ‘quick wins’ might be possible, informed by the feedback from staff surveys etc.</p> <p>GMc noted that there had been a significant degree of attention on socio-economic status in the media recently and would like to see the Society include this in the Strategic plan.</p> <p>b) Oral Presentations at RPS Conference</p> <p>NC confirmed that oral presentations would be incorporated at this year’s annual conference on 10th November and noted that overall 172 abstracts had been received.</p> <p>Using the same venue as last year, the Society has committed to taking a larger space which would help with provision of networking areas and rooms for breakout sessions.</p> <p>TO congratulated the team on securing Prof John Amaechi as the key note speaker.</p>	EB
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<p>Item 04 CEO Update</p>	<p>i) Downing Street Round Table Event</p> <p>PB attended a round table event at 10 Downing Street on 27th June with AoMRC, other medical Royal Colleges, professional bodies and unions ahead of the publication of the NHS Workforce Plan later that week and stressed the importance of RPS being invited to this meeting as an equal with the other Royal Colleges.</p> <p>At the meeting, he had had chance to comment on pharmacy and the importance of IP etc which had been warmly received by the Prime Minister. He had been struck by the support from the Prime Minister and other cabinet and NHS representatives for the plan and its areas of focus. The meeting led to a commitment to invite all those present to further similar meetings where, again, the Society would participate as a full equal with the other Royal Colleges.</p> <p>GMc asked what activities had taken place on workforce planning in Scotland and Wales. PB noted that both EJ and LW have a number of routine discussion with their respective CPhOs and education bodies and, in reality, England is just now catching up with Scotland and Wales in this area. EJ added that there had been a workforce plan launch in Wales recently as well which aligned to the Society's Vision.</p> <p>ii) UK Covid Inquiry</p> <p>PB noted that the Inquiry had now been formally established with the stated aim of learning lessons for the future should another pandemic or similar event occur. He reminded members that the Society had itself already engaged with the profession and published a report on the impact of the early stages of the pandemic on the pharmacy profession in July 2020, as well as submitting evidence to a number of parliamentary committees since then.</p> <p>JD and John Lunny, Public Affairs Manager, were now leading the work on pulling together details of all the Society and its members had done over the course of the pandemic in order to submit to the Inquiry later this year. PB noted that the Society would also be a core participant in Module 3 'Impact on Covid-19 pandemic on healthcare systems in the 4 nations of the UK' and may be asked to provide oral evidence at the public hearing element of the Inquiry next year. GM stated he would be happy to help support any of the work on gathering evidence.</p> <p>He noted that the Inquiry website contained details of the 'Every Story Matters' element of the process whereby anyone can share their experience and encouraged members to participate.</p> <p>EJ noted that it was easy to forget just how much the Society and its members, as well as the wider profession, had done during the pandemic on top of normal practise and felt the Inquiry represented an opportunity to highlight this and also the frustrations experienced by many pharmacists eg not being recognised as key workers.</p>	
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Item 05 Professional Leadership Commission		<p>PB reminded members that the Society had been actively engaged with the Chief Pharmaceutical Officers (CPhOs) since the launch of the Commission Report in February. He and CA have also held a number of very constructive meeting with APTUK and PFNI and the three professional leadership bodies (PLBs) have continued to engage, meet and corresponded with the CPhOs, stressing how keen all three are to understand exactly what plans they have for the creation of the proposed Council. A joint meeting with the five Specialist Pharmaceutical Groups (SPGs) referenced in the Report had also occurred.</p> <p>Frustratingly a number of questions still remain and the three PLBs are therefore looking to the next meeting with the CPhOs on 24th July to gain more clarity on matters such as progress on appointing a Council Chair, composition of the Council etc. This clarity would then allow the individual PLBs to have a more meaningful engagement with their members on the proposals.</p>	

		<p>PB stressed that the Society was keen to engage constructively with all stakeholders in the process with an honesty and degree of humbleness to create an even stronger sense of collaboration than already exists.</p> <p>AT noted it was positive to see the collaborative work being done by the Society and the willingness to engage constructively with the other pharmacy stakeholders. She shared PB's frustration that no one knows what is happening at present in terms of process etc for the creation of any new Council and was therefore fully supportive of the proposed way forward at the meeting on 24th July.</p> <p>AJ felt it was important to ensure that the Society wasn't simply passive in the process but set out what its vision is in terms of future ways of working. TO similarly felt, as the largest leadership body, RPS needed to take an active role and asked that dedicated time be given at future Assembly meetings to allow AMs to properly discuss this.</p> <p>CA did note that the Society had already submitted it's vision on the way forward as part of the Commission's initial phase of work and didn't believe, with the lack of any detail on the new Council etc, that there was anything else to add to this at present.</p> <p>LS felt PB and CA should be more forthright in expressing frustration with the lack of information and stress that the Society was very keen to engage with its members on any proposals. She recognised it was difficult to report back to them that there had been no progress but felt it was none the less important to relay even this lack of progress to the members. CA agreed that an update should be provided after the meeting today.</p> <p>ACTION – PB/CA</p>	PB/CA
Item 06 2023 AGM		<p>Tony Scully, PJ Publisher, joined the meeting for this item and the paper detailing the motions for the 2023 AGM was noted. The motion relating to the Pharmaceutical Journal, proposed by Mary Tompkins on behalf of the Retired Pharmacists' Group, was the only motion passed at the AGM and so would now be considered by Assembly at the meeting today.</p> <p>KB outlined the detailed two year governance processes the decision to remove the print copy of the Journal had been through since 2019 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • market insights and user surveys taken to PhP Board composed of publishing experts • PhP Board critical of initial proposals which, alongside input from Assembly, led to changes • revised proposal unanimously approved by Assembly • once approved additional external expertise was sought by appointing third party designers for the new platform 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> team continue TO obtain feedback and monitor engagement, which is health and growing, against industry benchmarking <p>KB was conscious that some members were disaffected with the decision and believed that more could therefore be done to further work with user feedback to keep the numbers who were as low as possible.</p> <p>Aside from bringing back a print version of the PJ, which was not economically or environmentally viable, she informed members that the team were currently working on delivering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of an app to optimise user experience & 'portability' finalising a business case for digital archive for inclusion in 2024 budget better user access controls for online use of PJ <p>and was confident that delivery of these three workstreams would address those areas the organisation had been asked to by users but added that the team would of course continue to listen to feedback provided, including further feedback sessions with the RPG, as the user experience was hugely important to the team to build into iterative improvements for the PJ.</p> <p>AT noted the motion referenced 'widespread dissatisfaction amongst RPS Members' but thought the steps outlined above seemed as if they would address this. She felt it would be very difficult to support the motion's call for a 'wide-ranging review' given the whole governance process KB had outlined that the decision had already been through and couldn't see where the justification for any review might be found. She was fully supportive of the work of the team and therefore would not support the motion.</p> <p>CW noted she had voted for the motion at the AGM and felt members did miss the paper version of the Journal. She felt that, at present, the app hadn't really captured the full experience of reading the paper copy so was pleased to see the plans in place to improve this. Whilst recognising that it was not possible to go back to producing a print copy, she felt it was important to give readers a better experience than at present, particularly in terms of sign-on etc.</p> <p>She asked if it was possible to measure the impact of the withdrawal of the print version on RPS membership numbers. KB noted that this was touched on in the paper and estimated the impact on members who had chosen to leave the Society because of the decision to be in the region of 200-300 members.</p>	
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		<p>therefore bring a full update on work in this area back to the meeting in November. GMc asked for an interim update before then to understand the results of ACh's initial considerations.</p> <p>ACTION – ACh</p> <p>Members then unanimously agreed it would not be possible to support the motion's call for a review.</p> <p>PB noted that a number of other motions had initially been submitted for consideration at the AGM, all of which were detailed in full in the paper alongside the responses sent to the individuals submitting the motions explaining why they were not suitable for inclusion at the AGM. A motion on the Pharmacy Leadership Commission had gone on to be included at the AGM, submitted by Mike Hannay which had not been passed at that meeting.</p>	ACh
Item 07 Constitution & Governance Review		<p>PB reminded members that the initial Invitation to Tender for organisations to work with the Society on a full Constitution and Governance review of the RPS had been issued at the start of the year. The review would explore the structure and governance that would best enable the Society to thrive for the next 180 years whilst delivering for its members, the public and the wider profession.</p> <p>He was very pleased to confirm that Firetail had now been appointed to undertake this work and Ben Randall was in attendance to observe the Assembly meeting today, his colleague Nicola Doyle having been present at the Induction Day yesterday.</p> <p>Firetail will undertake a whole series of activities, including engaging directly with members of the Boards and Assembly, and would ultimately produce a set of options and recommendations which would hopefully be brought to Assembly in November. PB stressed that this was not to be confused with the work of the Independent Commission.</p>	
Item 08 Supervision		<p>PB updated members on recent developments with the Supervision Working Group which has been looking at a number of important aspects such as delegation, where legislation should rest etc and noted how important and helpful the work of the three National Boards in this area had been for the Society to input into the Group.</p> <p>The work of the Group had been very constructive and led to the development of a largely consensus position document for the wider profession to discuss further, however, he was not at liberty to share more detail at present as the Group had agreed this would be released via a formal announcement which is expected imminently.</p>	

		<p>AJ asked if there had been any areas where consensus was unlikely to be reached. PB stressed he was unable to disclose other organisations' views but that there would inevitably be some areas where 100% agreement across all stakeholders was not possible and he noted that the Group had been discussing how best any differences might be expressed.</p> <p>GMc asked if there had been much feedback on the RPS's position (which had been published on the website). PB was not aware of any member comments but noted that there wasn't anything particularly contentious in the Society's position. He felt more comments might be forthcoming once the wider Group position was published.</p> <p>PB clarified that the Guild had not been part of the Working Group.</p> <p>TG left the meeting at this point.</p>	
Item 09 International		<p>The paper outlining the background to the appointment of Tracey Thornley as RPS nominee to the FIP Community Pharmacy Executive Committee and the possible options around attendance at the 2023 FIP Congress in Brisbane was noted.</p> <p>PB clarified that Assembly were now being asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) continue the Society's support for the Tracey Thornley as the RPS Nominee b) agree the President's proposal that RPS part-fund TT's attendance at the 2023 FIP Congress or c) determine some other course of action should it not agree item b) <p>AJ noted that the paper had been very informative, not just in relation to the current points for Assembly to consider but in relation to the Society's wider engagement with FIP in general. He therefore suggested an added action to explore how best to ensure members generally could gain increased benefit from the RPS's members of FIP.</p> <p>He felt the cost of continuing support for TT was not very high but the risk of not doing so would be much higher reputationally. GMc agreed and felt the costs would benefit the RPS and demonstrate to the wider membership the Society's commitment to FIP.</p> <p>AT however noted that costs related to FIP had been an issue in the past and Assembly had previously committed to funding only two places at the 2023 FIP Congress for the CEO and President and was therefore concerned that making an exception this year may lead to more exceptions being made in future years. She also highlighted the environmental impact of three individuals flying to attend an event in Australia.</p>	

		<p>TO noted that the Society sometimes had a tendency to address matters reactively and noted that RPS had just re-joined FIP and should therefore be prepared to take a different approach to that taken previously and consider all those elements that had been flagged as an issue with FIP membership previously from a more strategic perspective, particularly in areas such as this which would recur on a regular basis.</p> <p>CW felt it was important RPS was represented at the highest levels within FIP but asked who was responsible for FIP and related work from a staff perspective.</p> <p>NC informed members that his team were currently looking at the relationship with FIP and all the international organisations the RPS was a member of to ensure the Society was set up to maximise its benefits and achieve strategic goals in this area. This work would be able to be progressed more rapidly once the new Partnership Manager was in place to help prioritise all the different external relationships and would be able to inform decisions such as who should attend meetings etc.</p> <p>Agreed a formal FIP engagement plan, to include details of how work in this area is communicated to the wider membership, should be brought to the November Assembly meeting. The paper should also enable principles on RPS attendance at future FIP and other international organisations' events to be established. TT should be invited to the November Assembly meeting to give an update to members and CA additionally committed to providing a report on her attendance at FIP Congress</p> <p>ACTION – PB/CA</p> <p>PB noted that FIP itself would formally be bringing a set of proposals on a new member offer for organisations to the Congress for discussion and approval which would likely bring an opportunity for the RPS to work with FIP on what more it might be possible to offer individual RPS members. He also noted that the organisation had never had more feedback on FIP work than it currently received from TT and that this was routinely shared with the relevant staff teams.</p> <p>He noted RPS has undertaken a significant amount of work with FIP specifically on environmental matters which EJ outlined, noting that the Society simply would not have had the resources to undertake this work on its own.</p> <p>The Society also had a responsibility to share evidence and best practice etc in areas where RPS was ahead of other countries on the global platform of FIP and PB noted that an IP session was being held at the 2023 Congress because RPS had asked them to include this on the agenda. CA will be speaking at this session and noted that the large sphere of influence FIP has globally enables the Society to help the wider pharmacy profession all over the world and also to learn from international colleagues.</p>	PB/CA
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		Members then formally agreed to continue support for TT as RPS CPS ExCo nominee and to part-fund her attendance at the 2023 FIP Congress.	
Item 10 Any Other Business		<p>a) Expert Advisory Groups Declaration of Interests</p> <p>An item of AOB had been submitted by AJ requested that the possibility of obtaining declarations of interests from members of the Society's EAGs, even if just for internal record, be discussed.</p> <p>He thanked members of all the EAGs for the valuable work they continued to do for the organisation but, given that the Boards and others were reliant on their expertise, he was surprised that the Society did not routinely capture declarations of interest from them. Whilst mindful of not introducing any unnecessary additional levels of bureaucracy or putting off individuals from joining the EAGs he proposed it would be sensible to capture and hold this information centrally even if this was never published.</p> <p>PB reminded members that the EAGs were not part of the organisation's formal governance structure and noted that members were invited to participate by the Society. If Dols were to be mandated and an individual chose not to submit one, it would be entirely for the Society to then decide whether or not they were able to remain on the Group.</p> <p>EJ, as the staff member with overall responsibility for the EAGs, assured members that there was a rigorous appointment process for all the Groups which included the provision of CVs etc. Given the level of detail already provided she did not think it would be an issue to also ask for Dols. She confirmed that members did already declare relevant interests during meetings when items of possible conflict arose.</p> <p>PB again stressed that it was important to acknowledge the valuable work done by the EAG members but did think it would be sensible to introduce the routine collection of Dols and this should therefore be included in all Groups' terms of reference and instigated going forward.</p> <p>ACTION - EJ</p>	EJ
Item 11 Date of next meeting		AD confirmed that the next meeting would be held on 21 st /22 nd November rather than the dates stated on the agenda and would be held entirely on Zoom.	

ACTION SHEET – Assembly Meeting 12th July 2023

Item	Action	Who by	When
Item 03a EDI	Final version of EDI Strategy & Action Plan to be provided for next meeting	EB	November Assembly
Item 05 Professional Leadership Commission	Update to be provided after meeting with CPhOs	PB/CA	As soon as possible after meeting
Item 06 2023 AGM PJ Motion	Interim update on ‘quick fix’ options for PJ user identity management to be provided	ACh	As soon as possible
Item 09 International	FIP engagement plan to be provided f	PB	November Meeting
	TT to be invited to attend next meeting	PB/AD	November Meeting
	Report on attendance at FIP Congress to be provided	CA	November Meeting
Item 10 EAGs	Collection of annual declaration of interests for EAG members to be implemented	EJ	As soon as possible