

Minutes of Assembly Meeting held on 22nd November 2023

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

In attendance: Paul Bennett (PB), Karen Baxter (KB), Avril Chester (ACh), Rick Russell (RR), James Davies (JD), Elen Jones (EJ), Laura Wilson (LS), Alison Douglas (AD), Melissa Dear (MD), Liz North (LN), Parastou Donyai (PD), Aman Doll (ADoll) – Item 03 only, Katie Burlison-Rush (KBR) – Items 03 only, Emer Bellis (EB) – Item 03 only, Tony Scully (TS) – Item 03 only, Joseph Oakley (JO) – Item 08 only

Observers: 2 Members attended as Observers

Apologies: Thorrun Govind (TG), Ruth Edwards (RE), Sorbi Khattak (SK)

Item	Paper	Notes and actions	Action by
Item 01 Welcome & Apologies		CA welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Thorrun Govind, Ruth Edwards and Sorbi Khattak.	
Item 02 Items for Noting	23/11/ASB/02	<p>The following items were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Code of Conduct & Remit of Assembly and COG b) Declarations of interest c) Minutes of the Open Business Assembly Meeting 11th/12th July – noted and approved d) National Pharmacy Board Reports e) President's Report f) Treasurer's Report 	

		<p>g) 2023 Education & Standards Committee Annual Report & minutes of meeting held on 18th October</p> <p>h) 2023 Science & Research Committee Annual Report</p> <p>i) 2023 Panel of Fellows Annual Report & to note process for National Honours</p> <p>j) 2023 Membership Committee Annual Report</p> <p>k) 2023 CPA Annual Report</p> <p>l) 2023 Health & Safety Annual Report</p> <p>m) 2024 Effective Dates</p> <p>n) FIP update</p> <p>o) Inclusion & Diversity update</p> <p>GM noted he was pleased to see the Society's process for National Honours clearly set out and hoped it might lead to more pharmacists being nominated in future.</p>	
Item 03 Matters Arising	23/11/ASB/03a	<p>a) EDI Strategy</p> <p>EB, KBR & ADoll attended the meeting for this item.</p> <p>RR gave a brief summary of the background to the EDI Strategy & Action Plan 2023-2025 and EB then ran through the paper.</p> <p>She explained that the internal staff EDI group had also had sight of the document and had discussed it when it met last week. Members of the group had asked how the team were planning to act on the data it would be collecting and requested that further details on this be provided to them at a future meeting.</p> <p>EB stressed that, as the Society was not a large employer, any actions it might be able to take in this area would inevitably have to be proportionate to its size and within the existing limited resources, but that this did not mean that the team would not be challenging itself – rather that their work would need to be led by the needs of all its employees as a whole, recognising that it would not be possible to focus on every area.</p> <p>LS noted the paper referenced the need to consider undertaking an EQIA impact assessment for certain activities and asked why, if the assessment was relatively easy to complete, there was a need to have to assess whether it was required rather than requiring its completion for all activities. EB replied that the assessment process had already been in place for a while and had been included in the action plan document simply to ensure it was always considered when creating new policies/processes and to increase awareness of it.</p>	

		<p>PB added he was very keen that the completion of EQIAs became even more firmly embedded within all teams across the organisation and it became the norm to complete across all areas.</p> <p>TO thanked EB & KBR for producing the strategy which was the most robust report on EDI she had seen since becoming an Assembly member and noted that she had already shared a number of thoughts on the document with them ahead of the meeting today.</p> <p>She noted that some of the statements in the document were around ‘considering’ certain things and other items were indicated as optional but felt that the wording for many of these should be firmed up as work evolved. She additionally noted the strategy only covered 2023 – 2025 and asked what the team planned would happen post-2025 and noted she would expect to see a focus on EDI and intention in this area to be clearly set out in the Society’s next overarching 5 Year Strategy in 2026.</p> <p>TO then asked where overall responsibility and accountability for performance against the plan sat within the organisation and would like to see reporting/monitoring of progress on implementing the various aspects of the plan brought back to Assembly on a regular basis going forward.</p> <p>PB was pleased that TO considered the plan to be robust and explained that he himself took overall responsibility for EDI across the organisation. He had last year delegated this responsibility internally within the Executive team to the CEMO however, since the post holder had left the organisation, responsibility had again reverted back to him directly. He added that all members of the Executive team were fully engaged in this work, a monthly I&D update came to each Exec meeting and Exec members attended the internal EDI meetings on a rotational basis. He assured members that monitoring of work against the plan would be undertaken in the same way as all other work plans and an update would be brought back to each Assembly meeting.</p> <p>AJ noted that three of the 10 ‘pillars’ listed in the plan involved some form of training around EDI but cautioned against falling into a false sense of security just because staff were undertaking training and stressed it would be important to also monitor its effectiveness.</p> <p>BJ noted that pillar 10 had an indicator of ‘what good would look like’ of ‘tracking’ applications from diverse candidates but questioned whether this was really a good metric to use. He also questioned if women and people of colour were the main areas of focus for the work as there were many different characteristics that could actually be considered. GMC similarly noted that socio-economic diversity cut across many characteristics and would therefore be keen to see the team undertake work in this area in future.</p>	
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Item 04 CEO Update		<p>a) RPS Conference</p> <p>PB began by congratulating the team for a hugely successful and positive Conference held earlier in the month. 630 people had attended in person (an increase of ~15% on the previous year), 214 people had joined the event virtually, 111 posters had been presented, 29 exhibitor stands had been present and all</p>	

		<p>feedback received to date had been positive with the conference rated either excellent or good. Members had been particularly complimentary about the Prof John Amechie, the key note speaker.</p> <p>Assembly members all felt the conference had been very successful and congratulated the team. GM added that he had been particularly pleased to see science so well integrated into the conference and to see so many abstracts and posters.</p> <p>TO felt the record attendance had shown how grateful people were to now be able to come together again and showed a desire for in-person attendance that she hoped could go on to be replicated at smaller events at a more local level.</p> <p>CD asked how it was decided which sessions would be streamed on-line as she noted not all of them had been. PB noted that some presentations naturally leant themselves better to this but the team worked with the presenters to assess. There was also a capacity issue and limitations as to how many could be streamed but hoped the right balance had been struck and welcomed any further feedback on this outside the meeting.</p> <p>b) New Society Awards PB was pleased to remind members of the three new awards recently announced by the Society to recognise and celebrate outstanding contributions to the pharmacy field: The Daniel Thomas Award, the OPERA Award, and the Barnett Award</p> <p>c) Bazier Noted that PhP had now completed the acquisition of the Bazier psychotropic drug directory and content would be available via MedcinesComplete from January 2024.</p> <p>d) Paracetamol The President has recently issued a statement calling for the ban on multi-buy paracetamol offers.</p> <p>e) Collaborative Working PB and CA recently attended the UKCPA conference and dinner and the Society has joined forces with them to help enhance Accreditation & Credentialling.</p> <p>The organisation celebrated Black History Month and hosted a very successful Celebrating our Sisters event coordinated by ADoll.</p> <p>Teams have been working with Marie Curie to facilitate the roll out of the Daffodil Standards for Community Pharmacy which was a fantastic example of both creating standards then supporting their roll out.</p>	
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<p>Item 05 Future Professional Leadership</p>		<p>PB noted that the title of the new body had now been announced as the UK Pharmacy Professional Leadership Advisory Board (UKPPLAB). He and CA had met with the four CPhOs, APTUK, PFNI and the pharmacy SPGs to raise concerns about progress on the appointment of a Chair and publication of terms of reference for the Board. The President & CEO had also published a blog outlining these concerns and reflecting the discussion held by Assembly at its meeting in July - this had led to an open letter by the CPhOs being published which stressed the importance of the independence of the Board.</p> <p>Sir Hugh Taylor has now been announced as the Board Chair and the Society issued a statement welcoming both his appointment and the announcement of more detail on the composition of the Board, as well as expressing a desire to work constructively and positively with him. PB & CA will be meeting with Sir Hugh next week however PB noted that the Society would not be involved in any way in the appointment of the nine independent experts who would sit on the Board (nor would any of the professional leadership bodies or SPGs) which he felt was regrettable.</p> <p>CA, as the RPS representative on the Board, would also be meeting with Sir Hugh and the other representative Board members on 5th December but she noted that the appointed independent experts would not be in place at that time.</p>	
<p>Item 06 Constitution & Governance Review</p>		<p>PB provided a recap of the background to the commissioning of the Review and the appointment of Firetail as the independent consultants to undertake the work. He reminded members that, ultimately, any recommendations from Firetail that might be agreed by Assembly but that impacted on the governance of the organisation would be something the wider membership would want to express their views on and that any that might require a change in the Society's Charter would have to be approved by the membership via a Special Resolution vote.</p> <p>He explained that Firetail's recommendations would be grounded in robust evidence and their research undertaken with many different stakeholders (eg CPhOs, Board and governance committee Chairs, Assembly Members, past office holders etc) including the recently issued survey of RPS members which had received a good response rate.</p>	

		<p>PB stressed the importance of engaging with members, especially elected governance members, before any potential changes could be formally addressed and the team were currently in the process of considering what form this engagement might best take.</p> <p>LS asked how the process of engagement with members might dove-tail with the work of the UKPPLAB. PB stressed the governance review had never been dependent on the work of the Independent Commission and had always been planned to be undertaken at some point but had initially been delayed by the pandemic.</p> <p>Although there was a link to the wish of the IC to provide a horizontal structure for better collaboration across the various pharmacy organisations it was for completely for RPS and its members alone to determine what its organisational structure should be.</p> <p>He noted that Firetail had spent considerable time considering the wider context of the pharmacy landscape, including the changes with Independent Prescribing, the three National Pharmacy Board Visions and the findings of the Chairs of the Commission on the broader leadership of the profession. Firetail had also been provided with the findings of last year's review of the Society's communications processes undertaken by Luther Pendragon.</p> <p>TO asked if there was anything that might delay the Society reaching where it might need to get to in terms of undertaking the review. PB explained that any timeline was in the Society's own gift but that the review itself was likely to run over the course of the coming year.</p> <p>Firetail would now be taking the outputs of yesterday's discussions with Assembly away in order to bring back a more detailed proposal to Assembly Members early in 2024.</p>	
Item 07 2024 Election Scheme	23/11/ASB/07	<p>AD introduced the paper accompanying the 2024 Election Scheme which outlined options for re-setting the current imbalance that existed in the number of places for election across the three year election cycle for all three National Boards.</p> <p>She explained that, although all elected Assembly members except BJ were due to come to the end of their Board terms of office in June next year and so would therefore be affected by any decision regarding the 2024 Election Scheme, as any change agreed at the meeting today would be to the potential detriment of these members the conflict of interest that this created had, following a discussion between herself and PB, been deemed to be immaterial and all AMs would therefore be able to discuss and if necessary vote on this item.</p>	

		<p>PB noted that the regulations in regard to the National Board elections had been changed a number of times in the last few years because of the pandemic but felt that continuous change in this area was not best practise.</p> <p>AJ agreed that change should not be undertaken more than was necessary but did feel now was the time to correct the imbalance, rather than wait for the outcome of the Constitution & Governance Review and any changes to the overall structure that might result from that, as any potential changes would by necessity take a long time to enact. His preference would therefore be to re-set the cycle now in order to build-in greater stability for the Boards rather than have to wait a further three years.</p> <p>GMC noted that, although this item had been discussed at the recent National Board Chairs' Forum, she had since realised that the governance review would take a considerable length of time to complete and so would be in favour of re-balancing the terms now rather than waiting. GMC asked how this might affect the maximum three term limit that had been introduced and AD explained that the length of term received upon election would not affect this.</p> <p>Members agreed that it was important to help better ensure a degree of continuity every year and CD felt this would also help with knowledge management and retention.</p> <p>PB agreed that some degree of organisational memory was helpful but also felt there was a positive side to re-invigorating the composition of the board and bringing fresh eyes to challenges. He felt that a good induction onto the Boards was important to ensure that new members had sight of workstreams that were underway and noted that the team were continually looking at the content for the Induction Days to ensure new comers were helped but added it was important for Board members to also share their advice with incoming members too.</p> <p>AJ suggested that in addition to it being productive to have all BMs present for the Induction Day, it might be helpful to those who had been elected for the very first time to have an additional 'on-boarding' session prior to this. EJ noted that the Welsh Board had done this in the summer.</p> <p>Members unanimously approved that Option A detailed in the paper be implemented to allow the election cycle to be re-balanced and the appropriate amendments required to the Regulations to be enacted and AD will therefore ensure these are gazetted for the required 60 days [Secretary's Note - the Election Scheme adopted at this time will also be updated accordingly.]</p> <p>ACTION – AD</p>	AD
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<p>Item 08 Any Other Business</p>	<p>23/11/ASB/08</p>	<p>a) ESC Recommendation re Faculty Scheme</p> <p>JO joined the meeting for this item and members discussed the proposal in the paper from the Education and Standards Committee to close the Society's Faculty Scheme.</p> <p>JO explained that the paper had been brought as a recommendation from the Committee following their review of the Scheme against the considerable costs (currently standing at around £12k for each candidate) and the background of Advanced Credentialling which was now in place.</p> <p>TO expressed her disappointment at hearing what she felt was an allusion along the lines that RPS doesn't acknowledge the vast experience of pharmacists in non-patient facing roles and the amount of work they do indirectly for patient care and safety, for example as part of an ICB, but may have misinterpreted this. She stressed there was a very strong desire from members in these roles and believed this actually represented a really big gap for the Society in terms of the member value proposition. She noted that there was a huge workforce that would need to be considered who would never take up the Independent Prescribing pathway and was therefore very disappointed to see this proposal coming to the meeting.</p> <p>JO stressed that there had not been any intent to imply this but, in fact, the opposite in that because so much of the team's energy was currently focussed on patient facing roles as a requirement of the Assessment and Credentialling work and there was a need to look at a mechanism for recognising other areas of the workforce in the wider sense. However, the existing Faculty scheme wasn't currently being used by this cohort and was, therefore, not felt to be the best mechanism as well as being excessively expensive.</p> <p>AC agreed that simply to close the Faculty scheme without having any alternative in place would not be acceptable and would therefore think option 4 in the paper (to close Faculty in 2025 with a 12 month wind-down period) would be preferable.</p> <p>BJ however felt that terminating the scheme going forward was not the same as saying Faculty had no value but rather was an acknowledgement that it didn't achieve the initial aims overall and may well have run its course in the current pharmacy landscape which now included Credentialling. The real challenge was therefore how best to widen this or something similar out to non-patient facing members.</p> <p>JO advised members that there was a clear distinction between the Society providing 'assurance' (via Assessment & Credentialling) and providing 'recognition' (via Faculty) but did agree there may well be work to be done with NP on how best the Society could better recognise non-patient facing members.</p> <p>GMC also expressed disappointed at the proposal and felt Faculty had been neglected over the last few years as there had been no promotion or investment in development of the submission platform which was now extremely difficult to use. She had been under the impression that work was planned to actually</p>	
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<p>Item 11 Date of next meeting</p>		<p>Assembly Working Day – 26th March, Assembly Meeting – 27th March.</p>	

ACTION SHEET – Assembly Meeting 21st November 2023

Item	Action	Who by	When
Item 07 2024 National Pharmacy Board Elections	Amendments to Regulations re terms of office for 2024 elections to be gazetted	AD	Immediately
Item 08 Faculty Scheme	Alternative options to current Faculty Scheme to be produced and provided to Assembly for decision	JO	Next Assembly meeting if possible
	ESC to be informed of Assembly decision on future of the Scheme and the reasons behind reaching this decision	JO	Next ESC meeting