

Minutes of Assembly Meeting held on 18th November 2020 – HELD VIA VC

Present: Sandra Gidley (SG) - Chair, Claire Anderson (CA), Sibby Buckle (SB), David Carter (DCar), Martin Astbury (MA), Suzanne Scott-Thomas (SST), Jamie Hayes (JH), John Marriott (JM), Ewan Black (EB), Jonathan Burton (JB), Mike Hannay (MH), Lynne Smith (LS), Andre Yeung (AY), Thorrun Govind (TG)

Staff In attendance: Paul Bennett (PB), Karen Baxter (KB), Jeremy Macdonald (JM), Robbie Turner (RT), Helen Gray (HG), Rick Russell (RR), Gail Fleming (GF), Luigi Martini (LM), Amandeep Doll (AM), Elen Jones (EJ), Ravi Sharma (RS), Alison Douglas (AD), Corrinne Burns (CB), Claire Morrison (CM), Vicky Taylor (VT)

Observers: Bayo Adegbite, Bruce Burnett, Darren Powell, Karen Harrowing, Mohammed Hussain, Neera Goel, Nisa Khan, Noma Al-Ahmad, Ojali Negedu, Raliat Onatade, Mohammed Faraz Hussain, Elsy Gomez Campos

Apologies: None

Item	Paper	Notes and actions	Action by
<p>Item 01 Welcome & apologies</p>		<p>SG welcomed all present to the meeting and Assembly and staff members introduced themselves. There were no apologies but it was noted that JH would be joining the meeting slightly late.</p> <p>She noted that a number of members of the Society would be observing the proceedings of the open section of the meeting and welcomed them. She reminded all present on the Zoom call that pictures should not be taken during the meeting as consent to do so had not been obtained from attendees.</p> <p>SB requested that these observer members be asked to introduce themselves, as Assembly members and staff had just done as she would like to know exactly who they were and was uncomfortable not having a list of their names etc. SG stated this was not necessary as the members were simply observing and not participating in the meeting. She also pointed out</p>	

		that a full list of all attendees at the meeting, including all observers, was available for all participants to see under the Participant list in the Zoom screen and suggested SB consult this for information.	
Item 02 Code of Conduct & Remit of Assembly	20/11/ASB/02	The Code of Conduct and current remit of Assembly were noted.	
Item 03 Declarations of Interest	20/11/ASB/03	The updated declaration of interests paper was noted. SG reminded Assembly members that they were also able to declare an interest at the start of each individual agenda item if a particular conflict existed.	
Item 04 Minutes of the Open Business of 15th July	20/11/ASB/05	AD noted that SB had been present at the meeting on 15 th July but had been missed off the attendance list on p1 of the minutes. With this amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 15 th July were approved as a true and accurate record.	
Item 06 Matters Arising		<p>a) 180 Years of Pharmacy</p> <p>PB updated Assembly on the plans to recognise and celebrate the 180th anniversary of the RPS which was founded on 15th April 1841.</p> <p>A series of events and other activities were being planned based not only on looking back over the long history of the Society but also on looking forward into the future of pharmacy and celebrating achievements across the entire membership both UK wide and overseas. It was an opportunity to reinforce the RPS's reputation and brand as a professional body with royal patronage.</p> <p>The timetable of events would start in January and would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • content of the RPS museum launched on-line for the first time • launch of a new RPS Strategy • collation of pharmacy images collected across the organisation • on-line exhibition of Women in Pharmacy to coincide with International Women's Day • Facebook live event • commemorative certificate for the 180 longest serving and 180 newest members of the Society • commemorative on-line social media card for members 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • celebratory edition of PJ <p>CA has already expressed an interest in being involved in the planning stages for the events and PB invited any members who might also want to be involved to contact him in the first instance. AD was asked to email Assembly members with a reminder about this after the meeting.</p> <p>ACTION - AD</p> <p>JH joined the meeting.</p>	AD
<p>Item 06 Elections</p>	<p>20/11/ASB/06</p>	<p>The following Assembly members were conflicted for this item (either because their election was deferred in 2020 or they may be re=standing in 2021) and as such, although they would be permitted to speak on the issue, they would not be permitted to vote on any decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SG • MA • JB • SST • CA • TG • EB <p>As the President was among the conflicted members, PB took the chair for this item and gave a brief summary of the background. Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic Assembly had agreed in March that, given these exceptional circumstances, the 2020 Election Scheme would be withdrawn and the National Pharmacy Board elections for 2020 would be cancelled. Consequently, those board members whose terms of office would have come to an end in June 2020 were granted an extension of one year to their term.</p> <p>At the meeting in March it was further agreed that, should these members chose to stand for election in 2021, and be successfully returned for a further term of office, it <i>would be anticipated</i> they would choose to stand down from office one year early (ie in Summer 2023) when their term of office would have come to an end had they been re-elected in 2020, rather than serving the full three years.</p>	

		<p>While this was not made a mandatory requirement and would be at the member's own discretion there was a clear expectation from Assembly that they would choose to stand down in 2023.</p> <p>PB drew members' attention to the advice (set out in the paper) which had been received from Mi-Voice, the Society's external scrutineers, that organisations provide clear rules and requirements for nomination and voting processes, rather than relying on general guidance or broad principles as these can prove challenging to enforce (as has sometimes been experienced by the Society in relation to campaigning etc in previous years).</p> <p>Assembly members were therefore now asked to consider options for the formal requirements of the 2021 elections which were outlined in full in the paper and briefly summarised now by AD, with the recommendation that Option D (specifying a two year term for any of those who would have been due for election in 2020 should they be elected in 2021) be implemented.</p> <p>SG declared an interest and noted that in her personal opinion, she felt it would be unfair to obtain any advantage as a sitting member of the decision taken by Assembly to suspend the election.</p> <p>MA declared an interest and stated he believed the proposal under option D would amount to an imposition of a restriction on the 2020 individuals, should they choose to stand for re-election in 2021. He therefore felt Assembly should first debate whether they were happy to impose such a penalty. when he believed the 2020 individuals had already been penalised by not having the opportunity to stand for election this year. He felt Assembly had taken a decision to extend individuals' terms of office which had then been imposed on them.</p> <p>He cited precedents in the past when members had had their terms either extended or cut short for various reasons such as the de-merger or the withdrawal of sectoral places but noted that in these instances no attempts had been made to then re-dress the extension or curtailment. He also drew a comparison with how a casual vacancy would be treated should one have arisen this year or should one arise between now and the election next year.</p> <p>He believed that if lawyers or trade unions were to look at the action being proposed under, for example, employment law the only way they would be able to justify the action would be to consider the Society an 'old boys club' with its own internal rules and regulations and questioned if this was how the Society would wish to be portrayed. He was therefore in</p>	
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Item 12 Inclusion & Diversity	20/11/ASB/12	<p>Amandeep Doll (AmD) joined the meeting for this item.</p> <p>SG noted the session held at the Assembly Working Day yesterday and invited TG to comment on the discussion held at that meeting. TG had been really pleased to see the work done so far by the team and the newly established ABCD Group and noted that all Assembly members had acknowledged how important it was to continue this work so as not to lose the momentum that had been built. She proposed that a statement of support from Assembly on behalf of the organisation as a whole be issued to show its continued and unanimous support for the work of the Group.</p> <p>RT thanked Assembly members for their input into the I&D item at the Working Day and the positive discussion that was held. It had been clear from this discussion that Assembly acknowledged more could still be done and therefore wanted to see this remain a significant priority for the organisation in terms of nurturing and celebrating as a strength diversity across all areas of its work.</p> <p>He noted that race had, rightly, been a key priority over the last few months and remained the right thing to focus on while racism and systemic bias still existed. He wished to note that a number of anti-racism statements had been made by Assembly members at the meeting yesterday and, with Assembly's unanimous approval, would now be worked up into a formal statement to be issued on behalf of the entire organisation.</p> <p>ACTION – AmD/RT/SG/PB</p> <p>Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Data Collection</p> <p>AmD introduced the paper outlining a number of proposed options for collection of EDI data. She reported that the team had already begun to collect EDI data for Board and Assembly members to help highlight those areas where the Society is not doing as well as it might with to, and to better enable work to address imbalances. However, there was an important need to do the same across the wider membership of the RPS too not only to help</p>	AmD/RT

		<p>ensure that any actions taken do start to have traction and make a difference but to also flag up areas where more might need to be done.</p> <p>She confirmed that Option 3 (the optional collection of the data at the end of the membership joining and renewal processes, then stored in a separate EDI data file (not identifiable to any individual)) would be the recommended way forward as this allows for data to be collected and also balances the data protection safeguards for members personal details. RT clarified that provision of this information would be purely voluntary but that the team would be doing all it could to ensure members felt comfortable providing the information safe in the knowledge it would be completely anonymous.</p> <p>Assembly unanimously approved Option 3.</p> <p>ACTION – AmD/RT</p>	AmD/RT
Item 13 Early Careers Programme	20/13/ASB/12	The update report on ECP work was noted.	
Item 14 Strategy		<p>PB noted that the Society’s existing Strategic Plan, created in 2016, came to the end of its five year span next year. The Executive Team, in partnership with the Country Directors and Assembly members, were currently in the middle of a significant piece of work to produce the next five year plan which would take the Society into a new phase as it marked its 180th anniversary.</p> <p>The work sought to address a number of significant questions facing the organisation and he has been delighted with the progress made to date. He noted that the final iteration would be created after the next Strategy Workshop on 20th January and would then be shared with the three Nation Boards and be formally signed off by Assembly at its meeting in March ahead of the launch in the anniversary week in April 2021.</p>	
Item 15 Health & Safety	20/11/ASB/15	The annual Health & Safety report was noted.	
Item 16 AGM		RT informed members that teams were currently planning for the 2021 AGM to be held wholly virtually following the success of the meeting in 2020 and would be looking to make the experience even more interactive than this year’s had been.	

		<p>Although it would take place at some point in May the final date had yet to be agreed and would be dependent on the timing of the completion of the annual accounts. Whilst some idea of 'new normal; might be clearer by this time, he noted that to run a mixed model of virtual/face to face would be incredibly difficult and the team had therefore taken the decision to hold a wholly virtual meeting instead. As this meant it would be more readily accessible to a much wider audience he was hopeful attendance would increase from the 140 at the 2020 meeting which in itself had been a record turnout.</p> <p>SST would hope it might be possible to continue to hold the AGM and possibly other meetings completely virtually even when any 'new normal' is established.</p>	
<p>Item 17 Any Other Business</p>		<p>SG hoped the observers had found the meeting interesting and noted that in 2021 a common process across all three National Boards and Assembly would be introduced which would hopefully enhance the experience and she looked forward to future greater level of engagement with members.</p>	
<p>Item 17 Date of Next Meeting</p>		<p>The dates of the Assembly Working Day and Meeting, 16th & 17th March were noted.</p>	