

**GOVERNING BOARD MEETING**

18 OCTOBER 2016 10.30 16.00

Held at 63 Jeddo Road, London W12 9HQ

Minutes

**GB members present:**

David Abrahams (DA) lay member, Ron Bishop (RB) Chair, Cathy Chapman (CC), Dr Ming Cheng (MC),  
Mercy Jeyasingham (MJ) lay member, Anthony Lock (AL) lay member, Philip Rose-Neil (PRN), Danny  
Maxwell (DM), Peter Ward (PW) lay member

**In attendance**

Paul Hitchcock (PH) CEO, Rob Strange (RS) Treasurer, John Wheeler (JW) Company Secretary,  
Harriett Lansdown (BAAB)

**Apologies**

Mike Watson (MW) Registrar

**Minutes:** Sandy Williams

**1 Opening Remarks**

Cathy Chapman was welcomed to the Governing Board.  
GB was reminded of the Nolan Principles.

**Declaration of interests and conflicts were reported as follows:**

MC – member of the ATCM and tutor at University of Middlesex  
DM – editor of Journal of Chinese Medicine  
MW – Chairman of CNHC audit committee and Chairman of the audit panel of the Institute of  
Osteopathy.

## **2 Minutes from June meeting**

Approved

All action points completed.

## **3. Advocacy Service – JW**

Key discussion points:

- Support for a member is missing if he or she is before the Investigating Committee, a support service that other membership organisations often provide
- However, this could create an organisational conflict of interest – the BAcC in effect regulating and defending
- From the members' perspective might some form of advocacy service be seen as a good idea? Based on a model such as the Association of Optical Practitioners? Or a model based on current network of PDLs or the mentoring register?
- Some concerns that members do not always understand the role as register and the duty to protect the public
- Importance of remaining with the PSA discussed and endorsed
- The importance of the network of PSA accredited organisations was discussed and endorsed
- BAAB historically has had similar problems about the understanding of the importance of accreditation

Action points:

- Communication to the membership regarding benefits of the PSA and registration – PH
- Piece in Acu. to raise level of membership understanding of PSA and associated regulation issues
- Look at potential ways to provide a greater level of support to members without compromising the BAcC regulatory role – PH

## **3 Code of Safe Practice**

Key discussion points:

- JW gave credit to Ian Stones for all his hard work on this document
- Document highly commended by the Board
- The Code of Safe Practice was approved

Action Points

No specific action required

## 4 CEO REPORT

Future structure of report requested to be a short overview with an additional list of CEO level contacts and meetings attended.

Key discussion points:

### Staff reorganisation

- PH presented an overview of the staff reorganisation. Some details were brief because an appeals process was in progress and ACAS guidelines were being applied. The three work streams of Developing the Profession, Membership Services and Professional Standards were described and the potential benefits outlined. The changes, together with changes in spending priorities, should make for a more effective, efficient and sustainable organisation.
- Concerns were expressed that there had been insufficient involvement of the board. It was noted that the Chair had been informed in advance of all potential actions and had approved all actions taken. Comment was made that although individual discussions had been held between the CEO and Board members that this was insufficient.
- Confirmation was required that the process was that that was required by law. PH confirmed that HR consultancy advice had been taken and that the ACAS process was adhered to.
- There was discussion as to the boundaries of operational management and board level governance.
- Concerns were expressed that the changes in emphasis and priorities related to PR were a board level decision and were not in members' interests. Comment was made at the Board meeting that positive comments had been received from members of the BAcC including positive endorsement at the AGM.
- Comment was made that there should be a process that limits the activity of a CEO during any probationary period. It was noted that the role of the Chair includes a line management function for the CEO.
- Further staff changes were reported
  - Lakhbir Bhandal has chosen to return to teaching and writing
  - Sue Quirk has chosen to remain as publications manager for a further year
  - Robert Moore has returned from prolonged sick leave
  - Caroline Jones has started maternity leave and her role is being covered by Teresa Williamson.

### NICE

- BAcC are in an ongoing dialogue with NICE but there is no indication which way the low back pain guideline will be decided
- Intent for involvement with future guideline consultations
- Note that the BAcC needs to be ready to comment
- It was noted that NICE guidelines have a greater impact on members working in the NHS

### Action points

- To be prepared for public and membership communication when the guideline decision is announced - PH

## **ASA**

The intended project on regulatory status has been delayed and likely start time is January and finish time April. To be reported at next GB

## **Locktons and the RSA**

Meetings held with both with Lockton and RSA. The RSA continue to fund our membership packs and there are on-going discussions with Locktons to support further initiatives

## **Member engagement**

PH has met with Northern College, CICM, Middlesex, GB members, Brighton Regional Group, individual members across London and the South East and Charlie Buck, the previous Chair. He has instigated regular emails direct to members.

Concerns with professionalism of the membership were raised by the Board and noted.

## **Safe Practice website**

A meeting has been arranged with members who raised the petition to the board.

### Action points

- PH to meet with the petitioners
- Overall with regard to membership engagement develop and implement a proactive communication plan from GB to the membership – GB at next meeting
- Put GB profiles in Acu and on website

## **Conference**

Feedback suggests that overall the conference was a success

### **Education and CPD**

#### Key discussion points

- A return of 86% to date has been achieved. Lakhbir Bhandal was commended by the board
- Concerns were expressed that in some areas there are a number of practitioners who have never done CPD and are practicing on the edge of acceptable practice
- The board expressed a strong desire to do something with the 14% who have not made returns

### Action points

- To report on the plan for reaching the 14% CPD non returners - PH

## **Membership**

Appears to have stabilised but December/January renewals will reveal if there are any trends.

## **ARMA**

The BAcC is continuing to be an active member of ARMA

## **PR and Marketing**

The retainer contract with Pegasus has been stopped but PH is continuing to discuss with them regarding possible specific support to Acupuncture Awareness Week and individual project pieces.

## **5. Chair's Report**

RB confirmed he had attended ARMA AGM, the BAcC AGM, the BAcC conference and the NICE open board meeting. RB confirmed that he had been involved in the restructure process.

RB reported on the contact he had made with the Chair of the Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists to learn of board and governance processes of a similar professional body.

Points to note

- SCP has a contingency for the Chair to be protected from inconsistency in end of term
- SCP has a large Council and a committee structure involved in most aspects of the organisation
- The profession of podiatry also uses acupuncture

Key discussion points

- It was noted that there is a potential issue with the role of Chair in BAcC and re-election in 2017
- Comment was made that BAcC processes around committees and election need to be reviewed
- Comment was made as to a need for reviewing the BAcC constitution and the role of the Chair. Could the BAcC have a lay chair or a directly elected Chair?

Action points

- Redraft constitution for the next AGM
- Engage with membership re changes to involvement of members and constitution

AGM report

RB provided a short verbal report

Concerns were expressed that the AGM minutes are in draft format only and had not been circulated.

Action

Circulate draft AGM minutes - PH

## 5 **Ethics Committee**

### Key discussion points

- Concern was expressed at the length of time that the Charles Buck case took from complaint to resolution.
- There was discussion around average length of cases and what seemed to be acceptable or best practice. An intent was expressed to aim for resolution within three months

### Action points

A plan for enhancing professional conduct case work will be presented at the February meeting – PH

## 6 **BAAB**

### Key presentation points

- New 3 year strategic plan out for consultation with intent to:
  - Maintain the effective running of the board
  - Produce a guide to online learning
  - Review modes of delivery
  - Engage with teaching institutions regarding length of courses
  - Build a better feedback loop regarding safe practice and professional conduct
  - Include compliance with BAcC Code of Safe Practice in teaching institutions

### Action points

Circulate report/ accreditation committee report and strategic plan – HL

## 7 **Partners and protagonists – PH discussion papers**

### Key discussion points

- There was a broad discussion around the similarities and differences between the different groups who use acupuncture techniques
- Concerns were expressed that other people work to different standards
- It was noted that the previous strategy of the GB and the BAcC had been to share resources with other organisations
- Concerns were expressed that the views of the membership are critical and that some members are averse to other clinicians using acupuncture
- No clear agreement was reached as to a relationship strategy with other organisations beyond the need to communicate the differences to the public

## **8. Finance**

### Key discussion points

- Broad agreement to changing the presentation style in line with recommendations from the Treasurer
- Meetings of the Finance Committee should have a Board member present over and above the Treasurer
- The broad expectation that the finances are on track against the budget was noted.
- Concerns were noted as to how the decision was made to invest £100k with Standard Life. A suggestion was made to reduce the CEO authorisation limit to £20k. There was agreement that major investment proposals should have prior Board approval. This to be reviewed

### 2017 budget

The 2017 budget recommended by the Finance and Executive committee was discussed.

### Key discussion points

- The proposed reduction in fees was rejected and the decision to maintain fees at the current level was made on the basis of the uncertainty surrounding the economy following the Brexit vote. Unpredictable inflation in the economy has particular impact upon membership professional bodies like the BACc that have limited opportunity to raise increased funds if required.
- Concern was expressed that CEO communication at the AGM was inappropriate as the Board had not given approval. Note all communication and presentations at the AGM had been discussed and agreed by the CEO, the Chair, the Treasurer and the Company Secretary prior to the AGM.
- Changes to the research budget are to be in line with the research strategy and only to be authorised following full project plans for each piece of work
- Overall concerns expressed that there needs to be clear plans in place to show how the budget will be spent
- Budget agreed with the following provisos
  - Membership fee maintained at current rate of £610 per year for full membership
  - Contingency fund created
  - BACc continues to fund first aid training

## **9. AOB**

- Concerns were expressed about the way that the CEO communicated to members at the AGM regarding office location
- JW confirmed that he was retiring from his formal role as the Company Secretary at the end of 2016

## 10. Handover of Chair

PRN was endorsed as the new Chair.

There is intent that RB will spend 2017 supporting the chair and new members who come on board.

Thanks were given to RB for stepping in to support chair.

PRN will suggest dates for 2017 meetings by email to members.

It was agreed to have these meeting three times a year with potential for Skype meetings if required.

RS thanked JW for his support, guidance, information and help with reports.

RB thanks MJ for all her hard work.

PRN as representative of membership gave thanks to JW for all his hard work.

RB thanked SW for taking the minutes.

PRN thanked RB for his work as Chair

PRN closed the meeting

Minutes accepted by GB 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017



PHILIP ROSE NEIL

Chair