

Minutes of the BAcC Governing Board meeting

held 63 Jeddo Road, London W12 9HQ
on Tuesday 21 February 2017

Governing Board members present: David Abrahams (lay member) (**DA**); Ron Bishop (**RB**); Cathy Chapman (**CC**); Dr Ming Cheng (**MC**); Anthony Lock (lay member) (**AL**); Philip Rose-Neil (chair) (**PR-N**); Danny Maxwell (**DM**)

In attendance: Paul Hitchcock (CEO) (**PH**); Harriett Lansdown (BAAB) (**HL**); Rob Strange (treasurer) (**RS**); Joanna Brown

Also attending: Kevin Durjun (**KD**); Teresa Williamson (**TW**)

Minutes: Anna de Oliveira (**AdO**)

Apologies: Peter Ward and Mike Watson

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AdO to set up meeting between PH and Dr Gillian Leng, NICE deputy CEO.	3	
AdO to set up meeting between PH and new chair of NICE	3	
PH to look at a strategy for separating the logistics of membership from CPD, including membership renewal submissions.	3	
PH to review communications around CPD and provide recommendations.	3	
TW to draft an equivalent document for non-PSA accredited acupuncture organisations, for the June GB meeting.	3	
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PH to create a new induction programme, to include external support, reading material and a Board dinner.	7	
AdO to contact GB members to arrange calls with PR-N.	8	

1 Welcome and apologies

Meeting was opened by **PR-N** at 10.30am. Governing Board (GB) were reminded of the Nolan Principles. GB confirmed the agenda.

2 Disclosure of interest

GB noted no real, perceived or potential conflicts of interest experienced by any member in relation to items on meeting agenda.

3 Minutes of previous meeting

PR-N presented the minutes of October 2016 GB meeting for approval.

GB endorsed the minutes as complete and accurate.

4 Actions arising from the previous meeting

GB noted the current status of actions arising from the previous meeting, as presented in the table of page 1-2 of the October meeting minutes. It was confirmed action points were complete with the exception of those items on today's agenda.

5 CEO overview and organisation report

Points covered:

- Summary of overall staffing levels at the BACc:
 - Some colleagues still on long-term sick leave.
 - Two new positions being advertised.
 - HR support temp had been hired.
- Current status of NICE guidelines on lower back pain discussed:
 - PH view is that the guidelines have little direct impact upon clinical decision making at a local level and therefore in reality NICE is more pertinent to international colleagues.
 - Opposing views were expressed with concerns that the impact upon high-level decision makers is important and that the media pick up on NICE opinions.
 - The guideline review date is very short therefore there is opportunity to maintain contact with NICE.
- PH expressed intent to run a membership survey to develop membership engagement and strategy:
 - Last formal survey was 2011.
 - Board members agreed that a survey is a good way to engage members.
- PH explained concerns held by the group of members who petitioned the board regarding the safety website:
 - Confirmation that the safety website will be password protected.
- Discussion took place around payment of membership renewals:
 - Concerns that the process is more complicated than it needs to be.

- Timing of CPD submission requirements and renewals all falling in January adds to the complicating factors.
- Intent to change the process to split renewals from CPD requirements.
- This will be done in line with PSA requirements of CPD submission, audit and membership sanctions if required.

ACTIONS

- **AdO** to set up meeting between **PH** and Dr Gillian Leng, NICE deputy CEO.
 - **AdO** to set up meeting between **PH** and new chair of NICE.
 - **PH** to look at a strategy for separating the logistics of membership from CPD, including membership renewal submissions.
 - **PH** to review communications around CPD and provide recommendations.
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6 Professional standards

Teresa Williamson (**TW**) introduced herself as head of professional standards (HPS) and interim professional conduct officer (PCO).

Key points discussed were:

- Restructure in team was absolutely necessary to separate the work of the HPS from that of the PCO.
 - PCO work must remain confidential and reporting structure is very different.
 - GB welcomed this change and there was discussion around how to ensure the PCO does not feel isolated.
- **TW** explained the PSA is a government backed organisation that aims to protect the public.
 - The PSA accredit the voluntary registers scheme for organisations that are self-regulatory and want to see the very same standards they apply to the statutory registers.
 - To remain accredited the BAcC has to maintain high professional standards and once a year goes through a renewals process.
 - The initial part of the reaccreditation process was completed mid-January.
 - Annual fee and the staff time required to complete the renewals process was discussed, with the Board agreeing that in an ideal world the BAcC would pay the fee annually but undergo the accreditation process only once every three years.
- Final point made was regarding the information sharing protocol, recommending the present version to the Board, which stipulates that the BAcC are not to take anyone onto the BAcC register who has previously been terminated for disciplinary reasons from any one of the other 22 registers. The information sharing protocol was approved by the board for the PSA accredited register.

ACTIONS

- **TW** to draft an equivalent document for non-PSA accredited acupuncture organisations, for the June GB meeting.
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7 Developing the profession

Kevin Durjun (**KD**), as head of developing the profession gave a brief overview of his team. He is responsible for four main areas of BAcC output – events, research, education and publications – and he manages five members of staff.

Key points discussed:

KD outlined upcoming conferences and events.

- The BAcC conference will take place at Wokefield Park in Reading,
- The ARRC symposium will take place in a new venue on Chancery Lane as King's College has become too expensive.
 - General discussion on location of conferences ensued with agreement that it was difficult for some members to attend BAcC conferences due to distance and traveling difficulties. Suggestions made included: hold the conference in multiple venues around the country and connect participants up virtually; organise coaches from a central location which members could easily get to.
 - **PH** reminded all that Wokefield Park was booked two years in a row to get the best rate, but that he and Kevin would be open to looking at alternative venues for 2018.

KD summarised key achievements within his team:

- Mark Bovey and the Research Committee pulled together a strategy document to offer grants to members to deliver research projects. This has been drafted and sent out to all members for consultation and will be released at the beginning of March.
 - BAcC have a temporary part-time staff member collating CPD returns and are currently recruiting for the education manager post.
 - Update on the China exchange which the BAcC recently ran for the first time. Exchange took place with the TCM university in Harbin. Delegates had a productive time working in a busy western and TCM hospital and four delegates from Harbin came to attend the UK conference. This programme will be run again this year, with **PH** attending. No official report has been written but participants will feed back on their experiences in Acu.
 - Acu. will now be published four times a year. Sue Quirk will be leaving the BAcC in June. Ann Gordon will be taking on the role of publications manager.
 - Discussion around Acupuncture Awareness Week (AAW):
 - Feedback has been mixed.
 - BAcC will consider how to proceed next year, bearing in mind the cost of having a celebrity endorsement.
 - Focus this year was very much on individual members building their own practices and increasing their own reputations – a switch from a national to a local emphasis.
 - **KD** emphasised that there will be opportunity for members to give feedback on their AAW experience.
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8 Finance and treasurer's report

- **RS** reported on end of year figures:
 - The figures were pre-external audit.
 - It was demonstrated that the BAcC are looking at positive variance against an internal budget surplus of £35,000.
 - However, once the audit is complete, this figure is expected to reduce but remaining with positive variance and a positive surplus.
 - It was suggested that BAcC builds up reserves by 10K per year.
- Key figures of the report were outlined demonstrating that the BAcC would get confirmation from the auditors that finances are in better shape than they have been.
 - It was noted that it had been a difficult year with many changes and that the benefits have come in through savings on cost rather than through growth.
 - **PH** suggested this approach was not sustainable and that at some point the BAcC would need to focus on growth.
- The ensuing discussion did not give a mandate for a membership growth strategy:
 - Concerns were stated but not in full agreement that growing the overall membership was not good for current members.
 - Retention is considered more important than increasing numbers.
 - A request was made for **PH** to report on membership dissatisfaction and to provide a growth and retention plan.
- Financial report concluded with thanking **AL** for his input on investment:
 - Authority was given to invest two amounts of £75k in separate funds.
 - All board members approved.

ACTIONS

- **PH** to include in his monthly report to the Board an update on membership dissatisfaction and growth, and to come up with a strategy on growth by the June meeting.
 - **PH** and financial manager to authorise and invest two amounts of £75K each in an appropriate savings fund.
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9 Professional Conduct Committee report

The Professional Conduct Committee report was then discussed. **TW** said she was happy to take questions but could not disclose any sensitive details.

- Discussion on the speed of completing cases
 - Most are completed within three to four months.
 - **TW** made it clear that the BAcC want cases to be dealt with expeditiously as well as fairly.
- Discussion around fines and sanctions also took place;
 - **TW** confirmed there is no contractual obligation in place for members to pay fines.

TW requested approval for her revisions to the Code of Professional Conduct. All Board members present approved. **TW** stated she may request further revisions, to the Code of Disciplinary Procedures.

10 British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB) report

Summary of the open minutes of the last BAAB Board meeting was shared. Topics covered included: changes in membership category; Education Away Day; changes in higher education; TCM Kongress in Rothenburg; Online Learning Matrix guide and the advantages of working online; Education Day at the end of June; possible impact of Brexit on student numbers.

GB was thanked for awarding Dr Ann Hopper a BAcC fellowship.

- **HL** stressed the intention for BAAB to disseminate more widely the standards of education achieved in BAcC and BAAB accredited teaching courses.
- It was noted there is confusion among the public as to whether practitioners have done a ten-day course or a three-year degree.
- **HL** emphasised how education is the foundation of the profession and that the BAcC does not advertise widely enough just how good we are.

ACTIONS

- **HL** to send **PR-N** the BAAB strategic plan.
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11 Overall communication strategy

PH shared an embryonic communication plan for discussion.

The strategic vision is for traditional acupuncture to be a valid health care choice for people in the health and care environment of the UK.

Key discussion points:

- Initial discussion focused on clarifying if this plan was part of existing strategic direction or a new strategy. This is existing strategy but suggested new specific activity in the light of changes to the health and care landscape over the last three years since the strategy was written.
- There seems to be membership confusion about BAcC strategy to be part of the health and care for our communities or part of the NHS.
- Any strategy should be based on financial value for GPs.
- A strategic decision should be made – is acupuncture part of health and care or is it something different?
- It was requested that the status of the plan should be either a communications plan, PR/lobbying plan or an NHS engagement plan.
- Further discussion focused on the role of board members in engagement and communication with stakeholders.

- Non-practitioner members should not be used in the same way as practitioner members of the board.
- Do we promote the profession as a part of health and care for the future or do we promote acupuncture as something nice to have?

ACTIONS

- **PH** to revise the communication plan contextualised with the strategy.
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12 GB structure and role of officers

GB structure and role of officers was discussed.

The role of company secretary is currently vacant and possible new appointments were considered.

PRN is up for re-election at the AGM.

- This technically could result in the current Chair being deselected before natural time is reached.
- Protecting the Chair was considered and rejected in order to maintain the election system and terms of reference for term of office.
- GB also discussed the need for a more comprehensive induction programme for new Board members.

ACTIONS

- **PH** to share descriptions of duties of both president and chair roles, and to create a report on the current GB roles.
 - **PR-N** to produce a report on his role and to tell the board how he would like it to change and how much this would cost. **PR-N** also to inform current president of changes.
 - **PH** to create a new induction programme, to include external support, reading material and a Board dinner.
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13 Enhanced member engagement

PH presented his view that greater member engagement is needed to give the Board policy and strategic direction:

- Members' recommendations could help GB set policy and strategy, which BAcC staff could then put into practice.
- A number of suggestions were made as to different ways to approach enhanced engagement and enhanced democracy:
 - Enhanced member engagement could be done via committee structures or webinars, although the former could have cost implications.
 - The BAcC might need to clarify its remuneration policy and potentially put in place a zero payment policy.

- It was suggested that the GB sets up a structure whereby five practitioner members represent each region and become the conduit for membership to feed views to the Board.
 - It was also suggested that **PH** and two Board members (one practitioner and one non-practitioner) visit a regional group meeting every six months. **PH** can give a presentation and make it an open session for feedback from the membership.
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- All agreed further discussion on how to open up communication was necessary.
 - **PH** concluded by saying that how the BAcC engages members was probably the single, most important point discussed today and that all of the GB should start the discussion with members even though the plan is unformed at this stage.

ACTIONS

- **AdO** to contact GB members to arrange calls with **PR-N**.
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14 Any other business

Next Board meeting scheduled for Tuesday 20 June at 10.30am, at 63 Jeddo Road.

The meeting was closed by **PR-N** at 4pm.



Signed (Board chair)

Date: June 20th 2017