

**BRITISH ACUPUNCTURE COUNCIL'S GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

20 JUNE 2017 (10.30am to 16.00pm)

Held at 63 Jeddo Road, London W12 9HQ

**GB members present:**

David Abrahams (DA) lay member, Ron Bishop (RB), Cathy Chapman (CC), Dr Ming Cheng (MC), Anthony Lock (AL) lay member, Philip Rose-Neil (PRN) Chair, Danny Maxwell (DM) and Joanna Brown (JB) lay member.

**In attendance:**

Paul Hitchcock (PH) CEO, Rob Strange (RS) Treasurer, Jasmine Uddin (JU) BAAB, Di Shimell (DS) Education Committee, Michael Watson (MW) Registrar, Teresa Williamson (TW) Head of Professional Standards and Jane Debois (JD) Professional Conduct Officer.

**Apologies:**

Harriet Lansdown (HL) BAAB.

**Minutes:**

Anna de Oliveira (AdO), PA to CEO.

<b>Action points:</b>
PH to ensure all acronyms are explained in full, all named people identified and more context provided in reporting.
JU to clarify entry requirements for the BAAB accredited MSc programmes.
JU to clarify what the BAAB have control over when it comes to setting the curriculum and standards.
JU to confirm that there are the same learning outcomes for the MSc as for the current BSc.
PH and Finance Manager to put in place robust financial controls including contracts that are mandatory.
DS, on behalf of the Education Committee, to share the education strategy with the Board in October 2017.
TW to approach the nine regulators, the ATCM and the RCHM with a draft information sharing policy. TW to assess the reputational risk in agreeing to such a policy from the BAC's governance perspective.
PH to send a further specific communication to the members re the PSA and to write a paper on the advantages and disadvantages of regulation for the profession, to be presented at the next Board meeting.
PH to consider how the BAC might do some lobbying in Parliament and present a plan at the next Board meeting in October 2017.
<b>JU email the headlines of the ETCMA strategy to the Board so the Board can feedback into that strategy.</b>

## **1 Opening Remarks:**

- Welcomed Jasmine Uddin and Di Shimell as observers for the day.
- Formal adoption of Joanna Brown 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

## **2 Minutes from February meeting and matters arising:**

- Minutes approved.
- All action points completed.
- Discussion took place around the members' survey drawn up by Karen Charlesworth. The Board agreed they would like the opportunity to look at the final iteration of the survey before it is circulated to the members.
- Concern was expressed if only the survey was used to inform strategy, and that focus groups might be a better way to gather information and understanding of the British Acupuncture Council's 3,000 members.
- Agreed that a new strategy is needed and the survey will be one of several important inputs.
- One of the biggest criticisms by the membership of the current strategy is that strategy is set by the leadership and not influenced by the membership. This process recognises and will rectify these concerns.

## **3. Organisation Report – PH**

PH introduced a different way of reporting, with the emphasis more on asking questions, leaving time for discussion to be centred on future rather than past events.

- PH asked if there were any questions on the CEO overview reports, the Chair overview, the Developing the Profession overview, the Membership Services overview and the Professional Standards overview.
- The board were happy with the reports presented and asked if, in future, acronyms could be explained and if more context could be provided.
- **ACTIONS:** PH to ensure all acronyms are explained in full, all named people identified, and more context provided in reporting.

## **4. Internal Communication – PRN**

- Concerns around internal communication within the BAC were discussed.
- In specific response to slow communication, PH assured the Board that the management team have set ground rules within the staff around communication, in particular: that there will be a holding response and all email signatures will display a preferred communication method. The

management team have also agreed on a proactive plan to send more routine emails out to members.

- It was noted that for the next Board meeting in October 2017, the BAC will have in place a set of processes that will allow a dashboard of progress to be displayed in the CEO's monthly report. Projects will be labelled green, amber or red and discussion will focus on those projects needing support.
- CC expressed it is vital to have a coherent policy so it is clear to members what is going to happen when they initiate communication. The BAC must be clear on what it can and cannot offer. It is very important that if the BAC say something is going to happen, then it needs to happen.
- DA stressed that the BAC must operate as a service provider as members pay £600 a year for membership. JB stated that although she could not comment on the past, the early alerts to the Board are important as the Board needs to speak as one voice.

#### **5. BAAB Report – JU**

- The minutes of the open meeting (December 2016) of the BAAB were discussed.
- The BAAB Treasurer reported expected profit and loss reporting figures.
- The issue of pre-qualifications to the MSc programme was discussed, particularly the point that students who have not got an undergraduate qualification can go straight to a Masters programme. There was clarity that the colleges would insist on a health care profession background, albeit not necessarily acupuncture. The policy document written by the Board recommends one has a background in healthcare. The BAAB doesn't have control of what universities require but the BAAB does have control of what universities it accredits.
- A discussion around the time scale for members on the BAAB was discussed with JU agreeing to check and report on the terms of reference for the chair role and other board members.
- **ACTIONS:** JU to clarify entry requirements for the MSc; JU to clarify what the BAAB have control over when it comes to setting the curriculum and standards; JU to confirm that there are the same learning outcomes for the MSc as for the current BSc; JU to report on terms of reference for board membership

#### **6. EJOM Report – JU**

- A discussion around having a high level research journal versus a more popular journal took place.
- JU commented that if one bases the journal solely on research articles, this would not serve the membership as EJOM believes in the need to cover a wide range of issues that cover the acupuncture profession.
- JU confirmed EJOM publishes high quality research articles, but it is not inundated by them, to which DM responded by asking if market research was carried out to understand the levels of reader satisfaction.
- The Board was reminded by JU that in the 2011 membership survey EJOM was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in what the BAC offer its members, so the assumption on EJOM's part was that there was satisfaction.

#### **6. Professional Conduct Committee Report – TW**

- TW introduced herself as Head of Professional Standards and explained this would be the last report she would present given the recent appointment of Jane Debois as Professional Conduct Officer.
- The Board discussed the level of detail the Moderator's Report should contain and where it should be published.
- TW explained that the Moderator's Report is used by the Investigating Committee to get feedback and to reflect on their work. If the Governing Board feels cases are not being dealt with fairly, there might need to be changes to the Code of Professional Conduct.
- TW explained that the Moderator has made certain recommendations as contained in the Moderator's Report circulated with the Board's meeting papers. The PSA has imposed certain conditions discussed under Item 10. Both the PSA conditions and the Moderator's recommendations will be factored into a complete overhaul of the Code of Disciplinary Procedures.
- The Board decided that the full Moderator's report would still be received by the Board and Investigating Committee. The Moderator and/or the PCO would write a summary and recommendations to be published on the website.

#### **7. Treasurer's Report including 2017 half year report and 2016 audited accounts – RS**

- The treasurer's report was discussed.
- The Audit partner was very pleased and commended the BAC and the Finance Manager for maintaining vastly improved records. Following the usual checks by the auditor, it was noted the BAC had a better surplus for the year 2016 than budgeted for, amounting to 7.4 K. The BAC wanted very much to improve its reserves so this was a good outcome.
- A point was made about the Memorandum stating that the BAC financial controls are not sufficiently robust and that invoicing is not carried out correctly. This was deemed unacceptable by the Board.
- RS explained this in terms of the changeover of CEO and Finance Manager. He assured the Board that this issue was the number one priority for the BAC Finance Manager and that come next year's audit, this would no longer be an issue.
- The Board gave the CEO backing to be crystal clear about what processes are in place. A mandate from the Board was given to grant the CEO the necessary authority to quickly put in place systems and contracts that cannot be argued with and must be used by everybody.
- The end of year accounts were approved by the Governing Board and the end of year accounts will be submitted to Companies House.
- **ACTIONS:** PH and Finance Manager to put in place robust financial controls including contracts that are mandatory.

#### **8. Education Committee Strategic Priorities – DS**

- It was pointed out there had not been a report from the Education Committee to the Board for some time.
- It was discussed how at the last EC meeting the members found it difficult to come up with a strategy. Alongside the newly appointed Education Manager, the members of the EC are now looking at a new three year strategy, which they will bring to the Board in October 2017.
- The need for a new education strategy was questioned given the strategy of the BAC had not changed.

- DS explained that this need arose given the education strategy needs to dovetail with the general strategy of the organisation so the two are aligned.
- Discussion around who would initiate the education strategy and who would take it through the governance process ensued.
- The CEO raised the following questions: how do we develop this profession and the individuals in this profession; do we need to develop primarily around CPD, or is it about business skills, healthcare or communication; and how do we develop the profession's needs to be aligned with any implementation and strategy.
- DS stated it would be good to understand where the EC sits within the Board, members and staff as historically the EC has directed the strategy and then worked with the Board and staff to ensure the outcomes take shape.
- A discussion around the Professional Development Leads (PDLs) ensued with PH providing clarity that PDL contracts had been issued but there had been reservations around signing the contracts. The contracts were reasonable and legal and normal practice for an organisation.
- **ACTIONS:** DS to share education strategy with the Board in October 2017.

#### **9. Admissions Policy – MW**

- The paper proposing significant changes to the admissions processes were discussed.
- MW noted that people were deterred from joining the BAC and these changes were proposed to facilitate increasing the numbers.
- MC commented that the proposed changes did not touch on English language requirements, which currently deter many Chinese acupuncturists from joining the BAC, some of whom have practiced for ten or twenty years.
- The proposed changes were approved by the Board with recommendations about instructing the executive to make CPD compulsory including point location.

#### **10. PSA required policy changes – TW**

- TW confirmed the BAC received the provisional decision from the annual PSA review process. The issues identified by the PSA were similar to those identified by the Moderator, the Investigating Committee, the Professional Conduct Committee and the PCO. These issues are to be resolved by a complete overhaul of the Code of Disciplinary Procedures.
- If the PSA's provisional decision is not revised to the BAC's satisfaction following representations made by the CEO and PCO, the organisation will submit a formal appeal.
- The CEO or PCO will inform the Board of the PSA's final decision.
- The Board discussed whether there should be an Information Sharing Protocol for other organisations that are not Accredited Registers.
- It was agreed that TW approach 11 organisations (the nine regulators, the ATCM, and the RCHM) with a draft information sharing policy. TW will ensure that those organisations have adequate data protection procedures and systems in place. TW was also asked to assess the reputational risk from the BAC's governance perspective.
- **ACTIONS:** TW to approach the nine regulators, the ATCM and the RCHM with a draft information sharing policy. TW to assess the reputational risk in agreeing to such a policy from the BAC's governance perspective.

#### **11. PSA Future Strategy – PH**

- Discussion focused on how to get the most from the benefits provided by PSA accreditation. It was recommended that this be a question on the members' survey and noted that many BAC members are not aware the BAC is accredited by the PSA, nor what this entails.
- There was debate around the strategic importance of accreditation to the profession.
- There was general agreement the BAC are committed to the PSA but questions were asked about how we could make it work better for the BAC and how the BAC could raise awareness of the PSA to its membership.
- Decision was taken that PH should provide a paper at the next Board meeting in October 2017.
- **ACTIONS:** PH to send a further specific communication to the members re the PSA and to write a paper on the advantages and disadvantages of regulation for the profession, to be presented at the next Board meeting.

## 12. External Stakeholder Management (PH)

- Debate took place around whether or not the BAC want to influence policy based on its strategy to be a valid healthcare choice.
- It was suggested that some members may not fully understand the external context of health and care within which the profession operates.
- Consideration was given to communication at a number of levels
  - To government and elected MPs
  - To regional and national influencers
  - to GPs and other local referral routes
  - to members locally
- It was agreed the BAC must start talking to MPs and PH is to make a plan.
- **ACTIONS:** PH to consider how the BAC might do some lobbying in Parliament and present a plan at the next Board meeting in October 2017.

## 13. International Strategy (DM)

- A review of the BAC's involvement and commitment to the bodies in other countries, particularly Europe was the next focus of discussion.
- PH and DM represented the BAC in Rothenburg, Germany, for the International Congress of Chinese Medicine; an annual gathering of acupuncturists, professional associations and decision makers. JU was also present.
- A discussion ensued about the BAC's relationship with the ETCMA and how the BAC might need to reconsider this relationship with Brexit.
- It was noted the BAC has always played a fundamental role in the umbrella of 25 professional associations from all over Europe that are part of the ETCMA. The BAC has been a significant financial supporter of the ETCMA and traditionally, the BAC has been good at sharing information and processes around education and best practice.
- It was decided that it is valuable for the BAC to be part of the ETCMA.
- Discussion around the broader international agenda suggested new focus on the relationships the BAC might have with America, Australia and China.
- It was agreed that it need not be an either or case; the BAC could engage in a range of relationships.

- It was agreed that work should be undertaken to influence the three year strategy of the ETCMA.
- JU is to email the headlines of the ETCMA strategy to the Board so that the Board are guided by a framework.
- **ACTIONS:** JU email the headlines of the ETCMA strategy to the Board so the Board can feedback into that strategy.

**14. AGM Reporting of Planning Arrangements – RS**

- The AGM is now set at 18:30 pm in Wokefield, Reading.
- Ann Gordon, the new Publications Manager has been assisting RS in issuing the AGM notice and Governing Board nomination forms.
- Three practitioner members of the Governing Board – PRN, RB and MC are due to step down after the AGM. PRN is encouraged to stand again for a further two years.
- The BAC only need three members but if the BAC get ten nominations, proof checking of all statements will take place. If voting is necessary, RS will arrange for voting forms by August 10<sup>th</sup>.
- PRN will chair the AGM.
- It was noted that the BAC would appreciate if lay members were also present at the AGM, but this is not expected.
- Discussion around the job description of the President took place with the conclusion that it needs re-writing.
- Clarity was provided around the cost of the conference: the AGM is a legal constitutional gathering event and therefore if Governing Members are present at the AGM, the expenses and cost of travelling should be claimed, including one night's accommodation for those GB members living far away.

**15. AOB**

- PRN thanked the three Board members who would not be present at the next board meeting: RB for all his help and stewardship, MC and DA for their wise counsel on the board. The Board wished them well.

Next Board meeting scheduled for Tuesday 24 October at 10.30am, at 63 Jeddo Road.

The meeting was closed by PR-N at 16:30 pm.

Signed by Philip Rose-Neil (Chair):



Date: June 20th 2017