



THE BRITISH ACUPUNCTURE COUNCIL

Draft action points & minutes of the AGM Committee 2021

Held on Friday 17 September 2021 by video conference call at 5.00pm

Present	
Pia Huber (PH)	Practitioner Director and Chair
Alan Longcroft (AL)	Practitioner Director
Susan Evans (SE)	Practitioner Director
Joanna Brown (JB)	Non-Practitioner Director
Naresh Rao (NR)	Non-Practitioner Director
Joseph Ogbonna (JO)	Non-Practitioner Director
Samantha Peters (SP)	Non-Practitioner Director
Jennifer Norton (JN)	Chief Executive (CEO)
Rob Strange OBE (RS)	Company Secretary
Richard Costella (RC)	Treasurer
Alex Jacobs	Lianne Aquilina
Ali Kaye	Lou Oppenheim
Bruce McCallum	Lydia Howarth
Carole McKerracher	Lynn Kirby
Dee Holbourne	Mark
Elizabeth Temperley-Shell	Martin Grasby
Fabienne Boue-Bigne	Mary Pender
Felicity Moir	Nick Lowe
Hannah Bowie-Carlin	Nicola Rycroft

Harriet Lansdown	Pierre Jean Cousin
Heather Adams	Polly Ashton
Helen Fielding	Sally Blades
Irina Szmelskyj	Sandy Sandaver
Isabelle Wen	Sarah Parker
Jane Robinson	Spod Dutton
Jane Wilson	Stephen Rainbird
Jinbin Xu	Tish
Jon Lee	Tracey Underhill Law
Kate Dixey	Tracy Frankson
Kyoo tak Yoon	Wallace Gilbraith
Apologies	
Paul Blacker (Practitioner Director)	
Rebecca Avern	Catherine Esworthy

Opening of the meeting

1 Welcome & Introduction

PH Chair welcomed everybody and opened the AGM 2021

JN announced that the office move was going ahead, and that she was going to submit a further report by next meeting

2 Year-End Accounts

PH announced the **BAcC Fellowship Awards 2021** in recognition of special services to the field of acupuncture and the BAcC.

Rebecca Avern received the award for her long-standing commitment to acupuncture and acupuncture education. **Sally Blades** was recognised for her tireless work in mentoring and supervision. **Rosey Grandage** also received an award for her long-standing involvement with, and services to the BAcC.

PH further announced two people's retirement from BAcC services: **Rob Strange OBE** – Treasurer, Company Secretary and interim CEO (twice) and **Naresh Rao** - Vice-Chair and Non-Practitioner Director, completing his 3-year term in office.

PH confirmed that the AGM was quorate. The Chair also confirmed that Non-Members, Student Members and BAAC staff (unless they were BAAC members) were not entitled to vote.

Minutes and Actions

1 Approval of minutes of the Annual General Meeting held 18 September 2020

Isabella Wen proposed the minutes be accepted and **Jasmine Uddin** seconded.

JH informed the meeting that slight corrections were made from last year's AGM, as there was a specific matter arising regarding blood certificates and sick notes which **HBC** had investigated further as the Safe Practice Officer.

2 Chairs Report

PH briefly explained the change in Governing Board members from last year 2020 AGM; six out of the nine members were new and previously Sarah Attwell was Chair.

JN arrived as the newly appointed CEO barely three months before COVID-19 hit in March 2020

Sarah Attwell went on maternity leave in October 2020 and resigned from her position in January 2021. **PH** became Interim Chair in October 2020 and was elected chair in March 2021. The launch of the 5-year strategy in March 2021 enabled BAAC to get back on track with new initiatives and further development within the profession.

The Professional Recognition Working Group (**PRWG**) was formed in response to members' requests as a direct result of our professional standing during the pandemic. The PRWG is chaired by **Susan Evans (SE)** and consists of members from all countries of the UK.

PH encouraged Scottish Members to apply to PRWG as there is an position available. The Chair expressed that she was looking forward to successful implementation of the strategic aims with the help of members and BAAC staff serving on committees, not only ensuring the BAAC returned to secure financial basis, but also allowing the BAAC to grow and continue to serve its members in the best possible way. This in turn could give patients the healing power of acupuncture in the safest, and most effective way possible.

3 Chief Executive Report (CEO Report)

JN highlighted the key aspects from 2020 including the 25th Anniversary of BAAC, celebrating the milestone in achievement of the council. **JN** expressed the concerns about

how the pandemic affected the way of work, examples given were the effects on ARRC, conferences, remote working, and the restructuring of the organisation. Close to £30,000 was saved by reconfiguring budgets, and finally savings of 20% of basic costs have been implemented and will be carried on for the years ahead.

JN commented that through the pandemic BAcC supported Members financially when they could not practice by setting membership fees to non-practising fees for all, ensuring that there was a gradual return to work with clear phases of practice together with robust Covid-19 guidelines. **JN** also advised that increased communication through weekly Enews alongside webinars helped to support members during this time.

JN highlighted that the new website would be launched in 2022, moving conferences to a hybrid format would be investigated - when safe to do so. **JN** mentioned the launch of the next development phase of 'our members voice'.

JN gave a breakdown of the membership figures. There had been a significant drop in the overseas members between Aug 2020 to Aug 2021, a fall from 131 to 84 members due in part to Brexit as well as COVID-19. **JN** explained that these were, however, not the end of year figures; 23 new graduate admissions were being processed in September 2020 alone and re-opening the admissions process for applicants from the non-accredited trainings would encourage more. A lapsed membership campaign will be launched to reach out to members who had recently left the organisation to offer the re-joining pathways with explanations of BAcC membership benefits.

4 Treasurer's Report

RC presented a breakdown of profit and loss of 2020 for the year ending 31 December. **RC** pointed out the income was down significantly during the year 2020 due to the reduced subscription rates. However, with the government's furlough scheme the loss was 20% less than it would have been.

RC advised that reserves went down to £316,000 in 2020 compared to £463,000 in 2019. **RC** recommended the reserves be increased for emergency situations and to cover the costs within the BAcC for another three months.

The highest spend in the allocation of funds, went towards member services (30%), reduced fees to members (19%) and finally office services (22%).

The **Chair** proposed to adopt the Directors' report and the audited statements of accounts, for the year ending 31 December 2020. Proposed by Helen Fielding seconded by Isabelle Wen and passed with a majority.

Subscriptions have remained the same for the past eight years and are due for review. In the light of financial difficulties experienced by members due to the pandemic, the Governing Board decided for the ninth year running subscriptions would remain the same.

The company seal had been used 100 times which had increased since the last AGM, which was 70 times between 18 September 2020 and 17 September 2021. The company seal use reflects admissions of new BAcC members.

5 Elections for Governing Board

JN proposed the following three nominations for the governing board, Pia Huber, Susan Evans, and Lianne Aquilina for the three existing vacancies.

Nominations for the Governing Board arrived by Thursday, 29 July 2020 and no challenges to the nominations were made 48 hours prior to the AGM.

All three nominees were accepted onto the Governing Board. PH and SE were both to serve their second term while LA was to serve her first.

6 Appointment of auditors

PH proposed that HL Barnes & Co be appointed as the auditors for a further year and to authorise the directors to fix the auditors' remuneration. Proposer **Jasmine Uddin** and **Helen Fielding** seconded the proposal.

7 Any other business appropriate to the meeting

Dee Holborn submitted the following formal question:

Could we allocate more time for the Q & A session so that members and the board can ask questions/discuss topics and members views?

PH answered more time had been allocated and questions could be raised up until 7:30pm.

Nick Lowe submitted the following formal question:

Can we have an update from the BAcC and the Professional Recognition Working Group about their progress, in particular the new NICE guidelines for chronic pain, promoting traditional acupuncture, and what the PRWG have achieved?

SE confirmed that new NICE guidelines had opened doors for members. The PRWG have met once since the guidelines had been announced and supporting material had been uploaded on the website. On the Campaign section of the website under Chronic Pain,

there were three webinars and case studies, as well as a press release with a presentation from Rebecca Gentry about contacting GP's and CCG's.

Significantly, the PRWG is made up of members from the UK nations including, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands. As the NHS and CCG work very differently, this enabled us to have people on the ground to assist members with any issues they may have. Furthermore, the PRWG had also been in touch with the charity Fibromyalgia UK and were preparing an article for them, which would enable them to give more information to their members.

The PRWG were at the early stages of exploring a commissioning pilot - members would be updated. The PRWG has also been looking at contacting the Government about having a member in each place to enable local members to get involved, including Wales and Scotland as they decided they needed referrals and statutory bodies during the lockdown.

Sarah Parker submitted the following formal question:

Please confirm the membership numbers for new members, and those who have left?

JN replied we are collecting as much data as possible, and in the future, this will be freely available to the membership. The data currently in use is from the new database system, which provides more comprehensive details whereas information from the previous database was minimal. We are also in the process of interviewing old members who have left to ask questions like, why they have left. Exit surveys would be launched with those leaving the organisation shortly. Hopefully, this newly collected information and more would be available to members.

8 Formal meeting concluded – Website & Database Development

JN reported that the website and database upgrade had been due to take place in the year 2020. It was noted that student and member sites were not part of the same structure which required updating separately. Issues included maintaining the website. It was old, out of date with inactive pages, problems with the mobile version and limited interconnectivity between website and database. The database held limited information and required significant paperwork by staff and members. A risk to members' data was identified and was deemed to be too high. The BAcC therefore determined it should introduce a smaller, simpler website initially pared back to be subsequently built up.

The solution: BAcC went to tender for an upgrade of website and database. Kino Creative with 20 years' experience, was selected.

The Present: The long-term and short-term result are: member's data are secured and have been completely moved to the new database. The smaller website has been cleaned of old, broken and dead-end pages. Work with Kino Creative, practitioner members of MSC and GB is ongoing to ensure a website and database fit for purpose.

The future: Increased dashboard functionality, Acu site, forum/communities, and advanced booking systems. Increased database functionality to reduce antiquated in-house processing.

9 Survey 2022: Our Member's Voice

JN discussed the survey for 2022 and the aim to put members at the heart of everything the BAcC do.

10 Meeting opened for verbal questions

Sarah Parker asked:

How many full members have we lost in the last year? My impression is that our organisation is shrinking, I have been asking the same question now for eight years, and I still yet have not got the answer? It might be 238 but I am not sure if this is clear or not? Could members also be a part of the exit interview process?

JN agreed that it was important, to answer the question. During Covid-19, people were coming and going therefore we can only project the figures from the year 2020.

The figure for 2021 was 1,891 full members, an increase from 1,118 in August 2020.

Regarding exit interviews, we would be glad to enable our long-standing members to participate in exit interviews and to give their experiences.

Training for members who wanted to be involved would be investigated. Data protection would also need to be considered when sharing leavers' personal details.

Jane Robinson asked:

I am concerned that we might have a national shortage of Acupuncture Practitioners, can the BAcC encourage more people to join?

HL responded with the following: One of the effects of the pandemic is that many people have had time on furlough or experienced life changes, which enabled them to reconsider what they want to do which has in fact translated into higher student applications at BAAB acupuncture training colleges.

Pierre Jean Cousin asked the following questions:

In our constitution there is not one single paragraph about the protection of the profession of acupuncture. Isn't it time the constitution of the BAcC was actually looked at and revised? As we are told, people are leaving our association which could be due to members not feeling as if they were assisted and protected by the constitution?

JN answered, we do have that protection in place for our members. The Safe Practice Officer is always on hand to discuss adverse instances and reporting. A legal helpline and insurance company are there to support and guide members through difficult situations. Peer-to-peer support is also offered and provided on a case-to-case.

11 Closing the Meeting

On behalf of the Governing Board **PH** thanked everyone who attended and/or participated and closed the 2021 AGM at 7.30pm.