

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the
British Paediatric Neurology Association
Held at @ Bristol
18 January 2006**

1. Minutes

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted.

2. Matters Arising

Nil.

3. President's Report (Colin Kennedy - CK)

(i) *Links to other organisations*

CK informed the AGM that the BPNA continues to have links with the Joint Neurosciences Council, the Paediatric Neurosurgical Group and the Brain Centre. Currently issues affecting Paediatric Neurology being discussed at the Joint Neurosciences Council include the proposed post-registration training in Neurosciences and the Brain Centre. The link with the Paediatric Neurosurgical Group is not currently particularly active but it is considered important to maintain it at least formally.

(ii) *Mac Keith Prize*

No submissions for the Mac Keith Prize had been made this year, the Executive had asked the Committee who had awarded the prize last year to consider whether Heinz Jungbluth should be awarded it this year. On the basis of the strength of his application last year, this had been agreed. In order to encourage more applications for the prize in future years, Deanery Advisers will be alerted by email shortly prior to the closing date for applications. This will be in addition to the normal notification in the spring Newsletter.

(iii) *Europe*

Following elections to the EPNS Board, he had been elected as President, Helen Cross as one of two Secretaries, Peter Baxter to serve on the Finance Committee and Richard Newton to play a major role in education and training.

Paul Casaer had been awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the RCPCH on the recommendation of the BPNA.

The BPNA had been successful in its bid to host the EPNS Meeting in 2009. This will be held in Harrogate. The bid had been prepared by Helen Cross and Philippa Rodie. The AGM gave a vote of thanks to Helen and Philippa.

(iv) *Deanery Advisers for Scotland*

Following consultation and discussion in the Executive and Council, CK proposed that from henceforth Scotland should have one Deanery Adviser and two Deputy Deanery Advisers who between them should represent service based in Edinburgh, Glasgow and the North East. Either the Deanery Adviser or one of the Deputies to attend Council Meetings. This proposal was accepted.

(v) *Distance Learning*

The first cycle of the Distance Learning Course was almost complete. It had generally been seen as a huge success. It is hoped to pilot the Distance Learning Course in the Netherlands via the EPNS.

- (vi) *PET Courses*
The first PET 1 Course and the first two PET 2 Courses had now been held. From the feedback received from attendees and from Dr Andrew Coleman (a Medical Educationalist), the courses appear to be well received. The first PET 3 Course will be held in Edinburgh in March 2006.
- (vii) *Epilepsy Networks*
Richard Newton was leading on trying to foster the development of managed Clinical Networks at a national level. A bid is being prepared to undertake research in demonstrating whether such networks make a difference.

New Initiatives

- (i) *Payment by results*
Keith Pohl has prepared a very helpful report regarding the experience of “Payment by Results” in South Thames. A number of important issues had been identified. It is intended to place this paper on the website of the BPNA as it is felt it will be helpful to members up and down the country. Chris Verity stressed that it was important to make it clear that the paper contained Keith’s perceptions of Payment by Results and was not “official” BPNA policy. CK agreed and indicated that this would be clear on the website.
- (ii) *Performance Indicators*
Work was currently in progress trying to develop useful Performance Indicators in Epilepsy. The Council had asked Colin Dunkley, assisted by Colin Ferrie, to further develop this initiative over the next 6 months.
- (iii) *Paediatric Neurology Web Forum/Message Board*
Dr Leena Meswasingh had been working independently on a project to develop a paediatric neurology web forum/message board but because it is likely to be of great interest to members of the Association, she had briefed the Council about it at some length. Some concerns had been raised in Council regarding consent and security and Robert McWilliam had been appointed to act as a link between the Web Forum/Message Board and the BPNA. He will report to the Executive and Council. If the concerns of the BPNA can be appropriately addressed, it is planned that there will be a fixed link between it and the BPNA’s website.

There had been a discussion in Council as to how the BPNA might support members interested in ethical issues. Sarah Benton had agreed to lead on the formation of a Special Interest Group and, in addition to this, Sameer Zuberi was exploring whether the Neurology section of the RCPCH spring meeting in 2007 should be held jointly with the Palliative Care Group, addressing ethical issues.

4. Clinical Excellence Awards (Colin Kennedy – CK)

CK briefed the AGM about previous discussions held at the Executive and Council about the desirability of making the process whereby the BPNA makes recommendations for Clinical Excellence Awards more transparent. As a result of this, Council have proposed:

- (i) That a Standing Advisory Committee should be formed, comprising: the President; the Immediate Past President or the President Elect and the National Training Adviser; and two Deanery Advisers, elected by the other Deanery Advisers. This Committee will be responsible for making all recommendations regarding Clinical Excellence Awards.

- (ii) That the said Advisory Committee will use the criteria published by the RCPCH for judging applications for Clinical Excellence Awards.

A discussion then ensued. Brian Neville asked whether the Standing Committee might give help with applicants filling in application forms. Peter Baxter and Chris Verity felt that it was important that this was kept separate from the work of the Advisory Committee. Michael Smith asked how many recommendations the BPNA is entitled to make. CK explained that this is based on the number of members the BPNA. Chris Verity also explained the process followed by the RCPCH.

The proposal was agreed by the AGM.

5. Secretariat (Colin Kennedy – CK)

CK outlined to the AGM how the work undertaken by the Secretariat had grown very substantially over the last few years. Reasons for this included the Distance Learning Course and the PET courses. He explained that the BPNA had been advised by our Accountants that Philippa Rodie should now be employed by the BPNA rather than paid on an hourly rate. Philippa Rodie has indicated that she is also in favour of this. CK then explained that Helen Cross (the previous Treasurer), Penny Fallon (the current Treasurer) and Richard Newton (the previous Immediate Past President) had investigated how best to take this forward. Following a detailed discussion in Council, it had been agreed that we should move towards offering Philippa Rodie a salaried post, starting in April 2006. It is envisaged that she will be employed for 4 days per week and will be entitled to 6 weeks paid annual leave. Following an analysis of similar advertised jobs, it is proposed that her salary for the next year will be calculated, such that her earnings will be similar to those she could have expected had she remained self employed and worked a similar number of hours.

CK also informed the AGM that over the next few months work will be done to try and separate more clearly different aspects of the BPNA's accounts and that following this, further consideration will be given to the appropriate salary level for the Secretariat.

CK also informed the AGM that the Council had recommended that in future Philippa should be given the title of Executive Manager of the BPNA.

Richard Robinson asked about National Insurance contributions. CK confirmed that the BPNA would be responsible for these but that the BPNA would not otherwise be responsible for providing a pension.

Peter Baxter asked if we had sought legal advice. CK informed him that this will be done prior to offering a formal contract.

Philip Jardine asked when the new breakdown of the accounts will be available. CK informed him that it is hoped that this will be within the next few months.

Ruth Williams emphasised that, in her opinion, we should be paying Philippa towards the upper end of the range of appropriate salaries. There seemed to be general agreement within the AGM for this statement.

No objections were raised to the proposal was therefore accepted.

CK then explained that the BPNA is also renting office space for the Secretariat and has also authorised Philippa Rodie to employ assistants (at a lower rate of pay) to undertake clerical work when this is in the best interest of the Association.

6. President Elect's Report (Mike Pike – MP)

Visits to training centres had all been completed prior to the deadline set by PMETB. MP further explained that it was currently very unclear as to how training centres will be assessed in the future. Indications are that this will be infrequent, Deanery led and that, in all likelihood, all adult and paediatric services will be assessed in a single visit. There were no issues raised about this from the floor.

The British Paediatric Neurology Surveillance Unit (BPNSU) will be officially launched at the Annual Meeting. MP explained that a 'Core Group' will be responsible for taking the project forward. This will comprise William Whitehouse, Carlos DeSousa and Finbar O'Callaghan. Normally each member of the core group will serve for 3 years, although some transitional arrangements will be necessary to ensure that replacement of core group members takes place in a staggered manner. There will be a small charge for each study included payable in advance. BPNSU start-up costs and initial running costs have been provided by UCB-Pharma.

Chris Verity asked if confidentiality issues had been addressed. MP explained that advice had been sought from the BPSU and that the BPNSU will be a conduit for a variety of studies and will only include information as to the number of children seen with a condition in the previous month, not clinical or identifying information. It will be the responsibility of investigators to contact notifying consultants about individual notifications. The core group will have the responsibility of establishing that each proposed study has appropriate ethical approval.

7. Secretary's Report (Colin Ferrie – CF)

Robert Forsyth had stood for re-election as National Training Adviser and was unopposed. His election was confirmed by the AGM.

William Whitehouse is standing down as Convenor of the Governance & Audit Committee. Carlos DeSousa has expressed an interest in taking on this role and this had been approved by Council.

Sarah Benton is continuing for a further term as Deanery Adviser for North Thames, whilst Anne-Marie Childs is taking over from John Livingston in Yorkshire, Sandeep Jayawant from Tony McShane in Oxford and Jay Patel from Philip Jardine in the South West.

In 2006 elections were due for the President (starting as President Elect), the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary. Formal notification will be given in the Spring Newsletter. In addition, CF advised the AGM that the posts of Deanery Advisers for East Anglia (currently Alasdair Parker), the North East (currently Anita Devlin), North West (currently Pam Tomlin), Scotland (currently Martin Kirkpatrick) and Trent (currently Chris Rittey), are coming up in 2006.

Council had co-opted Paul Eunson as Meeting Organiser for Edinburgh 2007, Helen Cross as Meeting Organiser for Harrogate 2009 (EPNS). Council had also asked for a member of the BPNSU core group to serve on it as a co-opted member.

Membership Lists

CF briefed the AGM on issues regarding provision of members' contact details to other members and to outside organisations. Over the years this has proved rather contentious. Following consideration in the Executive and at Council, the AGM was asked to consider the following:

- i) That there will be a presumption that members of the Association are content for their contact details to be made available to other members of the Association. The said contact details to include both surface and email addresses. However, provision should be made for any member who does not wish either their email or surface mail address (or both) to be available to other members, to opt out of this. Provision to opt out will be made on the website.
- ii) That members of the Association will be asked if they are content for their contact details (surface mail address, email address or both) to be made available to non-profit making outside organisations at a cost which covers administration.
- iii) That members should be asked if they are content to have their contact details (surface mail address, email address or both) made available to outside commercial organisations. The BPNA will charge a commercial fee for making such contact details available.

This was debated and the AGM agreed with the proposals, subject to the proviso that the issuing of contact details to other members will be for a trial period and that problems and difficulties will be monitored.

8. Assistant Secretary's Report (Robert McWilliam – RM)

RM presented figures which showed that the total membership in 2004 was 317 and had risen to 333 in 2005.

He presented to the AGM a list of new applicants for membership. 27 applications for ordinary membership were received. These have been reviewed by Council and all were recommended. A single application had been received for overseas membership but the names of no sponsors were given. It was recommended that this application be rejected. The AGM accepted these proposals.

9. National Training Advisers Report (Robert Forsyth – RF)

RF briefed the AGM regarding the workings of the National Grid and PYA. The problem which the Grid appears unable to accommodate is the question of part-time posts. These have to be arranged on an ad hoc basis. It looks like 9 National Grid appointments will be made this year. The interviews will be held in March.

RF then outlined the BPNA's involvement in developing competency documents for the RCPCH. Richard Robinson asked whether the importance of Adult Neurology training for Paediatric Neurology was recognised. RF explained that he had stressed the importance of this and he felt that the RCPCH were now at least aware of this as an issue. He noted that it also affected some other sub-specialities.

- 10. Treasurer's Report** (Penny Fallon – PF)
PF explained that she was developing new accountancy arrangements in an attempt to better protect the assets of the BPNA and the individuals involved in administering the finances. Also, the new accountancy arrangements will be more transparent in terms of the income generated and the expenditure of the different activities of the Association. A feature of the arrangements will be that there will only be one spreadsheet for all the accounts rather than the current three.

PF then presented the accounts for 2005. Current Assets stand at £221,722 with Current Liabilities being £84,472. The Net Assets are £137,249.75 and the Net Income is £34,553. The 2005 Conference showed a surplus of £24,598. With regards to general running of the BPNA and overheads in 2005, these totalled £18,343 and the total Expenditure was £21,431. Hence there was a negative balance of £3,088. This was almost exactly as predicted by Helen Cross (the previous Treasurer) based on current subscription rates.

PF informed the AGM that Mac Keith Press is increasing the subscription to Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology by £4. Currently, the total subscription to the BPNA is £160, of which Developmental Medicine receives £103 and the BPNA £57. She informed the AGM that the Council proposed that no change to current subscriptions be made for this year but that the expectation is of a likely increase in 2007. This was agreed.
- 11. Report of the Convener of the Governance & Audit Committee**
Due to a lack of time, William Whitehouse did not present a detailed report, but informed the AGM that Dr Carlos DeSousa will be taking over from him. Colin Kennedy thanked William for his hard work over the years as Convener of this important committee.
- 12. Neurodisability Report** (Jane Williams – JW)
JW informed the AGM that the second National Grid interviews for Neuro-disability will be held this year. Also, the neurodisability CSAC is looking for a Trainee Representative.
- 13. Child Psychiatry Report**
Colin Kennedy informed the AGM that Mary Eminson (the Child Psychiatry Representative on Council) had suggested that a Neuropsychiatrist within the BPNA might be prepared to form a Special Interest Group. Due to a lack of time there was no time to debate this.
- 14. Mac Keith Press** (Peter Baxter – PB)
PB informed the AGM that submissions to Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology had increased and the impact factor of the Journal remained high.
- 15. Meetings**
Paul Eunson briefly outlined plans for the Annual Meeting in Edinburgh 2007. The 2008 meetings will be held in Leeds. Proposals for the meeting in 2009 were asked for. The only nomination was for Birmingham, which was accepted.
- 16. Any Other Business**
Nil.
- 17. Next Annual General Meeting**
The next Annual General Meeting will take place in Edinburgh in 2007. Date and time to be announced.