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**NHS RETIREMENT FELLOWSHIP**  
**Minutes of the National Council Meeting held on**  
**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 12.30**  
**at John Snow House, 59 Mansell Street, London E1 8AN**

**Present:**

Margaret Moffat, Chairman  
Michael Bennett – NE Thames      Barbara Smart - North West  
Helen Dempster – South Wales      Loreen Smith - Scotland  
Jenny King - East Anglia      Lorraine Taylor – NW Thames  
Ros Lobo – SW Thames      Sue Williams - Midlands  
Judith McMurray – Scotland      Rosemary White - Wessex  
Jack Yan – SE Thames

**In attendance**

John Rostill, Chief Executive  
Chris Kitchin, Trustee  
Debbie Arnold, Administrator

**1605 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from George Kempton and Pat Oliver  
The Chairman welcomed Helen Dempster the new Regional Representative for  
South Wales to the meeting

**1606 MINUTES OF MEETING 01.05.19**

Minutes of Meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**1607 MATTERS ARISING**

Unsung Hero Award - Rosemary White enquired about the eligibility of members  
who had held office in the past, for an Unsung Hero award. The Chairman  
confirmed that past office holders were ineligible.

The award has been publicised on the NHS Retirement Fellowship Facebook  
page and will feature in the next Newsletter. Nominations will be considered by a  
panel comprising the Chairman, a trustee and a regional representative. The  
presentation will then be made at Conference. A list of nominees will be available  
at the Conference

Capitation Fees - Michael Bennett asked whether branches had been notified of  
the changes to the timescales for collection of capitation fees. The Chief  
Executive responded that a letter had been sent to branch secretaries. Rosemary  
White said she had not received this and it was agreed that information will be  
sent to her.

CE /  
CO

Safeguarding Policy - Jack Yan asked about progress of this policy. The Chief Executive confirmed that this had been agreed by the Board of Trustees and a copy was available on the website.

Fellowship overseas holidays -The Chief Executive said that his request for the Regional Representatives to provide suggestions for criteria regarding these holidays, had generated very little response.

CO

70/40 project – A report will be loaded onto the website within the next few days.

## **1608 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

The Chief Executive was pleased to report that Lorraine Taylor had represented the Fellowship at the presentation of the petition for free TV licences for over 75's at Downing Street. Support for this campaign will continue.

The Chief Executive expanded on his written report as follows:

Business Plan - In response to a query from Michael Bennett regarding the timing of the Business Plan being produced by the Planning for the Future group, he explained that the 3 Year Plan started in April 2019 and therefore contains a record of the work and targets already achieved as well as those for the future. It will be presented to the Board of Trustees on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and then generally circulated. Chris Kitchin will provide further details later in the meeting.

Fellowship overseas holidays – Newmarket Travel will be meeting with the Chief Executive, Lorraine Taylor and Sherry Smith on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

Expo 19 – the presence of the Fellowship stand was very successful generating contact with 50 potential new members and the possibility of a new branch. Contact was made with the Director of NHS Workforce Services (within the NHS Business Service Authority) who is responsible for the Pensioner's Update which accompanies the P60 and is sent to NHS pensioners annually.

2020 Member's Days – planning has started for events in the North East and East Anglia. The aim is to cover the whole of England every 2 years. The events have been organised for all members (postal and branch) local to the event since 2016.

## **1609 BENEVOLENT FUND**

The paper 'Increasing the Scope of the Benevolent Fund' is being presented to the Board of Trustees on 18<sup>th</sup> September and this was an opportunity for National Council to influence the thinking

Michael Bennett enquired about the limits for awards and applicant's savings. Following increases over recent years the maximum award is £800 although the Benevolent Fund Committee has some discretion in relation to awards marginally higher than this sum. The savings limit was increased to £6500 (from £4500) recently. Some discussion followed regarding the savings limit with concern being expressed that the figure is still too low.

Applications to the Fund remain low and the Chief Executive asked the meeting whether it believed that the new scope was likely to increase applications. The general opinion was that it would not. Ros Lobo enquired about the source of the

suggestions for the increase in scope. The Chief Executive responded that they originated from suggestions made by Fellowship members, but encouraged the Representatives to make other suggestions to the Benevolent Fund Committee. Other topics which were discussed included payment of an award in instalments (Loreen Smith); use of the Fund to pay for Osteopathy (Helen Dempster)- this would be covered under the alternative medicine category; using the fund to pay for transport for less mobile members to get to meetings (Ros Lobo) – the Chairman commented that, as a Fellowship, other branch members should be encouraged to consider helping these individuals to attend meetings.

RR's

Lorraine Taylor informed the meeting that there would be a Benevolent Fund stand at Conference with a pop-up banner and leaflets. Judith McMurray stated that the Benevolent Fund is mentioned at every Dundee branch meeting but also suggested that pride may be a reason for the limited applications. Loreen Smith commented that the Aberdeen branch has a welfare policy of contacting members who have been absent for a couple of months to see if they need help attending meetings and a list of such members is kept by the branch.

## 1610 SPRING 2019 – A PROFILE OF THE SOUTH EAST

Several Representatives had not received a copy of this report. Debbie Arnold will Distribute further copies.

CO

Topics which were discussed relating to this report included:

- Disappointing support from the local NHS organisations. The Chief Executive suggested that he should write to these on behalf of the branches in order to raise the profile.
- Some branches are not interested in working with other organisations e.g. League of Friends, or other branches, and are somewhat insular in their outlook.
- Lack of interest from some branches in joining other NHS organisations e.g. Patient's Association
- Regional groups such as the M25 group were considered a good idea and Judith McMurray reported good attendance in such groups in Scotland. Rosemary White indicated that she and Development Officer Paul Pople had a good response when the establishment of such a group was suggested in the Wessex area.

CE

It was agreed that Sally Bundock had completed a very useful piece of work capturing significant information which could be used by the Fellowship to help increase membership and retain existing members and branches. It was also agreed that similar information for other regions should be collected.

CE

Rosemary White asked for clarification regarding raising funds for other charities and Loreen Smith asked for clarification regarding branches making donations from their branch funds to other charities.

CE/CO

The Chairman replied that branch funds cannot be used for such purposes but that as long as the funds raised are paid into a separate bank account and that donations are not subsidised or added to from branch funds, then this was legal. Clarification of the measures necessary to make donations to other charities will be sent to all branches.

## 1611 REPORTS FROM THE REGIONS

Reports from the Regions and Countries had been circulated with the Agenda and the Chairman asked for further comments

Additional comments were as follows:

- Scotland has lost one branch (Clyde and Lomond) but opening a new one in Shetland and reopening Dumfries.
- Helen Dempster enquired about the social media training held in Scotland. This was financed by a grant from Santander and was provided by the Edinburgh Silver Surfers organisation. Helen Dempster agreed to speak to DO John Toman re contacting Santander regarding a similar grant. Banks were also mentioned as being willing to provide information and training regarding online security.
- Michael Bennett raised a query regarding reference to the Personal Reward Statement. The Chief Executive clarified that this is available to NHS employees online and provides information on NHS pensions, years of service, training etc.
- South East report:

P60 – The meeting agreed that this was progressing as fast as was possible and that the delays had been out of the Fellowship's control. The P60's to be issued in May 2020 will contain information about the NHS Retirement Fellowship. The Chief Executive asked the Regional Representatives to consider how they would like responses to enquiries from this campaign to be handled – ie at branch level or via a centralised function.

HD

RR

Fellowship running costs – There was some discussion regarding availability of Fellowship financial information. The Fellowship accounts are presented as part of the AGM, but there was a suggestion that more regular financial updates would be of interest to National Council especially with regard to planned expenditure for the year ahead. There was a call for more transparency and access to the Fellowship's financial status. The Chief Executive reminded the meeting that the Board of Trustees is responsible for the management of Fellowship funds but agreed to consider how the spending plans could be shared with National Council.

It was agreed that the point regarding the ability '*to express an opinion on where/how our limited resources should be utilised*', as expressed in the South East /East Anglia Report, did not reflect the views of all members.

## 1612 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY UPDATE

The Chief Executive indicated that the next edition of the Newsletter in its revised format, together with the loose leaf advertising sheet – Fellowship Extra - would be published by the end of September.

The Board of Trustees will be asked to agree to the continuation of the role of Communications Officer

In response to Jenny King's query regarding the Fellowship support of the WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) campaign, the Chief Executive replied that decisions would be made following the publication of a Government report.

Sue Williams queried whether followers of the NHS Retirement Fellowship Facebook page should be members of the Fellowship. Michael Bennett pointed out that as the Facebook platform can be used for recruitment purposes as well as for publicising branch activities then not all followers would be members. There was some discussion concerning inappropriate comments appearing on the page. The Chief Executive and Debbie Arnold indicated that abusive and inappropriate comments can, and have been, deleted and members blocked for inappropriate use, but as the site is used as a platform for discussion, then not all comments are going to be positive.

## **1613 PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE – BUSINESS PLAN**

Chris Kitchin provided some background to the development of a Fellowship Business Plan.

He explained that charity leadership is continually under scrutiny, with Trustees being both individually and collectively responsible for the management of charities. Following the publication of the Taken on Trust report which examined the roles and responsibilities of trustees, the Fellowship set up a group to examine whether guidelines for charity management were being followed. On the whole the findings were positive, but a list was compiled of areas where improvements could be made. These included implementation of GDPR, new and revised policies e.g. Safeguarding, and new rules for Trustee recruitment. A group comprising Trustees, a Regional Representative and a Development Officer was set up to manage this work and this is the Planning for the Future team.

The team has developed a Business Plan covering Membership, Communication and Governance and detailing specific objectives and targets with the aim of helping the Fellowship to grow. The Plan is designed to run on a rolling 3 year basis and commenced in April 2019 and contains an annual Action plan with target dates for completion of activities.

The Business Plan is being presented to the Board of Trustees on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

A Day Conference was held in June 2019 to present the rationale for the Business Plan development and to deliver a consistent message to Trustees, Regional Representatives and Staff. Attendees were asked to 'sign up' to the messages and to then communicate them to the wider membership.

At this point in the meeting a brainstorming session took place during which, the meeting was asked to provide suggestions for recruiting more members. A list of suggestions is appended to these minutes.

The Chief Executive stated that there is an overriding target of 10,000 members by November 2020; the Fellowship currently has just over 8300 members.

The P60 recruitment campaign is a means of delivering some of this growth and Regional Representatives were asked to speak to their branches and to indicate how they would like responses from the recruitment campaign to be managed – some branches may want more members and may want to speak to potential members in their area, some new branches could be opened, national membership can be increased. The P60 exercise is likely to take place in mid-May 2020.

A previous recruitment campaign directed responses to a call centre. This campaign achieved some success but many new members did not renew their membership as they felt unwelcome at some branches. Rosemary White informed the meeting that her branch telephoned the new recruits to welcome them before they attended the branch meeting. Michael Bennett suggested that National

RR

members who wish to attend / join branches could be offered a reduced membership fee.

It was recognised that not all members wish to commit to attending branch meetings but GDPR allowing, national members in the vicinity of a branch could be invited to occasional activities e.g. trips, theatre visits.

The Fellowship needs to recruit younger members in order to grow.

Lorraine Taylor mentioned that she had made contact with West Middlesex Radio and will be promoting the Fellowship during an interview on this station. She agreed to let the Chief Executive know how successful this proves in terms of recruitment.

LT

Rosemary White enquired whether an increase in capitation fees was likely in 2020 and the Chief Executive replied that this would not happen.

Jack Yan commented that the Business Plan approach was a positive step as it represented something tangible and Chris Kitchin was thanked for his explanations.

#### **1614 NHS CULTURE, HERITAGE AND MEMORIES PROJECT '71-41'**

The first meeting of this project team followed the National Council meeting

#### **1615 AGM AND CONFERENCE**

Plans are progressing well and a number of speakers have been lined up and a Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands is attending the Gala Dinner. The Coventry branch is being very supportive.

#### **1616 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business  
The meeting closed at 14:25

#### **1617 DATE OF NEXT NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING**

April 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 12 noon – Civil Service Club, 13/15 Great Scotland Yard, London SW1A 2HJ

Debbie Arnold  
12.0919