

Dear Member

Over 150 people attended the AGM and Conference at Manchester on 21st/22nd October. It was good to see people back again, many of whom were seeing old friends and colleagues for the first time in 2 years. The feedback from the conference was good, members thoroughly enjoyed listening to the two main speakers Sir Muir Gray, Director of Optimal Ageing Programme (and NHSRF member) who spoke about The Living Longer Better Revolution - and Professor Nairn Wilson CBE the Honorary Founding President of the College of General Dentistry who spoke about the new College.

There was also a presentation from Bob Middleton, Project Manager and Karen Kennedy, Development Officer explaining innovations in the North West and the establishment of our first virtual branch in Central Manchester.

Members were also introduced to Trustees and noted in particular the four new ones - namely Janine Brooks, John Mosley, Mark Bagnall and Suzy Brain England (photographs and profiles of these appear in the Fellowship newsletter).

George Kempton was appointed Chairman for a period of 3 years and Chris Kitchin was endorsed as Vice Chairman for the same period. George thanked Margaret Moffat for all her considerable work over the past four years. The outgoing chairman, will remain as a Trustee and continue to chair the benevolent fund committee.

Thanks were also given to Wendy Lindley who has been a Trustee for a number of years who had stood down, in her absence for all her efforts. Wendy's departure now leaves a vacancy for a new Trustee, who should be a member of the NHS Retirement Fellowship. The details are included in the newsletter but I emphasise that I am happy to talk through the responsibilities and eligibility criteria for anybody who is interested. I also confirm that I would be particularly pleased to talk to members from diverse backgrounds. The closing date for applications is 13 December 2021, and you need to get in touch with central office Tel: 01305 361317 to book a telephone call with me.

In the afternoon session I explained the need for and the challenge of change emphasising that during the last two years the Future Group set up by the Trustees had considered a number of proposals. I also explained the role of the Trustees and the work that had been undertaken in the last few years to ensure that the governance arrangements were appropriate and met the requirements of the charities commission. The underlying theme was that the membership numbers were falling somewhat dramatically since 2015 that we could no longer rely on substantial funding from the NHS. It was also clear that despite all the work undertaken in the background that the work of the trustees was not visible. The Fellowship is and should continue to be one large family working together from the same agenda. It was important that we shaped the future together. In planning ahead the Trustees were conscious of the need to ensure that more members have the opportunity to participate in the wider activities of the fellowship and that there was an immediate need to have a major recruitment campaign.

In terms of changes the new proposals are to use counties in England as the basis for the organisation, groups of counties make up a region (thereby replacing the old NHS regional boundaries established in 1974). Each county to elect a member representative from which a regional member is appointed to the Members Council which will now formally be the principle advisory body to the trustees. The Members Council which is currently chaired by the chair of trustees to be chaired by one of its own. Also, the proposal is that 2 postal members (we have over 700 of these) be elected to join the Members Council. It is hoped that these proposals will lead to more local member engagement and improvement in communications.

However, it was emphasised that some things remain the same. The members relationship with the local branch remains unchanged, branches continue to manage their own business and activities and branches continue to determine their own annual subscriptions.

These proposals are evolutionary and not revolutionary and the Conference generally endorsed the proposed way forward.

In the meantime the trustees have agreed that some trustee meetings will be held outside London and that in due course members should have the opportunity of observing all meetings. The proposals will be subject to further consultation and because they involve changes to the Constitution which was last revised in 2015 will need to be agreed by a 2/3 majority of branch votes.

In April and May 2022 all NHS retirees (and there are over 1 million of them) will receive an envelope containing their P60 and a letter giving details of pension arrangements. Included in that envelope will be a leaflet inviting them to join the NHSRF. That means that 50,000 leaflets will be posted each day and our aspiration is that we will receive at least 1% positive response which will increase our membership by 10,000. This major recruitment campaign requires the help and co-operation of everybody to ensure it is successful and helps the Fellowship to remain sustainable. Further details will be sent to branches shortly.

Two further announcements were made at the conference. One about the new arrangements for Mirthy:-

For a period of three months, Mirthy has offered NHSRF members free subscription to its Unlimited programme (worth £15), as part of the launch of the new service. From today members will be able to log into the Mirthy website and use a unique voucher code - NHSRF - which will give them 3-months access to all of the live Zoom events from Mirthy for free.

And I launched a new short story competition "How many of you have said I should write a book and not got round to it". Now is the opportunity to submit a short story health related which could be humorous or factual of no more than 1500 words. This is the brainchild of Peter Sykes who has written many books and he will be joined by two other judges determine results.

Entry criteria:

This is a competition open to NHSRF members, for the best short story based in a healthcare or social care setting.

Maximum length 1500 words (No minimum length)

Stories may be fact or fiction on any subject. Good use of language to tell the story is more important than spelling and grammar.

Entry is free and multiple entries will be accepted.

Ideally submissions should be typed and double spaced.

The author's name and contact details must not appear on the submission. Please write an accompanying note.

The closing date for entries is the 30th April 2021. The winners will be announced and prizes presented at the Fellowships Annual Conference in October 2022.

All stories submitted may be published in Fellowship literature and on the www.medicaltales.org website

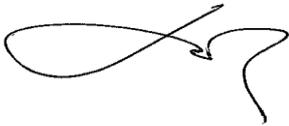
I am also delighted to say that there was a collection for the NHSRF Benevolent Fund and the grand total of £500.87 was collected.

The number of people now signed up to our Facebook page is over 1900 and if you are not one of these perhaps you would like to give that further consideration.

Whilst a significant number of members have given permission to use their email addresses there are still many that haven't. The benefits are that we can communicate with you more speedily and this makes communications that much more effective.

There will be regional meetings over the next few months so that you can consider proposals for change and I look forward to meeting many of you at these events.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Rostill', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Rostill OBE
Chief Executive