

Minutes from National Council meeting 01.09.21

Action

Present:

Margaret Moffat, George Kempton
Michael Bennett, Jenny King, Ros Lobo, Pat Oliver, Sharon Slack, Lorraine Taylor, Helen Dempster, Barbara Ham
Chris Kitchin, John Toman
John Rostill
Debbie Arnold

Apologies : Rosemary White, Sue Williams, Loreen Smith, Judith McMurray, Paul Farenden

1618	The Chair, Margaret Moffat, welcomed everyone and accepted apologies.	
1619	<u>Notes of National Council meeting held on 28th April 2021 via Zoom.</u> The notes were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting	
1620	<p><u>The Challenge of Change – slide presentation.</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive introduced a slide presentation the contents of which will remain confidential until after the AGM.</p> <p>The need for some change in order to ensure the survival of the Fellowship had been agreed at the National Council meeting on 28th April and the Trustees approved, in principle, a number of proposals presented by the Future Group as a way forward for the Fellowship, taking into account the steadily declining membership numbers. Membership in 2013/14 was around 14,000, but by 31st March 2021 this had declined to 7414.</p> <p>Grant funding for the Fellowship continues to decline.</p> <p>Increasing the engagement of members, enabling members to have a greater voice and improving democracy, are key elements of the proposals. The P60 campaign, planned for April May 2022 is designed to address the declining membership numbers .</p> <p>The Challenges were identified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current regions based on 1974 NHS regions which have little relevance today • 772 postal members do not have a voice as they do not belong to a branch and so are not currently represented at National Council • There is an apparent lack of clarity regarding eligibility to become a member of the Fellowship <p>The way forward was summarised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members to continue to join as branch or postal members • All members to be treated equally and involved • All members have a voice • Trustees to be more visible <p>Changes will be implemented incrementally.</p> <p>The new structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counties will be used as the organisational basis for the Fellowship, with groups of counties forming regions • Counties will elect member representatives • County Representatives will elect Regional Member Representatives • Regional Member Representatives will form a new Members Council • 2 elected representatives of postal members will be included on Members Council • Members Council will be chaired by one of its members • The Chair or Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees will attend Members Council meetings • The Chair of Members Council will attend the Board of Trustees <p>The new structure will enable more member engagement, giving members more opportunity to get</p>	

	<p>involved. Workloads of the current Regional Representatives will be reduced and members will be in control of the business at Members Council.</p> <p>Some meetings of the Board of Trustees would be held away from London and there is a proposal that consideration could be given to allowing members to attend as observers at Board Meetings therefore enabling members to see the Trustees at work.</p> <p>Whilst the basic principles have been agreed the details of the implementation will be discussed and confirmed as the processes start to evolve</p> <p>Queries raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon Slack – the Chief Executive’s attendance at Members Council meetings. <i>Traditionally the Chief Executive, together with an administrator, services but does not manage, the National Council meetings. The Members Council would decide whether to continue in this way. The Chief Executive would attend by invitation only.</i> • Jenny King – election of the Chair of Members Council. <i>Regional Member Representatives would elect their own Chair</i> • Sharon Slack – election processes – <i>Central Office would need to be involved in administering the nomination and voting processes particularly for the County Member Representatives who would be nominated by branches. The County representatives would then elect the Regional Member Representatives with help from Central Office if required. Whilst this is a layered approach it is important to recognise that it is not a centrally controlled process.</i> • Michael Bennett – Could County Representatives attend a branch in the relevant county but live in another county? – <i>details are yet to be agreed but it would be unlikely that volunteers would be turned away</i> • Lorraine Taylor – Whilst not against change, expressed reservations regarding recruiting enough County Representatives – <i>this can only be answered once the process begins. Filling the roles will take time and the process will be introduced incrementally.</i> • Pat Oliver – responsibilities of the County Representative role – <i>they will be responsible for co-ordinating information from a smaller group of branches than that covered by the current Regional Representatives. This should make the role less onerous and may encourage more interest from members.</i> • Michael Bennett – P60 campaign – <i>communication of the rationale behind the postponement was not relayed effectively to the branches. The system of communication from Trustees to members should be improved and any proposals from Member Representatives for a revised system, will be considered. It was acknowledged that the effectiveness of dissemination of information through to branches and members varies regionally.</i> <p>The Chief Executive suggested that the lack of significant issues being raised at National Council via the branches could be improved by members having more access to the Members Council via their County Representatives</p>	
1621	<p>The Chief Executive asked National Council to vote on 6 elements of the proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Do you support the need for change? <i>Agreed unanimously</i> ✓ Would the ‘county basis’ help the role of Member Representatives? <i>Agreed - Vote 6:2</i> Provisional plans are being drawn up for Scotland and Wales, there is some flexibility eg some counties with very small numbers of branches could be combined ✓ Should postal members have a voice? <i>Agreed unanimously</i> ✓ Do you agree that the [Members] Council should be chaired by one of its own? <i>Agreed unanimously</i> ✓ Should Trustees Meetings sometimes be held outside London? <i>Agreed unanimously</i> Meetings outside of London could be arranged to coincide with regional members meetings ✓ Should members be able to observe Trustees Meetings? <i>Agreed unanimously</i> (Caveats – pre-booking required, maximum number, members can observe only, some elements of the meeting may be held ‘in camera’ as proceedings are confidential) Hybrid meetings (face to face meetings with observers joining via Zoom if technology permits) could be considered. This could help to encourage more members to stand as Trustees and ‘demystify’ the position of a Trustee 	
1622	<p>The Chief Executive will now prepare a report for the Board of Trustees meeting on 15th September informing them that the elements of the proposals listed above, were accepted by National Council and recommended to the Trustees, and also recommending that we proceed to the launch of a consultation process at the AGM and Conference in October. This consultation would run for a period to be determined</p>	Chief Exec

	and culminate in an EGM at which the changes would put to the vote, probably before the end of March 2022. A two thirds majority is required for adoption of the changes. Every member would receive a copy of the consultation document and work will commence to determine how responses are received.	
1623	<p><u>Conference and AGM 21-23rd October 2021</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive reported that around 150 members and staff are currently booked to attend the Conference in Manchester. The hotel is Covid secure and the booking is confirmed. The Fellowship can ask for additional precautions such as social distancing and the wearing of masks, if it is considered appropriate.</p> <p>IOW Tours have confirmed that, whilst this will be a somewhat smaller conference than usual, they remain willing to organise it and will ensure that standards remain as high as in the past.</p> <p>Conference bookings are still being taken and National Council and staff are encouraged to promote the event wherever possible. A Facebook campaign is part of the effort to encourage more attendees.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that the Fellowship should announce that a national consultation on the future of the Fellowship will be launched at the event as this could encourage more members to attend. This suggestion was agreed. The proposals will remain confidential until the consultation launch.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>Chief Exec. /CO</p>
1624	<p><u>Bank Charges</u></p> <p>HSBC has announced that it is changing its charity accounts to community accounts and classifying them as business accounts, which in turn, means that they will be introducing a monthly fee of £5 together with charges of 40p for each cheque deposit and 0.4% to pay in or take out cash. Michael Bennett is investigating alternatives. Metro Bank has a community current account facility designed for clubs, societies and charities that they have classified as small businesses. This allows 200 free transactions per month and free cash withdrawal/deposits up to £10.00 per month.</p> <p>There is currently a lack of clarity regarding the introduction of charges from other banks which offer free banking to charities, and the Chief Executive asked the Regional Representatives for feedback from their branches regarding this issue.</p> <p>Once the situation is clearer, a note will be issued to branches.,</p>	<p>All</p> <p>Chief Exec.</p>
1625	<p><u>Short Story competition</u></p> <p>One of our members, Peter Sykes a retired surgeon who writes books about his experiences, has suggested a NHSRF short story competition. The details are currently being finalised and Regional Representatives will be asked to publicise this to their branches in due course.</p>	All
1626	<p><u>Joint working with other organisations</u></p> <p>A joint working relationship has recently been set up with the College of General Dentistry as a result of a suggestion from a postal member. They will shortly be establishing patient councils amongst other initiatives, and Regional Representatives will be asked to promote the organisation to our members.</p> <p>The Chief Executive has spoken with the Bishop of London who is chairing the Bereavement Commission. This organisation has been established to explore issues and provide recommendations on how to better support bereaved people. Following another meeting on 13th September, a questionnaire will be available for Fellowship members to complete. Regional representatives will then be asked to publicise this.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p>
1627	<p><u>P60 campaign</u></p> <p>The Chairman reminded the meeting that the P60 campaign in April/May 2022 represents a major opportunity for membership growth in the Fellowship. A previous campaign achieved less success than expected as a result of some new members experiencing a lack of welcome when they joined some branches. The Regional Representatives were therefore asked to encourage branches to get behind this campaign and to consider ways of making new members feel welcome.</p>	All

The meeting closed at 1.25pm

Debbie Arnold
02.09.21

Chairman	Date.....
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