

**UNCONFIRMED Minutes of the ANNUAL MEETING OF FELLOWS of the Royal Society of Medicine held at 1 Wimpole Street, London W1G OAE on Monday 9 March 2020**

---

**Present:** Professor Sir Simon Wessely, President (in the Chair)  
Dr Fiona Moss, Dean  
Ms Michele Acton, Chief Executive  
Mrs Joanna Rose, Charity Secretary  
66 Fellows

The President welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting of Fellows.

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the last Annual Meeting of Fellows held on 4 March 2019 were signed as a correct record.

**2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The Report from the President had been circulated (AMF 19/20/1).

Sir Simon said that a lot had happened during the year. There had been a number of changes in the Senior Management Team, notably the appointment of a new Chief Executive, Ms Michele Acton.

As reported last year, there had been several issues relating to the new IT systems and website. Things had now stabilised, and improvements were starting to be seen.

A number of events had taken place, which the Dean would report on, but Sir Simon drew attention to the 'In Conversation' events with Ken Loach, Jed Mercurio, Sarah Wollaston and Dame Sally Davies, to name but a few. More of these were planned with Michael Palin taking centre stage later in the year.

Sir Simon said that this would be his last Annual Meeting as President as he would be demitting office in July and handing over to Professor Roger Kirby at the Honorary Fellowship Ceremony on 28 July. He had enjoyed his time in office immensely and thanked all those who had supported him over the last three years.

**3. DEAN'S REPORT**

The Report from the Dean had been circulated (AMF 19/20/2). Dr Moss reported. She was delighted that Ms Acton had moved the CEO office down to the third floor, adjacent to the Education Department, as this made her far more accessible to fellows and members.

Following the major restructure last year, education staff had now been assembled into five teams to assist specific Sections with their activities. A new Head of Programmes, Mr Olly Chapman, had been appointed. This now completed the teams in the Education Department, with a Head of Content (Ms Rebecca Casey) and Head of Library (Mr Paul Banks).

Section programmes remained the core activity of the Society and Dr Moss was pleased to be able to report that delegate numbers were up on last year. She thanked the Sections for their ongoing commitment to the RSM.

There had been some outstanding public engagement events over the year, not least the London Clinic Lecture given by Professor Don Berwick. This had been outstanding and had 'sold out' within three days of going online.

Another breakthrough event had been the LGBTQ+ Pride in Medicine healthcare day. The RSM had been the first medical institution to hold such an event, which had been well attended and received. An exhibition built around Dr Georgina Somerset, the first openly intersexual person in the UK, who qualified as a dentist back in 1944, had been running concurrently. Another, similar event was planned for later this year.

Dr Moss wished to thank Professor Roger Kirby, who had completed his term of office as Chairman of the Academic Board and was now President-elect. Professor Kirby had been replaced by Professor Nik Patel and Dr Moss welcomed him in his new role.

Finally, Dr Moss wished to thank all the teams in the Education Department for all their efforts over the last year in what had been trying circumstances.

#### **4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

The Report from the Chief Executive had been circulated (AMF 19/20/3).

Ms Acton firstly thanked everyone at the Society for making her so welcome. She was enjoying her new role enormously, despite the obvious challenges it had brought, and said it was a privilege to be in post.

Ms Acton then gave a presentation outlining the main areas she wished to report on.

Financial results for year ended 30 September 2019:

- Total income of £15.6m and total expenditure of £16.6m giving overall operational loss of £1.0m.
- Also, net losses on investments of £0.5m increasing losses to £1.5m.
- Income from donations and legacies fell from £1.5m (2018) to £0.7m (2019).
- Reserves:
  - Unrestricted general funds fell from £3.9m (2018) to £3.0m (2019) but Ms Acton was confident that there were sufficient reserves to absorb the loss.
  - Designated Section Funds remained constant at £1.4m.

New Senior Team in place:

Ms Acton advised that Mr Richard Whitley (Director of Finance and IT) and Mr Neville Carter (Director of Engagement) had both taken up post towards the end of 2018.

Development work on CRM and website:

- New CRM and Website launched in February 2019.
- Some key learnings from the project.
- Project Team put in place in July 2019 to address issues and get back on track.
- Functionality was improving and there were now two streams of work:
  - Stabilisation.
  - Benefits realisation.

### Strategy:

Ms Acton advised that one of her key goals was to build on the existing Library and Education strategies and develop an overall strategy for the Society. This would cover:

- Education programme – scope, content, delivery.
- Developing a sustainable financial model.
- Technological infrastructure that we need
- Ensuring 1 Wimpole Street meets the needs of all stakeholders.

The strategic goal was to be the leading provider of continual learning for healthcare professionals with four key pillars:

- Education.
- Learning Resources.
- Convening.
- Innovation.

Chandos House: CH was in the process of being sold and contracts had been exchanged. It was hoped completion would take place by the end of June this year.

1 Wimpole Street: Although some work relating to the refurbishment of 1WS had been carried out in previous years, Council had agreed that it would be prudent to wait until after the overall strategy had been agreed before looking at the best way to utilise the space at 1WS.

New Charter & By-Laws: Following approval by members and Fellows of the Society in January 2019, the revised Charter and By-Laws were now awaiting final approval by the Privy Council. We had been advised that this would happen in July 2020, and the new Charter and By-Laws would be implemented from 1 October 2020.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): The Society was following Government advice on COVID-19. Staff were being updated regularly, and messages were being displayed on the Society website for members and Fellows. Updates from the Government were being constantly monitored and contingency plans were being put in place. Some external events had been cancelled and it was anticipated that some Section meetings would also be postponed. The Society was being as flexible as possible to assist with this. However, it was inevitable that it would have an impact on all areas of the business.

## **5. AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR THE 2018/19 SESSION**

The Meeting received and accepted the audited accounts for the session 2018/19 (AMF 19/20/5).

## **6. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR THE SESSION 2019/20**

The President and Council recommended that BDO be reappointed as Auditors for the 2019/20 session. The Annual Meeting of Fellows approved this recommendation.

## **7. QUESTIONS FROM FELLOWS**

The President asked for questions from the floor.

Mr John Skuse asked why the number of members had reduced when in previous years the AMF had been told that it would increase. Ms Acton advised that numbers had gone down by approximately

4,000 during 2017. However, the number of new members were steadily increasing and there were initiatives to continue this. These included working with partner organisations to promote the RSM to their membership.

A FELLOW questioned the strategy behind selling Chandos House and asked if it was a good time to be selling such an asset? Ms Acton said that Council had discussed the issue and decided that CH was not a core part of the Society's business. She agreed that the flat floor space at CH was useful, but the space utilisation at 1WS was not good and floor space could be generated here. The President added that CH did not justify the expense of the Society owning such a Grade 1 listed building.

A FELLOW asked if would be useful to approach hospitals to sign up more members. Ms Acton advised that Mr Neville Carter was already approaching institutions and she would pass this comment on.

Mr Peter Richardson asked if there were any comments on the current year financial information and if there were any areas of concern. Ms Acton she said she expected things to improve slightly this year but there would be no quick fix. Initiatives were doing well and delegate numbers were holding up. However, it would not be possible to predict the obvious impact from COVID-19.

Dr Stingelin asked why there hadn't been more information in the Annual Report about what services were available to Fellows and members. The President said that this was not the role of the Annual Report and member benefits were included in marketing material. Ms Acton added that this year's Annual Report had been deliberately low-key as it had been produced by a completely new team. This would be readdressed for the 2019/20 Report.

Dr Sally Taber, a former President of the History of Medicine Section, advised the meeting that the Section had now changed its name to Medicine and Society. She also asked if live demonstrations of aesthetic surgery were still carried out on the 1WS premises. The President advised that this was no longer the case. Dr Taber added that the Bishop of Norwich had produced a report following the Paterson Inquiry, and she would recommend him as a speaker at a meeting or lecture. Ms Acton noted this and thanked Dr Taber.

There were no further questions.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The President said that as he was due to demit office later this year, this would be his last Annual Meeting. His successor, Professor Roger Kirby, would be inaugurated as President on 28 July at the Honorary Fellows Ceremony. The President urged people to attend this as Dame Clare Marx, Professor Stephen O'Rahilly, Professor Baron Peter Piot, Mr B Sethia and Dr Sarah Wollaston would be admitted as Honorary Fellows of the Society.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on 2 March 2021 at 6.30pm.

There being no further business, the President closed the meeting.