

UNCONFIRMED Minutes of the ANNUAL MEETING OF FELLOWS of the Royal Society of Medicine held at 6pm on Monday 4 July 2022 in the Max Rayne Auditorium, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1G OAE, and via Zoom

Present: Professor Roger Kirby, President (in the Chair)
Ms Michele Acton, Chief Executive (via Zoom)
Professor Mary Bishop, Director of Learning (via Zoom)
Mrs Joanna Rose, Charity Secretary
35 Fellows present in person, 83 attended via Zoom

The President welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting of Fellows.

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Humphrey Scott, Dean.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the last Annual Meeting of Fellows held on 26 April 2021 (AMF 21/22/1) were unanimously approved and signed as a correct record.

2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

RK said that this was the first in-person Annual Meeting since 2019 and it was delightful to see everyone.

The pandemic had changed many things for a lot of people, but he was hopeful that the RSM was in a position to take advantage of the changes, with the 2021-2026 strategy now well on the way to being implemented.

The 2020/21 academic year had been a challenge but one that staff and volunteers had risen to. RK thanked all the Section Councils and the RSM staff for delivering such a high-calibre education programme and member services throughout the period.

With members now in over 100 countries around the world, RK took this opportunity to thank all the members and Fellows for their continued loyalty and support of the Society.

With the closure of the building for so much of the 20/21 financial year, there had been an inevitable hit on the finances of the Society. Despite the closure, though, we had continued to provide an invaluable source of learning and relevant information for thousands of healthcare professionals.

Some highlights from the year were the 48 Covid-19 webinars, the ten-part climate change series, the Medicine and Me events, where we partner with other charities and organisations, as well as the Section programme events. In all, over 600 events were held over the year.

The reach of the Society had expanded dramatically to become a truly national and international resource. Meeting delegate numbers increased from around 36,000 in 2018/19 to over 202,000 per annum. In addition to this, there were over 1.3m views of online events

We had been fortunate to secure an extraordinary array of top-level clinicians, scientists and celebrities to participate in our webinars which, in turn, had resulted in extensive coverage in quality media.

The 'In Conversation' series had again provided an impressive roster of guests including Sir Paul Nurse, Dame Kate Bingham, Tom Holland and the Most Reverend Justin Welby. Although free to attend, these had resulted in a considerable amount of voluntary donations to the Society.

Donations continued to be an important part of running the RSM. Through the generous support of our donors, we were able to provide vital training and insights as part of our outstanding education programme. RK asked that if any members wished to assist with fundraising, they should contact him directly.

Looking to the future, the RSM needed to build on its successes. Its teaching had to become more inspirational and evolved from the somewhat old-fashioned method of delivery from a lectern to a passive audience, to a more interactive format whether online or in person, and networking opportunities should be maximised, encouraging members to socialise and forge new connections, as well as enjoying the opportunity to renew old connections.

The Library had to be transformed from a static location to become a lively, interactive offering to provide in-depth learning that people wanted to return to. Our Librarians would need to reach out to members and provide information in new and exciting ways.

Above all, the RSM had to establish itself as an important innovation hub, encouraging members and other clinicians to come up with inspirational ideas which may improve patient care and then putting them in touch with engineers and financiers who can help them turn their conceptions into reality.

In summary, more than 200 years since its establishment, the RSM has a bright and increasingly important future. We would continue on this journey to transform the Society whilst preserving our heritage. The ongoing support of members whilst working towards this exciting future is welcomed.

4. DEAN'S REPORT

Professor Bishop reported.

MB said that unfortunately Professor Scott was unable to be at the meeting this evening and she would therefore give the Dean's Report on his behalf.

Firstly, since switching from in person to online, the team had delivered 608 events, 592 of which were online. This did not just involve offering webinars to provide education during the lockdown, but allowed for innovation, trialling of new packages, the development of hybrid approaches and enhancing the member experience through learning.

The Society continued to focus on the digital enhancement and sought to leverage this by better understanding the available data and our brand footprint to develop responses to member needs, combining the best of the London location and the potential for delivering our vision of better healthcare for better lives – across the UK and internationally.

The RSM's COVID-19 webinar series delivered 48 COVID-19 Series episodes with delegate registrations of over 82k from around the world, and 191k YouTube views, generating regular national press coverage in publications including The Times, The Telegraph, the Independent, The Daily Mail and HSJ. Guests included: Professor Chris Whitty, CMO of England, Sir Jeremy Farrar, Director of the Wellcome Trust, Professor Sharon Peacock, Executive Director of the COVID-19 Genomics UK, and Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu, Assistant Director General at the World Health Organization.

The Covid series continues and recently celebrated its 100th episode, building on the global interest and engagement it has generated.

Despite the huge focus on Covid during the period, the RSM managed to continue its other work, including a 10-part Health Emergency of Climate Change webinar series, funded by a donation of £100k. The impact of climate change on human health again drew global interest, with 6,652 registrations and 6,303 views across the series.

In May 2021 the Psychiatry Section held a three-part series Transforming Mental Health in schools and colleges in partnership with the charity MIND. The series, which discussed concepts and ideas around mental health that could be adapted for use in the classroom, saw over 1,500 delegate registrations across the three episodes.

In September 2021, the Vascular, Lipid and Metabolic Medicine Section ran a four-day virtual conference about peripheral vascular disease, in association with the European Society of Vascular Medicine. The programme featured experts from countries including Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, UK and USA, and attracted over 400 delegates from around the world.

The heart of the RSM was provided by its 55 Sections and member volunteers and MB thanked them for valuable contribution.

The Library also pivoted to provide a digital library offering of healthcare resources, making this available in person wherever the rules allowed.

The Library's legacy authentication analytics system was migrated to the more robust OpenAthens system. This provided members with faster, more seamless access to resources in the digital library and delivered a more robust, secure and long-lasting technical infrastructure. This had improved reporting on members use of the digital library, thereby allowing better analysis and, in turn, enabling better purchase decisions and more effective promotion of digital resources to members.

A Critical Appraisal and Research Methods training course was re-introduced in the summer of 2021, attracting 108 delegates initially. In parallel the publisher Karger hosted a series of three free webinars for RSM members in March, May and July 2021 focusing on research skills and writing for publication. These were attended by more than 230 members. This substantially increased the reach and impact of information skills training offered by the Library during their period of operation. It also allowed us to renegotiate our contract with Karger to provide a tighter specification of what members needed, thereby freeing up resources for use in other areas.

MB summarised the year by saying it had been a pivotal year for the team, but they had risen to the challenge by ensuring we continued to provide a robust learning experience for members. This work continued and augurs well for our future plans.

Finally, on behalf of the Dean, MB wholeheartedly thanked all the volunteer members, key speakers and supporters, and colleagues at the RSM for collaborating to successfully to deliver to the RSM mission to share learning and support innovation throughout 2020/21.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

MA started by apologising for not being able to attend in person.

Firstly, she wished to thank all the RSM staff, Section Councils and volunteers who had all worked together so hard during the period to ensure we continued to provide an education programme and member service.

Operationally it had been a difficult period and there had been impact on the finances and MA highlighted the following:

- 1 Wimpole Street closed for a significant part of the year as a result of lockdowns and re-opened in May 2021.
- Education events ran throughout the year – 608 (2019-20: 347) events held with majority of these online.
- Over 202k delegate registrations (2019-20: 153k) and 1.3m views of event recordings (2019-20: 460k).
- Over 336k downloads of e-journals from our digital library.
- Membership numbers at the year-end remained similar to the previous year end at 19,363, with the number of Students joining increasing.
- Lockdowns had a significant impact on our Commercial Services business (hospitality and external events).
- We continued to be grateful for the generous support of our donors which saw us equaling our highest ever level of philanthropic income.

The Commercial Services business had been impacted heavily during the year, as the impact of Covid and the loss of external business hit:

- Total income for the year was £8.2m (2019-20: £11.0m, excluding profit on sale of Chandos House).
- Decrease largely due to loss of income from hospitality and conferencing falling to £624k (2019-20: £3.6m), from the academic programme falling to £803k (2019-20: £1.0m) and furlough funding at £283k (2019-20: £644k).
- Income from philanthropy increased to £1.5m (2019-20: £952k) and membership subscriptions were marginally higher at £4.6m (2019-20: £4.4m)
- Total expenditure in the year was £11.5m (2019-20: £15.4m)
- Overall operating loss of £3.3m (2019-20: loss of £4.4m excluding Chandos) reduced to a loss of £1.9m after gains on investments (2019-20: loss of £5.4m).
- As at 30 September 2021 the Society had general unrestricted reserves of £7.1m (2020: £8.6m).
- Accounts were prepared on a going concern basis.

There had been some governance changes during the period and MA highlighted the following:

- Following approval by the Fellows in Extraordinary Meeting in January 2019, the new Supplementary Charter came into effect on 1 October 2020. The main changes were:
 - Reduced number of Council members/Trustees from 18 to 13 (10 elected and 3 appointed)
 - Reduced term length to 3 years from 4 years
 - New Presidents of the Society will be decided by a vote of the membership
- A skills audit of Council members was undertaken in September 2020 which led to advertising for a Trustee with digital experience. Mr Hamish Thomas was appointed to Council in April 2021.
- A review of Council Committees was undertaken and in February 2021 Council approved a new structure and changes to the Terms of Reference of Council Committees.

- At the end of the year, we said goodbye and thank you to Prof Philip Bloom, Dr Sarah Filson and Dr Suzy Walton who retired as Council members and welcomed Prof Henrietta Bowden-Jones, Dr Hiten Patel and Dr Samantha Shinde.
- The Senior Management Team remained the same throughout the year except for the appointment of Professor Humphrey Scott as Dean replacing Dr Fiona Moss in October 2020 and the appointment of Ms Michelle Gordon as Director of Communications in March 2021.

Looking to the future, MA advised that following the launch of the 2021-2026 strategy, we were now focusing on the four pillars: education, learning resources, networks and innovation support. She highlighted the following areas that would assist with this:

- To deliver the best experiences for education delegates and for members (both in-person and on-line) we need to deliver key transformational projects regarding our property and our digital infrastructure.
- Property: Specialist advisers were appointed last year to advise on options. Key focus is to stay on the same site, improve the spaces for education delegates, members, Section volunteers, commercial partners and staff, realise value from our excess space and support a sustainable financial model for the Society.
- Digital transformation: Chief Digital Officer was appointed earlier this year. New digital strategy being developed in line with the RSM's overall 2021-26 strategy. Plans include new education event platforms, an RSM app, website improvements, new interactive learning tools, new content management and networking capabilities.
- Focusing on delivering the strategy and looking forward to updating you as we roll out changes.

MA completed her report by thanking everyone for attending and for their ongoing support in the coming years.

6. REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

The audited accounts for the session 2020/21 (AMF 21/22/2) were unanimously received and adopted.

7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR THE SESSION 2021/22

The President and Council recommended that BDO be reappointed as Auditors for the 2021/22 session. This recommendation was unanimously approved.

8. QUESTIONS FROM FELLOWS

Professor Kirby asked for questions from fellows:

Dr Nicola Stingelin: The 2021-26 strategy includes a pillar for innovation. Given the pressures on the SMT at the moment, could Fellows use their skills to help provide support in this area? MA thought this was a good idea and asked those interested to contact her.

A Fellow thought the RSM could further expand its global reach by having 'chapters' in countries around the world. MB thought this could be a good platform for the RSM and would develop its appeal internationally and could be investigated.

Professor David Misselbrook, a former Dean, advised that links between the RSM and medical universities in Bahrain were being established and this could be built on.

Mr Trevor Jones said that the RSM was unique in that it catered for multiple specialties, and he asked if there were any similar institutions overseas we could work with. MB thought that this could raise brand awareness and there was potential to partner with other institutions. The appeal of a Royal Patron was attractive and MA added that we had been approached by companies to investigate the possibility of partnering with the RSM.

Professor Luis Sobrevia asked a question via Slido: Do you think the RSM Fellows would benefit from establishing a network of physiologists and clinicians? RK believed this could be beneficial as RSM was focussed on health rather than exclusively looking at medicine.

Mr Ed Glasgow referred to the donation received to support the series of meetings on the effects of climate change on health and questioned how Sections could obtain better sponsorship deals that would be beneficial to both the Section and the RSM. MB thought that there could be a more thematic approach made to potential sponsors and also ways of making the funds more accessible. MA added that there were ethical issues to consider but ways of maximising income should be investigated. Traditionally sponsors had provided relatively small amounts to have a stand at meetings. NCa and his team were working on securing larger sponsorship deals for a series of meetings, rather than just one stand-alone deal.

A Fellow raised a question via Slido, noting that the Society had offered fewer free places at meetings for Students and Trainees this year, and asked if there were plans to increase the number of free places in the coming year. This would be considered.

A Fellow in the audience asked if Innovation Days would make a comeback now that we were able to hold in person meetings again and if so, whether these could be more international to tie in with the Innovation pillar of the strategy. RK confirmed that this was being considered again.

In response to a question about retaining members, NCa advised that it was quite difficult to convert individuals who were given free membership in the early part of their career, to full members. A more disciplined and commercial approach was needed to ensure the longevity of membership.

Dr Malcolm Barrett-Johnson referred to innovation and the need to get involved not just with local industry and people but more generally. MA was keen to embrace complementary businesses and use our strengths to find ways to harness knowledge and enthusiasm. She wanted innovation to add value to the RSM and although this was moving forward, it would take a little time.

Dr Albert Levy, a physician based in Manhattan, asked if it would be possible to create a database of clinicians for use by members when needing to make recommendations in other specialties to their patients. RK considered this and although it would not be easy, particularly given GDPR requirements, it could be explored.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business to discuss.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Annual Meeting of Fellows was scheduled to be held in April 2023 and the date would be advised in due course.