

## **MINUTES OF THE OPEN MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD**

Held on Thursday 10 October at the British Acupuncture Council  
63 Jeddo Road, London, W12 9HQ

### **GB Directors present:**

Sarah Attwell Griffiths (S-AG) – Chair  
Joanna Brown (JB) – Lay  
Naresh Rao (NR) – Lay  
Paul Blacker (PB) – Practitioner  
Pia Huber (PH) – Practitioner  
Rosey Grandage (RG) – Practitioner (present from 10:30 am to 11:00 am)  
Sarah Matheson (SM) – Practitioner

### **In attendance:**

Rob Strange OBE (RS) – Company Secretary  
Richard Costella (RC) – Lay Treasurer  
Harriet Lansdown (HL) – Lead BAAB Accreditation Officer  
Kevin Durjun (KD) – Head of Events and PR  
Jane Debois (JD) – Head of Professional Standards  
Cathy Chapman (CC) – former practitioner Director (present from 15:10 pm to 15:20 pm)  
Anna de Oliveira (AdO) – Leadership Support Manager and Minute Taker

### **Apologies:**

Mike Watson (MW) - Registrar

### **1. Welcome, introductions and apologies:**

- All attendees introduced themselves and the three newly elected practitioner directors, Paul Blacker (PB), Sarah Attwell-Griffiths (S-AG) and Sarah Matheson (SM) were warmly welcomed onto the Board.
- Apologies were made on behalf of Michael Watson, the Registrar.
- It was noted that PB, S-AG and SM had attended an induction session on 8 October 2019.
- All participants agreed the agenda.

### **7. Strategy Update:**

- S-AG welcomed HL, British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB) Lead Accreditation Officer to the open part of the meeting.
- A round of introductions took place.
- PH opened the discussion on strategy by stating that the draft strategy was presented to the Strategy Focus Group (SFG) on 5 September. Much discussion and written feedback followed on from that meeting. PH confirmed that as some of the feedback

was given fairly recently, she had not had the time to compile it all and assess it. Overall however, PH noted that comments centred on the lack of 'excitement' in the strategy and also on the operational focus of the strategy. PH shared that she would carefully go through all the proposals and report back to the Board at the next meeting in December. PH further noted that although the strategy was still work in progress, the next iteration of the strategy would need to be shared with BAAB and the College Heads of Acupuncture Courses (CHAC) for their input.

- NR further pointed out that the strategy could not be finalised until the new CEO was in place to deliver it to the membership. NR noted that although the strategy was now nearly two years overdue, it would be a strategy with a 5 year vision and that therefore, it was important to get it right.
- It was agreed that the strategy could not be finalised without the new CEO in place, and that PH and NR would feedback to the Board the comments of the SFG at the December Board meeting. It was also agreed that for continuity, PH and NR would continue to lead on the strategy.
- **ACTION 1:** PH and NR to update the Board on the SFG's suggestions for improving the strategy.

## 8. BAAB Update:

- HL began her update on the work of the BAAB by saying how delighted the BAAB were with the appointment of their new Chair, Professor Mike Saks. HL shared how Professor Saks was very supportive of their work, has excellent credentials, and a large network of colleagues within the complementary health sector. HL further noted that Professor Saks was a highly strategic thinker with an aim to help the acupuncture profession recover from the loss of its university-based courses.
- HL then referred to the two BAAB papers circulated: 'Business Management and Setting up in Practice' and 'The Accreditation Committee Review', and asked if there were any questions.
- JB stated how impressed she was to learn just how much was done to offer business management skills on acupuncture courses and asked if HL might be happy to share these successes with Membership Services Committee (MSC) by attending a meeting.
- It was noted that whilst the 'Business Management and Setting up in Practice' paper clearly outlined should be taught in a BSc or Licentiate in Acupuncture, that there may still be gaps and that perhaps the BAAB and the BAAC might consider working together to ensure standards are met via more formalised CPD training. It was agreed that PB would take this to the Professional Standards and Regulatory Committee (PSRC) to investigate how the PSRC might work with the BAAB to meet the needs of practitioners.
- PB formally thanked the BAAB for the work they have completed, alongside the CHAC and the PSRC, noting that the BAAB have been a real asset to the achievements of the PSRC.
- HL formally invited S-AG to the next BAAB meeting on 30 March 2020.
- **ACTION 2:** PB to consult with the PSRC and the BAAB on the possibility of offering more formalised CPD training to complement any gaps in business management and setting up practice skills.

## 9. Company Secretary's Report:

- RS shared that from a Company Secretary's and legal point of view, the 2019 AGM went well. RS noted that an AGM script had been prepared and that directors rehearsed the AGM speeches three days prior to the AGM, concluding that this was good practice to be followed on an annual basis.
- RS asked the Board to reflect on a number of comments he received about the AGM, focusing in particular on comments around the one hour time slot allocated to AGM business. RS shared how many members expressed that one hour was not sufficient time to adequately allow members to share their views and ask questions.
- NR commented that this was an important point and that the AGM provided a critical opportunity for directors to be held accountable and to answer questions from the membership.
- Following a brief discussion, the Board agreed to extend the AGM by a half hour. It was decided that RS would inform Kevin Durjun about this.
- RS also shared that an Enews bulletin had gone out announcing the appointment of the newly elected practitioner directors, and that their biographies were now up on the public and the members' website.
- In terms of the appointment of the two new lay directors, RS shared that he, PH, RC, JB and Suzanne Scruton had been on the interview panel and that 2 candidates stood out, namely, Joseph Ogbonna and Samantha Peters. RS shared that Joseph Ogbonna had an excellent coaching background and a thoughtful and insightful style, and that Samantha Peters had excellent links with the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). As members of the Nominations Committee, RS, PH, RC, JB and Suzanne Scruton recommended these two candidates be appointed lay directors and asked the Board to formally ratify this recommendation. The Board agreed. It was decided that RS would liaise with Suzanne Scruton to formally appoint Joseph Ogbonna and Samantha Peters as lay directors to the BAAC Board.
- RS then asked all directors to note the 2020 GB and Committee meeting dates.
- Directors then discussed the various vacancies arising on committees, noting the following:
  1. The appointment of S-AG (former practitioner member of the MSC) as Chair to the Governing Board resulted in one practitioner vacancy on the MSC. It was agreed that whilst JB would continue to Chair the MSC and SM would continue as a MSC member, both JB and SM would likely step away from the MSC in 2021 allowing new participation onto the committee.
  2. The departure of Cathy Chapman (former director and Chair of the PSRC) and the appointment of PB as Chair of the PSRC resulted in one practitioner vacancy on the PSRC meetings.
  3. The resignation of Rosey Grandage resulted in one practitioner vacancy on the Nominations Committee.
- It was agreed that committee vacancies would be advertised on Enews.
- It was noted that S-AG would replace Philip Rose-Neil, former Chair, on the CEO recruitment panel and that Sarah Matheson would replace Rosey Grandage on the CEO recruitment panel.
- RS asked the Board to note and ratify the minutes of the 19 June 2019 Remunerations Committee and Nominations Committee. The Board agreed.
- **ACTION 3:** RS to liaise with Kevin Durjun to extend the 2020 AGM by a half hour.
- **ACTION 4:** RS to liaise with Ann Gordon, Publications Manager to advertise committee vacancies on Enews.
- **ACTION 5:** RS to liaise with Suzanne Scruton to formally offer Joseph Ogbonna and Samantha Peters the lay director positions on the Board.

- **ACTION 6:** AdO to update 2020 GB and Committee meeting dates document and circulate to the Board.

## 10. FRAC Report:

- RC drew the Board's attention to the FRAC minutes and the Treasurer's Report. He noted that although the budget forecast pointed to a £8k deficit, his feeling was that the BAcC was heading towards a larger deficit. RC shared that in the short-term this would not pose a problem and that in the last couple of years, the BAcC had dipped into the reserves. RC noted that the BAcC would likely run a deficit in 2020 and that this would not be sustainable. He commented that at the next FRAC meeting on 14 November, the FRAC members would be considering options to mitigate these concerns and that these would be presented to the Board at the 12 December meeting.
- In terms of cutting costs, it was noted that the BAcC already operates with a small staff team and that more time would be needed at the next GB meeting to more carefully consider all the implications.
- NR then briefed the new Board directors on the background surrounding the risk register, stating that whilst the various risks, ranging from finance, staffing and reputational risks, did not belong to the Board, it was the Board's duty to challenge the risks in terms of the indicators, the scoring and in terms of the actions needed to mitigate those risks. NR made clear that ownership of the risks lay with the CEO and the various committees.
- It was noted that the risk register was last populated by Teresa Williamson, that the red scoring on the risk register would need to be brought down and that the amber and green scoring would need to be monitored.
- **ACTION 7:** FRAC members to consider cost savings and income generation at the next FRAC meeting on 14 November 2019 and RC to bring those suggestions to the Board at the GB meeting on 12 December 2019.

## 11. PSRC Report:

- CC joined the meeting by Skype to update the directors on the call between the BAcC and the Professional Development Leads (PDLs) and former PDLs on 16 July 2019.
- CC asked if all directors had read the meeting minutes. CC noted that she wished to raise a couple of points before handing this matter over to the current Governing Board.
- CC shared that the work of the former PDLs was stopped in part because of disagreement over a clause in the PDL contract.
- CC went on to explain that the former PDLs wished the Board to know that they had played a central role within the BAcC and that this role was now terminated. Some of their work, particularly around CPD was now absorbed by the BAcC staff team. CC stated that she would circulate the PDL's job description to the Board so they could have sight of their former roles and responsibilities.
- In terms of moving forward, CC asked if the Board might consider enhancing the role of the Regional Group Coordinators (RGCs). CC further highlighted that she made clear to the PDLs and former PDLs that they were very much encouraged to apply for positions on the various committees, stressing that a very fair and transparent process was in place for recruiting onto the committees. JB commented that the MSC were already looking into the job descriptions of the RGCs to ensure that they

were fair for purpose; fair to the RGCs and that they provided something of practicable value to BAcC members.

- CC urged the Board to contact Balquees Ali and Susan Evans who were very keen to get involved. CC assured the Board that they could contact her without hesitation should this issue be raised again. CC reminded the Board that the point of the call was to leave accusations and anger behind and for it to be a healing meeting. The Board thanked CC for her insights and her time.
- PB and JD went on to other matters concerning the PSRC, namely, the request to include Jasmine Uddin (Vice-chair of the BAAB, co-opted member of the former Education Committee, BAcC representative at the ETCMA and a BAcC practitioner) and Di Shimell (co-opted member from the former Education Committee and a BAcC practitioner) as permanent members of the PSRC. Currently, they are specialist advisers to the Chair with non-voting rights. JD in particular commented on the unique breadth and depth of opinion which Jasmine and Di brought to the PSRC and hailed them both as valid stakeholders.
- The Modes of Delivery Working Group Report, which identified and explored new issues affecting the delivery of accredited acupuncture courses, was then discussed. JD shared that all College Heads of Acupuncture Courses were invited to the last meeting organised to discuss additional standards for acupuncture education, but that only Lara McClure from the Northern College of Acupuncture attended. JD explained that most of CHAC are against the proposed changes as they believe that the increased availability of PGDip/MSc degrees in Acupuncture could undermine all of the other qualifications BAcC members currently hold. This is particularly the view shared by the Acupuncture Academy (AA) and the International College of Oriental Medicine (ICOM). JD shared however that MBaC title awarded to all BAcC members ensures a fair playing field.
- PH asked if there was anything the BAcC could do to make the proposed changes better understood by the CHAC. JD replied that this is rendered somewhat difficult by the fact that most do not wish to sit at the table. PB shared his feeling that once the BAAB had the opportunity to clear any misunderstandings and to listen to and act upon CHAC's considerations that the CHAC warmed to the proposed changes. PB was hopeful that the CHAC present at the meeting would take the suggestions back to the other college heads.
- S-AG concluded that she felt this was a very important and big discussion and that she would like it to be added to the agenda on the December Board meeting so that more time could be devoted to properly reflect on all the implications.
- A small point was made around the PSRC meeting minutes and it was suggested that a standard, and more condensed style, be adopted by the Board and all the committees, perhaps guided by AdO.
- A final point was made by JD regarding the BAcC's accreditation review by the PSA. JD noted that a number of new conditions were set and that although the accreditation review process typically takes three months to complete, this process took nine months. The BAcC was given three recommendations to consider: to consider its approach to risk, especially around children; to consider developing guidance with regards the treatment of family members and friends; and to consider how the BAcC deals with registrants who resign but who are under a disciplinary sanction. JD concluded that she and KD would be meeting with the new CEO of the PSA to discuss the importance of working together and raising the profile of the BAcC to PSA member organisations.
- The Board wished to minute their thanks and congratulations to JD for successfully leading the BAcC's accreditation review with the PSA.
- **ACTION 8:** AdO to circulate the PDLs job description to the Board.

- **ACTION 9:** PB to discuss permanent membership on the PRSC and bring a decision back to the Board in December.
- **ACTION 10:** Modes of Delivery proposal to be discussed in greater detail at the 12 December GB meeting.
- **ACTION 11:** AdO to come up with a standard template for GB and committee meeting minutes and share this with fellow minute takers.

## 12. MSC Report:

- JB opened by stating that the MSC did not have any recommendations for the Board to consider and that the Board had had sight of the minutes and action points, which were all in process.
- KD went on to describe some of the recent successes, noting in particular, the 2019 BAAC Conference, the MyMop App, the BAAC film “To the Point” and the completion of an international collaborative report. KD shared that the report would be launched at the BAAC Parliamentary event at the House of Commons, noting however that in the event of a snap election, the launch of the report might have to be postponed until the spring of 2020.
- KD shared that in relation to the conference, spaces were sold out very quickly so the numbers were lower than in 2018. KD expressed his hope to secure more rooms in 2020 by negotiating more rooms with the hotel and/or securing more accommodation at an alternative venue.
- KD shared that he would be in Lisbon for the upcoming acupuncture and TCM Conference, the first of its kind in Portugal, and in York for the Research Conference later in the month.
- In terms of the film being produced, KD noted it was in its final stages, exploring the work of BAAC members. Beverley de Valois who specialises with patients with cancer, Rebecca Avern who specialises with babies and children, and Rachel Peckham who works with survivors of Grenfell, all featured in the film.
- In terms of the report, KD shared that during his time at the TCM Conference in Rothenburg, it became very clear that many partners wished to be involved with the report in some way. KD praised Rachel Edney, the report writer, who has an acupuncture as well as medical writing background. KD concluded by noting that a Case Study Day was coming up on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, organised in conjunction with the Confucius Institute; a free training event in Bristol on how to facilitate valuable meetings was taking place on 20 October; and the Fertility Show in Olympia was taking place in November, and that these were all events to look forward too.
- The Board thanked KD for his work on the 2019 BAAC Conference and the Report.
- **ACTION 12:** KD to keep the Board up to date on the launch of the Report at the BAAC Parliamentary Event at the House of Commons.

End of Open Meeting

S-AG closed the meeting at 16:30 pm.



Minutes approved by the Board on 12 December 2019

Next Board meeting scheduled for Thursday, 12 December 2019 at 10.30am, at 63 Jeddo Road.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SAG', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Signed Sarah Attwell-Griffiths (Board chair)

Date: 12 December 2019