

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 4 September 2008 at 1
Lambeth High Street, London, SE1**

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Present

Treasurer

Mr A Gush (in the chair)

Ms S Agha
Mrs M Allan
Mr David Carter
Mr J Gentle
Mrs L Jacobs
Mr A Kershaw
Ms Y Liddell
Ms A Moore
Mr D Thomson

Mr G Alexander
Mrs C Brown
Mrs D Drury
Mrs S Hikins
Mr R Jobling
Mrs S Kilby
Professor B Michell
Mr D Simpson

In attendance

Mrs B Taylor, Chairman of the English Pharmacy Board, Mrs S Melville, Chairman of the Scottish Pharmacy Board and Mr M Donovan, Chairman of the Welsh Pharmacy Board.

Mr Jeremy Holmes, Chief Executive & Registrar

08/94 Chairman

Mr Holmes took the Chair. In the absence of the President and Vice-President, Mr Holmes asked the Council to agree that the Treasurer, Mr A Gush, should preside as Chairman of the meeting under Standing Order 8.3.

Council

agreed

that Mr A Gush should be the chairman of the meeting.

Mr Gush took the chair

08/95 Apologies for absence

The President, Mr S Churton; the Vice-President, Mr M Astbury; Mr S Acres; Professor N Barber; Dr B Curwain; Dr C Duggan; Dr P Entwistle; Ms J Ramsey; Ms M Saunders; Mr J Jolley; Professor K Wilson.

08/96 Welcomes

The Chairman welcomed Mr M Donovan, newly elected Chairman of the Welsh Pharmacy Board.

08/97 Declaration of interests

The Treasurer reminded Council members that declarations of interest should be made by individual Council members at the beginning of the relevant item.

08/98 Policy and communications forum

The Chief Executive & Registrar introduced paper 08.09/C/79, which had been circulated. Mr Holmes drew Council's attention to the draft remit and the proposed format for the meetings of the forum which had been developed following Council's discussion at the July 2008 meeting.

Mrs S Melville, Chairman of the Scottish Pharmacy Board, commented on behalf of the Chairmen of the three Boards, that they were content with the proposals.

Council

agreed

- i. the formation of a Policy and Communications Forum to replace the National Pharmacy Boards Liaison Group and the Public Affairs Planning Group,
- ii. the remit for the Policy and Communications Forum as set out in the paper, and
- iii. that deputy chairmen of Education, Law & Ethics, Governance and Science Committees should be able to attend the Forum meetings if the Chairmen were not available.

Mr Ray Jobling queried whether when interim policy was agreed by a national Pharmacy Board, Council members and Board members were bound by the provision in the Council member Code of Conduct regarding collective responsibility to support Council policy. Differing views were expressed and the Chief Executive & Registrar undertook to clarify the position of Council members being bound by interim policy.

08/99 Membership survey: Have your say

The Chief Executive & Registrar informed the Council that there had been an excellent response to the survey and that Council would be presented with the full results in the strategy meeting to be held later in the day.

Council

agreed in principle

that following the presentation of the results to the Council the results would be released.

08/100 Policy on co-payments

The Chairman informed the Council that paper 08/09/C/80 had been withdrawn and that Council would have the opportunity to discuss the policy at a later date. Following a question, Mr Gush confirmed that although a copy of the letter which comprised a response to a consultation had not been circulated with the paper, a copy had been emailed to all Council members the morning following the despatch of papers.

A number of Council members raised concerns about the process of policy development for country specific issues. The Chairman referred Council members to the presentation on policy development and implementation scheduled for later in the day and asked that those questions be raised then. Following that session, if concerns remained outstanding, the matter could be discussed at the Council meeting in October 2008.

Professor Bob Michell raised his specific concern that a number of very important government policy initiatives on which the Council should decide policy were not reaching the Council for example, co-payments, polyclinics and dispensing doctors. Professor Michell had raised his concerns by email to the Secretariat prior to the meeting but had not received a reply. The Treasurer apologised to Professor Michell for the lack of reply and the Chief Executive & Registrar undertook to respond to Professor Michell regarding those concerns.

Council

noted

- i. that the Chief Executive & Registrar would write to Professor Michell, and
- ii. that the policy on co-payments and the issues raised by Professor Michell would come back to the Council in October 2008 if necessary.

08/101 Fees 2009

Mr Bernard Kelly, Director of Finance & Resources, introduced paper 08.09/C/81, which had been circulated. The response to the consultation had been low overall but with a small majority for introduction of a low income fee. However, there had been no support for such a fee to be covered by a slightly higher retention fee for practising pharmacists.

The Treasurer informed the Council that since the fees consultation had commenced inflation had risen to 5% but he proposed that the Council decision that an increase of 3.9% be applied to all fees if a low income fee was not agreed should be maintained.

Council noted with disappointment that the response to the consultation had been low.

However, whilst recognising the low level of support for a low income fee, a number of Council members were of the view that it was morally imperative for the Council to show leadership and act to assist pharmacists with a low personal income by offering a reduced retention fee. Moving towards the establishment of the new professional body it was important to encourage as many pharmacists as possible to become members and such measures would be seen as welcoming.

Other Council members were concerned at the cost of implementation, particularly if appeals arose, which would result in an additional administrative burden and the lack of support from the membership in general.

Concerns about pharmacists first coming onto the Register were also raised and it was noted that Council had recognised and acted on those concerns in setting the 2008 fees when the level of increase for those fees was held at inflation.

Council members were encouraged to submit comments on fee structures to the Transitional Committee.

Council

agreed

- i. to introduce a reduced retention fee for those practising pharmacists with low annual personal incomes, to be funded by an increase to the retention fee for practising pharmacists of 4.5%
- ii. that a reduction of one third of the practising pharmacist fee be established for practising pharmacists with a total annual personal income of less than £16,500. This would equate to an annual retention fee of £275 for 2009 and
- iii. to increase all other fees by 3.9%.

Organisational matters

08/102 Recommendations from the Officers regarding appointments to committees and groups

The Treasurer introduced paper 08.09/C/82, which had been circulated.
Council

agreed

- i. that Professor Norman Lannigan and Ms Hilary Edmondson be appointed to the BPC Panel (2009) for a period of 2 years.
- ii. that Mr Gerald Alexander be appointed to represent the Society at the Europharm Forum 17th Annual meeting and General Assembly, and

noted

- iii. that Mr Gerald Alexander had been appointed as the Society's representative on PGEU and
- iv. that Ms Alison Moore had been appointed the Council Champion for the review of Council Committees and Working Groups.

08/103 Professional standards and guidance for responsible pharmacists: steering group

The Treasurer asked the Council to note paper 08.09/C/83, which had been circulated and the request for expression of interest.

Ms Priya Sejpal, Head of Professional Ethics, explained that once the steering group had deliberated, its proposals would be considered by the Law & Ethics Committee and then the Committee would report to the Council seeking Council's agreement to the proposals.

Council discussed the requirement to have a Council member and a pharmacy technician Council member on the steering group and agreed an amendment to the composition as set out below.

Council

agreed

that expressions of interest from a pharmacist Council member, a pharmacy technician Council member and a lay Council member be sought for the steering group, to be received by close of business on Friday 5 September.

08/104 Venue for October 2008 Council meeting

Council

agreed

- i. that the Council meeting in October 2008 be held in Cardiff, and
- ii. that in future Council meetings to be held outside London would be indicated in the schedule of Council and Committee meetings when agreed by the Council.

It was also noted that plans to hold a meeting in Edinburgh in 2009 might be affected by the "Scottish Homecoming" as accommodation would be very difficult to arrange.

08/105 Any other business: Fitness to Practise annual report

The Chief Executive & Registrar drew Council's attention to the publication of the Society's first annual report on Fitness to Practise, which had been circulated to Council members and thanked the Fitness to Practise team for their work.

FOR NOTING

08/106 Premises fees 2009

Council

noted

the report regarding the application to the Department of Health for an increase in the premises fees proposed for 2009, which had been circulated at 08.09/C/84.

The Treasurer closed the public business of the Council.