

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6 November 2008 at 1 Lambeth High Street, London, SE1 7JN

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Present

President	Mr S Churton
Vice-President	Mr M Astbury
Treasurer	Mr A Gush

Mr S Acres	Ms S Agha
Mr G Alexander	Mrs M Allan
Professor N Barber	Mrs C Brown
Mr David Carter	Dr B Curwain
Mrs D Drury	Dr C Duggan
Dr P Entwistle	Mr J Gentle
Mrs S Hikins	Mrs L Jacobs
Mr R Jobling	Mr A Kershaw
Mrs S Kilby	Professor B Michell
Ms A Moore	Ms M Saunders
Mr D Simpson	Mr D Thomson
Professor K Wilson	

In attendance

Mr R Daniszewski, Vice-Chairman of the English Pharmacy Board and Mrs S Melville, Chairman of the Scottish Pharmacy Board

Mr Jeremy Holmes, Chief Executive & Registrar

PUBLIC BUSINESS

08/132 Apologies for absence

Mr J Jolley, Ms Y Liddell, Ms J Ramsey, Mr M Donovan, Chairman of the Welsh Pharmacy Board

08/133 Declaration of interests

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

Professional leadership matters

08/134 New professional leadership body Prospectus

The Chief Executive & Registrar introduced paper 08.11/C/110, which had been circulated. It was important to note that the Prospectus was a Transitional Committee document and Council was being asked only to agree to its publication. A few drafting amendments, layout proposals and specific comments had come forward at the previous day's discussion and would be forwarded to Nigel Clarke, Chairman of the Transitional Committee for consideration.

At that discussion consensus had been reached on a number of issues regarding the Prospectus including

- Publication of the Prospectus should be undertaken before the formal consultation on the possible Charter changes necessary to establish the new professional leadership body (PLB).
- Feedback on the Prospectus should be sought from members and stakeholders as soon as possible and ahead of the Charter consultation in order to promote and ensure wide engagement.
- Council would be presented with the feedback and be able to consider the views expressed before agreeing further actions

Mr Stephen Acres declared an interest as Vice-President of the APTUK, which was directly mentioned in the Prospectus.

Mr Douglas Simpson declared an interest as a former member of the RPSGB staff and a member of the RPSGB staff pension scheme.

The Society's role was to support the Transitional Committee in the launch of the Prospectus and to ensure that it was seen by all members and potential members, that those people understood what was being offered and understood the process going forward, including that there would be a need to make Charter changes. The Prospectus would be sent to all members of the Society, all staff of the Society and the organisations which comprised the Reference Group of the Transitional Committee for those organisations to circulate to their members if they so wished.

Council

agreed

- i. the publication of the Prospectus, and

noted

- ii. the process for dissemination and feedback, and
- iii. that the Council would consider the feedback in February 2008 in parallel with proposals for amendments to the Society's Charter.

Council also

noted

- iv. that the communications plan for the publication of the Prospectus would be discussed by the Policy & Communications Forum the following day.

The Council recorded its thanks to Mr Nigel Clarke for his work for the Society as Chairman of the Clarke Inquiry and the Transitional Committee.

Council further

agreed

- v. that a report of the consensus agreements reached at future strategy days should be available at the following formal Council meeting in order to be entered into the formal record of the Council.

08/135 Overseeing the transition to the new professional leadership body

The Chief Executive & Registrar introduced paper 08.11/C/111, which had been circulated. The Prospectus set out the basis of a design for the new professional leadership body (PLB). A business plan was being developed to achieve the de-merger of the Society into the General Pharmaceutical Council and the PLB and progress was being made in internal reorganisation and re-focussing work streams. The paper proposed establishment of a Council working group to take oversight of the transition programme to the PLB and to keep Council informed of progress and any issues arising. However, the Society's Council retained the responsibility for the establishment of the new PLB and would take the decisions on the Charter changes. Council also held the fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the Society's funds were appropriately and effectively allocated.

Council considered the proposed remit and was of the view that establishing and managing the risks relating to the transition to the PLB was a priority.

Council was concerned that the working group would mean further considerable workload for the staff but were assured that methods of working would be adopted to minimise the burden on staff.

Council

agreed

- i. the establishment of a "New professional leadership body working group" to oversee the process of transition to the PLB until the establishment of the shadow Assembly;
- ii. the composition of the working group as follows
 - the Council's nominees to the Transitional Committee (Mr Churton, Mr Astbury, Mr Gush and Mr Carter);
 - 1 nominee from each of the National Pharmacy Boards;
 - Mrs Lorna Jacobs;
 - Nominees from the other organisations which commit to being part of the PLB; and
 - Mr Nigel Clarke as an external adviser – as required;
- iii. that Council would review the working group as progress was made with the transition;

noted

- iv. that a report from the working group would be a standing item on formal Council agendas and updates would be provided between meetings if required

08/136 Top-ups

Paper 08.11/C/111A was tabled for Council's consideration. The Council welcomed the paper, which encapsulated the discussion at the previous day's strategy meeting.

Council

agreed

the following key points to form the basis of communications and further engagement with key stakeholders regarding the issue of top-ups.

1. The need for top-ups should be minimised as far as possible: the focus should be on improving access to effective medicines for NHS patients. Top-ups should therefore be the exception, not the rule.
2. A number of measures could help to improve access to medicines for NHS patients, including:
 - Speeding up NICE appraisals; however, there were risks associated with rapid assessments, especially where there was insufficient published data to base the assessment on
 - Reforms to NICE procedures to improve the availability of drugs used near the end of life that do not meet current cost-effectiveness criteria
 - Risk and cost-sharing schemes with the pharmaceutical industry
 - Value or performance-based pricing agreements with industry (The above two measures could be included in the new PPRS. RPSGB is collecting examples of such schemes.)
 - Phase IV clinical trials of new drugs in use, which would generate the data NICE needed to make quicker, but still robust, decisions on cost-effectiveness
 - Improving the prediction of who would benefit from expensive new medicines through patient stratification and the development of biomarkers – the RPSGB was commissioning work in this area.
3. Local decision-making processes on funding off-label drugs needed to be improved to provide prompt, consistent, robust and transparent decisions.
4. There would still be circumstances in which medicines were not available under the NHS so there would be a need to provide unbiased, accessible information on these medicines for any patients who might be considering whether to access them privately. Measures to protect the public from misleading claims were also needed.
5. Pharmacists would play a key role in advising patients and helping them access trustworthy sources of information in those situations.

In addition

Council

agreed

that there should be a standing item on the public agenda of the Council meetings to provide an opportunity for Council to discuss any topical matters relating to public interest or health.

Regulatory matters

08/137 RPSGB (Fees in connection with 2009 registration cycle) Rules – affixing of the Common Seal of the Society
Council

resolved

that the Common Seal of the Society be affixed to the RPSGB (Fees in connection with 2009 registration cycle) Rules as agreed by the Council on 7 October 2008.

08/138 Any other business
There was no other business.

08/139 Announcement of CHRE's position on the harmonisation of sanctions across the healthcare regulators
Council

noted

the publication of a statement of the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE)'s position on the harmonisation of sanctions across the nine healthcare regulators.

The President closed the public business of the Council.