

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20 May 2009 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 D Carter	Dr B Curwain
Mrs D Drury	Dr C Duggan
Mr J Gentle	Mrs S Hikins
Mr R Jobling	Mr J Jolley
Mr A Kershaw	Ms Y Liddell
Mrs S Kilby	Professor B Michell
Ms A Moore	Ms M Saunders
Mr D Thompson	Mr D Simpson
Professor K Wilson	

In attendance

Mrs B Taylor, Chairman of the English Pharmacy Board, Mr A Jack, Vice-Chairman of the Scottish Pharmacy Board and Mr M Donovan, Chairman of the Welsh Pharmacy Board

Mr J Holmes, Chief Executive & Registrar

09/51 Welcome to Guests and Observers

The President welcomed Dr John Rees, Mr Tony Cartwright, Mr John E. Balmford, Mr Alan White and Mr Douglas Davidson.

09/52 Apologies for absence

Mrs K Blair, Dr P Entwistle, Mrs L Jacobs and Ms J Ramsey

09/53 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.

09/54 Special General Meeting

The President introduced paper 09.95/C/42 which had been circulated and drew Council's attention to a background paper prepared by Dr John Rees and circulated with the Council agenda.

The President asked Council the following question:

'Since Council reached its stance on the issue of the restricted title, has any argument been advanced, or new information come to light which, on reflection, should cause us to change our current position?'

The President invited each member of Council to answer this question and with the exception of two members, each member confirmed they did not believe that any argument had been advanced or new information provided that would change their view on Council's position on the restricted title.

The President invited the observers to contribute to the meeting. Dr John Rees expressed his dismay that Council would not alter its stance on the restricted title, and suggested that the profession could be at risk if one third of members might lose the right to use the title of 'pharmacist'.

The President summed up the majority of Council's view by stating that their decision on the restricted title was the best one for public safety and for the profession. He unreservedly supported the position reached in March and believed that what had been proposed at the SGM was both undesirable in principle and unachievable in practice. It was not in the public interest if a situation were created where anyone was placed in a position where they felt the need to have to question the difference between someone calling themselves a pharmacist and someone calling themselves a registered pharmacist or a pharmacist practitioner. It would become progressively more distanced as the professional and statutory responsibility for continuing professional development moved towards a revalidation model to signal competence to practise. The Council also needed to take account of the 'silent majority' of practising pharmacists who were currently on the practising register and diligently keeping themselves up to date and competent to practise and who are the most deserving of the entitlement to refer to themselves as pharmacists. The President further stated that on a practical level, the proposals advanced were, to his mind, unworkable. To expect the General Pharmaceutical Council, the Department of Health, the Director of Public Prosecutions or any other body for that matter to utilise their resources to bring prosecutions against those who were not registered under statute for inappropriately using a title, which was associated with a voluntary membership organisation, was unrealistic. To have a situation where the title of pharmacist was not exclusively restricted to those on the register was tantamount to total unrestricted use. In this situation, the word 'pharmacist' would simply be relegated to a word in the dictionary, with an equivalence to any other of the estimated half a million words in the English language, and with it the effective right to be used by anyone who had a desire to describe themselves as such.

When the Council had last debated these issues in March, it was explicitly acknowledged that those long-serving members who had made a significant and often distinguished contribution to the profession over many years should be recognised for this. It would clearly be desirable for them, on leaving the register, to proudly be able to retain the descriptor of pharmacist, but for this to be placed in the context of their retirement from, or former inclusion in, the register. This had been purposefully included in the Council's submission to the Department of Health's consultation and had been acknowledged as acceptable by the Department.

The President finished by advising that in his view modern and progressive regulation must recognise the need to place public interest and protection at the forefront of any consideration, and to suggest that it was only those in patient facing roles who should be subject to such regulation and the responsibilities and privileges which come with this, was outdated and served only to confirm a misunderstanding of what modern regulation was about.

The President's position remained unchanged from the policy that the Council agreed in March.

A vote was taken, with 23 for and 2 against, with Mr Douglas Simpson asking for his dissension from the majority view to be recorded.

Council

agreed

- i. that no revision of Council policy was required on the issue of the restricted title of 'pharmacist'.

09/55 Appointments, nominations and awards: Medical Education England

The Chief Executive & Registrar introduced paper 09.05/C/43 which had been circulated.

Council

agreed

- i. that Professor S Dhillon be the RPSGB deputy to Medical Education England.

09/56 Order of business for the 2009 Annual General Meeting

The Chief Executive & Registrar introduced paper 09.05/C/44 which had been circulated.

Council

- i. **received** the order of business for the 2009 Annual General Meeting.

09/57 Any other business

There was no other public business.

09/59 Chief Executive & Registrar's report – recommendation from the Officers [Moved from confidential business into public business after the meeting]

Policies covering temporary registration arrangements in the event of an emergency involving loss of human life or human illness

The Chief Executive & Registrar introduced paper 09.05/C/45 which had been circulated and advised that the report had been placed into confidential business as at the time of Council despatch, the Health Care and Associated Professions (Miscellaneous Amendments and Practitioner Psychologists) Order had not been approved by the Privy Council. Council requested that the report go into the public domain as it offered reassurance that contingencies were being considered and plans put in place. It was considered important that the plan was kept live and continued to develop with time to rehearse contingency plans.

Former Pharmacist (left the practising register and whose fitness to practise is not impaired)

It was agreed that in these circumstances the former pharmacist should be able to operate as a pharmacist, not as a pharmacy technician, in an emergency. It was important that all pharmacists and pharmacy technicians worked within their competencies.

Insurance

There was discussion over indemnity insurance for retired/former pharmacists who were undertaking emergency duties as a practising pharmacist. It was agreed that this was an issue that the Society would continue to raise with the government.

Pharmacist (practising) except for those on part 3 of the Register (temporary service providers)

Council agreed that in this instance the pharmacist should be able to prescribe methadone.

Janet Flint, Head of Support Staff Regulation, advised that full guidance on emergency duties would be developed and published at the appropriate time.

Council
ratified

- i. the decision taken by the Officers regarding the measures to be implemented in the event of a civil emergency being declared under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 with the inclusion of the amendments detailed above.

09/58

Farewells

The President paid tribute to the three Council members who were leaving the Council.

Dr Brian Curwain

Brian was elected to Council in May 2006 and, following a period as Deputy Chair of the Science Committee, was appointed Chairman in May last year. During his year as Science Chairman he has been instrumental in prioritising the work of the Committee and focusing its collective mind on the future professional leadership body by engaging with many colleagues, both in industry and academia, to understand what they are anticipating the new body will provide to support its members in advance of the profession's science agenda. In both his Council and Committee work, Brian has always brought his experience from the various branches of pharmacy in which he has worked to the fore. Throughout the time I have been fortunate enough to have known Brian he has always very ably demonstrated his commitment to the profession and to the science and research agenda in particular. In fact, I would go as far as to say that this has become a passion for him, and that is a word I do not use lightly. Brian is well-regarded as an intelligent and kind person, who is always willing to put himself out. Requests as far and wide as being a last minute stand-in to provide a branch talk, to providing comment and valued feedback to impossible deadlines, have always been met with a quiet dedication, genuine helpfulness and an unselfish approach which has become synonymous with Brian. He will be much missed by his colleagues

on Council and staff, who have had the opportunity to work with him. I was going to suggest that he might now have more time for sailing his yacht, but as a member of the English Pharmacy Boards, in his own right, he will still be around, and no doubt working industriously behind the scenes in the run-up to the launch of the new professional body.

On a personal note, Brian, it has been a pleasure having you on board and working with you. You are a credit to Council, more importantly a credit to this Council, but more importantly you are a credit to the profession and yourself. I am sorry personally that you will not be as closely involved with our work over the next nine months as I would have wanted, but I am quite sure that we can all rely on your continued contributions and support during this case time. Thank you Brian and bon voyage.

Mr Andrew Gush

Andrew has been a friend and a very supportive colleague over the last year. As Treasurer he has had to make some very tough decisions and I personally applaud him for the fair and conscientious manner in which he has committed himself to the task in hand; always cognisant of the need to balance sound financial decisions with respect for members and a need to bring them with him.

Andrew has dealt with some difficult issues, including large fee increases, reserves policies and pension deficits. Throughout his tenure he has always dealt with difficult messages in a very coherent and considered way. And whoever follows in his footsteps as Treasurer will have a lot to live up to. Andrew has also of course chaired RMC for two years, where he has brought a degree of professionalism to the role, which has been appreciated by all the members of the Committee, and particularly by the staff, who have appreciated the close working relationship and his support.

When Andrew took on this responsibility he said that he wanted an open and cooperative style of working, and he has certainly delivered on that. I am sure we have all appreciated Andrew's collaborative, challenging and supportive approach. I know that personally I have found Andrew to be totally committed to his role and to the profession. He has the valued skill to blend incisiveness and integrity, and to be successful in whatever he sets out to achieve, with a style that benefits greatly from his quiet persuasion and his very effective use of humour.

Andrew, whatever the future holds for you, may you always look back on your years of service to this organisation with pride. It has been a pleasure to work alongside you, and I will forever be grateful for your support and wise counsel. I am sure that everyone thanks you for your support and friendship.

Mr Douglas Simpson

Doug joined the Society's Council after 34 years, give or take a year I think, working on the Pharmaceutical Journal. Joining in 1965 as a sub-editor, Doug went on to become editor in 1987 and in 1996 was also appointed Editorial Director of PJ Publications. During this time he launched several publications and the Pharmaceutical Care Awards launched in 1992, in association with Glaxo Pharmaceuticals, as a means of recognising innovation in pharmacy practice, was Doug's idea.

Doug worked for the Society for almost all of his working life, and on retirement could have opted for the cocoa and slippers, but no. Doug characteristically looked for the next challenge and found this by standing for Council in the middle of most acrimonious row in decades, and did so for the sake of a principle. The rest is history, and as we all know his service as a member of staff, plus the six years he has been on Council, makes him our longest serving colleague. What a fantastic achievement by anyone's standards.

Doug received the Charter Gold Medal in 2005 which is awarded to recognise outstanding services by members to the Society, or generally promoting the interests of pharmacy – a very deserving recipient indeed.

Doug was Chairman of Law and Ethics Committee for two years, a period that covered the review of the Code of Ethics. Doug was seen by the Committee as a very fair and supportive Chairman, and I know from what people have told me that the Committee were extremely grateful to him for the way in which he led them through some very difficult debates, and that he is remembered as a strong and caring leader and Chairman.

From my own experience, I know that Doug is characteristically enthusiastic and vocal about matters that matter, both to himself and to the wider membership. He cares passionately for our profession and for the future of our professional leadership body. And time and time again, I have been impressed with his trademark manner of combining serious points with the humour that makes them land with the impact they deserve.

I know from speaking to people, Doug, that you are very much appreciated by many colleagues in this building, as much for your personal support for them and what they are committed to achieving on behalf of the profession, as for his brilliant eye for detail when checking the papers and minutes for grammar and spelling, which I am sure stems from his journalistic background.

People speak of Doug with respect and affection – a fitting tribute to a man who has dedicated his life to this profession. Doug, you are a constant, valuable and (some would say with humour and well-meaning) a living reminder of the history of the Society! I am quite sure that you will remain active in the world of pharmacy. I respect and understand your decision to retire from Council at this stage.

I would like to thank you sincerely on behalf all your colleagues and friends throughout pharmacy for your dedication over many years for outstanding service. You have made a truly fantastic and much appreciated contribution to the lives of thousands of members and their patients. I am sure that we all wish you good health and happiness as you move on to pastures new. Thank you, Doug.

The President thanked the observers for attending and closed the public business part of the meeting.