



# Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

Helping pharmacists achieve excellence

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## **Open letter sent to Keith Ridge, Bill Scott, Carwen Wynne-Howells, Norman Morrow and Ken Jarrold**

I would like to inform you of the outcome of yesterday's Special General Meeting of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.

A total of 137 members of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain met at the Park Plaza Riverbank Hotel, 18 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TJ at 2pm on Sunday 19 April 2009. There were 27 non-members present comprising 5 lay members of Council; 1 pharmacy technician member of Council, the Chief Executive and Registrar, 21 other members of Society staff, 4 members of the press, a shorthand writer and 4 others. Only the members of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain were able to vote in accordance with our byelaws.

The meeting was called under the provision of section VI of the Society's byelaws to consider motions relating to the Society's submission in respect of the Department of Health and Scottish Government consultation on the draft Pharmacy Order 2009, and in particular Article 27 of the draft Order regarding offences concerning the use of the title 'pharmacist' and concerning practising as a pharmacist. Motions 1 to 4 and Motion 6 were notified to the membership in advance of the meeting, with Motion 5 being added on the day.

The outcome of the meeting was: -

### Motion 1

This meeting rejects the proposed article 27(2) in the draft Pharmacy Order 2009 which would make it a criminal offence for anyone not registered as a pharmacist by the General Pharmaceutical Council to use the title "pharmacist".

The motion was carried by 101 votes to 34 votes.

### Motion 2

This meeting rejects the proposed article 27(4) in the draft Pharmacy Order 2009 which would make it a criminal offence for anyone not registered as a pharmacist by the General Pharmaceutical Council to practise as a pharmacist.

The motion was carried by 95 votes to 31 votes.

### Motion 3

This meeting supports the proposition that the title "pharmacist" should be permitted for use only by any person who has successfully completed a degree or other course of education and professional experience accredited by the RPSGB or who in future is accepted as a pharmacist member of the new professional body.

The motion was carried by 91 votes to 30 votes.

Motion 4

This meeting supports the proposition that the title “registered pharmacist” is a suitable restricted title for use by those suitably qualified and registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council.

The motion was carried by 75 votes to 26 votes.

Motion 5

This meeting considers that the definition of “practice” in Article 3(2) of the draft Pharmacy Order must be amended to align the definition with the key principles set out in the February 2007 Government White Paper on Regulation of Health Professionals; thus, specifically for the purposes of the Order, to avoid the creation of unnecessary regulatory burdens in relation to the risks addressed and the benefits obtained, “practice” must be limited to the activities of those pharmacists engaged in the provision of services, care and advice to patients and the public.

The motion was carried by 51 votes to 36 votes with 3 abstentions.

Motion 6

This meeting instructs the Council to submit further urgent representation to the Department of Health, to Parliament and to Ministers in order to secure amendments to the draft Pharmacy Order 2009 and/or to the Medicines Act 1968 that will achieve the wishes of this meeting in so far as they relate to the motions carried.

The motion was carried by 61 votes to 4 votes with 15 abstentions.

The requisitioners of the SGM made it clear during the meeting that the motions were a package of measures that should be taken as a whole rather than seen as separate issues.

There was clearly a strength of feeling and passion among the speakers and I recognise the anxieties of retired, academic and industrial pharmacists about the draft Pharmacy Order 2009.

I am aware that many of the participants in the Special General Meeting will already have expressed their views during the Department of Health and Scottish Government consultation on the draft Pharmacy Order 2009. However, I wanted to write to you as soon as possible about the outcome of the Special General Meeting. Council will obviously be taking the motions seriously and will discuss them at its next Council meeting on May 20th.

We remain committed to the work to create a separate pharmacy regulator and professional body that are each fit for purpose, sustainable and have the widest possible support amongst the profession, policy-makers and other key stakeholders, whilst continuing to demonstrate leadership in both professional and regulatory roles up to the point of separation.

Yours sincerely



Steve Churton  
President