Palliative Care Research Society Annual General Meeting

Monday 30th October 2017 at 10.30am (Telephone Conference Call)

Present: Jo Bayly, Sally Boa, Anna Bone, Julia Downing, Anne Finucane, Erna Haraldsdottir, Felicity Hasson, Ruth Isherwood, Barbara Jack and Stephen Mason.

1. Apologies
   Clare Marlow, Caroline Nicholson, Fliss Murtagh, Ros Scott, Chris Todd, Sarah Yardley

2. Welcome
   Julia Downing welcomed everyone to the AGM

3. Minutes of last meeting
   Jo Bayly asked for it to be noted on page 1 (point 5), that Anna Bone joined the Executive committee last year and shadowed Jo in her role as Communications Officer, which she is now taking on as Jo steps down from the committee. Anne Finucane also asked it to be noted that membership numbers (page 2) would have been for December 2015, not for 2016.

4. Matters arising
   Jo highlighted that she had not written an article alerting members about the difficulties of accessing BMJ Palliative and supportive care via Google Chrome. Anna will put this in the next newsletter.

5. Membership of the executive committee
   Julia reported that Sonja McIlfatrick has stepped down from the committee due to work commitments. Julia thanked her for all her hard work as Treasurer. She noted that we are now looking for a Treasurer on the committee. Jo has served on the committee for over three years and is now stepping down. Julia thanked her for her hard work as Communications Officer. Anna is now taking on that role, having shadowed Jo over the past year.
   Julia welcomed Felicity Hasson, who has been nominated as a committee member by Sonja. Felicity is happy to join the committee but is unsure exactly the level of commitment this entails. Julia will send her information to help inform her decision.
   We still need more committee members, including a Treasurer. Anna will send out an email to members to let them know.

6. Chair’s report
   Julia gave her report (see Appendix 1)
Following this, there was discussion about the challenges which the committee have had to face following the dissolution of Palliative Care Congress (PCC). Both Barbara Jack and Erna Haraldsdottir felt that the committee had done well to steer the Society through this difficult time and felt that now was a good opportunity to make new connections, rebrand and decide who we work with. It was agreed that it would be good to make links with HospiceUK who are actively promoting research.

7. Treasurer’s report
   Julia gave the Treasurer’s report (see Appendix 2)
   Jo welcomed the fact that PCRS will have a conference award, feeling that this is a good reason for people to join PCRS.

8. Membership Secretary’s report
   Anne reported that membership fees remain the same and we as a society continue to promote the benefits of joining. We currently have 94 members (88 full and 6 student/unwaged). This has fallen slightly on previous years but is in keeping with normal patterns (usually membership rises just before PCC). Barbara pointed out that some people have an honorary membership so it would be worthwhile holding a list of who these members are.
   Anne reported that the committee will be distributing a questionnaire to members to find out their views on the benefits or otherwise of membership.
   Stephen and Jo wondered if it would be possible to extend a subsidised rate to PhD students who are on stipends. The committee will discuss this at their next meeting.
   Caroline Nicholson had also spoken to Julia about how the membership can be encouraged to become a more active community – either virtually (through social media) or physically (by providing meeting points at conferences etc.) The committee will discuss this at their next meeting too.

9. Communication officer’s report
   Anna thanked Jo for her support over the past year while she has been shadowing her as Communications Officer. She is now ready to take over the reins. Anna reported that she is currently working on the newsletter, which will be the first one with the new branding. She encouraged members to get in touch throughout the year with suggestions for articles.
   The Twitter account continues to be active (this has grown from 465 to 1087 followers in the last year). All committee members have access to the Twitter account and were reminded to tweet on behalf of PCRS, especially retweeting/quoting relevant tweets from PCRS members.
   The gmail account is still active and Anna is currently managing this. When our administrator starts, this may be something that she can take on with Anna.
   The Facebook account has now been closed.

10. PCRS Events
    A local event is currently being planned in Cardiff on ethical issues in palliative care research. The date for this will be circulated once it has been decided. Barbara is planning a North West England catalyst event in palliative care education. She wondered if PCRS could support this – she will send the committee details for consideration. Anne
has had an enquiry form Morna O’Connor, a PhD student from Nottingham University who is organising a conference for PhD students. She wonders if PCRS could support it. Anne will find out more about the conference and the committee will discuss. PCRS have a stand at the HospiceUK conference in November and will also be at the PCC ASP conference in March 2018. Further events will be planned in the future.

11. AOB
Erna suggested we could recruit more members through the newly formed Scottish Research Forum. Anne will target this and the SPPC to encourage people to become members.

12. Date of next meeting
To be confirmed

Appendix 1

Chair’s Report
At lot has happened since I took over from Barbara Jack as the Chair of the Palliative Care Research Society, much of which has been going on behind the scenes. This year the Palliative Care Research Society celebrated its 25 years anniversary. It has been interesting looking back over these 25 years and talking to different people involved from its inception, in particular Robert Twycross, who has written a small piece for the newsletter. Late 2016 we met as an executive committee to look at where we are at as the Society and where we think we should be going. Much has changed in palliative care research since those early days and yet we felt that there is still a place for the Palliative Care Research Society in todays changing world. In relooking at who we are we felt that the Palliative Care Research Society supports good quality palliative care research through:

1. Collaboration – Linking with other organisations, researchers and clinicians with an interest in research in palliative care.
2. Networking – social media/ events/ conferences/ website news
3. Training – research skills workshops across the UK for all members
4. Information sharing – through email updates, newsletter, workshops, social media and our website.

We are still to finalise what this actually looks like and will be contacting all members to have an input into or strategy for the next few years, later in 2017. In order to be more responsive to our members and to be able to move the Society forward we have decided to appoint an administrator – working initially on a consultant basis. Kate Hockey is starting working for us on the 1st November and she will be supporting us with the membership, newsletters, the website, social media and communications, and also helping us to get documents etc. out for the AGM in plenty of time next year. One of the big things we have also done is move over to an online banking system – the practicalities of this took a while to sort out but it is now up and running and is much easier and more efficient and prevents us from having to send cheques around the country for signing.
Another big change this year has been that of the Palliative Care Congress. Following a successful PCC in March 2016, the Association of Palliative Medicine (APM) approached us to say that due to financial reasons they wanted to disband the existing PCC and they hope to run an annual ASP conference for their members. There was much discussion about this, what it would mean for the Palliative Care Research Society, but also for the future of conferences such as the PCC. As you will have seen APM held their first ASP conference in Belfast in 2017 and the congress next year is a joint ASP/ PCC conference – after 2018 we do not know what will happen and it is likely that that will be the last PCC. We have been working hard with APM to ensure that this coming conference is as multidisciplinary as possible, and we have a variety of plenary speakers, and also there will be a research track running through all of the break out sessions, as well as abstract sessions. We are aware that the branding for the conference focused on ASP, but we do encourage members to attend, and as per usual members will get a reduced registration rate. As the Palliative Care Research Society we are also offering a grant which is open to all members. The aim is to offer an award to encourage and acknowledge good quality palliative care research and offer financial support to PCRS members to attend our national palliative Care research conference or the EAPC research conference also being held in 2018. Whilst this has meant a lot of change and challenges over the past year, the Palliative Care Research Society are looking at this as a way to explore and develop new partnerships e.g. with Hospice UK. If you are at the Hospice UK conference in November please do come and visit us at the Palliative Care Research Society stand.

Another big event of the year has been the process of rebranding – we decided that we needed a fresh look, and that our 25th anniversary was a good time to do this. You will have seen our new logo, and hopefully our new materials which were on display at EAPC in Madrid and you will see them again at the Hospice UK conference next week. The next step is to redesign the website and we hope that Kate will work with the developers on this in the next couple of months.

In the last year we have managed to keep the cost of membership the same, with the benefits of access to the BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care, EAPC membership and reduction in conference fees for PCC and EAPC. We have also continued to support and offer local events, and are looking at increasing this. The membership has remained stable and when members leave, we follow them up to ascertain if any members are unhappy – we are also hoping that with Kate in place we will be able to gradually grow our membership. Financially we remain stable, and all processes for the Charity Commission, data protection etc. are followed. We are currently using Compleat Conferencing Service to maintain our membership and deal with all financial matters, although this may change in the future as Kate does more work for us.

In conclusion the last year has continued to show the Palliative Care Research Society is as a vibrant society. It is challenging but a privilege to be working with the Society and I am excited about the next steps and where we go from here. I would like to thank all members of the committee for their hard work, over what has not been an easy year. I would particularly like to thank Sonja who has stepped down as Treasurer and Jo Bayly who has been our Communications Officer and has handed this role over to Anna Bone. We would also like to encourage new members to join the Executive Committee and
help us shape the Palliative Care Research Society so that it is a robust society that continues to support quality palliative care research.

Prof Julia Downing
October 2017

Appendix 2

PCRS AGM Treasurer’s Report

Monday 30th October 2017

During this year, our Treasurer Prof Sonja McIlfatrick resigned from the position of Treasurer due to increased responsibilities at work. We congratulate her on her appointment to Head of the School of Nursing at Ulster University and thank her for all her input to the Palliative Care Research Society and particularly as the Treasurer. Sonja will continue as a member of the Palliative Care Research Society although has stepped down from her role on the Executive Committee. Since she stepped down at the beginning of June 2017, Sally Boa has been helping with the work of the Treasurer and we are hoping to be able to appoint a new Treasurer in the coming months. If anyone would like to serve in this capacity please do let us know.

The auditor’s report for the year ending 31st December 2016 is included with this report.

Bank balance at 31st December 2016

£45,180 Reserve Account: £41,793

Current Account: £3,487

The Palliative Care Research Society (PCRS) is in a financially secure position. In the year Jan-December 2016 reserves have been maintained to both sustain the organisation and to ensure business could continue for a period of at least 12 months if there was no additional income. During 2017, the Palliative Care Research Society has also received £47,600 from the Palliative Care Congress Account – these funds were Society funds but previously held in the PCC account. The society is now in the pleasing position of considering how to use surplus funds to further palliative care research. To this end, investment has been made in redoing the Societies Brand and you will all have seen the new logo and materials at the EAPC conference and work is about to begin on the website. We have also subscribed to Bankline which means that we can control of our finances online, which has made transactions etc. easier as signatories are dispersed across the UK and previously we were sending cheques by post, which sometimes got lost. Due to the changes in PCC, the Palliative Care Research Society no longer is at any financial risk if the conference does not cover its cost, but also will no longer receive any profit.
Membership fees have remained unchanged in the year ending December 2016. Numbers are being maintained. We will also be engaging a consultant to provide administrative and financial support to the Society and will help us be more responsive to the needs of our members. Compleat Conferencing Services continues to maintain up-to-date membership and financial databases and it is anticipated that this will be transferred gradually to our administrator.

In conclusion, I would like to thank members of the Committee for their hard work and support that has enabled the achievement of a stronger financial position.