



Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting by videoconference

2 March 2022; 14:15-16:00 GMT+1

Approved on 16 May 2022

MEMBERS ATTENDING:

1. Vanessa Jordan (Authors)
2. Robert Dellavalle (Co-ordinating Editors: **Co-Chair**)
3. Maria-Inti Metzendorf (Information Specialists)
4. Stefano Negrini (Fields: **Co-Chair**)
5. Sarah Nevitt (Methods Groups)
6. Lotty Hooft (Geographic Groups Directors)
7. Erik von Elm (Geographic Groups Directors)
8. René Spijker (Information Specialists)
9. Gail Quinn (Managing Editors)
10. Silvia Minozzi (Methods Groups)

NON-VOTING ATTENDEES:

11. Judith Brodie, Interim Chief Executive Officer
12. Chris Champion, Head of Engagement & Learning Support
13. Cinzia Del Giovane, incoming Methods Group representative
14. Tracey Howe, Governing Board Co-Chair
15. Lorna McAlley, Executive Support Manager
16. Karla Soares-Weiser, Editor in Chief

APOLOGIES:

- Augustin Ciapponi (Authors)
- Lucie Binder, Head of Governance
- Montserrat Conde (Fields)
- Liz Dooley (Managing Editors)
- Ndi Euphrasia Ebai-atuh (Consumers Network)
- Catherine Marshall, Governing Board Co-Chair
- Jo Morrison (Co-ordinating Editors)
- Jack Nunn (Consumers Network)
- Santiago Castiello de Obeso (Early Career Professionals Network)
- Ahmad Sofi-Mahmudi (Early Career Professionals Network)

1. Welcome, Apologies, Declarations of Interest for this meeting

Stefano Negrini chaired the meeting. All attendees introduced themselves. The apologies were noted. The Chair welcomed Cinzia Del Giovane, whose term as Methods Groups representative on the Council would start on 1 April. Cinzia would be replacing Sarah Nevitt, who was standing down to begin maternity leave. Maria-Init Metenzdorf would also be ending her term after this meeting. The Chair thanked them both for their service to the Council.

2. Report Approval of the Agenda, including the papers and decisions in the Consent Agenda

The agenda was approved and the reports in the Consent Agenda noted. The ongoing Russia/Ukraine conflict - and consideration of whether Cochrane should make any form of statement - was added as an item under Any Other Business but taken as the first item.

Tracey Howe summarized the discussions that had been held between the Governing Board and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) on the drafting of a statement. It had been agreed that a statement would be issued on Cochrane.org (<https://www.cochrane.org/news/statement-cochranes-governing-board-0>) condemning violence and promoting peace, but not directly condemning a particular country. Further, no sanctions would be taken against Cochrane Russia at this time.

The Board and Executive Leadership Team would continue to review the situation and welcomed suggestions from the Council.

3. Approval of the minutes from 1 December 2021 meeting

The minutes of the 1 December 2021 meeting were approved.

Erik von Elm (Geographic Groups) requested an update regarding the possible development of a new Open Access journal for Cochrane. At the December Council meeting, Tracey Howe had reported that the Governing Board was looking at opportunities to diversity income streams for the Charity, and the development of new journals was one possibility. A proposal for a new Open Access evidence synthesis journal was being brought to the Board for approval at its meeting in March, which would be supported by Wiley, publisher of the Cochrane Library, but with Cochrane retaining full editorial oversight.

4. Council Co-Chair Report

Tracey Howe reported that the Council Co-Chairs and Board Co-Chairs had met on 21 March. The discussion had been around the material, content, and format for this Council meeting.

5. Future of evidence synthesis

Karla Soares-Weiser gave an introduction on the Future of Evidence Synthesis proposals that had been approved by the Governing Board in February. Three recommendations would be implemented:

1. To re-arrange volunteers within the Cochrane Groups producing content into 'thematic groups'; these would work in collaboration with other Cochrane entities. Also, the creation of approximately 10 inter-disciplinary Evidence Synthesis Units that would be geographically dispersed.
2. To expand the Central Editorial Service to take responsibility for the management of the editorial process for all evidence synthesis published by Cochrane and to provide a direct pathway for publication in the Cochrane Library and Fast Track Service.
3. For Cochrane to simplify systems, processes and tools to enhance the efficiency of evidence synthesis production.

She also gave a scenario to show how the model would work in practice and how the structure of the Central Editorial Service core team would look. She welcomed questions from members and during the discussion, the following points were clarified:

- The Charity's senior leaders are currently in discussion with six potential funders for Evidence Synthesis Units (ESU). Fundraising will be crucial to the success of this initiative. The first conversations are not requesting funding but presenting the concept.
- Thematic Groups and Review Groups will not be a 'like for like'. Thematic Groups provide an opportunity to look at Cochrane's topic areas and make groups more understandable both internally and externally. The Council will have a role in how Thematic Groups will be organized.
- A Case for Support for an ESU to be established in sub-Saharan Africa is in development and six Geographic Groups have expressed interest in being part of ESUs. The directors of the relevant Geographic Groups are very involved and have expressed interest from the beginning. There will be a transparent process for the establishment of ESUs.
- The UK NIHR's Evidence Synthesis tender has nothing to do with Cochrane, it is open to anyone in the UK. We have no control over this. Cochrane is separately discussing with the NIHR whether they would fund a Cochrane ESU.
- An Advisory Group will be established, chaired by Sally Green from Cochrane Australia, to oversee the implementation of the overall Future of Evidence Synthesis plans. Appointments will be made based on required skills and experience.

ACTION: Council to establish a sub-group of its own members to provide advice on the organization of Thematic Groups.

ACTION: Karla Soares-Weiser to share the Question & Answer document on the NIHR's evidence synthesis tender with the Council.

6. Cochrane Recognising the achievement of those leaving Cochrane and/or leaving their current roles

6.1 Membership & Awards Committee – adding Council members

Vanessa Jordan (Authors) said the changes to how Cochrane is organized to produce evidence synthesis would mean a lot of people would be leaving the organization. It would be important to give them proper recognition to their work.

Chris Champion explained that a paper about Lifetime Awards was shared with and approved by the Council last year. The Board-Council Membership & Awards Committee, which would decide on Emeritus and/or Lifetime Membership Awards, would be established imminently, and two seats were ring-fenced for two Council members. Chris invited members who wanted to put themselves forward to join the Committee to contact him.

Karla added that Review Groups such as PAPAS had put together a two-page document setting out their achievements of the past ten years. She encouraged other Cochrane Groups to do the same. She also suggested co-ordinating with the Cochrane UK Centre to arrange a ceremony for those people who would be leaving – many of them UK-based - at their upcoming face-to-face meeting in May.

ACTION: Chris Champion to circulate the terms of reference of the Membership & Awards Committee to the Council; and Council members to wanted to join to put themselves forward

7. Cochrane Statement of Values update

Judith gave a brief update on the Cochrane Statement of Values, in Jack Nunn's absence. She made clear she was not representing the Consumers' Network, but she would share an update based on the discussions she had had with Jack. An interim task group formed of eight people had been established, though Jack was keen that the Cochrane Consumers Network would set up a more stable on-going task group. The first priority of

the task group would be to develop a brief with a timeline and a draft budget as this project was still at a conceptual level. A proposal would be put to the Governing Board.

Council Constituency Reports

7.1 Discussion of issues identified as for Council discussion

There were no issues identified not otherwise covered by the agenda.

8. Any Other Business

Tracey Howe provided an update on the recruitment of a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Cochrane. Over 100 applications had been received for the role. A recruitment agency was helping with the process. She anticipated that the new CEO would be in post by July 2022.

9. Date of next meeting

14 April GMT.

10. Closed session (Council members only)

Judith Brodie, Chris Champion, Tracey Howe, Lorna McAlley and Karla Soares Weiser were thanked for their attendance and left the meeting. Council members convened in closed session, a record of which is kept by the Council Co-Chairs.

---MEETING END---

Remaining action items from 2021:

Meeting and Agenda Item	Action	Status
4. 14 April 2021	Council Co-Chairs to circulate to Council the key issues discussed at the Board and Council Co-Chairs' catch-ups in a bullet-point format.	Standing
6.6 October 2021	Constituency and Working Group representatives to provide short written reports of activities and issues for the Council to consider at each formal meeting.	Standing
5.1 December 2021	Council members interested in joining the Value Statement Task Group to send an email to Jack Nunn.	Ongoing