



Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting by videoconference

27 June 2023; 20:00-21:30 BST

Approved at the 3rd September face-to-face meeting

MEMBERS ATTENDING:

1. Vanessa Jordan (Authors)
2. Stefano Negrini (Fields: **Co-Chair**)
3. Irena Zakarija-Grkovic (Geographic Groups Directors)
4. Liz Dooley (Managing Editors)
5. Silvia Minozzi (Methods Groups)
6. Robert Dellavalle (Co-ordinating Editors: **Co-Chair**)
7. Cinzia Del Giovane (Methods Groups)
8. Valerie Wells (Information Specialists' representative)
9. Santiago Castiello de Obeso (Early Career Professionals Network)
10. Ahmad Sofi-Mahmudi (Early Career Professionals Network)
11. Ndi Euphrasia Ebai-atuh (Consumers Network)

OTHER ATTENDEES:

12. Catherine Spencer, Chief Executive Officer
13. Lucy Johnson-Brown, Head of Governance
14. Tracey Howe, Governing Board Co-Chair

APOLOGIES:

- Karla Soares-Weiser, Editor in Chief
- Nai Ming Lai (Authors)
- Veronica Bonfigli, Administrative Officer
- Catherine Marshall, Governing Board Co-Chair
- Jack Nunn (Consumers Network)
- Jo Morrison (Co-ordinating Editors)
- Luis Garegnani (Geographic Groups Directors)
- René Spijker (Information Specialists)
- Montserrat Conde (Fields)

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

Robert Dellavalle chaired the meeting. There was a round of introductions. The apologies were noted.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda was approved.

3. Approval of the minutes of the 4th April formal meeting

The minutes of the 4th April formal meeting were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Report from the Council Co-Chairs

5. Report from the Chief Executive Officer on the World Health Assembly meeting held in Geneva on 21- 25 May 2023 and the Board meetings in Paris.

Catherine provided an update on the World Health Assembly meeting which had focused on rehabilitation. She said that it had been a useful networking opportunity and had set the scene for taking forward the changes that had been made at Cochrane. Representatives from Cochrane had met with the UN and WHO Foundations and different colleagues from different part of the world.

It was explained that Cochrane had a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the WHO as an official partner which provided a valuable opportunity for joint working. Bob suggested that Cochrane should seek out opportunities to work with other organisations who had established partnerships with the World Health Assembly. At a time of change, the overall feeling had been of incredible confidence in and need for Cochrane.

Tracey reminded that there used to be a working group made up of those both involved with Cochrane and working with the WHO.

Catherine provided an update on the Board meetings held in Paris in May. Members of the Governing Board considered updates on the large transformation projects (the Future of Evidence Synthesis and Open Access) as well as fundraising and the development of the new strategy for 2024-2027. Gavin Adams, Head of Fundraising would present the new Fundraising Strategy at the Governing Board meeting in September.

She reported that good progress was being made in the journey towards open access. A consultant was offering valuable input and a model was being worked up into more detail. Discussions with Wiley around the development of new products were continuing.

Also, the Governing Board confirmed that review production would remain core to Cochrane's business.

From his point of view, Stefano said that the meeting had been a very positive one, he felt that there had been a shift in attitude and that there was a better connection between the Governing Board and the Community. There was though more work to be done to tackle the big issues and provide clarity around the Council's role.

6. Update on the Strategy for 2024-2027

Catherine gave an update on the development of the new organisational strategy which would set out the organisational ambitions and plans under four high level goals. A strategy working group had been engaging with a range of stakeholders and a small group of 'critical friends'. A special session at the Colloquium would be used to engage more widely. Council members' input would be particularly valuable over the next few months.

There was some discussion about the sequence of engagement, whether engaging with the Council collectively ahead of doing so with groups directly was a better approach.

Silvia asked about future plans for the Diversity Group following the resignation of Chris Champion. Tracey responded that this was something to be addressed by ELT and an update would follow.

7. Council's face-to-face meeting at the Colloquium

Bob explained that Council members had split in groups to address the three main topics for discussion at the London face-to-face meeting:

- The Governance review.
- The new organisational Strategy.
- The future of evidence-synthesis program (FES)

Barney confirmed he would be presenting the findings of the governance review at the Board face-to-face meeting in September.

Members asked for background papers and presentations at the meeting in London which clearly set out the Council's role in taking forward the three priorities already identified.

Council also asked for clarity around what they would be taking forward so that the face to face meeting in London could be used productively and it would be possible to plan ahead. In particular, they agreed on needing specific questions to be addressed.

Governance review: Catherine explained that the findings would be presented at the Governing Board meeting and no paper would be ready in time for the meeting on Sunday 3rd September.

New organisational Strategy: Information in advance would be provided.

FES: The team had clarified that there already were mechanisms for feedback on the program. Karla would not be able to attend the Council meeting and dinner on the Sunday.

It was clarified that the questions provided ahead of the meeting would be addressed to the full Council rather than to the working group. Tracey added that the Council should focus on the intended outcome for the body itself, on how to best use everybody's time and collective intelligence going forward and to focus on understanding the term "representation": she put forward a series of questions. Was representation still well granted at Cochrane through the Council? Were there enough reps from LMI countries? Were external stakeholders, funders and end-users represented? How could the Council fulfil the strategic objectives?

She added that the future direction of the Council as a body was going to evolve over the near future: the results of the Governance Review would be reviewed and an implementation plan developed. The Governing Board would discuss this at their meeting on 31 August, so any discussion about governance at the Council meeting on 3 September would need to be done with that in mind. The Council agreed to use the meeting to discuss issues pertaining to members' constituencies and whether the Council represented the full range of voices across the Cochrane community might be a useful topic for discussion.

The membership of the working groups was updated as follows:

Governance Review: Bob (leading), Irena, Jack, Luis, Euphrasia

New organisational Strategy: Stefano (leading), Luis, Valerie, Santiago

FES: Vanessa (leading), Ahmad, Cinzia, Liz, Jo, Monserrat, Nai Ming, Silvia

Items for the Council/Board joint meeting

This wasn't discussed separately from the item above. It was suggested that the Governing Board and Council could meet first thing on Sunday 3 September to discuss the findings of the governance review. Laura Ingle and Gavin Adams would both like to attend some of the Council meeting (if Council members agreed).

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Date of next meeting:

25 July (informal) with Tracey Barr joining.

COUNCIL ONLY TIME

Tracey Howe, Catherine Spencer, Lucy Johnson-Brown and Barney Tallack 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 2022:

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.	Paused