Cochrane

Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday 8th October Teleconference
Approved on 8th December 2020

Council Members present:	Representing:
Vanessa Jordan	Authors
Miranda Langendam	Methods & **Co-Chair**
Rachel Plachcinski	Consumers
Craig Lockwood	Fields & **Co-Chair**
Liz Dooley	Managing Editors (MEs)
Gail Quinn	Managing Editors (MEs)
Sarah Nevitt	Methods
Robert Dellavalle	Co-ordinating Editors
Jo Morrison	Co-ordinating Editors
Erik von Elm	Geographic Group Directors
Central Executive Team present:	
Lucie Binder	Head of Governance and Strategy
Chris Champion	Head of People Services
Veronica Bonfigli	Governance Officer (Minute-taker)
Apologies:	
Stefano Negrini	Fields
Lotty Hooft	Geographic Group Directors
Maria-Inti Metzendorf	Information Specialists (CISs)
Rene Spijker	Information Specialists (CISs)
Absent:	

Summary of Actions requested during the meeting

Agenda Item	Action	Date Added	Date Completed
2.	**Jo Morrison to send Craig Lockwood the requested edits to Item 3 of the 23rd June 2020 Minutes via email for Veronica to incorporate them.**	**8th October 2020**	**19th October 2020**
3.	**Veronica to collate the feedback on the new Strategy received by the Co-eds and to send it back to the Co-Eds reps and the Council Chairs.**	**8th October 2020**	**19th October 2020**

4.	Council members to provide the Council Chairs with groups feedback on the Strategic framework before the end of October.	8th October 2020
7.	Veronica to update the Council webpage with the Council's on-going projects and the representation within the working groups.	8th October 2020

1. Welcome. Apologies. Absent. Approval of Agenda.

Council Co-Chair Craig Lockwood opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. All apologies received were noted. Craig gave an overview of the agenda which was approved.

2. Review of action points and approval of the Minutes from the 23rd June 2020 Teleconference

The Minutes from the 23rd June 2020 teleconference were approved pending a request from Jo Morrison to clarify the wording of item 3 of the Minutes.

ACTION: Jo Morrison to send Craig Lockwood the requested edits to Item 3 of the 23rd June 2020 minutes via email for Veronica to incorporate them.

Action items from the previous teleconference (23rd June 2020) were reviewed.

- Rachel Plachcinski updated Council members on her action item, informing them that she was working with Richard Morley on the Consumer Strategy.
- Craig Lockwood investigated that each Council member was well set-up in terms of capacity to communicate with their constituencies. A short discussion followed.

3. Updates from the Groups

Fields

Craig Lockwood reported that he had notified the Fields' Executive and Jo Anthony that he would step down from the chairing of the Fields Executive at the end of 2020. A new nomination process to find a replacement was in place.

He explained that Stefano Negrini was a member of the Council but not a Chair of the Fields Executive, so this would mean that there would be two members of the Council representing the Fields who were not Chairs of the Fields Executive. He had no plans to step back from his position on the Council, a vote process was underway, and changes were due to take place.

Authors

Agustin Ciapponi thanked Chris Champion and the KT department for their support in setting up the Authors forum as almost 100 authors took part to it.

Methods

Sarah Nevitt reported that the main topics being discussed at the Methods Executive meeting were the feedback on the Strategic framework and the upcoming event of "*A day with*" which would involve several methods groups.

Information Specialists

The representatives of the Information Specialists had sent their apologies for this meeting.

Managing Editors (MEs)

Liz Dooley reported on the following topics:

Editorial Management System (EMS) questionnaire

Liz explained that the primary system used for editorial processing was a tool called Archie that was developed in-house in 2003. Later in the year Cochrane would move to a new EMS.

To prepare for this fundamental change, Cochrane contracted an external editorial collaboration consultancy which was managed and staffed by industry recognized leaders on peer review management and best practice, with an emphasis on efficient editorial office management and professional communication. In May, the ME community was asked to complete a detailed questionnaire designed to understand editorial team's current workflow and communication patterns to inform future editorial workflows. The questionnaire primarily focused on the current practices of work, but also asked for comments on things we would like the new EMS to be able to do, with a particular focus on the peer-review process.

The findings from the ME questionnaire were currently being finalized and the Cochrane Project Team. The plan was to circulate the findings shortly as it would give everyone an understanding of the proposed workflows in the new EMS. There would be a staged launch of the new EMS starting with a pilot Group from one Network planned for November 2020, with the roll out concluding by March 2021. In the next few weeks, there would be a formal EMS update published with confirmation of the chosen EMS vendor. After the launch, indefinite access to all earlier versions of reviews would be retained, but they would be managed in the new EMS and no data from Archie would be lost.

Updating Classification System (UCS)

The Updating Classification System (UCS) was developed to help editorial and author teams assess and report on the update status of an individual Cochrane Review (whether a review is up to date, likely to be updated in future, or does not need updating at the current time). The ME community undertook a huge project to individually categorise all their published Reviews. The Project Team worked closely with MEs from four Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs) to pilot the publication process.

In May 2019 problems were identified with the project when the UCS data for Cochrane Infectious Diseases started publishing. Several bugs were noticed and so further UCS publication was paused while the bugs were investigated. The MEs gained useful experience and insight about using the UCS and the publication of the UCS data. In discussion with the Project Team a decision had been made to discontinue work on publishing the UCS data as it was currently set up, and instead focus efforts on integrating the key elements into established editorial and publishing approaches. The UCS would remain in place in Archie for the time being.

In related work, the Informatics & Technology (IT) Services team had started working with MEs to explore the tools and systems CRGs need to best manage their review portfolios in the context of moving to the new EMS.

Conflict of Interest Policy (CoI) update

Another enormous project which had impacted significantly on the workload of MEs, was understanding and implementing the new CoI policy, which would be officially launched next week. MEs benefited from an excellent programme of webinars and training packages to inform and support throughout the formation of the new policy. Jordi Pardo Pardo, Board member, and Liz (Council rep) were on the calls which led to the launch.

Main changes to the policy were:

-The proportion of conflict free authors in a team would increase from a simple majority to a proportion of 66% or more.

- Last authors would be treated in the same way as first authors and, therefore, must be entirely free of conflicts.

-Authors of industry-funded clinical studies eligible for inclusion in a Cochrane Review would be prohibited from being the first or last author on that review.

-Reviews funded by not-for-profit organizations with a specific interest in the outcome would be assessed by Cochrane's CoI Arbiter Panel and the Editor-in-Chief, who would judge whether there was a conflict.

-Cochrane authors would need to declare non-financial interests and think critically about how these might influence the results of the review. The CoI team was also talking to the EMS team about how they could streamline the COI process.

Cochrane's new Strategic Framework
As requested by the Council Co-convenors, Liz & Gail canvassed the ME Community to feedback to the Council on our constituents' thoughts and comments on the new Strategic Framework. The comments received from 14 MEs on the five core questions, as well as their opinions on the sample set of activities, plus some general comments on the strategic framework were fed back to the Chairs.

Co-ordinating Editors

Bob Dellavalle reported that him and Jo had solicited feedback on the new Strategic framework from the Co-Eds. The feedback received was not massive but very qualitative and Veronica would collate the feedback and send it back to him, Jo Morrison and the Council Chairs for inclusion in the Council view.
ACTION: Veronica to collate the feedback on the new Strategy received by the Co-eds and to send it back to the Co-Eds reps and the Council Chairs.

Geographic Groups
Erik von Elm reported that last week the Geographic Groups Directors had had their regular virtual meeting. The discussion had mainly focused on the feedback to the Strategic Framework and concerns were raised around the very tight deadline left to provide feedback.
He also updated the Council that the Geographic Groups Executive had started to review the minimum criteria and minimum resources for groups to be able to become official Cochrane groups.
Erik explained that it was difficult to find a balance between being welcoming but also realistic, especially when new Centres expressed the interest in becoming Cochrane Centres without having any prior knowledge or experience. There were also implications in terms of Conflict of Interest criteria.

Consumers
Rachel reported that the Consumers Executive had had three calls in the past month: two of these were to talk to people about joining the Consumer Executive and one to collect feedback on the Strategic framework. She was very pleased with the response received and the interest expressed and she noted that most people who had joined these calls were researchers interested in finding out more about the consumers' involvement but didn't have a very active Cochrane Centre in their area or were not familiar with Cochrane's work and were interested in finding out more. She solicited feedback from Council members on how to respond to queries like that. Craig suggested this issue to be included in the AOB of the agenda for discussion.

4. **Council feedback on the Strategic framework**

Craig handed over the chairing to Miranda.
Miranda explained that the rationale of this agenda item was to discuss a consolidated Council view on the strategic framework with input from all groups to provide an encompassing Council feedback.
She noted that feedback had been received only by the Fields, Methods and Managing Editors and she urged an active engagement of all groups for the Chairs to incorporate all ideas, concerns and suggestions.
For this reason, Miranda and Craig requested a postponement of the deadline for feedback by two weeks.

Lucie thanked members for the feedback received. She informed them that there was indeed need for extra time to get more Community feedback and for it to be properly processed, therefore the launch of the Strategy had been postponed to early 2021. She would write to the Council Co-Chairs with a revised timeline and she stressed the

importance to get feedback from Council reps as the Council was a critical voice within the Strategy implementation, being with the Central Executive Team responsible for the delivering of the Strategy. Therefore, the deadline for the survey had been extended to November 5th.

Craig suggested to collect the feedback, consolidate it and re-circulate it to Council for final approval to make sure it reflected all voices and it was as cohesive as possible.

The first round of feedback would be finalised before the end of October; the Chairs would then collate it in November, and they would re-circulate it to Council for final approval.

ACTION: Council members to provide the Council Chairs with groups feedback on the Strategic framework before the end of October.

5. **Members of the Council on working groups updates:**
   - **Conflicts of interest working group summary**
   - **Diversity working group summary**
   - **Any other working group**

Conflicts of interest working group summary
Craig was a member of the Conflict of Interest working group and he reported on the on-going work of the group. He informed members that the soft launch was progressing and that the group was focusing mainly on communication, training and support. The decisions flowcharts had been finalised, FAQs had been developed, a database of drug manufacturers had been established, as well as an appeal process and a review proposal. The work underway included the development of scenarios for a conflict of interest portal with examples for people to look at and email templates integration into Archie close to being completed.
The on-going work included: updating webpages, put together instructions on how to fill out a declaration of interest, checklists for MEs, a flow work guidance and there was an ambition for groups to take on a translation piece of work into Spanish. In addition to this, the group was developing some HTML versions of the bodies of resources around the Conflict of Interest for the Cochrane Library.

Diversity working group summary
Chris Champion reported that the group was still at an early stage and that the group had been tasked to undertake a listening and learning exercise. Chris explained he was waiting on the Governing Board to nominate who they wanted to be involved in the leadership of the initiative. When conceptualizing how to run this group, he was very keen that someone from the Council would co-lead alongside a representative of the Governing Board, therefore Miranda would be the Council representative on the group and at the Board meeting next week the membership of the group would be finalised.

Colloquia and Events Working Group
Bob Dellavalle was the Council representative within this Board sub-group. He informed members the working group had looked at different virtual platforms to run future Cochrane events.
Chris Champion explained that the group had been conceptualized before the pandemic to focus especially on the environmental concerns of Cochrane meetings and how to mitigate their environmental impact. The work of the group was progressing well, it was focusing on the purposes and the customization of Cochrane events, differentiating the type of events that could be run virtually such as a training sessions and those which needed to necessarily be in person such as the Colloquium.
The group had reached the acknowledgement that without face-to-face meetings, Cochrane would not be able to achieve all the current purposes that had hoped to achieve.

6. **Organizational monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes to measure and communicate the impact against the new strategy: A Council discussion**

Miranda explained that Juliane Reid, Planning and Performance Manager, was on annual leave and could not be present at the meeting.

Sarah Nevitt and Liz Dooley had offered to help Juliane to further develop the implementation project. Miranda explained that this agenda item would be further discussed by email or at a Council meeting once the project would be launched.

Lucie added that the development of the framework was affected by the delayed launch of the Strategy as the two pieces of work were linked. The prep work was on going and Juliane would be in touch with Liz and Sarah before the end of the year to discuss how to approach the development of the processes.

7. AOB and Council Only Time

Review of the Execs
One of the items brought to Council's attention as an AOB item was an update on the Review of the Execs project. Lucie explained that this long-standing item was to be discussed at the Manchester Governance Meeting and it had been postponed due to the cancellation of the meeting and the COVID-19 pandemic. On the 8th November the Senior Management Team (SMT) would discuss the review and Lucie would report back at the next Council meeting. A dependency of this piece of work would be the revision of the Council Terms of Reference, a piece of work on the agenda for 2021.

Queries about Cochrane
The issue raised by Rachel Plachcinski (people who were not consumers, attending consumers' calls to hear more about Cochrane) was also discussed as an AOB item. She asked members whether they had come across people enquiring about Cochrane and in that case, who would be best placed to re-direct their queries to.
Members suggested to either re-direct interested people to the Cochrane Centre of their country or the review group related to their area of interest. They also suggested to flag Cochrane's projects such as Task Exchange and Cochrane Crowd.

Council Webpage
At past Council meetings there had been a suggestion to update the Cochrane Council webpage with the Council's on-going projects and the Council representation within the working groups.
ACTION: Veronica to update the Council webpage with the Council's on-going projects and the representation within the working groups.

Veronica explained that she would send a call for items email to the Community two weeks ahead of each Council call to make sure the Council would discuss topics relevant to the Community.

Council members did not convene in Council Only Time.

---MEETING END---