



DRAFT FOR MEMBERS' APPROVAL

MINUTES of the 2023 Annual General Meeting of The Cochrane Collaboration ('Cochrane'), held online and in-person at QEII Centre, Broad Sanctuary, London SW1P 3EE on 4 September 2023 at 17.45-19.15 GMT+1 (British Summer Time)

Trustees present:

Catherine Marshall, Co-Chair of the Governing Board and Chair of the meeting
Professor Tracey Howe, Co-Chair of the Governing Board
Karen Kelly, Treasurer
Yuan Chi, Trustee
Juan Franco, Trustee
Professor Sally Green, Trustee
Gillian Leng, Trustee
Wendy Levinson, Trustee
Jordi Pardo Pardo, Trustee
Emma Persad, Trustee
Vanessa Piechotta, Trustee

From the Council:

Robert (Bob) Dellavalle, Co-Chair, Cochrane Council
Stefano Negrini, Co-Chair, Cochrane Council

Senior staff of the Charity present:

Catherine Spencer, Chief Executive Officer
Karla Soares-Weiser, Editor in Chief, the Cochrane Library

Approximately 250 Cochrane members & supporters attended in-person or online.

A video recording of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is available at:
[Cochrane Annual General Meeting 2023 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

1. Welcome

Catherine Marshall, Co-Chair of the Governing Board, was in the Chair, attending in-person in London. She opened the meeting at 17.45 GMT + 1 and welcomed everyone attending in-person and online.

Proper notice had been given, quorum was achieved, and therefore this was a duly constituted meeting.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The Chair read out the first Resolution on which members would be asked to vote. The results of all Resolutions would be announced after the meeting once all votes had been counted.

The following Resolution was approved by the members:

APPROVED RESOLUTION: To approve the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, held on 17 October 2022 (Yes: 189. No:1. Abstain:28)

3. Trustees' Reports

I. Co-Chairs' Report

Catherine Marshall reported to members that both she and Tracey Howe were stepping down as Co-Chairs of the Governing Board and that Jordi Pardo Pardo had been appointed Interim Chair of the Governing Board.

The Interim Chair introduced the report.

Jordi Pardo Pardo thanked Catherine Marshall and Tracey Howe for serving as Co-Chairs of the Governing Board for 4 years and 3 years respectively.

He said that Cochrane was in a solid financial situation which will allow the organization to continue to revolutionize the way in which evidence is produced and disseminated. The development of Thematic Groups and Evidence Synthesis Units will help Cochrane to produce systematic reviews that help to tackle the world's most pressing health and care challenges and support the UN's sustainable development goals.

A recent governance review concluded that Cochrane is a complex and complicated organisation but that overall the governance arrangements are 'healthy'. There was more work to be done to engage and connect with the large and diverse Cochrane Community on which the organization relies.

In closing, the Interim Chair of the Governing Board thanked all members and supporters and said that the achievements of 117,000 members and supporters should be celebrated.

II. Treasurer's Report

Karen Kelly, Treasurer, presented an overview of the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022. She said that she felt content with the organization's financial position.

In 2022, the Charity's income was £8.9 million GBP and expenditure was £7.9 million GBP. The surplus of £1million GBP was largely a result of the cost saving restructuring exercise which took place during 2021.

The Treasurer set out the reserves policy, approved by the Governing Board in 2021 which guides decision making. A total of £9.6million GBP is held in reserves. £2.6million GBP represents the equivalent of three months operating costs which is in line with guidance from the Charity Commission.

£1.0million GBP is held as excess free reserves. £3.0 million GBP is held in an Open Access Continuity Fund and £3.0million GBP is held in a Strategic Investment Fund to allow for investment during a period of transformational change. £0.7million GBP has already been

allocated from the Strategic Investment Fund for the Future of Evidence Synthesis programme of work. £2.3m is unallocated.

The Treasurer highlighted that 77% of income was from the Cochrane Library and that work to diversify income in the long term was continuing. A new fundraising team will build relationships with global funders and implement a fundraising strategy.

The current forecast for the year to date indicated that overall, financial results were on target to achieve the agreed budget for 2023.

In concluding, the Treasurer said that the Charity is in a good position to support the ongoing transformation change and that the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and the Governing Board will be vigilant in managing financial risks.

The following Resolution was approved by the members:

APPROVED RESOLUTION: To receive and note the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2022 (Yes:192. No:4. Abstain:21)

4. Appointment of the Auditors

The following Resolution was approved by the members:

APPROVED RESOLUTION: To approve Price Bailey as auditors until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting (Yes:187. No: 0. Abstain:30)

5. Council Report

Stefano Negrini, Co-Chair of the Cochrane Council, presented the Council report. He introduced other members of the Council who were present in person and thanked Gail Quin and Erik von Elm who both stood down during the year.

The Council met monthly during the last year and provided input to the development of the new organizational strategy, contributed to the governance review and to the Future of Evidence Synthesis programme of work.

To improve engagement between the Governing Board and the Council, the Co-Chairs of the Council attended Governing Board meetings and the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board attended Council meetings.

The Governance Review concluded that the Council cannot fulfil all of the expectations and functions that are placed on it and recommended that new and improved ways of two way communication between the Community and the central organization be developed. Members of the Council and members of the Governing Board agreed to work together over the next three months to develop a multi-stranded approach to ensure everyone in the Community is represented.

Catherine Marshall thanked Stefano Negrini, Bob Dellavalle and the members of Council for their support and contribution.

6. Senior Officers' Reports

I. Chief Executive Officer

The Chair welcomed Catherine Spencer to her first Colloquium since taking up her post as Chief Executive Officer just over a year ago.

Catherine thanked the members of the Central Executive Team for their hard work and dedication to the organization over the last year.

She said that the team had been working hard to respond to the need to produce evidence more quickly. The Central Editorial Service is fully operational and this, together with the new review format will increase the speed with which reviews can be produced and will improve the author experience.

Highlights from a successful year included Cochrane Crowd enabling 8.3 million classifications of primary research helping to identify and describe hundreds of thousands of studies. 77% of new World Health Organisation guidelines were informed by evidence included in Cochrane reviews. 81% of all Cochrane Reviews were free to access and Cochrane evidence was translated into 15 languages.

The Chief Executive Officer said that relationships between Cochrane Groups and national decision makers are vital for the organisation to achieve its goals and improve global health.

Alongside transforming the way in which systematic reviews are produced, a new organizational strategy had been developed to guide the organization over the next four years. Representatives from Executives, Groups, Fields and a number of critical friends had helped to develop a draft strategy that builds on strengths and recognises where we need to do better.

There were opportunities during the Colloquium to comment on the draft strategy and shape the final version.

Catherine emphasised the importance of financial sustainability which underpinned the other three goals included in the strategy. An economically viable Open Access model was being developed and tested, new income generating activities will be explored and opportunities to work in partnership and collaborate with others built on.

In concluding, Catherine invited all members and supporters to visit the Cochrane stand during the Colloquium and to attend a special session on the development of the new strategy on Wednesday 6 September.

II. Editor in Chief's report

Karla Soares-Weiser presented the Editor in Chief's report. She thanked members of the Community for their support and reflected on how Cochrane has grown from a small group of pioneers in 1993 to a community of over 100,000 members and supporters 30 years later.

The Editor in Chief recognised the Cochrane Groups that no longer have funding to work as part of the organisation. She said their unwavering dedication had helped to make Cochrane what it is today.

Karla said that Cochrane's commitment to excellence is grounded in understanding our users. The 2023 Voice of the Customer survey run by Wiley gives an insight into how users feel about Cochrane. Over 90% of respondents rated Cochrane's trustworthiness as 'very high'. Maintaining and guarding our reputation for trustworthiness is vital.

Reflecting on a personal journey through the Camino de Santiago, Karla saw parallels with Cochrane's transformation as both journeys require resilience, adaptability and a clear goal. She said that Cochrane's role in a changing and increasingly complex world is critically important. Cochrane offers evidence to navigate global issues and inform decision making to improve health and care.

The Future of Evidence Synthesis Programme of work is driving the transformation of Cochrane. An Oversight Committee monitors the work on behalf of the Governing Board, reviewing metrics and providing assurance that progress is being made.

Metrics include acceptance decisions within 7 months, rejection decisions within 4 months and a target for copy editing of 2 months. There are challenges but progress is steady.

During the last year, 343 reviews and 250 protocols were published. So far this year, 222 reviews and 74 protocols have been published.

The Cochrane Library reaches 181 countries and includes 44,000 plain language summaries and abstracts translated into 15 languages.

Since its launch in November 2022, the new Open Access journal received 26 submissions and published 14 articles.

The Editor in Chief recognised the dedicated and diverse Methods community that is at the centre of Cochrane's reputation for scientific rigour and the importance of developing and refining policies to ensure integrity and transparency.

A new Scientific Strategy that has the endorsement of the Governing Board sets out how Cochrane's evidence will contribute to the UN's sustainable development goals.

In concluding, Karla said that the organisation needs to hold onto the values of those who founded Cochrane while passing the baton onto the next generation. She thanked all of the members of the community for contributing to the success of Cochrane.

7. Members' questions

A number of questions from attendees in the room and online were taken. They included:

What are the implications of returning to using the name The Cochrane Collaboration rather than Cochrane?

Catherine Spencer confirmed that the organisation's name has always been The Cochrane Collaboration and that collaboration underpins the way in which the organisation works.

Guidance will be shared which sets out how to use the organisation's name. An expensive re branding exercise will not be carried out and both The Cochrane Collaboration and Cochrane can be used to refer to the organization.

Are there plans to remove or rename directorates?

Catherine Spencer confirmed that directorates will not be removed or renamed.

What specific commitments will be made to encourage the next generation to get involved with Cochrane?

Vanessa Piechotta (one of three Governing Board members under 30 appointed the previous year) asked members to get in touch and share their views which she and other members of the Board would address.

How will a perceived gap between the Central Executive Team and the Community be addressed?

Catherine Marshall said that the Future Engagement Mechanisms Working Group set up to consider new and improved ways of two way communication and engagement between the central organisation and the community will help to address this.

Catherine Spencer recognised that more work was needed to improve links and communication. She and other members of the Executive Leadership Team were committed to doing more and being present at Group meetings and events. Catherine invited feedback and engagement from members during the Colloquium.

8. Awards and Prizes

The following awards and prizes were presented:

The Anne Anderson Award 2023

The award is given to a female member of Cochrane who has made a significant contribution to the enhancement and visibility of women's participation within the organization.

Tiffany Duque, the 2022 recipient presented the 2023 award to Dr Madelon Van Wely.

The Kenneth Warren Prize 2023:

The prize goes to the principal author of a systematic review, published in *The Cochrane Library* by a national living in a developing country, that is judged to be both of high

methodological quality and relevant to health problems in developing countries.
Dr Nai Ming Lai, the 2022 winner, presented the prize to Dr Rashmi Ranjan.

Emeritus and Lifetime Membership Awards

These awards recognise extraordinary contributions to Cochrane's success over many years from members who are ending their active time with Cochrane.

Mid year awards 2023

<p><u>Emeritus</u> Gerd Antes Sally Bell-Syer Xavier Bonfill Iain Chalmers Kay Dickersin Muir Gray Jini Hetherington Sophie Hill Anne Lyddiatt Nandi Siegfried Prathap Tharyan Hywel Williams</p>	<p><u>Lifetime</u> Peter Herbison Anne Lethaby</p>
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End of year awards 2023

<p><u>Emeritus</u> Hilda Bastian Martin Burton Nicky Cullum Gladys Faba Paul Garner Robin Grant Malinee Laopaiboon Petra Macaskill Fergus Macbeth Mario Tristan Christopher Williams</p>	<p><u>Lifetime</u> Linda Clare Leon Flicker Patricia Graves Fiona Rowe Karen Steingart Maoling Wei</p>
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Information about individuals' achievements can be found at: [Cochrane Membership | Cochrane](#)

9. Date of next Annual General Meeting

The date of the Annual General meeting in 2024 would be confirmed.

Post hoc note: It was later confirmed that the meeting would be held on 14 November 2024 rather than at the Global Evidence Summit in Prague during September 2024.

The Chair thanked the speakers and members for their participation and closed the meeting at 19.15 GMT +1.