Cochrane
Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting by videoconference
1 December 2021; 20:00-21:30 GMT+1

MEMBERS ATTENDING:
1. Vanessa Jordan (Authors)
2. Agustin Ciapponi (Authors)
3. Robert Dellavalle (Co-ordinating Editors: **Co-Chair**)
4. Jack Nunn (Consumers Network)
5. Jo Morrison (Co-ordinating Editors)
6. Stefano Negrini (Fields: **Co-Chair**)
7. Montserrat Conde (Fields)
8. Lotty Hooft (Geographic Groups Directors)
9. Erik von Elm (Geographic Groups Directors)
10. René Spijker (Information Specialists)
11. Liz Dooley (Managing Editors)
12. Gail Quinn (Managing Editors)
13. Silvia Minozzi (Methods Groups)
14. Ahmad Sofi-Mahmudi (Early Career Professionals Network)

NON-VOTING ATTENDEES:
15. Lucie Binder, Head of Governance and Strategy
16. Veronica Bonfigli, Governance Officer
17. Judith Brodie, Interim Chief Executive Officer
18. Rachel Craven, Product Lead-Cochrane Library
19. Ursula Gonthier, Membership and Support Manager
20. Tracey Howe, Governing Board Co-Chair
21. Catherine Marshall, Governing Board Co-Chair
22. Rachel Marshall, Editorial Lead
23. Obi Onuora, Publishing Technology Manager
24. Karla Soares-Weiser, Editor in Chief

APOLOGIES:
- Ndi Euphrasia Ebai-atuh (Consumers Network)
- Santiago Castiello de Obeso (Early Career Professionals Network)
- Maria-Inti Metzendorf (Information Specialists)
- Sarah Nevitt (Methods Groups)
- Chris Champion (Head of People Services)

1. **Welcome, Apologies, Declarations of Interest for this meeting**
   Robert Dellavalle was in the Chair. He opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. All attendees introduced themselves. The apologies were noted. Montserrat Conde, new Fields representative, was welcomed.

2. **Council Co-Chairs' Report**
   Stefano Negrini gave the Co-Chairs' report. He reported on the main items of discussion from the Council Co-Chairs' recent meetings with the Board Co-Chairs:

   - The Board Co-Chairs had thanked the Council for its contribution to the consultation on the future of evidence synthesis. The Editor in Chief also asked for her thanks to be recorded.
   - On behalf of the Council, the Co-Chairs had raised concerns with the Board Co-Chairs about the unclear communication on the disbandment of the Cochrane Review Group Networks. In response, the Board Co-Chairs had said that one of the priorities for 2022 would be the development of a new organizational communications strategy for internal and external communications; the Council would play an important role in developing this strategy.

   The Chair anticipated the following priorities for Council in 2022:

   - Improvement of the communication between the Council, the Board, and the Council's constituencies.
   - Leading the development of a set of organizational values.
   - Helping the organization to face its Open Access and funding challenges.

   The Chair asked the Head of Governance & Strategy to speak to Paper 011221-6, which outlined the proposed rotation of Council meetings in 2022. It set out alternating formal and informal meetings, with rotating times to suit the different timezones of the Council members. Not all members would be able to attend all meetings. The proposal was approved by the Council.

3. **Approval of the Agenda, including the papers and decisions in the Consent Agenda**
   The Agenda was approved. The minutes from the 6 October 2021 meeting were approved.

4. **Issues on the implementation of a new Editorial Management System (EMS)**
   Obi Onuora, Publishing Technology Manager, thanked the Council for the invitation to join the meeting and for its constructive feedback on the rollout of the EMS. He summarized the rationale for moving away from Archie to a new EMS, explaining that it was no longer fit for purpose, couldn't be updated, and was financially unsustainable to maintain. He recognized that the new EMS was not a 'like for like' replacement for Archie and said this was deliberate: Cochrane needed to be using industry-standard software and editorial processes. The implementation of the new EMS could not be delayed any further as running two systems was financially problematic. Nevertheless, the issue of increased workloads during the transition from Archie to the new EMS, particularly for Managing Editors, was recognized. Support from the Central Executive Team had been prioritized.

   Rachel Marshall, Editorial Lead, said that a written response to each question received in Paper 011221-1 would be circulated after the meeting. She addressed specific themes from the feedback. She said that the EMS was intended to manage the process of submission and copy-editing; different people could be assigned to different portions of work. She urged people to raise any questions or issues via support@cochrane.org to make sure they were addressed properly. She said that the EMS would undergo continuous improvement. A page on the Knowledge Base resource would be published, to list all upcoming or implemented changes.

   The Publishing Technology Manager and the Editorial Lead left the meeting at this point.

5. **Plan for drafting a Cochrane Statement of Values** *[Paper 011221-2]*
   Jack Nunn thanked members for their interest in the proposals set out in paper 011221-2. He explained that the development of a Cochrane Statement of Values was a co-designed proposal with different stakeholders, led by the Consumer Executive. The implementation plan would take into consideration the resources available.

   The Interim CEO expressed her full support to the project, stating that working on core values was important during this time of organizational change. This was echoed by the Board Co-Chairs.

   The Council emphasized the need to recognize the existing set of organizational principles, and to make clear how Groups and the wider community would be consulted in the development of the values. As Cochrane was a multi-lingual organization, translation of terminology would need to be considered.

   The Council supported the proposal.

   > **ACTION: Council members interested in joining the Value Statement Task Group to send an email to Jack Nunn.**

6. **Cochrane Library Product development** *[Paper 011221-7]*
   The Council had expressed an interest in being more frequently involved in the development of the Cochrane Library. The Cochrane Library Product Lead, Rachel Craven, had therefore been invited to the meeting and was thanked for her attendance.

   She said that the Cochrane Library team was currently working to enable the transition to Open Access for Cochrane Reviews, which provided both an opportunity and a challenge in terms of financial sustainability. She had shared the product vision statement for the Cochrane Library with the Council [PAPER 011221-7]. The idea was to provide a compelling value proposition around accelerating healthcare research, supporting decision-making in policy and practice, and facilitating educational needs for healthcare researchers and policy-makers. She and her team had identified product development themes in 2022 to enhance the format of the Cochrane Reviews to make them more accessible. She outlined the process for product development.

   She invited the Council to increase its involvement in Cochrane Library development. Stefano Negrini suggested the Council could be involved at a strategic level; he invited the Cochrane Library team to attend future Council meetings for input or feedback on features. They could also contact members of the Council directly for a more granular level of involvement (e.g., user testing).

   The Cochrane Library Product Lead left the meeting at this point.

7. **Council Constituency and Working Groups Reports**
   The Chair asked Tracey Howe to provide information on the possible development of a new Open Access journal for Cochrane. In response, she said that the Board was looking at opportunities to diversity income streams for the Charity, and the development of new journals was one possibility. A publishing strategy meeting with Wiley was scheduled for January 2022 where this would be discussed further.

8. **Any Other Business**
   There was no other business.

9. **Date of next meeting**
   2nd February 2022 15:00-16:30 GMT (informal).

10. **Closed session (Council members only)**

The Board Co-Chairs, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Editor in Chief, Head of Governance & Strategy, and Governance Officer were thanked for their attendance and left the meeting. Council members convened in Council Only Time, a record of which is kept by the Council Co-Chairs.

---MEETING END--

Actions Arising 2021:

Meeting and Agenda Item	Action	Status
4. 14 April 2021	Council Co-chairs to consider with the Board Co-Chairs how to improve engagement between the Board and the Council.	Completed
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
4. 14 April 2021	Council to continue discussions with the Editor in Chief and Board Co-Chairs on the Editorial Independence and Efficiency Project at the Governance Meetings in May.	Completed 24 June 2021
5. 14 April 2021	Lucie Binder to share with Council via email the summary of the Senior Management Team response on the review of the Executives.	Completed 16 April 2021
7. 14 April 2021	Two seats on the Council to be ring-fenced for representatives of the Early Career Professionals Network (ECP). Council Co-Chairs to get in touch with the key contact of the ECP to communicate the Council's decision.	Completed 3 May 2021
7. 14 April 2021	A joint sub-committee made up of Board and Council members to be established to consider the nominations/awards of the new membership types.	Completed 9 February 2022
11. 14 April 2021	Erik von Elm to draft and circulate to a thank you and farewell message for Mark Wilson on behalf of the Council.	Completed 16 April 2021
4.1 June 2021	Members to contact the Co-Chairs if interested in joining a working group.	Standing
6. 1 June 2021	Council Co-Chairs to complete the Council's response on the preparation for the 2021 strategic sessions and circulate to the Council email list for sign-off before submitting it to the Senior Management Team.	Completed 10 June 2021
5.15 July 2021	Bob (Robert) Dellavalle to poll members to decide whether the Council should continue meeting on a single meeting or on two sessions at different times of the same day.	Completed on 1 December 2021
5.15 July 2021	Veronica Bonfigli to add the Review Groups' Networks and what can Cochrane do more simply as agenda items for the next Council meeting.	Completed on 29 September 2021
4.1-6 October 2021	Council members to let the Co-Chairs know whether they wanted to be speakers at the last two workshops on the future of evidence synthesis	Completed
5.6 October 2021	Consumers Executive to share a plan for the development of an organizational 'Values Statement' by the end of 2021	Completed on 1 December 2021
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

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1.2 December 2021	Veronica to update the 2022 Outlook calendar invites to reflect the timezones outlined in PAPER 011221-6.	Completed on 13 December 2021
5.1 December 2021	Council members interested in joining the Value Statement Task Group to send an email to Jack Nunn.	Ongoing