



Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting by videoconference

6 October 2021; 20:30-22:00 GMT+1

Approved on 1st December 2021

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. Lotty Hoofstede (Geographic Groups Directors)
8. Erik von Elm (Geographic Groups Directors)
9. René Spijker (Information Specialists)
10. Maria-Inti Metzendorf (Information Specialists)
11. Liz Dooley (Managing Editors)
12. Gail Quinn (Managing Editors)
13. Sarah Nevitt (Methods Groups)
14. Silvia Minozzi (Methods Groups)
15. Ahmad Sofi-Mahmudi (Early Career Professionals Network)
16. Santiago Castiello de Obeso (Early Career Professionals Network)

NON-VOTING GUESTS:

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE TEAM ATTENDING:

17. Lucie Binder (Head of Governance and Strategy)
18. Veronica Bonfigli (Governance Officer and Minute-taker)
19. Judith Brodie (Interim CEO)
20. Karla Soares-Weiser (Editor in Chief)

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING:

21. Tracey Howe, Governing Board Co-Chair
22. Catherine Marshall, Governing Board Co-Chair

APOLOGIES:

23. Chris Champion (Head of People Services)
24. Ndi Euphrasia Ebai-atuh (Consumer Network)

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

Stefano Negrini was in the Chair. He opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Chris Champion and Ndi Euphrasia Ebai-atuh had sent their apologies.

The Chair informed members of the Governing Board's decision to invite the Council Co-Chairs to join Board meetings as non-voting guests. This would support the integration of the Council and Board, and would improve communication between the two bodies.

The Chair congratulated Agustin Ciapponi on his re-election as Author representative and he welcomed Jack Nunn as new Consumer representative, replacing Rachel Plachcinski. Jack introduced himself to members.

2. Council Co-Chair Report

This report would be given during the closed session at the end of the meeting.

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

The Agenda was approved. The minutes from the 1 June 2021 videoconference and notes from the 15 July 2021 informal call were approved.

4. Future of evidence synthesis: update

Karla Soares-Weiser said that a workshop series had been organised to discuss with the Community possible options for making Cochrane's review production fit for purpose in the future. 170 people had attended the first session. A survey on Cochrane's future review production model was being run until Sunday 30th October.

The *editorial integrity and efficiency pilot project* was in its second phase and eight Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs) were participating.

Council members voiced concerns around inadequate communication on the future of CRGs. The – incorrect – impression was that all CRGs would soon disappear; therefore, communications had to improve to avoid wrong information being circulated. Further, they highlighted the importance of:

- Providing clarity to CRGs and author teams on registering new titles and supporting reviews currently in development; this was also a key message for non-UK based CRGs;
- Transparent communication on the Open Access strategy;
- Diversifying communications (not just workshops).

Karla Soares-Weiser reassured members the issues raised were being addressed by her team. She welcomed suggestions from the Council on how to improve communications. Further, she recognised the many challenges Cochrane was facing, but also said it provided an opportunity to build together the future of the organisation.

4.1 Future of evidence synthesis workshops: Council volunteers

Council members were invited to speak at the remaining workshops.

ACTION: 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.

4.2 Managing Editors Executive Report

An open access document with extensive feedback from the Managing Editors had been received and shared with the Council ahead of the meeting. Gail Quinn and Liz Dooley, the Managing Editor representatives, presented the highlights:

- The wellbeing of Cochrane CRGs and Network staff was a serious concern;

- Many UK CRGs were not set-up to apply for funds from the UK NIHR through different funding streams;
- Cochrane was a ‘belief system’ for many people, not just a job, and this needed to be recognised;
- The new Editorial Management System (EMS) was causing problems for some Managing Editors and added an additional burden at this time of change.

These points were noted by the Council members and Karla Soares-Weiser. It was agreed that members of the EMS development team would attend the Council’s meeting in November or December to discuss the issues being reported.

5. Cochrane ‘values statement’

Jack Nunn explained that the Consumers Executive would like to take the lead in developing a set of values for the organisation. These would sit along the existing Cochrane policies. Judith Brodie, Interim CEO, welcomed this initiative and said that it would be something for the organisation to consider together in 2022. In the meantime, the Consumers Executive would develop a plan for the development.

ACTION: Consumers Executive to share a plan for the development of an organizational ‘Values Statement’ by the end of 2021.

6. Council Constituency and Working Groups Reports

A written report from the Information Specialists Executive would be discussed at the next meeting. There were no other reports for this meeting. All constituencies were asked to provide written reports for formal meetings in the future.

ACTION: Constituency and Working Group representatives to provide short written reports of activities and issues for the Council to consider at each formal meeting.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Lessons learned by the Governing Board to make effective virtual meetings

Tracey Howe presented a few examples of good governance practices the Board had taken on for its meetings, that the Council might also like to consider adopting:

- An informal 15-minute ‘coffee catch-up’ ahead of each meeting;
- The concept of a ‘Consent Agenda’: reports and papers that were shared with members ahead of the meeting and didn’t need to be discussed during it unless specifically requested;
- Alternating between 90-minute minuted meetings with agendas and 60-minute informal and flexible catch-ups monthly;
- Putting substantive items at the top of the agenda to get sufficient time to discuss them.

The Chair suggested the Council consider all these options during Council Only Time.

8. Date of next meetings (GMT):

1 December 2021, 20:00-21:30 GMT.

9. Closed session (Council members only)

The Board Co-Chairs, Karla Soares-Weiser, Judith Brodie, Lucie Binder and Veronica Bonfigli 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.	In progress
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.	Standing (for discussion together with the item of the frequency of Council calls in 2022)
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 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	
5.6 October 2021	Consumers Executive to share a plan for the development of an organizational 'Values Statement' by the end of 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