

# Governing Board Meeting Minutes

13 October 2021 GMT – Meeting held by videoconference

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Trustees declare conflicts of interest related to their role on the Board, which are published on the Cochrane [Community website](#) and are updated annually or when circumstances change. All meeting participants are also required to declare any possible material interests that could give rise to conflict in relation to any item under discussion at the start of each meeting. All interests so disclosed are recorded in the minutes. Conflicted participants may be required to absent themselves from all or part of the Board's discussion of the matter at the discretion of the Chair.

## Board members (Trustees) present:

Name:	Attending from:
<b>Tracey Howe (Co-Chair)</b>	UK
<b>Catherine Marshall (Co-Chair)</b>	New Zealand
<b>Xavier Bonfill Cosp</b>	Spain
<b>Juan Franco</b>	Argentina
<b>Sally Green</b>	Australia
<b>Karsten Juhl Jørgensen</b>	Denmark
<b>Karen Kelly (Treasurer)</b>	UK
<b>Marguerite Koster</b>	USA
<b>Tamara Kredo</b>	South Africa
<b>Rae Lamb</b>	New Zealand
<b>Jordi Pardo Pardo</b>	Canada

## Board members having sent apologies:

<b>Nicky Cullum</b>	UK
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## Others present:

Name:	Role:	Attending from:
<b>Ginny Barbour</b>	Open Access consultant	Australia
<b>Lucie Binder</b>	Head of Governance & Strategy	Germany
<b>Judith Brodie</b>	Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	UK
<b>Robert (Bob) Dellavalle</b>	Council Co-Chair	USA
<b>Chris Mavergames</b>	Head of IT Services	Germany
<b>Stefano Negrini</b>	Council Co-Chair	Italy
<b>Charlotte Petridge</b>	Head of Publishing, Research & Development	UK
<b>Karla Soares-Weiser</b>	Editor in Chief	Israel

## Restrictions:

Board Minutes are open access unless content is restricted when the Board considers it confidential and/or commercially sensitive. **Restricted access content is highlighted in yellow** and is made available to the Board and Senior Management Team only. Minutes of the closed sessions of the Board, which are attended only by Trustees, are recorded on behalf of the Co-Chairs, and are only made available to the Trustees.

Approved Resolutions:

Minute:

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<b>GBMIN-2021-66</b>	<b>The Board approves the recommendation to continue to research and consult with key stakeholders on the full range of Open Access models assessed in the paper GB-2021-90, with an updated recommendation on the preferred Open Access models and the proposed validation and due diligence plan for approval by April 2022</b>
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Actions Arising:

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<b>GBMIN-2021-66</b>	<b>Working group of the Board to be established to support Charlotte Pestridge and team to develop further the plans for making Cochrane Reviews Open Access.</b>
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---MEETING START---

**GBMIN-2021-64 Welcome, Apologies, declarations of Interest for this meeting, Board Code of Conduct and Board Charter**

Catherine Marshall was in the Chair. Nicky Cullum had sent apologies. The Co-Chairs of the Council, Robert (Bob) Dellavalle and Stefano Negrini were welcomed. It was noted that they would now attend Board meetings as non-voting observers. Ginny Barbour was attending as an advisor on Open Access and was welcomed.

No changes to attendees' declarations of interest (posted on the Cochrane Community website) were required for this meeting but the following Trustees declared potential conflicts of interest in item GBMIN-2021-66:

- Bob Dellavalle: Editor in Chief, *JMIR Dermatology*
- Juan Franco: Editor in Chief, *BMJ Evidence Based Medicine* and Associate Editor, *Cochrane Clinical Answers*
- Stefano Negrini: Chief-Editor, *European Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine*
- Jordi Pardo Pardo: Husband of Editor in Chief of *Campbell Collaboration*

The Trustees were reminded of their duties as set out in the Board Code of Conduct and Board Charter.

**GBMIN-2021-65 Approval of the Agenda, including the papers and decisions in the Consent Agenda**  
The Agenda was approved. The papers on the Consent Agenda were noted.

**GBMIN-2021-66 Open Access Research Findings and Next Steps [PAPER: GB-2021-90]**

The Chair invited Ginny Barbour to provide initial comment on the general Open Access environment. She said that although the movement had been in existence since 2001, positions of governments and inter-governmental organizations were hardening: Open Access publishing would become a non-negotiable requirement for publicly funded research. She cited the examples of Plan S and the UNESCO Open Science Declaration. Although goodwill was being shown towards journals demonstrating commitment to transitioning Open Access, there was less patience for those not making sufficient progress.

Despite the challenges for Cochrane in finding a financially sustainable model for Open Access, it presented an amazing opportunity for the organization to deliver on its mission and people “don't want to see Cochrane fail”.

The Chair thanked Ginny Barbour for her introduction; and Charlotte Pestridge and her team for their report [PAPER: GB-2021-90], as well as the sessions they had run with the Trustees prior to the meeting on understanding Open Access. Charlotte Pestridge confirmed that she

had confidence in Cochrane achieving Open Access to Cochrane Reviews by 2025, and that the approach should be to maintain transparency in the challenges to achieving this, but willingness to try. Some Open Access models were looking more likely than others, but nothing had been completely ruled out at this stage.

It was further agreed that a working group of the Board would be formed to support Charlotte Pestridge and her team to develop further the options for achieving Open Access to Cochrane Reviews. The Treasurer said she was comfortable that appropriate financial information would be developed through the work of this group.

**ACTION: Working group of the Board to be established to support Charlotte Pestridge and team to develop further the plans for making Cochrane Reviews Open Access**

The following resolution was approved:

**RESOLUTION: The Board approves the recommendation to continue to research and consult with key stakeholders on the full range of Open Access models assessed in the paper GB-2021-90, with an updated recommendation on the preferred Open Access models and the proposed validation and due diligence plan for approval by April 2022**

**YES: Xavier Bonfill, Juan Franco, Sally Green, Tracey Howe, Karen Kelly, Marguerite Koster, Rae Lamb, Catherine Marshall, Jordi Pardo Pardo**

**NO: NONE**

**ABSTAIN: NONE**

**NO VOTE: Karsten Juhl Jørgensen**

Ginny Barbour was thanked for her contribution and left the meeting.

#### **GBMIN-2021-67**

##### **Chief Executive Officer Report**

The Interim CEO thanked the members of the Senior Management Team and Central Executive Team (CET) for their professionalism and commitment to the CET's review and reorganization. The process of consulting with individuals affected by the proposed restructure was underway.

A concern was raised about whether consultation with members of the CET had been sufficient. Tracey Howe sought to reassure the Board on this point: she said that she had been following proceedings closely and had access to all material provided to the CET; in her view it was a thorough and well-conducted process. Separate to the CET restructure, she had also been following the consultation on the Cochrane Review Group changes in the UK and was concerned that some Group staff appeared confused about Cochrane's status as an employer: the Cochrane Charity does not employ Group staff and this message needed repeating. Nevertheless, the CET's People Services Department was offering limited support via access to an online wellbeing resource platform to those in Cochrane Groups who wanted to use it.

The Agenda for the forthcoming Annual General Meeting was noted. It would be important to signal the need and opportunities for organizational change in the key messages of this meeting.

#### **GBMIN-2021-68**

##### **Editor in Chief Report**

The Editor in Chief spoke to the 'community engagement workshop series' she had been leading on the future of evidence synthesis in Cochrane. These webinars had been well attended and there was clear interest in the new proposed Evidence Synthesis Units. There had been a perception that change was being initiated only in response to the funding

situation of UK-based Cochrane Review Groups, but it was important to keep in mind that funders in other countries were indicating similar plans to change their funding to Cochrane.

These webinars, an online survey, and the Editorial Independence and Efficiency Project would be used to inform a business case to be presented to the Governing Board by January 2022.

As a result of the forthcoming funding changes to UK-based Cochrane Review Groups, an issue with lower numbers of new review title registrations was emerging. This would need to be closely monitored, and the Editor in Chief would report back to the Board on risk mitigation measures.

The Complaints Resolution Committee of the Board would be convened to advise the Editor in Chief on how to manage the reputational and safety risks associated with a decision on whether to proceed with updating the Cochrane Review on 'Exercise therapy for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome' (as per GBMIN-2021-58).

**GBMIN-2021-69      Approval of the Minutes from 15 September 2021**

The Minutes were approved with the addition of comments from Marguerite Koster.

**GBMIN-2021-70      Any Other Business**

It was noted that Nicky Cullum would not attend further Board meetings. She would be formally thanked at the November Board meeting.

**GBMIN-2021-71      Date of Next Meeting**

- 8 November 2021 GMT
- 14 December 2021 GMT

The Chair thanked the members of the Senior Management Team present, and the Council Co-Chairs, for their attendance; they left the meeting at 21:30 GMT+1. The Trustees continued in closed session, a record of which is kept on behalf of the Co-Chairs.

**---MEETING END---**