



## Minutes of the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

Room B004, Health Sciences Building, University College Dublin  
Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2014, 18.00 – 19.00

Chair: Simon Capewell, Minutes: Hg3 Conferences Ltd

36 members were present (see ledger for list)

### 1. President's welcome and opening remarks

Simon Capewell (SC) spoke about the Society's strapline 'Advancing knowledge for population health'. He described how the Society has been working with other organisations throughout the year, and the exciting progress with ECRs, and the proposed establishment of a Middle Career Researcher (MCR) section, and soon with a Senior Career Researchers (SCR) section. He emphasised the substantial day to day work undertaken throughout the year by committee members on behalf of the Society.

### 2. Honorary Secretary's Report (MB) – see *Paper 59\_2*

Michaela Benzeval (MB) summarised her report Paper 59\_2 and noted the Committee activities in External Relations; working on the structure of the ASM and how to engage more delegates; and Capacity building with ECR and MCR sections.

Ruth Dundas (RD) highlighted the call for one-day workshop proposals. She confirmed the closing date for applications was Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2015 at 12 noon. The application form and judging criteria are available to download from the SSM website. RD noted that the Society was particularly keen to welcome proposals working with other organisations on joint one day meetings.

Tony Robertson (TR) briefed the meeting on the members and non-members survey that was launched 10 days prior. TR reported that there had been 147 responses so far, consisting of 38 members and 109 non-members. TR asked for more SSM members to complete the survey and circulate. He confirmed that the survey link was on the SSM website.

Mark Kelson (MK) clarified that the Annual Scientific Meeting evaluation survey would be circulated on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September, post-conference.

### Action Points:

1. All members are invited to respond to the Members Survey.
2. All members are requested to feed back on the conference via the website evaluation.

MB confirmed that a Handbook outlining the Society's rules and ways of working was in the process of being uploaded to the website.

MB confirmed that the following Constitutional Changes had been made, as voted for by the Society's membership:

- (i) Increase the number of ordinary members on the committee from 6 to 9
- (ii) Make the role of Communications Officer an Executive Office and extend the term to 5 years to be consistent with the honorary treasurer and secretary
- (iii) To include the role of co-opted committee members in the constitution – the number of co-opted members should not exceed the number of elected officers; and ordinarily they should serve a similar term as ordinary members unless the role requires something different (eg ASM organisers generally are on the committee for 2 years).

MB noted that the call for suggestions of Honorary members had received no responses, and asked the Society for suggestions once again. Janis Baird (JB) suggested that the lack of response maybe due to a misunderstanding of the criteria for Honorary membership, and it was agreed that the Committee would issue another call for suggestions and confirmed the criteria as having made a contribution to Social Medicine, and/or a contribution to the SSM.

MB noted that it was her last meeting as Honorary Secretary for the Society and thanked the Committee and Hg3 for support. The support of Hg3, in particular, had made a huge difference to the workload associated with being Honorary Secretary, and processes were much improved with their input. SC warmly thanked MB for her 3 years of outstanding service to the Society.

### **3. Nomination and Elections (MB)**

MB noted that there were 5 roles to fill on the Committee, as below.

#### **a) Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary**

MB announced that Anna Pearce would act as Honorary Treasurer from January 2016, and that Peter Tennant would act as Honorary Secretary from January 2016. MB warmly welcomed AP and PT to the Committee.

#### **b) Three Ordinary Committee Members**

MB reported that 279 members voted in the Ordinary Members election, which was nearly half of the membership demonstrating how actively engaged members now are. The 3 new members to join the Committee were Catherine Hayes from Trinity College Dublin, Claire Niedzwiedz from University of Edinburgh, and Laia Becares from University of Manchester.

### **4. Honorary Treasurer's Report (MG) – Paper 59\_4**

#### **a) Finance**

Mark Gilthorpe (MG) reported that in 2014 the Society made a small loss of some £5,000, primarily from the Oxford ASM, which was a very successful meeting. But the cost of the ASM varies from year to year and confirmed that the Society's finances are well within plan. MG noted the modest costs of the administrative support from Hg3 Conferences.

MG confirmed that the Society were approximately £100,000 in credit.

Alastair Leyland (AL) queried whether the Society's funds need to be spread out over 2 bank accounts now it was above the financial services compensation scheme threshold of £75,000. MG agreed and will look into this with Anna Pearce.

Approval of the audited accounts was proposed by Michaela Benzeval and seconded by Jenny Mindell, and approved.

#### **b) Membership**

When MG joined the Committee as Honorary Treasurer, the Society had over 1,000 members on the books. However when the subscription fee changed to £35 it became apparent that there were some problems contacting members to change their standing orders, and there was a large number of members still paying the wrong amount and also paying into the old Nat West bank account. MG

reported that after several attempts to contact these members, the Society is still receiving their incorrect payments, and are therefore accepting them as donations.

Excluding these people, the formal figure of membership is 573. MG confirmed that these are active and engaged members. The reflections from other interactions with membership (i.e. ordinary members election with 279 responses) show that 573 is a much more accurate number of engaged members.

Therefore, MG confirmed that the Committee are focused on how to better engage all of the membership in terms of creating ECR, MCR and SCR sections for the Society.

SC asked the meeting how the Society can connect with the individuals and support their careers. Ivan Perry noted that senior members encourage their PhD students to attend the ASMs but perhaps they need reminding to encourage them to become members too. Jenny Mindell suggested regularly circulating the existing SSM flyer – (an electronic document with reasons to join the SSM that can be easily shared by email and social media). Janis Baird (JB) suggested that perhaps the Society did not offer enough focus on Intervention Studies, or Global Studies.

It was noted that for the membership nominations, it might be easier to put a referee down instead of an SSM member, for when an applicant does not know any SSM members.

Hazel Inskip suggested that because senior members do not attend the ASM as much, this might discourage ECRs from attending as it is not seen as 'the place to be'. Alison MacFarlane also proposed that different university departments such as nursing/midwifery who may not know about the conference, should be targeted.

Anna Pearce queried if there were exit interviews for cancelled members and MG confirmed that the Society was starting to work on this.

SC warmly thanked MG for his outstanding service to the Society.

**Action Point:** Regular circulation of the SSM flyer using Newsletter and monthly emails.

#### **5. Communications Officer's Report (MK) - Paper 59\_5**

MK summarised Paper 59\_5 and confirmed that the Communications sub-committee will appoint a newsletter editor soon to replace Richard Shaw. SC asked for any volunteers. Marie Murphy from the University of Warwick and Duygu Islek from University of Liverpool both volunteered as newsletter editors. MK also invited the membership to suggest ideas throughout the year for social media, newsletter and website content.

**Action Point:** All members please offer news items throughout the year.

#### **6. Middle Career Researchers Section – proposals (PT) - Papers 59\_6 (i) and (ii)**

PT referred to Paper 59\_6 i and ii, summarising the definition of an MCR and the issues that MCRs face. The MCR section will allow members to move through the Society and move on from the ECR section. PT, Emily Murray (EM), RD, MK and SR have been involved in developing the MCR proposal. It was agreed that the criteria for MCRs depended upon experience and duties rather than rank.

There will be elections for members into the sub-committee in autumn 2015. A meeting to discuss the proposed MCR section will be held Thursday lunchtime. PT noted that the aim is for MCRs to provide mentoring to ECRs. SCR (Senior Career Researchers) can provide mentoring to MCRs.

Simon Capewell supported PT's proposal and Cecily Kelleher seconded it.

#### **7. Early Career Researchers Section Report (DC)**

DC reported that it has been a successful and productive year for ECR Section with new schemes such as monthly newsletter emails, the ECR survey, attending workshops and conferences, and the ECR One-Day Workshop on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September. The ECR workshop 'Forging a Career in Academia: A Survival Kit' was attended by 55 members and the workshop covered subjects relating to ECRs such as personal skills.

DC asked the meeting what else the ECR section could do to help ECR members. Duygu Islek suggested that she could recruit members from her colleagues in Turkey who were not aware of SSM.

DC summarised the Network Platform which would enable ECRs to connect with senior members on topics of mutual interest. It was agreed that this was a good idea.

65 members completed the ECR survey. The 3 main themes included i) Job Instability, ii) Limited opportunities to develop an academic career, iii) Lack of mentoring available in 50% of universities.

DC summarised the findings of the ECR Mentoring survey, showing that the majority of mentees were looking for advice on career options/decisions, someone who could serve as a positive role model, and someone who could explain academic or work procedures honestly. SC confirmed that this would lead to SCRs mentoring MCRs, and MCRs mentoring SCRs, with administrative support from Hg3 Conferences. This proposal was approved by the members.

DC confirmed that the SSM can offer the following to ECRs:

- One year free membership
- ECR-tailored events at the ASM
- Gig trail and job related emails
- Mentoring scheme by more senior academics in population health

## **8. External relations (AC)**

AC proposed approaching other organisations for i) mutual advertisement, ii) membership offers, iii) one day joint meetings. AC noted that the SSM needs to remember their restricted resources, but continue to build on the Task and Finish group findings. AC encouraged the meeting to suggest other Societies that they would like to engage with, and Alison MacFarlane suggested the Association Des Epidémiologistes de Langue Française.

### **a) Report on EUPHA (AL)**

Alastair Leyland confirmed that the next 3 conferences for EUPHA would be hosted in Milan (2015), Vienna (2016) and Stockholm (2017).

## **9. Future scientific meetings (MB)**

### **a) York September 2016 - organiser – Steven Oliver**

Steven Oliver drew attention to the York ASM promotion flyer, advertising the meeting as the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SSM ASM. The dates were confirmed as Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> to Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016, with the ECR workshop on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September.

### **b) Manchester 2017 – organiser – Tarani Chandola**

Tarani Chandola could not attend the AGM. However SC confirmed that the dates of the 2017 ASM were Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> to Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September, with the ECR workshop taking place on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September.

## **10. Minutes of the 58th AGM held in Oxford and matters arising – Paper 59\_10**

The minutes were agreed by the meeting.

## **11. Any other business**

SC warmly thanked the Committee (notably Mark Gilthorpe, Michaela Benzeval and Hg3 Conferences) and all members for attending and for their continued contributions to the Society. He said that it had been a pleasure and privilege to lead the Society, and he closed by wishing Aileen Clarke every success as the new President.