



British
Fertility
Society

MINUTES

BFS Executive Meeting

22 March 2021

09:30 – 15:30

Attendees:

President: Jane Denton

Executive Officers: Raj Mathur (Chair), Kevin McEleny (Secretary), Marta Jansa Perez (Treasurer)

Elected: Uma Gordon, Mostafa Metwally, Harish Bhandari, Mark Wilcox, Bryan Woodward, Ippokratis Sarris, Angela Pericleous-Smith, Stephanie Gadd, Matt Noble, Yvonne Wedden, Debbie Evans, Jackson Kirkman-Brown

Co-opted: Stuart Lavery, Jacky Boivin, Yadava Jevu

Observers: Gwenda Burns (FNUK), Adam Balen (FEI), Melanie Davies (FPUK), Sarah Norcross (PET and ELP), Allan Pacey (Journal), Mark Hamilton (Chair of Trustees), Kate Brian (RCOG Women's Voices)

Invited: Colin Duncan (SRF), Jason Kasraie (ARCS), Rachel Cutting (HFEA)

Apologies:

Mostafa Metwally

Minutes from last meeting

No comments

1. Executive Committee membership

DE first term coming to an end – election to be held.

New P & P lead – Harish Bhandari

2. Next President of the Society

Unanimous choice is Professor Alison Murdoch.

ACTION:RM will approach her and she will take over from JD whose last Exec Meeting is 15th June.



3. Membership:

a) Membership numbers

Slow and steady increase. 1069 Jan - 1103 March

b) Lapsed & cancelled members

ACTION: Profile and Exec to chase

c) Honorary members

- Not had honorary members created since 2019.

- Henry Leese to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award at Fertility 2022.

ACTION: Exec to send suggestions for Honorary Members to RM/KM for 2022.

d) Membership working group

- Use of correct terminology - Registered Nurses / Registered Midwives
- A discussion occurred about the category of Paramedics and whether this should be merged into Associates. Associates are £135 and Paramedics are £65.
- **ACTION: CB to produce a list of names and length of members who are Paramedics/Associates**
- Discussion around restricting membership to specified professional groups: discuss once list provided by Profile
- **ACTION: Lapsed members – if you know anyone whose membership has lapsed, contact them and let the Exec know to avoid duplication**
- **ACTION: CB to send lapsed members emails**
- A discussion occurred on appealing to ARCS members who may also wish to be members of BFS. Want a collaborative relationship with ARCS and SRF.
- Decision we will consider offering a discounted rate. No discounted rate for ARCS for study rate.
ACTION: MJP to do some figures on the financial implications before deciding rate
- Changes for membership – proposer/contact proposer/students/codes of conduct etc as per BW report

4. Website update:

Working group – MJP/IS/MN – Tender out soon after meeting

ACTION: CB Circulate the RFP again to Exec

Profile functionality

ACTION: CB to remove identifying member information – unanimous agreement

5. Media & PR Update

CB now putting press on website and keeping records. Resources on new website for journalists. Should we have programmed press releases?

ACTION: If you are happy to be contacted, please let CB know so relevant media inquiries can be directed to you



6. Newsletter

Next due in April. A discussion took place about the development of the website, including future joint newsletters with other Societies, and integration of Newsletter into new Website. The newsletter is now the responsibility of the Officers.

ACTION: Can we get numbers for people who read the newsletter

7. Mentorship Programme

19 pairs now. Growing steadily. Publicising in newsletter and social. Good feedback.

8. Trustees & Governance

Trustees meeting on 24 February.

Produced draft document for tendering processes which will be used by the website working group for the website tender and see if it needs amending. Budget in good shape.

Approved rules for TC rules from Mostafa

Meeting planned with lawyers Mazars for upgrade of articles – April with RM.

RM thanked the Trustees for their support and guidance.

ACTION: CB to chase Paul at Mazars for meeting with MH/RM

9. Journal update

Maintenance mode atm. Meeting with officers in a week to discuss business operation model. Open access. Pros and cons of Open Access were discussed.

Move within academic publishing to move to open access. Reproductive medicine is not as far along this trend as others. Complete change of business model for the journal.

Who pays to have articles published – is it the reader or is it the person who wants their paper published (would BFS pay on behalf of its members?)

With Open Access, the journal would no longer be a membership benefit as would be open to everyone but it could put the Journal ahead of the curve if others are going to go open access. AP likes the model that we have now. And that it is a membership benefit. Need to decide if the current model is the model that the society wants for the next 5 to 10 years. Can you have a sustainable mixed model? Where some are paid for / open access by authors. Yes, and this happens now and contributes to the income stream.

JB – open access fees are about £3k. Would ours be the same or less? Affordable open access. AP need fees coming in to cover costs of publication. Could have model where you only charge half of the cost of an article to the author and half to the BFS. Would need to take advice on what would be an appropriate fee.

Publisher doesn't have a preference. Would going open access affect our impact factor? Not clear. JD suggest keeping a similar model at this point. Hard to get funding for research articles. No decision reached, and this matter will be discussed further after the Executive Officers and Editor meet with publishers shortly.



10. Finance update

a) Quarterly report

Bottom line is £308,097.94 - healthy position and growing. Enabling us to do website etc. Still waiting for the surplus from Fertility 2021.

Charity:

Expenditure £54,147.00. This has HF included which makes the bottom line less but this is only once a year.

Income £50,934.17

Education:

Expenditure £1,751.00

Income £5,470.00

More movement in next months

b) Sponsorship

Very healthy. 2 new Gold sponsors – Cooper and Cryos.

New digital packages means there will be increased visibility of sponsors in the newsletters and emails. But the content and selection of speakers remains firmly within the BFS – they have more opportunity to advertise but BFS have final say on content/speakers

11. Strategy & Development:

a) Planning

People to start thinking about what they want to discuss – 5 – 10 year time frame.

Different from an Exec agenda.

Do we need paid support for developing policy and practice.

ACTION: CB to find old minutes and send to RM to circulate

JB – should we create a logic model

ACTION: JB & BW to share a similar model. We can decide which at next Exec.

b) Royal Charter

KMcE brought the committee up to date with developments so far. Letter of intent submitted – meetings with other groups ongoing. DoH informed. They wanted to know what professional groups thought of it. JD approached RCN and Jason approaching RCPATH. Meeting with Peter Thompson HFEA – they were very supportive. Meeting with Eddie Morris President of RCOG to occur shortly, with Adam Balen support. Will feedback through Sarah to the DOH and through Keith to the Privy council. Then organisational working with Yadava and Mark see how this fits in with the BFS structurally. Also need to work out how individual chartership will work. IS will help KM with this. Will need input from other individuals re equivalence. Then prepare an FAQ document which will go out to all 3 memberships once we have the green light. Possibly an event in the summer so members have access to ask questions.



Sub-Committees

12. Meetings:

a) Fertility 2022

Rising to the Global Challenges of Fertility & Reproduction.

Dates: still TBC either 5 – 8 or 6 – 9 January, depending on Horse of the Year show.

Chairing: ARCS.

BFS: Stuart Lavery, Ephra with support of Ginny and Raj

2022 – will be face to face in Liverpool

2021 – exceeded expectation in a virtual world. May retain some of the elements of this – posters for example and overseas speakers as cost effective.

Eponymous lecture: Patrick Steptoe. Members suggested names for this lecture. Silke Dyer, Linda Guidice and Sheryl Van der Poel were among the names (RM, AP, MH, JB).

ACTION: People to send suggestions to SL

SIGS need space to have meetings. Also need time/space to share the animations.

ACTION: CB to send google doc of programme to Exec

The other eponymous Lecture is the Bob Edwards memorial: speaker is Daniel Brison

Anne McLaren lecture: not finalised yet

13. Training:

a) Study Week 2021

Nearly 10k bookings.

GP module launching this week

b) TC Rules

Just for information

Harish: 3 years seems quite short time. Maybe up to 5 years.

ACTION: CB delete point 4

c) Joint BFS/RCOG course

19th – 22nd April

All speakers confirmed. Pre-recorded sessions

101 delegates so far. Previously needed 90 to break even so in a good place

RCOG has reduced costs by 30% and has different costs for those outside UK

14 delegates are from abroad. They can attend 2 days or all 4 days.

ACTION: UG will be talking to MJP about finances.

ACTION: Exec to circulate the link to colleagues.



14. Policy & Practice

a. Consultations & Policies

Harish is new Chair. Mariano Mascherenhas is assisting Harish.

- Thromboprophylaxis – first draft almost ready for circulation.
- Co-parenting guideline – authors working on second draft – ready soon
- Transgender care – RCOG document – we need to understand what is expected from the BFS. Harish will learn more in coming weeks
- Oocyte cryopreservation – VB soon ready to share with Exec.
- ICSI – MJP and colleagues working on it – more updates soon
- RCOG – asked the BFS for its opinion on paper. Thank you to everyone for comments. BFS response has been submitted.

Second guidance is from ESHRE on medical assisted reproduction and viral infections. Thanks to SG and other scientist members for comments.

RM stated that we don't always have to do a BFS response to external consultations, and they can be circulated to individual members to respond directly.

15. SIGS

a) SIG governance

Need to put them on a more formal structure within the society. Rules have been circulated to everyone. Would welcome people's views on these in order that they can then go the Trustees. Once approved by Trustees, the Exec officers will write to SIG chairs. Current Chairs can continue for a further period of up to 3 years.

Process at end of terms, Exec ask for expressions of interest, and then choice is made. Also, they need to be resourced in a more transparent and reliable way. Need to be in the BFS budget. And a budget for each SIG. Budget/website/administrative support are key to the future of SIGS.

KM – it does need a level of financial planning. SIGs still need to work towards getting money for specific projects as and when they arise. RM sometimes the BFS may decide to fund some aspect of the SIGS work.

ACTION: RM to recirculate governance document and give time to respond and then pass to Trustees.

b) Fertility Preservation UK

Update was in the newsletter.

Enormously fast moving, interesting, a 'hot topic'.

Members of the society are the movers and shakers in FP and recognised internationally. Hope that the BFS will let them pick up on more of the medical political aims. To push for equity of care around the country.



c) Fertility Education Initiative

Different initiatives going on. The international FEI being set up. Funding for the andrology animations. Putting in applications from the BFS for research funding.

d) Andrology

Doing very well. As report. Task and finish as one of the main key principles, first project was varicocele paper. Second one male animation videos for boys 13 – 18 general male health and 18 – 24 more focusing on fertility.

Approx. £15k raised and with JB help matched funding is being sourced.

Key messages being assembled and once finalised they will go through the animation process and be ready for premiere at Fertility 2022.

Next meeting: end May. Third project to be focused on and taken forward from there will be information for patients.

Budget would be helpful and also admin help.

Expression of interest from 2 people. James Duffy and also Maria Satchi. Maria is a urologist, not a BFS member hence this needs approval from Exec. Agreed to accept her.

ACTION: SL to find place in Fertility 2022 for Male animations

e) Ethics, Law & Policy

Not had first meeting yet. SN has invited people (Emily Jackson, Dr Kirsty Horsey, Natalie Gamble, Ippokratis Sarris, Nicky Hudson) and they are trying to get together a date for first meeting. SN will be keeping it issue focused. James Duffy also expressed an interest in being a member of this SIG.

RM – if someone is a BFS member their membership of a SIG doesn't need to be approved by the Exec

Topics:

Additional layer of patient confidentiality on fertility treatment.

Surrogacy

Definition of family (HFEA)



British
Fertility
Society

15. HFEA Update

Opening the register service, has re-opened. Used to have 40 applications a month but now over 100 so there are delays. Trying to get on top of it, have recruited a new member of staff.

Prism: EDI legacy system being switched off end May. Prism will go live in June leading to their new register taking over later in June.

Covid: treatment numbers up to 90% of pre pandemic levels.

Patient queries have really slowed and are now mainly about vaccinations – thank you for the strong guidelines.

Changed how inspections are run as a result of pandemic. They have been going well. Final version of compliance and enforcement policy is going for approval this week.

Also been working on Code of Practice update. Thanks to people who responded.

Re-launched treatment add ons pages.

Report on Ethnic Disparities being published and RM speaking at webinar on this.

Sally Cheshire retires. Julia Chain been appointed. She will want to arrange meetings as soon as she can.

Kate Brian's last authority meeting this Wednesday.

Four new authority members appointed. Tim Child, Jason Kasraie, Catherine Seddon and Alison Marsden.

16. External Meetings:

a. RCOG World Congress

Virtual 2021 and plans already being made for 2022

YK and UG are involved in planning for future and will bring ideas to Execs in future

b. RCOG Professional Development Conference

Next meeting 23-25 November. Need 3 speakers and a theme

ACTION: Exec to send suggestions to UG

Northern Professional Development meeting is not happening until 2023 May, because the RCOG World Congress is taking place in London in 2022 and the RCOG does not run annual professional development meetings when the World Congress is happening in the UK.



17. Relationships with other organisations:

a. Associated Fertility Societies

Leadership with ARCS this year.

b. FNUK/Fertility Fairness

Still supporting far more patients than they have in the past. More people are becoming aware of the charity. Patients do recognise that clinics and staff have been working in difficult circumstances and are really supportive of everything they have been doing.

Been contacted by more people who have been thinking of when are they going to have a baby.

Taken over Rhod Gilbert's infertility campaign and going to be working more closely with him going forwards.

Launching a new Black Women's support group and planning a webinar around ethnicity and fertility

The covid webinar they did with Raj and Rachel Cutting is now approaching 1000 views. Planning one with the CMA and HFEA in the future.

April 1 extending support line to 5 days a week

Continuing to work with CCGs on funding policy

Started work on plans for National Fertility Awareness week

Updating patient information packs available soon hard and digital copy.

Carrying out a skills analysis of trustees before advertising for a trustee.

ACTION: If anyone is interested in being a Trustee please get in touch.

ACTION: Rhod Gilbert – GB to talk to KM afterwards and be sure to include SL

c. NHS England

NTR

d. Dept of Health

NTR

e. PET

Report.

SN wanted to highlight the event BFS supported on vaccine.

18. BFS Representation on other committees:

a. IFFS

NTR

b. RCOG Council, SST & Liaison committees

Sub specialty

Can they have some time in the BFS/RCOG course

ACTION:UG and HB to make contact afterwards.

RM it could be set up as a one off event. The SRF have similar needs. They start their conference on Wed afternoon so the BFS could do similar and have Wed afternoon dedicated specifically to just BFS things. Maybe for 2023 onwards.

The attendee at the Liaison committee in the past used to be Ephia. Ippo has volunteered.



c. NQAAP

Last meeting in October 2020, next in April. Look at performance related to andrology labs.

d .ESHRE

Ginny is the UK representative appointed by ESHRE.

e RMCSG

NTR

NEW GROUP:

National Casemix Office Subchapter MA/MB/MC/NZ Expert Working Group.
Harish is representative for BFS. Nothing to report.

AOB:

- **STEM**

NTR

- **Code of Conduct**

Bring to next Exec and look at it then and then approved by trustees

- **DOI forms**

ACTION: Everyone to complete

Change personal bit. Need one that works for the BFS. Do with Code of Conduct.

ACTION: RM will start and circulate

- **Covid-19**

NTR

Dates of next meetings:

15 June: Executive meeting zoom

20 Sept: Executive dinner in Manchester

21 Sept: Strategy meeting in Manchester

12 Oct: Executive meeting zoom