



British  
Fertility  
Society

## BFS EXECUTIVE MINUTES

06.01.21

**Elected Committee Members:** Jane Stewart (JS), Raj Mathur (RM), Jane Denton (JD), Marta Jansa Perez (MJP), Ian Aird (IA), Jacky Boivin (JB), Debbie Evans (DE), Yvonne Wedden (YW), Uma Gordon (UG), Jackson Kirkman-Brown (JKB), Mostafa Metwally (MM), Alison Richardson (AR), Bryan Woodward (BW), Stephanie Gadd (SG), Ippokratis Sarris (IS), Mark Wilcox (MW)

**Observers:** Mark Hamilton (MH), Melanie Davies (MD), Gwenda Burns (GB), Sarah Norcross (SN), Allan Pacey (AP), Adam Balen (AB), Kate Brian (KB)

**Co-Opted:** Kevin McEleny (KM), Ephra Yasmin (EY), Yadava Jevé (YJ)

**Invitation:** Colin Duncan (CD), Rachel Cutting (RC), Jason Kasraie (JK)

**Secretariat:** Claire Ball (CB)

Minutes of last meeting

a. Executive Committee 20.10.20

Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda elsewhere

Committee items

a Membership report

- Honorary members

These have been carried over to 2022

- Membership breakdown

Numbers steadily increasing – 1069

Need specific guidance for associate members and need to consider guidelines/expectations for all members. To be written by new membership rep. Membership Rep to be appointed from the Exec committee. Could insist everyone has a proposer from existing members.

- Lapsed and cancelled members

CB will start to gather data on why members have lapsed where possible

Some of the lapsed members are people who should be members.

**Action Point: Exec to go through list and identify lapsed members who need reminding to renew and notify CB. CB to add how long a member has been active for & make the document as useful as possible**

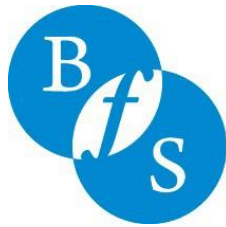
**Action Point: Code of conduct document by March. MW/ JD/BW working party to feedback through CB and Exec**

b Executive and committee membership

Jane Denton's tenure as President comes to an end in July. Need to appoint a successor to begin in April, with a 3-month handover.

Debbie Evans election due Spring 2021, 2<sup>nd</sup> term so cannot stand again.

**Action Point: Exec & Trustees to send suggestions to RM for President. CB to arrange election for DE position.**



c Membership groups development

- Embryologists
- SING
- Students
- Institutional membership

Mentorship

Slowly growing – now have 13 pairs of mentors/mentees. Surplus of 14 mentors so will recruit for more mentees.

**Action Point: Mentorship in newsletter**

Trustees and governance update

- Upgrade of Articles of Association. Have had discussions with legal team at Mazars regarding these. Scheduling an appendix approval for Executive at 2021 AGM.
- Broader question – our Articles are clunky and although appendices bring in the modern workings it would be favourable to have updated Articles so that they are in tune with modern company law. There is a Model set of Articles that Mazars can share and it would be good in the coming year to fine tune BFS Articles, draft a new set for Education and Charity and present to the AGM in 2022 for approval by membership.
- Process of developing policy around tendering for services eg: website, secretariat, PR is ongoing.
- Working party looking at membership of the Society, and obligations of such. Need to define terms of reference.
- Henry Leese stepped down as a Trustee in January after a 25-year association with the BFS.
- Ginny Bolton has been appointed a Trustee in his place.
- Jane Stewart will now also join the Trustees.

**Action Point: Lifetime achievement award for Henry Leese**

Financial Matters

a BFS quarterly report

- Balance is looking healthy compared to last year. Costs remain less due to no PR, savings on website and no physical meetings.
- Fertility 2021 in a healthy position, forecasting £35k surplus to be divided 3 ways.
- Study Week financially successful.
- 2 new sponsors – Gernitec (Silver) and Gedeon Richter (Bronze)
- Main expenses were for repaying sponsors the Fertility portion of their package, Profile organising fee and video costs
- Charity – main expenses were Profile secretariat fees and website (latter because two companies ran concurrently during handover of management)

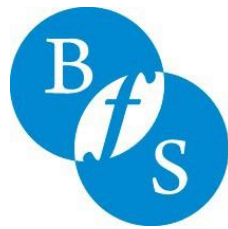
b Travel Grant applications

None awarded due to virtual nature of meetings

c Corporate sponsorship update

- New digital packages have been designed
- Have engaged with all current sponsors and also potential sponsors Cooper Surgical.

When normality resumes, BFS will keep these packages and add in a physical stand (and review costs or remove a digital benefit)



## Strategy and Development

### a Planning

Strategy meeting continues to be delayed by covid as the desire is to have this as a physical meeting. Possibly able to do this in the Summer. SN – if it is not possible then it needs to go ahead virtually in the summer.

**Action Point: Strategy agenda by April. Exec to send suggestions to RM**

### b Royal Charter

Letter to be sent to Privy Council signed by 3 Chairs

Membership to be notified of developments

**Action Point: KM to send text to CB to send to membership without specifics**

### c Law & Ethics SIG Proposal

- Suggestion to have a group of experts who can horizon scan.
- Useful to the Society to have preparation done when policies come up
- Good to have a compiled list which can go to the DoH and HFEA to alert them to issues needing addressing
- Representing a range of interests and experts
- Suggestion that Sarah Norcross could be Chair of this group
- Begin by creating guidance around one topic to get people interested and involved
- May encourage lawyers to become BFS members

**Action Point: SN to contact suitable people who may be interested and feedback at next exec. Name tbc. Possibly Law & Policy**

## Sub Committee and Special Interest Group (SIG) Reports

### a Meetings

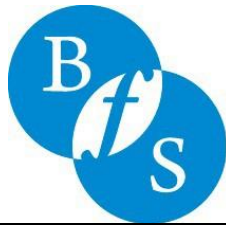
#### Fertility Liverpool, 2021

- Good profit on a par with other years – final figures will be about 700.
- BFS have highest number of delegates, then SRF, then ARCS.
- Sponsorship about 59k, down about 3k.
- 266 abstracts submitted – led to 54 oral and 207 posters No break out sessions but 8 short paper sessions. Brilliant online poster site hope to keep this even in ‘normal’ times. Thank you to all judges.
- 35k surplus forecast
- 2022 will be either 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Jan or 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Jan depending on Horse of the Year show at Liverpool.
- Theme is “Rising to the Global Challenges of Fertility & Reproduction”
- ARCS are chairing JEC
- 2023 – Belfast 11 – 14 Jan
- 2024 – Edinburgh 10 – 13 Jan
- Thank you to ARCS & SRF & Profile
- Stuart Lavery will become Chair for programming.

**Action Point: Stuart Lavery to be co-opted onto the Exec**

#### STEM – Virtual package

No updates



b Policy and Practice

- Coparenting document circulated for feedback
- 3 papers nearly ready
- Trans-gender document. Interest by the same group who have written co-parenting group. KM suggested a psychiatrist who would also be interested in being involved. EY would like to accept the offer of the group but would also like it to be part of a wider collaborative team.

**Action Point: Any suggestions from the Exec please send to EY. Exec to consider this at next meeting.**

c Training

**Study Week 2021 planning**

- Study Week 2020 – extending to December really worked – secured an extra 7k plus in bookings from October. Congratulations in particular to Jane Denton for devising a successful & invigorated Nursing module. Jane will remain as lead on this module.
- New GP module from Harish Bhandari & Himanshu Borase to be considered for 2021. Will be discussed at next TC meeting. Exec agreement to implement new module after TC meeting rather than wait for March Exec.
- Study Week 2021 will be virtual, until December 2021 – same as 2020
- Many videos will be reused from 2020 hopefully reducing production costs
- Terms and Conditions of Training Committee membership. Agreed that term is for 3 years. Any renewals after this are on an annual basis with agreement by the Executive Committee.
- Mark Hamilton provided addendum from Articles which state that the Chair of the TC can remove members from the TC at their discretion.
- Reach out to the wider membership to apply for positions on the TC - we need succession plans to that there is always an overlap with current leads. Start sending out invitations to the wider membership to ask if people are interested. They will be mentored by the current lead for a year before they then take on the lead for a 3-year term
- Masterclass – not happening this year.
- Marc Lucky has taken over the Male Fertility module – will be mentored by Kevin McEleny for a year
- Alison Richardson term has ended- special thanks to her for her involvement.

RCOG 2021

No update

d E-learning development

No update

e SIGs

**Fertility Preservation UK (FPUK)**

- Need some energy & assistance. MD has someone who has volunteered to help with administrative work.
- Contribution to ESHRE to Female Fertility Preservation Guidance



**Fertility Education Initiative ([www.fertilityed.uk](http://www.fertilityed.uk))**

- Email about contract is essential – needs to be signed
- Research taking place which will help inform how to get people to engage & use material

**Andrology**

- UG absent however brief update from KM – the Andrology SIG has been reinvigorated.
- New animation about male fertility – money for this has been raised by KM and other SIG members, and JB is applying to Cardiff University

Consultations and Policies

CMA – not put in a BFS response in but encouraged our members to put in a response

Compliance and Enforcement HFEA Consultation.

**Action Point: CB send to membership to ask them to respond directly**

External meetings

a Medical Students' Day

Cancelled last year.

Matt Noble might want to get involved with this.

b Fertility Forum

No update

c RCOG – Professional Development Conference (17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Nov 2021)

RCOG 2021 will be virtual

**Action Point: Exec to send suggestions to UG for speaker for primary ovarian insufficiency**

d RCOG World Congress

Cancelled last year

e Women's Network

To be reported by KB next Exec

Journal

a Editorial Board Report

As report

Suspicion over one paper. Published an expression of concern so readers of that paper are aware.

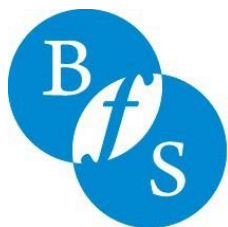
Website General update

- Website being maintained currently while waiting to tender for new website
- Need a website lead to think about the spec and the content
- JKB volunteered to be on the working group.

**Action Point: IS to send docs from Figment to CB. CB to ask YJ for any website contacts**

Media & PR

- Continue as we are



- Newsletter in January and every 2 months. Shorter than current ones for readability

**Action Point: Mentorship to be included in Jan newsletter. Fertility Preservation SIG update/call for help to be included – MD to send. Call for volunteers for the TC**

Relationships with other organisations

a **Associated Fertility Societies (ARCS/BICA/SING/SRF)**

- SING have struggled with not working face to face.

b **FNUK/Fertility Fairness**

Thanks to Raj and everyone for involvement

Webinar series coming up

Recruiting to meet demand

c **NHS England (and HFEA)**

No update

d **Department of Health**

No update

e **RMCSG**

- Looking at clinical study groups highlighted that there are only a few groups that have been active. Reproductive medicine is at the top of those three. Keen to expand on the membership and bring in other disciplines other than just reproductive medics - MJP has joined and obstetricians are taking more interest in studies on women who are pregnant after IVF.
- Supporting several HTA grants
- Scratch study has been completed.
- Cannot undertake any meaningful research without working with private clinics. They are engaged.

f **PET**

- Annual conference had the best feedback they have had for a PET conference.
- Very proud of how their staff coped – continued with BioNews and very full programme of events.
- 14 January supported by BFS “How to protect fertility patients in the fertility market” Raj and Mark are both speaking.
- CMA have extended their consultation deadline to 29 January 2021.
- Full programme of events for 2021.
- Fertility Facts event – a big appetite from this from audience for more resources to use with young people.
- Would like a piece from RM in BioNews for his plans for BFS
- Patient event at same time, like Fertility Forum, not huge appetite for it at present.

**HFEA Matters**

General update

Fertility treatment can continue and should be managed on a local level.

A couple of units have closed completely or reduced services.

In the letter we put emphasis on referral to NHS – in November we asked clinics to report any referrals



to NHS. Still were a significant number of referrals. Some were severe OHSS which required hospitalisation. So we have this time emphasised need to minimise OHSS as much as possible.

Mindful of pressures on clinic staff in private and NHS sectors. Looking at Prism launch, it is ready, clinics have a live version they can play around with, not the final version but for familiarisation. Wanted to go live 25 January but we are mindful of pressures on clinic staff – it might be too much. So there will be a slight delay

Looked at inspections and feel that if fertility treatment is continuing we should continue to do some sort of modified inspections with minimised on-site time.

CMA – thank you for all those that fed into it and attended the meeting. Very useful. Working through the responses now and working towards publicising guidance in Spring. They have asked, they are struggling to get a contact with a business manager in a unit who is used to dealing with someone in a clinic who is used to tendering for contracts or in a ccg

Code of Practice – few minor updates planned for October.

Compliance and enforcement policy – previous one was generic didn't really guide inspectors how to make difficult decisions and that led to inconsistency in how decisions were made

Thank you for your continued engagement – really appreciate help and support.

Vacancy in the register team for a 12 month secondment – anyone interested in donation it might be interesting please share if anyone is interested. Advertised on NHS jobs atm.

#### **BFS representation on other committees a IFFS**

- BFS involved with all the education work of the IFFS
- Jane is now the Deputy Education chair and will feedback.

b RCOG Council, SST and Liaison Committees

No update

c NQAAP

BW – nothing to report

Virtual annual meeting 11<sup>th</sup> March

d ESHRE

Nothing to report

#### **AOB**

a Newly elected Executive members

Discussed

b Code of conduct

Discussed under membership

d Articles of Assoc. Trustees

Discussed under Trustees



e Policy & Practice Guidelines  
Discussed under P&P

f Equality & Diversity Guidelines  
For strategy day

g Seed trust

Looking for some publicity support from the BFS

**Action Point: CB to ask if they would like to write 500 words for the newsletter & put on twitter**

h Advanced training & subspecialty training

MD reported.

- Reproductive medicine is very well represented at the moment. Melanie Chairs and Andy Drakeley is sub-Chair. Representatives are Harish Bhandari and Jane McDougall.
- They wanted MD to bring to the BFS – would like agreement from the BFS that these discussions will be helpful.
- Please encourage trainees to get everything signed up before they start.
- May need BFS backing and involvement if we are to retain the 20 reproductive training posts.

i DOI Forms

**Action Point: Exec to sign and return to CB**

j HFEA consultation on new draft Compliance and Enforcement policy  
Discussed above - membership to be asked to reply directly

k. Joint ARCS/BFS COVID working group

COVID group – met to update with vaccination. No great need to change guidance but will watch this space and react as we need to. Please note addendum concerning Covid-19 vaccination published after this.

**Action Point: CB to add covid as a regular item on the agenda**

#### **Dates of Executive Meetings – 2021**

22<sup>nd</sup> March - zoom

15<sup>th</sup> June – zoom

20<sup>th</sup> (pm – dinner) & 21<sup>st</sup> September – Strategy meeting. Manchester

12<sup>th</sup> October – zoom





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