

THE FORENSIC SCIENCE SOCIETY

Minutes of the 51st Annual General Meeting held at 1445 on Saturday 13 November 2010 at the Robinson Executive Conference Centre, Wyboston

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| 1 | Apologies | |
| 1.1 | Apologies had been received from Professor John E Cooper, Jim Fraser, Alistair Brownlie, Shirley Marshall, Professor Ronald Denney and Lord Angell. | |
| 2 | Minutes of the 50th AGM | |
| | The minutes of the previous AGM were confirmed as an accurate record. | |
| 3 | Matters arising | |
| 3.1 | There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting. | |
| 4 | Presentation of Annual Report and Financial Statements | |
| 4.1 | The Annual Report had been posted on-line. | |
| 4.2 | The President briefed the meeting on the huge strides which had been taken to improve the Society: steps had been taken in-house to reduce expenditure; Clarke House Head Office had been refurbished; staffing issues had been addressed and were now stable; a new format for conferences had been adopted to provide more one day programmes and a single two day event. AP described this as more focused and more financially friendly for members. | |
| 4.3 | AP went on to describe the links being forged with other organisations eg the British Academy of Forensic Sciences, with a view to building the membership. An assessment centre to test the competency of forensic podiatrists had been very successful. | |
| 4.4 | AP reported that some Council members had resigned because of pressure of work and this had included the Treasurer. AP gave a reminder of the time, effort and commitment required of Council members and then introduced the new interim Treasurer, Ted Rogers (ER), to deliver the financial report. ER would be replaced as interim Treasurer by election to the role at this meeting. | |
| 4.5 | ER said that it had been a difficult year and that the figures reflected what had obviously been a turbulent time. Money had been spent on a new database and on the office refurbishment at Clarke House. There had been more emphasis on on-line membership. | |
| 4.6 | In ER's opinion the figures reflect the financial cost of the staffing and organisational difficulties but not the time and effort spent in resolving them. ER considered it reasonable to say that problems at Head Office meant that things had not been running as smoothly or efficiently as they should have been which had resulted in work falling into arrears and a resultant negative impact on cash flow. | |
| 4.7 | ER said that better IT support will provide a more efficient service in the future and more directed to meeting members' needs. | |
| 4.8 | The balance sheet showed a fall in total investment following the huge amount of expenditure during the year. ER described annual subscriptions as a major source of income to the Society. A membership drive is now underway and the help of existing members in this regard would be appreciated. If existing members each introduced one new member then total membership of the | ALL |

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| | Society would be significantly increased. | |
| 4.9 | Measures had been taken to maximise the refund of taxes, mainly in the form of Gift Aid, by making the relevant section on the membership form more prominent. ER highly recommended consideration of this option to any member who is a UK tax payer and whose earnings are at the right level as it does represent a significant benefit for the Society. | ACTION |
| 4.10 | ER reported an increase in support costs from £100k to over £150k which was largely brought about by effecting the required staffing and organisational changes. Two staff members had been on lengthy sick leave. The £18k refurbishment costs were written off against the valuation figure of Clarke House. The £10k allocated to computer repairs and maintenance covered part of the cost of the new IT system. Consultations with HMRC are on-going to progress the Society's entitlement to further refunds. | |
| 4.11 | Investments: following a substantial fall in the value of the Society's investments the main investment fund is now being managed as a 'cautiously managed fund'. ER said that it had been a difficult year but after seeing interim figures there was cause for cautious optimism. | |
| 4.12 | There was a question from the floor about the health of the Society's finances to be able to continue this work over the next two to three years. | |
| 4.13 | ER said that the situation has to be monitored which is currently happening on a quarterly basis and that he would like to move to a monthly review. ER added that the Society is heading for a loss of nearer £30k - £40k in this financial year but this is considered manageable given the reserves. The membership drive and the resolution of the office staffing problems will result in an increase in the number of membership applications which will then be processed and managed more efficiently. | |
| 4.14 | Reassurance was given following a request from the floor that ER would effect the monthly review, not that this was something he would just 'like to do'. | ER |
| 4.15 | In response to another question from the floor ER gave the reassurance that existing members paying via direct debit will be contacted about Gift Aid. This is with the aim of maximising the benefit to the Society. | ER |
| 4.16 | AP thanked ER for the briefing and considered it well worth having the detailed explanation. | |
| 4.17 | Science and Justice: AP reported that there had been almost 69,000 downloads and gave a vote of thanks to Niamh Nic Daéid for all her hard work towards this achievement. | |
| 5 | President Elect | |
| 5.1 | <u>Motion to be considered</u> : That in the event that there are no nominations for the post of President Elect the incumbent President should continue in post for an additional period of time up to a maximum of two years. | |
| 5.1.1 | AP explained that because there had been no nominations for President Elect since the call went out last August she had agreed to stand for another year. | |
| 5.1.2 | The motion was proposed by Paul Millen and seconded by Barbara Daniels. | |
| 5.1.3 | Brian Rankin had kindly agreed to stay on as Past President. | |
| 6 | Election of Treasurer | |
| 6.1 | There had been one nomination and that was for Dr Anya Hunt. Therefore, Dr Hunt was elected unopposed and received the badge of office from AP. | |
| 7 | Election of three Ordinary Members | |

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| 7.1 | The three Ordinary Members elected - Mike Jones, Nigel Hodge and Darren Phillips - received their folders from AP. | ACTION |
| 8 | Motions for consideration | |
| 8.1 | <u>Chartered status:</u> That the Society should introduce the category of Chartered status for highly experienced practitioners who can demonstrate continuing professional development (CPD) aligned with continuing professional competence (CPC) as attested by the employing organisation. This category would also be open to line managers of current caseworkers who have a watching brief over case report writing and court presentational skills of their staff and academics who are actively involved in current casework. Chartered status would carry the post nominal for Chartered Forensic Practitioner: CFP (subject specialism). | |
| 8.1.2 | The motion was proposed by Niamh Nic Daéid and seconded by Dave Prior, and was passed unanimously. | |
| 8.2 | <u>Proposed amendment to Section E (6) of the Constitution:</u> this concerned the payment by new members of the full subscription at the point of joining instead of a part-yearly payment at that point. It requires a change to the wording of the Constitution. | |
| 8.3 | Current wording: Individuals in all membership categories shall pay such annual subscriptions as the Council shall from time to time determine. The subscriptions shall be payable in advance and become due on 1 November each year. Each member of the Society shall be entitled to receive one copy of the current year's journal. | |
| 8.4 | Proposed new wording: Individuals in all membership categories shall pay such annual subscriptions as the Council shall from time to time determine. The subscriptions shall be payable in advance at the point of application and renewable annually on the date specific to each member. | |
| 8.5 | Clarification was requested from the floor as to whether members would still receive the hard copy of the journal (as mentioned in the final sentence of the current wording. AP explained that the change had been necessitated by the availability of the electronic version and confirmed that members could still have a hard copy. | |
| 8.6 | The motion was proposed by Dr Nick Carey and seconded by Callum Sutherland, and was passed unanimously. | |
| 8.7 | There was a query from the floor as to whether this change would discourage those members who pay in instalments. It was confirmed that they would see no change in their payment arrangements. | |
| 9 | Any other Business | |
| 9.1 | Brian Rankin said a few words in recognition of the progress being made by the Society: the move towards Chartered Status; the professional environment and dedicated staff at Head Office; the CPD launch; the enthusiasm and support of the delegates here at the AGM - all of which BR considered as providing a solid foundation on which the Society can build for the future. | |
| 9.2 | As there was no other business AP thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 1525. The date of the next AGM is Saturday 12 November 2011. | |