

Minutes of the meeting of Action against Medical Accidents

Held on 24th March 2020 by Zoom

Present: Suzanne Shale (SS) Chair, Caroline Browne (CB) Vice-Chair, Angela Brown (AB) Treasurer, Nigel Holland (NH), Mike Andersson (MA), Jonathan Hazan (JH),

Apologies: Moi Ali (MAli), Linda Kenward (LK), Rachael Vasmer (RV)

In attendance: Peter Walsh (PW), Hugh Williams (HW), Nicky Rushden (NR), Nathan Bacon (NB)

1. Coronavirus update

PW added to the written update provided in the papers. It was becoming more and more apparent that the repercussions for AvMA of the pandemic would be more serious even than the loss of the Annual Conference this year, which itself would mean losing a projected £152,000 profit this financial year. There will be lost income from other conferences which we may have put on hold had it not been for them being postponed in March. There will be lost income from cancelled fundraising events. It is anticipated that Lawyers Service renewals for this year will be affected and other knock-on consequences for website and directory listings etc. it was impossible to estimate accurately at this stage but the total lost income for this year could be over £400,000.

PW and management were doing all they can to limit the damage. PW was working with Ed Maycock on a new date for the annual conference – probably in April 2021 with another in March 22. Work would then turn to other events that can be put in including possible online events whilst coronavirus is still an issue.

A tremendous amount of work had gone into gearing up to staff working at home. Staff morale and team spirit was very high considering. More use was being made of digital communication and efforts being made to ensure staff's wellbeing is maintained and they are supported. The office was now closed but helpline and other core activities continued.

SS mentioned that some organisations had found virtual coffee mornings for staff helpful and PW confirmed this was being considered. SS pointed out that due to good management, the excellent work NB had done improving AvMA's IT and capability to work at home, and prudent financial approach supported by AB and the Finance Committee, AvMA was in a far better position than most other small charities.

2. Trustees and staff reflections on last quarter

Trustees and staff present were particularly pleased with the following: improvements to management accounts; PW's presentation at the RSM patient safety conference and the positive reaction and references to AvMA; the feedback from Ipsos MORI; FIC meeting held virtually and went well; [REDACTED] the smooth management of COVID19 and transition to home working; introduction of measures to allow finance to be managed remotely; meeting the deadline for Gift Aid; the Patient Safety Alerts report and ongoing policy work.

3. Minutes of the Council Meeting held 17th December 2019

The minutes were AGREED as an accurate record. Arrangements would be made for these to be signed virtually or by post.

Action: PW to circulate updated action schedule with the draft minutes

4. Minutes of the Executive Committee held 14th January 2020

The minutes were noted. It was noted that the reference to the rate of CPI under staff salary increase was incorrect and should read 1.3%.

It was suggested that a more detailed risk report on coronavirus was produced as an addendum to the Risk Register. It was AGREED that PW would produce this and circulate to the Executive Committee.

Action: PW to produce coronavirus addendum to the Risk Register and circulate to Exec Committee

5. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

6. Finance

The IT needs set out in the Digital Strategy were discussed. PW asked whether any of these could be taken forward, pointing out that £50,000 had been built into the 10-year financial plan to cover

such developments. It was AGREED that decisions on the proposed expenditure in the Digital Strategy be deferred until the July Council meeting. Work to continue in the meantime to explore options, obtain costs etc. If PW considered any of the items to be more urgent he could seek approval over his spending limits from the Executive Committee. MA and JH felt that whilst the Digital Strategy was good, there may be some things missing such as extra security systems being built in. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It was noted that the Digital Strategy also recommended strengthening the governance of the IT/Digital work by formalising the role of the 'IT Taskforce'.

Action: NB to explore options and costs of a new phone/VOIP system and other items in the Digital Strategy and make recommendations to Council in July

Action: IT Taskforce to recommend governance arrangements for the IT Task Force to the Executive Committee

PW explained that he had reconsidered his original recommendation to make a cost of living increase to staff salaries at the rate of CPI (1.3%) in the light of the emerging financial effects of coronavirus on AvMA's finances. He remained of the opinion that this should be awarded in full as it was a relatively small amount; staff had performed excellently and financial projections had been far exceeded in the last two years; and not awarding an increase would smack of panic and could damage morale. AB confirmed that as Treasurer she considered that notwithstanding the financial impact of Covid19 it was not imprudent to award the cost of living increase which was a comparatively modest sum. Other Trustees were in agreement. The cost of living increase was AGREED.

Action: NR to increase salaries by 1.3% with effect from 1st April 2020

The draft budget was discussed and it was noted that due to the effects of coronavirus actual performance was likely to be very different, and the operational deficit was likely to be far higher (although comfortably within our reserves which can be used for 'black swan events' like this). It was impossible to provide an accurate estimate at this stage. It was AGREED to agree the 2020-21 budget as an interim budget but to review this at the July Council meeting.

Action: PW to work with NR to review financial implications of coronavirus and advance a revised budget proposals in the agenda for July 2020 Council meeting

7. [REDACTED]

8. Policies

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy was AGREED without amendment.

The Disciplinary Policy & Procedure was AGREED without amendment.

The draft Grievance Policy & Procedure was discussed, and it was agreed that amendments were desirable. It was felt that the procedure should say something about checking facts with the

person(s) that are subject to the grievance and the potential for the 7 day target for a meeting to be extended if need be to allow for matters to be looked into further.

Action: PW to amend policy and put on the agenda for the next Executive Committee for approval

9. Operational Plan and Departmental Reports 2020-21

The Operational Plan and potential changes to its format were discussed. It was noted that the Operational Plan should be read alongside the Departmental reports which report in more detail on progress with objectives. It was felt that this gave enough information for trustees. It was noted that a traffic light column would be added to the Operational Plan for future versions. It did not feature in this one because it is the first version for 2020-21. It was noted that the operational Plan and priorities generally may need to be revised due to the effects of coronavirus.

It was felt that collaboration (objective 4.2.4) was a bigger priority due to coronavirus. CB agreed to send PW suggested wording for objective 4.4.1 re Beneficiary Journey.

Action: PW to update plan and introduce a traffic light column for next iteration

Action: CB to send PW suggested wording for objective 4.4.1 re Beneficiary Journey

The Departmental Reports were noted.

10. Quality & Outcomes Committee

CB updated the Council on the Quality Committee's work. The feedback session from Ipsos MORI was very useful. The timetable for Beneficiary Journey work had been extended. Work was ongoing on reviewing quality aspects of the AvMA Panel and the committee was turning its minds to Lawyers Services. The quality of our Medical Expert service was an agenda item for the next meeting.

PW and Lisa O'Dwyer were due to report back to CB on progress in advance of the next Quality Committee meeting

Action: PW and LOD to take forward work on mental health calls and report to Quality Committee in advance of the next meeting.

11. Chief Executive & Deputy Chief Executive report

The report was noted. PW drew attention to the fact that AvMA had been doing relatively little work in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland due to lack of capacity. HW had stepped down from the Welsh Patient Safety Committee, and we had no trustee from Wales. He felt that AvMA's strategy re: working across the UK should be discussed when time permits.

PW said that trustees needed to be aware that as a result of having to deal with the effect of coronavirus, various other work would be delayed and priorities reviewed.

It was noted that there was a sensitive HR issue being dealt with and it was queried whether trustees should be concerned about any wider issues. PW explained that the current issue concerned an individual having been absent for a very long period on health grounds and in his opinion did not signal a wider pattern of workforce concerns. SS confirmed that PW had provided full details in confidence, and she was satisfied that the current issue was specific to the individual concerned .

It was noted that HW's role was changing significantly from 1st April and all line management he had been doing was transferring to the CEO together with some other responsibilities. Concern was expressed about the health and well-being of the CEO taking on even more responsibilities. PW reassured trustees that he was fine and that whilst his time might be spread more thinly, other managers were also being asked to "step up" and take on more responsibility themselves. SS confirmed that the situation had been discussed at PW's recent appraisal and they remained in regular contact. PW thanked trustees for their concern and support.

It was noted that SS had met with PW for his appraisal in March. The timing of this had been changed so that it aligned with the timing cycle for the Operational Plan and other staff appraisals and objective setting.

12. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 7th July 2020 1-5pm. SS anticipated that this would again be held via Zoom and that there would be no pre-meeting. This would be confirmed nearer the time.

13. Any other business

SS concluded the meeting by expressing her and the trustees' gratitude for the way that the current crisis had been managed and the commitment of staff in difficult circumstances. PW thanked the trustees on behalf of all the staff for the support and advice they were providing.

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Chair