

MINUTES of the meeting of the HPC Communications Committee held on Thursday 10th July 2003. Moat House Hotel, Glasgow, Scotland.

Present:

A Foster (Chairman)
S. Chaudhry
J. Stark
C.McGartland
M.Mackellar
J.Manning
M. Seale
N. Brook (part)

In attendance:

C. Middleton (Director of Communications/Secretary to the Committee)
R. Tripp (Communications Officer)
E.Price (Events Manager)
T. Glazier (Web Developer)

ITEM 1 **APOLOGIES**

No apologies were received

ITEM 2 **MINUTES**

The notes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18th February 2003 were confirmed as a correct record.

ITEM 3 **MATTERS ARISING**

The Chair welcomed Jo Manning. Clare reported that relationships with the Northern Ireland Health Professions were fine after a successful listening event in Belfast and that they now have a system to disseminate information in place. Jackie questioned the validity of the annual report being taken out of the Communications budget. Marc said he viewed it as a Communications project that this committee should own and that specific money had been set aside for this project. The committee raised no objection to the finances of the report being their responsibility based on the new facts arising.

ITEM 4 **COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

Chris presented an update on the communications strategy, highlighting achievements and areas that have had to be put on hold until the next financial year due to lack of income. Ann asked if our income was assured, Marc replied yes but that reserves had to be built up again having been exhausted during the set-up phase and due to investment in

HPC infrastructure. The use of sweets in promoting HPC at external events was questioned given our remit of regulating Dietitians. It was reported that they seemed popular with attendees and it was agreed they should be used but not over-promoted. The committee felt that internal communications could be improved and asked if each Director responsible for a profession was aware of their duty to contact and inform Council members from that same profession about matters of interest. Marc replied yes and said the Directors use their professional judgment in such cases. Ann agreed to remind Council to get involved with the various departments in HPC for a couple of hours to learn more about the day-to-day business.

It was suggested that HPC may be missing on communications with Scotland and Northern Ireland and the communications department were asked to contact the relevant AHP Officers in each country. It was also asked that we contact HR managers to let them know of the changes to HPC's powers.

It was confirmed that hearings and summaries of fitness to practise cases would be put on the website and a meeting with our legal representatives was being arranged to find the best way to approach this.

Ann asked if people were becoming tired of the 'listening events'? It was felt that they were continuing to be a success and that their value should not be based on the numbers attending but the debate it created. It was agreed to keep looking at the format to see if splitting into smaller groups, for example, could help freshen things up a bit.

Shaheen asked that translations of posters be looked at as part of the strategy. It was agreed that in all communications various versions and languages would be made available. Currently this was being done on a request basis and we would continue to do this for current publications.

There were no further details on the proposed annual conference at this stage but it was placed on the agenda for the next meeting in November.

ITEM 5 **BROCHURE SIGN OFF PROCESS**

Committee agreed to the process and would now forward it to Council for their approval.

ITEM 6 **BROCHURE FEEDBACK – MARKET RESEARCH RESULTS**

Opinion Leader Research presented the findings of some initial market research into the leaflets design and content. The findings gave excellent feedback that could be incorporated into future messages along with some very clear messages. The committee was in agreement that it is a long term job to convince registrants and the public about [the benefits of HPC](#).

ITEM 7 **INFONET AND INTRANET**

Rachel and Tony showcased the work that had been on-going on these projects. Chris confirmed this was a vital part of communications as it gave our customer facing members of staff the information they required to deal efficiently and effectively with our customers.

ITEM 8 **INTERNET**

Tony and Rachel presented the work that has been done on the Internet and previewed a 'Council Member only' password protected area of the site. This area can be for Council Members to log into and download the latest presentations, press releases, phone lists and diary events connected with the work of HPC. Ann said she would remind Council members of their responsibility to inform people of the talks they are giving on behalf of HPC – this could be placed in this part of the site.

Overall the site received excellent feedback and Tony and Rachel were thanked for their work.

It was agreed that some time in the future we would market research the web site to ensure it was easy to use and information easy to find.

ITEM 9 **ANNUAL REPORT**

Eleanor presented the drafts of the annual report. Marc explained the process of getting the accounts approved stating that the publication date is likely to be late September. In the future we will be canvassing registrants as to whether they wish to receive this report or not. This year we will print 155,000 copies and distribute one to each registrant. It will be available to download on-line too.

ITEM 10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Chris is to write a standard article to be distributed to Council members explaining that HPC does not validate the experience or skill levels of an applicant. HPC measures them against the Standards of Proficiency for their profession. Council members can then top and tail this article and make it relevant to their specific profession. This would help clear up some confusion that seems to be circulating just now.

Jo raised some concerns about the impact of the Freedom of Information Act on HPC business. Marc explained that Roy Dunn is now Director of Information and has been charged with looking into this. HPC is taking this very seriously.

Chris is to write the report for Marc highlighting the areas of success and those that can be improved for the next Council meeting. This is to be circulated to the committee for approval.

ITEM 11 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday November 20th 2003, Park House, Kennington, London 1100-1500