

**UNCONFIRMED - MINUTES** of the meeting of the HPC Communications Committee held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2003. Park House, London

**Present:**

A. Foster (Chairman)  
S. Chaudhry  
J. Stark  
J.Manning  
C. Lea (ex-officio)

**In attendance:**

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

ITEM 1        **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Claire McGartland and Morag MacKellar

ITEM 2        **MINUTES**

The notes of the meeting held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2003 were confirmed as a correct record.

ITEM 3        **MATTERS ARISING**

The Committee asked for an update on the Annual Report. They were told it was ready to go to the printers this week, there had been some delays this year caused in the main by the accounts being held in Parliament over the summer recess. Lessons had been learned and these will ensure a quicker turn around next year.

Communications were working on a basic outline for an annual conference which would take place in the latter half of 2004. The event is planned to bring together members of Council and the various Partners working on behalf of HPC and other regulators. The Committee noted that they felt the mixture of Partners and regulators was not a particularly good one as both groups would have different expectations of such a conference.

ITEM 4        **COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

The Committee asked what sort of feedback had been received from professions such as Paramedics and Occupational Therapists to the new registration process. Fees and some

misunderstanding regarding the registration process were the main ones but these were only from a small percentage of the overall registrant population for each profession. On the whole people are sending their forms in on time without any fuss. Obviously for those who are claiming to have had a poor experience HPC will look to adapt and put right what has gone wrong.

The Committee asked that a formal complaints review procedure about HPC be put in place for those people who remain unhappy with the way they have been dealt with by HPC with a Council member acting as adjudicator. They were informed that there was a complaints process in place but that the CEO would be informed of their suggestion.

It was reported that the issues arising from the Llandudno Listening Event were the same as they were during consultation. CPD is perhaps coming more into focus as the time for linking to registration approaches but there is little we can actually say on this matter until the CPD PLG completes its work and comes up with its proposals. Listening events are still a valuable means of hearing first hand from registrants though and should be continued.

The website feedback is good. After the peak of July the website is now receiving on average about 90,000 hits a month. This is at least double what it was at the start of the year. The communications team is now about to engage Opinion Leader Research to conduct some research on its behalf surrounding the website. This will be done early 2004.

The Committee endorsed the proposal for customer service development created by GB Consulting. They will now work with the Communications department to help develop a customer care program within HPC.

The HPC fees and registration rules had been debated by Committee in Parliament – although it didn't even go to a vote HPC had made valuable contact with MP's from all sides of the house. The ministerial visit to Park House in December was confirmed and the Committee agreed that it should be low key.

It was suggested that the Communications report be produced in a slightly shorter version for future Council meetings. It was agreed to speak to the CEO about this.

A '10 benefits' document has been produced in conjunction with Unison. The document aims to spell out the benefits to the registrants of registration. The Committee agreed that this documented should be printed separately to the Unison one and sent out with the Annual Report. It was agreed to look for another image for the front cover.

## ITEM 5 **FITNESS TO PRACTISE PROCESS**

Committee agreed to the process and would now forward it to Council for their approval. It was agreed that we should look at ways to communicate why we are releasing this

information. In particular this should be aimed at our registrants. It was also agreed that we would add explanations of the terms ‘founded’ and ‘Not well founded’ as these may be confusing to some. Rachel would speak to Michael Caplan about finding suitable alternatives.

The Committee asked that the executive be scrupulous in keeping the information from these hearings under review as it goes through the process to ensure it is factually correct. It was agreed to do so. A letter to the professional bodies was also suggested as a means of letting them know of our process and our legal obligation to inform the public of our work.

#### ITEM 6            **ELECTION OF NEW CHAIR**

Jo Manning (Paramedics) was elected unanimously as the new chair of the Committee. Jackie Stark (Lay) was elected as Vice-chair. These nominations will now go the Council for approval.

#### ITEM 7            **ADVERTISING**

The Committee was shown draft versions of the planned advertising campaign to be launched in March 04. The Committee agreed the approach was the right one, that it had been thoroughly researched and that now was the time to start focusing on communicating to the public.

The Committee asked that information relating to how people can make a complaint about a health professional be included in the leaflet that would accompany the campaign.

#### ITEM 8            **AOB**

Colin Lea thanked the Committee on behalf of the Finance and Resources Committee for the understanding way in which they had helped with the budget over the past 12 months.

Ann Foster was thanked by the entire Committee for her work as Chair over the past two years. It was agreed that Ann’s work ensured that Communications was put on the map at Council level from a very early stage and that the Committee has grown into one of the most successful Committees, in terms of work achieved, in HPC. The Committee wished her the best of luck in her new role.

Ann wished to thank Norma Brook and Colin Lea for their support, along with the Committee and the Executive for their work during that time.

#### ITEM 9            **DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

It was agreed that dates of the next meetings up until April 2005 would be circulated by Chris at a later date. It was agreed however that July 5<sup>th</sup> would be one of the three meetings the Committee will plan for next year and that will be held in London.

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

To be confirmed