

The Association of Child Psychotherapists
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Minutes of ACP Annual General Meeting, 25th June 2015

Heather Stewart (chair) opened the AGM by welcoming those present.

1. Present and Apologies

Present: Heather Stewart (chair), Mary Walker, Isobel Pick, John Crowley, Hilary Ann Salinger, Annabel Kitson, Eve Grainger, Ferelyth Watt, Alison Roy, Jane Cassidy, Lydia Hartland-Rowe, Lydia Tischler, Meryl McCartney, Dominique Christy-Evans, Margaret Pracka, Janine Cherry-Swaine, Martin Lyon, Mick Wood, David Hadley, Daphne Storey, Ruth Selwyn, Sandra Ramsden, Glyn Jackson, Lorraine McLeod, Kara Gledsdale, Janine Tulley, Eva Shehu-Whitefield, Eva Crasnow, Leslie Ironside, David Cornelius, Caryn Onions, Enrica Fiorelli, Nikki Lusher, Fionnuala Frances, Sue Kegerreis, Tessa Weir-Jeffery, Octavia Wilkinson, Ian Paton, Claudia de Campos, Lynda Ellis, Maria Powell, Betty Dawson, Michelle Grierson, Sarah Sutton, Michele Pundick, Joan Herrmann, Andrea Pedraz, Geraldine Crehan, Jennifer Ng, Iris Gibbs, Jasmin Gill, Claudia McLoughlin, Selina Perocevic, Jemima Phorson, Caroline Church, Fay Maxwell, Marina Manassei, Judith Golberg, Jackie Alexander, Peter Wilson, Andrew Briggs, Maria Consta, Paul Isaacs, Becky Wylde, Tess Bailey-Sayer, Rachel Melville-Thomas, Patricia Langton, Caroline Church, Medina Horne, Ria Wright, Georgina Taylor

Apologies: Janet Shaw, Katy Dearnley, Philippa Boulter, Sarah Dobson, Jocelyn Catty, Jeremy Gunson, Jeanne Magagna, Margaret Rustin, Katherine Arnold, Kate Stratton, Lisa Miller, Jill Wilson, Simon Cregeen, Judith Edwards, Gail Walker, Elizabeth Edginton, Julia Mikardo, Ryan Lowe, Jackie Hall

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2014

The minutes of last year's AGM were approved. Proposer: Hilary Ann Salinger. Seconder: Ferelyth Watt.

3. Reports from Committees (published on the ACP website)

Heather Stewart moved the motion to approve the following five reports:

- Media and Communications, including the Bulletin Board
- Training Council
- Independent Practice Committee
- Ethics Committee
- Registration Committee
- The Journal

Proposer: Mick Wood; Seconder: Jane Cassidy. All six reports were accepted.

At the time of the AGM the following Committee reports were outstanding:

- Research
- Programme Planning
- Assessors' Panel

HS proposed that she would take them the next Executive meeting for approval and publish them on the website as soon as they were available.

4. Treasurer's Report

John Crowley brought to people's attention that the ACP became sixty five in 2014. At the Extraordinary Meeting held in April of that year, it was agreed that plans, including organisational restructuring, needed to be put in place to professionalise the association if it was to meet the agreed ambition to better protect and promote its members and the profession. This would first mean the association getting its finances & operations in order.

The first task was a new website and membership database recording members' professional details including qualifying year, current workplace and experience. This is now up and running, in spite of some teething problems. He also reported that planning for the future meant we needed to be more professional in how we gathered our membership fee income. At last year's conference 150 members had not paid their fees but this year there were no fees outstanding. This now means that the organisation has a much better sense of its annual income, enabling it to prepare financial & operational plans with greater confidence.

He added that there were certain difficult realities facing the ACP; the costs necessary to run the ACP have been historically disguised due to the huge amount of time, goodwill and effort from members that kept it running. This situation is not sustainable and so last year the association moved closer to paying people appropriately for their time, the consequence was that our operational costs went up to approximately £180,000. He warned that these costs would likely need to keep rising if the ACP were to credibly meet its ambitions to better protect and promote the membership. The membership would need to either accept the limitations of what the ACP could do or face the reality in an increase in fees. In the meantime the Executive were looking at ways to make better use of what resources the ACP had, this included changing its legal status. While, initially, the organisation can draw on its reserves, this necessarily can only be an interim measure. He summarised by stating that, while 'our house was in good order', there was still a long way to go.

In response to Andrew Briggs' question about whether the ACP could apply for grant aid, for example from the Heritage Lottery, John Crowley stated that this would only be possible if/when the ACP changed its legal status to a charity. Heather Stewart added that the organisation is currently looking into this possibility. Lydia Tischler asked about the possibility of having chartered status, which is something that the ACP looked into some years ago. Heather Stewart replied that the organisation is currently seeking legal advice and also that of its accountants, with the aim of changing its status by the end of the year. This, in turn, will have an impact on its structures. John Crowley commented that, while there are sufficient funds to enable the ACP to continue in its present form, in order to meet the stated ambitions additional funding would be required. At present, there is a heavy reliance on the good will of ACP officers, who are carrying out their responsibilities on top of their 'day jobs'.

Heather Stewart noted that, in spite of some 'doom and gloom' at the 2014 AGM, the organisation had a significant surplus last year. Urgent twinned questions facing the ACP are: how we can raise money and how we should spend it? She asked for the treasurer's report to be accepted.

Proposer: Geraldine Crehan; Seconder: Eve Grainger. The report was accepted.

5. Independent Practice Committee – call for new members

Jane Cassidy spoke about the need for new members to join the Independent Practice Committee, which currently meets three times a year in London but with a Skype facility in order to facilitate communication with geographically dispersed members. While the committee has lots of ideas for ways of supporting independent practitioners, for example through encouraging the pooling of knowledge/experience, it is stymied by its small membership. The more people who join, the less each member will need to contribute but much can be achieved overall.

Heather Stewart thanked Jane Cassidy and Ryan Lowe for all their work in leading the Independent Practice Committee and expanded the request for new members to include all the ACP committees.

6. Update from the Media Team

Alison Roy gave the same very informative presentation as at the HoS meeting, held a few weeks ago in London, where it had been very well received.

As examples of the ACP's increasing use of social media and overall visibility, she stated that the ACP now has 1,500 followers on twitter and spoke about the letter sent to the incoming Prime Minister. She also drew the meeting's attention to the ACP's new 'house style' which incorporates a new logo, fonts etc. Having edited the Bulletin for several years, she is handing over this role to Georgina Taylor. From now on there will be three themed (A4) issues each year, in addition to regular newsletters, while the format of the ACP website has been improved to make it more 'user friendly'. All these measures are part of the media team's overall contribution to professionalising and promoting the organisation in order that it may continue to 'survive and thrive'. Key to this is our ability to 'get out there', for example through members having letters published in local newspapers and being interviewed on local radio.

Alison drew people's attention to existing ACP leaflets, which she asked people to take away from the conference for distribution. And she encouraged ACP members to become involved in writing further leaflets on practice areas in which they have expertise, for example eating disorders, self harm, autism. More generally she would very much like to hear from ACP members about their ideas and thoughts. Finally, she thanked the Bulletin Board and all the members of the Communications Team for their hard work and commitment.

Mick Wood proposed a vote of thanks to Alison Roy, which was seconded by Andrew Briggs. The membership showed their appreciation by prolonged clapping.

7. Chair's Report

Heather Stewart's full report, which will be published on the website, covered the current extensive work programme of the ACP. Under the heading of professionalisation, she spoke of:

- i) The hard work that had gone into, as well as the ongoing organisational impact of, achieving PSA (Professional Standards Authority) accreditation in November 2014 (to be reviewed in November 2015.) The PSA had questioned a number of previous ACP organisational structures and practices and had, for example, insisted that firewalls be established between committees.
- ii) The complex process of developing and establishing the new dynamic ACP website.
- iii) The achievement of obtaining an up to date register, incorporating important details on all registrants.
- iv) The workshop, to be held in September 2015, in order to explore the design of an appropriate new legal and organisational model for the ACP. She is hopeful that this new model will be in place by the 2016 AGM.
- v) The Executive has agreed that the organisation's legal status should be changed and the Treasurer and the Registrar have joined the Chair to meet with accountants in

order to take this forward and change the ACP to a private company limited by guarantee.

- vi) The improved 'Find a Therapist' site, which aims to offer a much clearer impression to members of the public about the work undertaken by child psychotherapists. It is also crucial that the former are confident in the latter's fitness to practice.

She mentioned the 'conflict of interest' policy which is on the ACP website and also spoke about a new joint ACP and BPC committee, ISAAC (Independent Scrutiny and Advisory Committee) formed as an outcome of the PSA process. While all the members are lay, Heather Stewart attends in her capacity as chair of the ACP. She has found that the committee asks helpful, at times challenging, questions. The former 'membership committee' has been renamed the 'registration committee'.

She reported that Rajni Sharma is leading the STPP (Short term Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy) Implementation Group; as well as mentioning three online surveys that have very recently been, or are about to be, sent to ACP members. These focus respectively on: core professional competencies; cuts to posts and services and downgrading; and the current distribution of parent-infant services (a growth area for the profession). She mentioned that the ACP plans to form a 'supervision working party' in order to review the current supervision policy.

She also spoke briefly about the partnership between the ACP and the BPC, with whom the former has been sharing office space for the past eighteen months, an arrangement not without its challenges. A joint ACP/BPC event, on the theme of how we look after and nurture ourselves, will be held on 28.11.2015. Monica Lanyado is one of the organisers.

Heather Stewart is very keen to promote a 'one nation ACP' in contradistinction to the historic London centrality. She has already taken or is in the planning stage of a number of steps, including: inviting a permanent Scottish representative onto the Executive Committee; reproducing the recent HoS day at a location in the north; and holding an executive meeting once a year away from London.

She went on to thank Julia Mikardo for an excellent UNITE trade union presentation at the recent HoS day, stating that it will be available on the ACP website. She also thanked the following: Isabel Pick, Chair of the Training Council; Mary Walker, Registrar; John Crowley, Treasurer; Ricky Emanuel, Chair of Ethics Committee; Alison Roy; Patricia Langton; and all the members of the Programme Planning Committee. Finally, she introduced to the membership Morwenna O'Brien, the recently appointed ACP Administrative Officer, presenting her with flowers (from the programme planning committee) in appreciation of her hard work and commitment to the organisation.

Hilary Ann Salinger proposed a vote of thanks to Heather Stewart, which was endorsed by the membership.

Joan Herrmann thanked Heather and also Alison Roy for their recent visit to Scotland, which was much appreciated.

8. Brief Feedback from recent survey on loss of posts

Eve Grainger, Chair of Assessors' Panel, stated that so far there have been 170 responses to the survey, which covered the period October 2012 to April 2015. Twenty areas reported cuts, while others reported down banding of posts. In some services new posts have been created but on a lower band. Eve and Julia will publish findings on the website once they have analysed the data.

9. General discussion open to membership

Andrew Briggs urged that ACP members join a union, preferably UNITE. He stated that out of eight hundred plus current members, only approximately two hundred are union members, mainly in UNITE, but also in the Royal College of Nursing or UNISON. Union fees are a little over ten pounds per month. His appeal to join the union was supported by another ACP member who said that UNITE had helped her significantly to obtain her current substantive post.

Mary Walker was able to provide accurate membership numbers. The ACP currently has 887 members, broken down into the following categories: 582 Full members; 153 Trainee members; 47 Overseas members; 94 Retired/Non-working members; 11 'Honoured' members

Ian Paton brought to the meeting's attention a TV programme currently being made at the Tavistock Centre. Some of his child psychotherapist colleagues have expressed their doubts about being involved although, in his opinion, the programme could potentially contribute to raising the profile of the profession. Heather Stewart asked an open question about ways in which different organisations, e.g. the Tavistock, the ACP and the Training Schools, might be able to link up with each other. Alison Roy mentioned the availability of media training to interested members; and she urged members, in the interest of making links, to let the ACP know when they are involved in relevant activities/initiatives. David Hadley noted that the Regional Advisers Network seems to have disintegrated. Heather Stewart responded that she was very aware of the problem and referred again to her ambition to develop a 'one nation ACP'. Currently, every third Annual Conference is held away from London.

10. Welcome to newly qualified members

Mary Walker welcomed by name the thirty nine ACP members who have qualified over the past year.

11. A.O.B.

There was no further business. The meeting closed at 6.45pm.

Minutes taken by Patricia Langton (Hon. Sec.) June 2015