****

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**OF THE GENERAL CHIROPRACTIC COUNCIL**

**HELD ON 18 JUNE 2015**

**44 WICKLOW STREET, LONDON WC1X 9HL**

**OPEN SESSION**

Present:

Suzanne McCarthy, Chair

Sophia Adams Bhatti

Marie Cashley

Roger Creedon

Roger Dunshea

Gareth Lloyd

Julie McKay

Grahame Pope

Liz Qua

Julia Sayers

Carl Stychin

Gay Swait

Phil Yalden

Apologies:

Tom Greenway

In attendance:

David Howell, Chief Executive and Registrar

Penny Bance, Director of Education, Registration and Standards

Paul Ghuman, Deputy Chief Executive (Director Resources & Regulation)

Neil Johnson, Policy and Communications Manager

Adam Halsey, Partner, Haysmacintyre (item on the Financial Statement 2014 only)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Apologies and declarations of interest**  Council welcomed new council member Phil Yalden to his first meeting. Apologies were received from Tom Greenway.  Grahame Pope and Phil Yalden both made declarations of interest in relation to item 4, ‘Letter re. Test of Competence (ToC) from the Alliance of UK Chiropractors’. They explained that they had been involved in the selection of the ToC assessors. Council agreed that both members could be present for the discussions of that item but could not take part in the discussion. |
| C-180615-1 | **Draft minutes of the meeting of 31 March 2015**  The following amendments to the draft minutes were agreed:  - Page 1, item 1 – the heading to be amended to read “Draft minutes of meeting of 1 December”, rather than October.  - Page 1, item 2, ‘Matters arising and action log’, the sentence “All matters arising listed in the action log were confirmed as complete” to be amended to read, “All matters arising listed in the action log were confirmed as completed”.  - Page 3, item 3, ‘The Chiropractic register’, the “Equality and Diversity Act” to be amended to read “Equality Act 2010”.  - Page 4, item 4, ‘Use of the courtesy title Doctor’, the second paragraph to be amended from “Council discussed the use of the title and noted that the Royal College of Chiropractors had attempted to dissuade chiropractors from using the title ‘Dr’. Council agreed that this issue should be raised at the joint GCC/RCC/Professional Associations meeting in May.”, to read “Council discussed the use of the title and noted that noted that support for use of the title may not be universal across all of the Professional Associations and the Royal College of Chiropractors. Therefore, Council agreed that this issue should be raised at the joint GCC/RCC/Professional Associations meeting in May”.  Subject to the above amendments, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the March 2015 meeting. |
| C-180615-2 | **Matters arising and action log**  Council noted that the update on the Welsh language scheme, the first phase of the research proposal and the recommendation for the external auditor were on the meeting’s agenda.  Council was informed that the mock-up of the guidance note template was not yet ready but would be provided to Council when this was available.  **Action: Update on guidance note to be provided to Council** |
| C-180615-3 | **Chair’s report**  Meeting of the International Chiropractic Regulatory Collaboration  The Chair reported on the recent meeting of the International Chiropractic Regulatory Collaboration (ICRC) conference that she had attended with the Director of Education, Registration and Standards, Penny Bance, in May in Athens. A number of useful presentations had been made at the conference on such subjects as education and regulation and CPD. Penny Bance had given a presentation on the latter. A draft note of the meeting would be available on the ICRC’s website.  The ICRC meeting ended with agreement, in principle, of those who were present to create a more formal group for the purpose of collaboration and the exchange of information. It would have no decision-making powers. Council expressed interest in this development but wanted to consider the proposal once it was more concrete. The Chair said that the ICRC was considering having its next meeting during the World Health Professions Regulation Conference in Geneva in May 2016.  Healthcare Bill  The Chair said that there was general disappointment among healthcare regulators that the Bill had not been included in the Queen’s speech. She had received a letter from Ben Gummer, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Quality at Department of Health, inviting the chairs of the healthcare regulators to a meeting to discuss the Bill’s future. No date had yet been arranged for this meeting. The Chair would keep Council informed.  Re-appointments and Extensions of Council Members Council Terms  The Chair advised Council that the PSA had informed all healthcare regulators that they need to have a new process in place for Council reappointments and extensions of terms of appointment. The GCC was currently in discussion with other regulators on this subject regarding the requirements for this.  **Action: Update to be provided on re-appointments**  **Action: Update to be provided to Council on the Healthcare Bill** |
| C-180615-4 | **Chief Executive’s Report**  Update on research  The Chief Executive (CE) reported on the recent recruitment of a Business Information Officer. Part of this role would involve data collection which would assist with the delivery of the GCC’s research programme.  The Chair of the Education Committee informed Council that at the last Education Committee meeting there had been a presentation on research around students’ professionalism and that the Education Committee would be contacting providers in order to take this work forward. He also said other healthcare professions were working on understanding and researching students’ attitudes in relation to professionalism.  Report on AECC visit  The CE said that he had recently attended the opening ceremony of the Open Upright MRI centre at the AECC. He also said that the Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) had attended an information event for students held at the AECC on 16 June.  Update on proposals for legal reform of regulation  The CE said that the GCC would try to pursue a Section 60 order, being as the Bill had not been introduced. The GCC had written to the GoSC inviting them to join the GCC in seeking a section 60 Order. The GCC had not yet received a reply.  **Action: CE to update Council on GoSC reply re. Section 60 Order**  PSA performance report  The CE reported that the GCC was preparing its response to the PSA performance report and the criticisms contained in the report. He confirmed that no substantial issue had been raised by the PSA in their report.  PSA Consultation  The CE said that the GCC would, in conjunction with the other regulators, produce a response to the PSA’s consultation.  Update on Council of Chiropractic Education International (CCEI)  The Director of Education, Regulation and Standards reported that the work on the CCEI was being carried out by an independent person. It was almost complete and had been approved by the CCEI. It would next be shared with chiropractic stakeholders around the world for feedback.  **Action: Update to be provided to Council on CCEI**  Letter on the Test of Competence (ToC) from the Alliance of UK Chiropractors  Council discussed the letter received from the Alliance of the UK Chiropractors (AUKC), which made several suggestions and criticisms of the new ToC. Council noted that the letter had not been signed by the BCA.  The Chair of the Education Committee said that, in devising the ToC and prior to its implementation, other regulators’ systems had been thoroughly investigated. The Committee was of the view that the new system was proportionate and reflective of other regulators’ approaches. He noted that the panel of assessors comprised a mixture of educationalists and practitioners and that the educationalists were also practitioners. The Chair said an independent external examiner had been appointed to oversee the panel’s outcomes and to ensure parity between panels. In response to the point made in the letter about the apparently high failure rate, he clarified that a number of candidates who had sat the test had been asked for further evidence and subsequently passed but that this fact was not reflected in the letter. He confirmed that the scheduled dates for the ToC had been filled much quicker than had been anticipated.  The Chair of the Committee confirmed that there would be an internal review of the ToC at the end of one year and an external review at the end of three years.  Council agreed that the Executive should respond to the operational issues in administering the ToC contained in the letter and that the Education Committee should respond to the issues raised about the ToC itself. Council would be sent a copy of these responses.  **Action: Council to be sent a copy of the responses made to the AUKC letter.**  Update on Governance Manual  The CE reported that the Governance Manual would shortly be circulated to Council members for their approval.  **Action: Governance Manual to be circulated to Council Members for review**  Update on the Welsh Language Scheme  The CE reported that the Welsh Language Commissioner had published her Standards Report on June 2nd. The GCC, along with the other healthcare regulators, hoped to discuss the new requirements further with the Commissioner. |
| C-180615-5 | **Financial Statement 2014 – Audit Findings Report and Letter of Representation**  Adam Halsey, Partner at Haysmacintyre, was in attendance for this item.  The DCE introduced the Financial Statement 2014 and proposed that Council agree to adopt these and that the Chair of Council sign both the Financial Statements and the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Council.  The Chair of the Audit Committee said the Committee felt that the audit had gone well and that implementation of some minor recommendations would be made. The Committee was satisfied with the audit of the financial accounts and recommended that Council adopt them.  It was reported that the portfolio’s initial investment of £4m had increased by £112k in 2014, with a total increase from £4m to £4.2m since the initial investment. Expenditure had reduced in 2014 by £336k, a reduction of almost 12%. The PCC’s costs had reduced by £201k also in that year. Council noted that General Reserves were at £3.3m, equivalent to 17 months of reserves. Further, the GCC’s costs had reduced overall although staff costs had increased slightly. The final deficit position for 2014 was confirmed as £30k.  It was noted that the GCC is not liable for tax, except for corporation tax, which is payable on investment income and any gain made on that income.  Council agreed that the item, ‘bank interest receivable’, under ‘Income’, should be specifically referenced in the 2014 financial statement.  Following discussion Council agreed to adopt the Financial Statements for 2014 and for these to be signed by the Chair of Council on Council’s behalf.  Council agreed to adopt the financial statements for 2014.  **Action: ‘Bank interest receivable’ to be referenced in 2014 financial statement.**  Letter of Representation  The DCE introduced the proposed Letter of Representation, which stated the responsibility of Council Members in fulfilling their responsibilities in preparing financial statements in accordance with the UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (UK GAAP). Following discussion, this document was also approved and agreed to be signed by the Chair of Council.  **Action: Council agreed the letter of representation and asked the Chair of Council to sign the letter.**  Audit findings report  Adam Halsey introduced the Audit Findings Report which summarised the key findings of the GCC’s financial statements audit 2014. He said that the audit had gone well and praised the executive in preparing the accounts and the assistance provided by the executive. He commented positively on the swift implementation of the recommendations made in last year’s report. He was of the view that changes in recent years had put the GCC in a strong financial position. Minor recommendation on internal controls had been put forward, which the executive had agreed would be implemented.  There was a discussion on the introduction of accounts, in line with the new financial reporting standard, FRS102. The executive would seek to recast the current financial statement and would provide this to the Audit Committee at its next meeting.  **Action: Recasting of current financial statements under FRS102 to be presented at next Audit Committee meeting.** |
| C-180615-6 | **Code and Standards Review**  The Director of Education, Registration and Standards updated Council on the Code and Standards review and presented a final draft of the Code. The new Code would be implemented in June 2016.  The associated guidance was currently being drafted by Pye Tait and once the draft was complete it would shared with the profession.  The Communications Manager advised Council of the associated Communication Plan, which contained four key messages:   * The Code is now approved; * The existing Code remains in place until implementation of the new Code; * The new Code represents the professional standards that chiropractors need to meet; * The new Code has undergone a process of consultation where the GCC has listened to the profession and other stakeholders in devising the new Code.   Council felt it was important that the messages were strengthened by the inclusion of explaining what the new Code would deliver, both for the profession and for patients and that the new Code was an improved version.  Council noted its previous discussions on the Code and subject to some minor amendments, Council approved the draft Code presented at the meeting. |
| C-180615-7 | **Performance report (including annual FtP statistics report)**  The DCE introduced the Performance report for the period to the end of May 2015.  KPIs  He explained that there was only one KPI for which the GCC was not meeting its target, which was “listing PCC hearings within 9 months of referral of case from the IC”. 66% of cases had met this target in 2015 and this percentage was expected to continue to improve once the backlogged PCC cases – which had affected the achieving of this KPI - had been determined. This was expected to be completed in the second half of 2015.  Business plan  The DCE confirmed that all activities due to be delivered by the end of Quarter 2 were progressing as planned.  Financial summary  He said that at the end of May 2015 income was slightly below target, at £2,293k as against the expected income of £2,307k, a £14k variance. This variance was a result of negative differences on both investment income and retention income and a positive difference on registration income. The income figure varied by 1 percent.  IT and office costs were below budget but the accommodation budget had been re-forecast as the building rates had changed, resulting in a variance. Professional fees had been slightly higher than expected, as were FtP costs. The balance remaining from the Department of Health grant was £72k.  Overall, the surplus position on the management accounts for the period was £5,824.  **FtP annual statistics report**  The DCE introduced the FtP annual statistics report for 2014, which contained key statistics on the GCC’s FtP activity.  He reported a decrease in the number of open cases at the year-end, for both the IC and PCC, as a result of actively investigating cases and determination by the FtP Committees. There was a reduction of 70% in open cases at the IC and 50% of cases at the PCC. It was also noted that there had been a drop in the number of complaints received in 2014. Of the 81 cases determined by the IC, 20 had been referred to the PCC, a referral rate of 24 percent. He said that work of the Executive and the IC had been a major factor in bringing about these developments.  Council discussed the breakdown of IC cases. Council felt that it would be helpful for future reports to contain information on the type of complaints along with data such as: the age of the chiropractors; how many chiropractors were in that age range; how many years chiropractors had been in practice. The Sally Williams’ report provided some of these indicators which could be utilised and built on in future reports. It was explained that this information was being updated by the newly recruited Business Information Officer and that this information would be provided to Council in the next FtP report.  It was also mentioned that the PSA had been given timeline data regarding the time taken for completion of IC cases.  **Action: Updated data building on the Sally Williams report and timeline data to be included in next FtP statistics report.** |
| C-180615-8 | **Indemnity Rule changes**  The Registrations Manager updated Council on the proposed new rules which were being implemented on 17 June and which would change registrants’ indemnity requirements. The main change to the Rules involved an increase in cover from £3m to £5m.  Council was content for the new Rules to be brought into effect. The Chair of the Council signed the new Rules. |
| C-180615-9 | **Update report from the Audit Committee**  External audit appointment  The Committee’s Chair reported that the external audit appointment process had been completed and that the Committee recommended that Council appoint haysmacintyre as the GCC’s external auditor.  Council agreed the recommendation.  Strategic Risk Register – items over 15  The DCE informed Council that there were no items currently over 15 on the Strategic Risk Register. |
| C-180615-10 | **Work plan**  Council discussed the work plan and agreed that the Financial Strategy Review (strategy and financial options) and the Financial Statements would be on the December agenda. |
| C-180615-11 | **AOB**  Dinner at the Athenaeum  Council agreed that a dinner should be held, following the December Council meeting, at the Athenaeum. Richard Brown, Secretary-General of the World Federation of Chiropractic and Dr Nick Clarke, from the Department of Health, had accepted the GCC’s invitation to speak at the event.  Newsletter  Council discussed the next issue of the newsletter and suggested the following items be included:   * Code and Standards; * Indemnity Rules; * Northern Ireland Assembly Reception; and * FtP figures and GCC’s position on legal regulation. |
|  | **Date of next meeting: 30 September 2015** |