

# POSTURE & MOBILITY GROUP

## MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009

11<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at Warwick University

*(the AGM can be viewed as a webcast – see details on PMG website home page)*

**Chair:** Nigel Shapcott (NS)

**Vice-chair:** Helen Hislop (HH)

**Treasurer:** Henry Lumley (HL)

**Minutes:** Olwen Ellis (OE - PMG administrator)

### 1. Apologies: none received

### 2. Minutes of the AGM 2008

Barend ter Haar proposed that the minutes of last year's AGM be accepted as correct. Anthony Welling seconded, and the minutes were approved by those present.

### 3. Treasurer & Membership Secretary's report

i) copies of 2008 accounts distributed at the meeting with summary form on HL's PP presentation

ii) HL explained the issues that the group had to face in light of poor attendance and organisational problems at NTE 07 and 08, and what actions had been taken to improve the financial picture – e.g. costs cut for NTE and getting higher attendance figures

iii) the results so far are promising, with numbers up on last year. With the improved organisation this year, HL now confident that there would be a significant surplus from NTE 09.

iv) One member asked if accounts could be provided ahead of AGM in order that they could be read thoroughly and questions prepared.

#### iv) Questions from the floor:

- a) Linda Marks enquired about the £28K unpaid debts showing for 2008. HL explained that these will show as income in 2009 accounts.
- b) NS asked for a projected figure on the conference. HL felt it would be unwise to speculate too much at this early stage, although based on numbers attending it was likely to be a surplus in excess of £50K. If this is the case, the net surplus in 2009, once costs taken into account, would be in the region of £30K.
- c) There would be calls on this money - for example, supporting the research fund and investing in development of the website. The treasurer stated that it is partly in the hands of the chair as to how the surplus can best be invested to fulfil the aims of the organisation most effectively.
- d) Barend ter Haar (BtH) recommended that some of the 2009 surplus needs to be kept back, because any profit realised on the International Conference in 2010 will be shared with BSRM and SPMN. He believed that additional training activities were to be organised by PMG as additional fund raising in 2010
- e) Question asked from the floor about how much was invested in the Research Fund in 2008. David Porter, chair of R&D sub-committee stated that although the exact figure spent in the year is difficult to show, there was approx £20K available to the research fund during the year. HL announced that £10K was committed in 2008, with £7K actually spent, explaining that accounting practice requires that actual spend is shown, not what is offered in grants. The allocation is ahead of the actual expenditure.
- f) Question from the floor about what "charitable activities" refers to. HL explained that all the group's activities are charitable because it is a charity. The layout of the accounts is standardised by the auditors for submission to the charities commissions.
- g) HL acknowledged that it would be desirable for the accounts to be made available for the membership to study ahead of the AGM, but that this is not always achievable as they have to be audited first - getting them back from the auditors in time is often

difficult. HL asked if the members would like the accounts included in delegate bags for future AGM's. Agreed.

- h) Lone Rose acknowledged the need for the accounting protocols but would have like to see the Notes referred to. HL explained that the Notes are provided in the full accounts which run to 10 pages, and anyone present could have sight of them today as he had brought a full set with him. HL to arrange for these to be on the PMG website in due course.
- i) NS felt that the questions from the floor were a positive sign that the membership is keen to be involved, and that the committee are now aware of what needs to be done to provide full information in good time.
- j) Lone Rose had hoped to see a breakdown of what the money is actually spent on and where the income came from. HL explained that it is not a requirement for charities to produce such breakdowns in their official accounts. However if the membership wish a more detailed breakdown of income and expenditure items, this can be produced. HL explained that such schedules of income & expenditure are regularly provided for finance sub-committee and ratified by the executive, but he would be happy for these to be posted in the members section on the PMG website. Agreed.
- k) From the floor – although members understand the difficulties of timing and the delay from auditors, the accounts come to the AGM to be approved by the membership. If the accounts cannot be understood, then how can they be approved? There is a distinction between accounts being audited and being approved by the membership. As a charity there is an obligation for the members, and not just the committee, to understand the accounts. Agreed that the detailed accounts should be posted in the membership area of the PMG website ahead of next AGM and in future years. The members present at the AGM would then feel confident in approving them, because the whole membership will have had the opportunity to raise questions.
- l) NS asked if, given the current debate, the meeting was still prepared to approve the 2008 accounts or should there be a further discussion? Mike Edwards proposed that the accounts be accepted by the meeting, and James Currell seconded. The motion was carried, with 2 votes against and 9 abstentions.

#### 4. Chair's Report

The chair's report had been provided for all those present, and the chair gave a brief resume, stating how much he valued this face to face interaction with the membership. NS thanked various personnel who had worked so hard to achieve so much in his first year as chair – the PMG secretariat OE and Simon Hukku; the executive committee members; all the sub-committees plus, this year for the first time, the group of additional volunteers specifically helping with the NTE, the training day and the webcasting project.

##### **A. Report on changes in executive committee structure –**

- i) NTE chair is now a member of the Finance sub-committee
- ii) Fundraising component in the Finance sub-committee, but not yet active
- iii) Executive Committee meetings now have Treasurer's report as the first main item of business

##### **B. PMG officers and work of the sub-committees**

- i) NS introduced **Helen Hislop (HH)** - vice-chair of the group; **Henry Lumley (HL)** - treasurer; **Jane Chantry (JC)** - chair of Publications & Marketing; **Kirsty-Ann Cutler (KAC)** - chair of NTE; **Barend ter Haar, Dave Long (DL) & Bart van der Heyden** – chairs of 2010 International Conference planning; **David Porter (DP) & Donna Cowan (DC)** – chairs of Research & Development; **HH** – chair of Government Relations; **Jo Jex (JJ) & Monica Young (MY)** – chairs of Education & Training; **Clare Wright (CW)** – overall chair of Special Interest Groups; **James Hollington (JH)** - chair of Website development.
- ii) NTE- Special thanks and congratulations to KAC, her sub-committee and OE - who took over the contract for organising the conference - for the success of the current event which will fund the activities of the group over the next year. In order to maintain continuity, KAC has joined the organising committee of the 2010 International Conference.

- iii) *Training Day* – NS reported that 210 delegates had attended the pre-conference training day, and thanked JJ, MY and OE for organising this additional event. It had been based on the same format as the pre-conference training day at Exeter 2005, led by Martin Moore, from which the Education & Training sub-committee was born. It is likely to become a regular feature at future PMG conferences.
  - iv) *SIGs* – NS reported on the first meeting of PMG SIGs that morning. General feedback is that such meetings should be later in the day to encourage a greater turnout. He thanked CW and James Foy for all their hard work getting SIGs up and running so quickly, and to all the various group chairs for supporting the new venture. NS hopes that it will encourage membership to become more involved in the group's activities. As SIGs develop, no doubt future leaders of PMG will emerge from these new groups.  
*At this juncture, CW, overall chair of PMG SIGs, gave a guided tour of how to access the SIGs forum. These instructions were later published in the July 2009 issue of the PMG journal and are also available on the PMG website via the SIGs Forum instructions page [www.pmguk.co.uk/Members/SIGs+Forum/](http://www.pmguk.co.uk/Members/SIGs+Forum/) in the section headed **Problems**.*
  - v) *R&D Sub-committee*: thanks to David Porter, Donna Cowan and the rest of the sub-committee for their on-going work, now a vital fixture of PMG, producing researchers of the future. Results from PMG funded research projects having been presented in Free Papers this week.
  - vi) *Website Development*: NS congratulated and thanked JH and his team for the huge amount of work they have done on behalf of PMG, producing the specification for a new website. The first document they produced was 107 pages long! Sadly the level of work required to install and support a website with such a high spec proved too costly, and the team will bring an amended spec back to the committee in due course.  
This sub-committee has recently added webcasting to its brief, this being led by Paul Hewett. The webcasts from 2008 and 2009 NTEs will be available to watch via the PMG website in due course.  
NS emphasised the importance of the website as a vital part of the potential of PMG, in particular for training opportunities through the webcasts, and more general outreach.
  - vii) *Publications & Marketing*: NS thanked JC and her team for their tireless work in creating a "mouthpiece" for PMG. He encouraged members to contact OE if they have a topic they wished to write about for the journal.
  - viii) *Government Relations*: DL recently handed over the chairing of this sub-committee to HH. She has been attending key meetings and also set up a training for executive committee members on *How Government Works*. Baroness Masham has offered to assist her, so that PMG gets to know how the lobbying processes work. HH is organising a Strategy Development Day for the PMG leadership later in April 09.
  - ix) *International Conference 2010* – theme of Best Practice to be held at SECC, Glasgow. Further details at [www.mobility2010.org/](http://www.mobility2010.org/).
  - x) *Finance*: thanks to HL for all his work as Hon treasurer; financial situation looking bright again going forward from this conference.
  - xi) *Changes in Executive Committee personnel*
- i) NS reported that BtH is leaving the executive committee this year after many years service to PMG; MY also leaving this year, as well as Martin Moore who has served on executive for 7 years.
- ii) With only 3 nominations for new members of committee NS would seek approval for the following to be voted onto the executive committee for 2009/2010 –  
**CW**, who was co-opted onto the Executive Committee for a year as chair of SIGs;  
**Carolyn Nichols**, already a co-opted member of the Publications & Marketing sub-committee, and about to replace Joanne McConnell (JMcC) as editor of the journal. Thanks recorded to JMcC for her work as editor for the past 4 years.  
**Alison Johnston**, a founder and continuing member of the PMG R&D sub-committee.

- C. *Crying Wolf meeting, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2009* – set up to examine the on-going issues of Field Safety Notices. NS to write a report which will be posted on PMG website in due course.
- D. *Alliances* – NS hoping to create alliance with the Irish Posture & Mobility Network and RESNA, Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America.
- E. *Accreditation* – striving for EU funding as it is a highly costly undertaking.
- F. *Joining PMG* – Ordinary member Mike Hare (MH) had previously approached NS to ask about joining PMG, as he finds it very difficult to join via the online system. MH, from the floor, also explained the difficulties he experiences with the electronic booking system for NTE, because of the way his Trust finance operates. He feels that the current online membership system mitigates against PMG as it discourages members from joining – the finances of the group might improve if there was the option of paper forms for both joining PMG and booking for NTE, or an improved website. He had also discussed the issue with other members, so not just an individual problem. Another member supported MH from the floor, with another raising the issue of the additional £15 incurred to join when paying by cheque. Could this surcharge be highlighted on the relevant website page? NS assured the meeting that their concerns will be looked at by the executive committee.
- G. *SIGs chairs concessions*: the idea has been put forward that the SIGs chairs should receive concessions on their NTE attendance fees, in acknowledgement of the work involved. This will be taken to PMG executive committee.

Paul Marl proposed acceptance of the Chair's report, seconded by Rebekah Marks-Hubbard. Approved unanimously.

#### **5. New committee members**

Agreed that all 3 members nominated for executive committee members be voted in. Jack Refell from the floor asked for a round of applause for the 3 outgoing members – applause from the floor.

**6. Presentation** made to BtH in recognition of his immense contribution to the group over many years.

**7. Date of next AGM:** June 7<sup>th</sup> 2010 at 5.30pm, SECC in Glasgow

Please check date of AGM as it is subject to change, depending on conference timetable.