

THE VASCULAR SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

MINUTES OF THE 39th ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING ON 25 NOVEMBER 2004 AT THE HARROGATE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, HARROGATE

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Baird, Mr B Braithwaite, Mr R Holdsworth, Mr D Lambert, Mr S Rose and Mr K Woodburn.

2. DEATHS

Members stood in silence as a mark of respect for the following Society Members who had died during the year:

Miss J Ackroyd
Mr J R Kenyon
Mr M Vickery

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual General Business Meeting on 27 November 2003 were approved as a correct record.

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President referred Members to his report in the Yearbook in which he had summarised the activities of Council during the past year. He referred to the issue of a national aneurysm screening programme, and reported that he had attended a meeting of the joint DoH/NHS Working Group to consider the feasibility of implementing a programme in England. He thanked those Members who had responded to his questionnaire prior to this meeting, which showed that the majority of vascular surgeons were in favour of a national screening programme, although it was accepted that this would increase workload. The President hoped that the Group would reach a conclusion at its next meeting in February.

The Group sought information from the Society on how screening networks could be established across the country and how they could be supported regionally. The President proposed to involve Vascular Advisors to help identify geographical areas with appropriate populations, potential screening headquarters and vascular surgical units that could contribute to the programme. He suggested that this should be based on populations of 1 to 1.5 million people. The President indicated that, if a screening programme was implemented, it would need to be of a high standard and would require an audit of its results. This would be considered further by the Audit Committee over the next year.

5. HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Honorary Secretary referred Members to his report in the Yearbook. He brought to Members' attention an issue recently considered by Council regarding the future publication of Society abstracts in the British Journal of Surgery. It was noted that the BJS were experiencing difficulties with including abstracts in its journal, because of limited space and cost. It therefore proposed to set up an e-abstract section on its website,

where fully citeable abstracts could be published, which would have the advantage of flexibility and speed over paper publication. Following representation from Council, the BJS agreed that, as an interim measure, it would offer the Society full publication on paper of the twelve best (prize session) abstracts, with the remainder of the oral presentations to be noted by title and author only with the full abstract published on the website.

Professor Campbell wondered whether the Society was committed to publishing its abstracts in the BJS and whether Council had explored other options. Mr Beard indicated that he would shortly be assuming the role of Editor in Chief of the European Journal of Vascular Surgery and would be keen to include abstracts from European meetings. Professor Naylor queried whether this would be practical and did not see a problem in publishing abstracts on the website. Other members disagreed, stating that possible publication in the BJS encouraged the submission of abstracts to the Society's meeting.

Mr Earnshaw, BJS Editor, apologised to Members on behalf of the BJS but explained that the journal had become top heavy and it was no longer possible to include abstracts from any of the Specialty Associations. The long association with the Vascular Society was recognised, and he emphasised that fast track publication of abstracts from the Society's meeting would still be available and he encouraged presenters to avail themselves of this.

The Honorary Secretary agreed to convey Members' views to the BJS.

The Honorary Secretary reported that the Society's membership continued to increase with a total of 731 members in 2004, compared to 702 the previous year, comprising:

Affiliate	128
Associate	14
Honorary	18
Ordinary	450
Overseas	14
Senior	107

6. HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

The Honorary Treasurer reported that the current financial status of the Society was much healthier than the same time last year, with approximately £300,000 in the bank compared to £173,000 in 2003. In addition, the assets transferred from the BVF totalled approximately £150,000.

To maintain this improvement in the finances of the Society, the Honorary Treasurer proposed that membership subscriptions should increase in January 2006 for Ordinary Members from £135 to £145, and from £70 to £75 for Affiliates, Associates, and Overseas Members. However, he stated that if the Society's finances continued to stabilise during the next year, the new Treasurer, Mr David Berridge, would reconsider whether to implement this increase.

On behalf of the Society, the President thanked Mr Galland for his work as Honorary Treasurer over the past four years.

7. AUDIT AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Mr Ashley apologised that it had not proved possible to provide the full version of the fourth NVD report at the Society's meeting. He hoped that it would be possible to publish this early in the New Year. He reiterated that the deadline for data submission remained

31st March, and encouraged Members to submit data. Mr Ashley indicated that new datasets would be introduced in the next year, and he also hoped it would be possible to introduce web-based data entry.

Professor Naylor referred to the ongoing national audit of carotid artery disease. He was aware that the Society had requested its name be removed from correspondence relating to this audit, and urged the Society to reconsider and support the project. Mr Ashley stated that Council had supported the principle of the audit but expressed concern at the involvement of neurologists in pre- and post-operative assessment of the patient, which had proved difficult in some centres. It was also felt that it was inappropriate for full endorsement to be given by the Society, particularly as the Society did not support any other national audit projects.

8. TRAINING AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Professor Scott thanked Mr Keith Jones for his work on the Committee over the past two years as the Affiliate representative. He also thanked Professor Bradbury whose term of office on Council ended, although he would remain on the Committee for a further year.

Professor Scott stated that the Committee would be working on developing a vascular curriculum and syllabus over the next year, and he would be looking to Members of the Society to assist him with this project.

9. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Professor Campbell reported that the Professional Standards Committee had met once during the year, but had dealt with issues by e-mail and telephone. The Committee continued to pursue details of varicose vein claims and had been asked to become involved in matters of service organisation.

Members were advised that the Committee had presented a document to Council outlining proposed action when 'outliers' were identified from the National Vascular Database (NVD). It was noted that the threshold for concern and action as a result of NVD figures should be agreed by Council in discussion with representatives of the Audit and Research Committee, and not determined by the Professional Standards Committee (PSC). If the figures of any surgeon transgressed the agreed threshold (yet to be determined), the Chairman of the Audit and Research Committee would check the identity of the surgeon and inform the President and the Chairman of the PSC. The identity of the surgeon would remain confidential to these three Officers, and the Chief Executive who would deal with the correspondence.

The document proposed that the President would inform the surgeon and the Medical Director of the employing trust simultaneously by confidential letter, and that the surgeon would be telephoned personally prior to the letter being dispatched. The letter from the Society would also suggest to the Medical Director that the surgeon should be suspended from undertaking the particular procedure, which had given cause for concern, until the matter had been resolved. The President's telephone call to the surgeon would advise this course of action, stressing that there was no reason to suggest that the surgeon should not continue to undertake other work and procedures in the normal way. It was acknowledged that, in some cases, it was possible to explain anomalies due to incorrect data collection or submission. Professor Campbell stressed that any action taken would be supportive to colleagues rather than punitive. Once the document had been ratified by Council, and the thresholds determined, it was proposed to circulate the document to Medical Directors. Professor Campbell also indicated that non-contributors to the NVD and non-Members undertaking index arterial procedures would be informed of this process.

Mr Ashley stated that Council would be considering the threshold level at its next meeting, and it was likely to concentrate on mortality figures as the numbers were small and likely to be aggregated over 2-3 years. Members supported this proposal which was felt to be a positive step. Miss Renton concurred with the approach to write to Medical Directors regarding non-contributors to the NVD in the hope that it may encourage financial support to providing the infrastructure to contribute to the database.

10. VASCULAR TUTOR

Mr MacSweeney reported that many courses developed since his appointment as Vascular Tutor were now being repeated at the RCS(Eng). He sought feedback from Members as to possible future courses. Mr Wolfe indicated that an endovascular course to be held in Brussels had sold out in one day, and there was clearly a need for such a course.

11. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

(i) Result Of Ballot For Ordinary Members

The successful candidates in the ballot for election to Council for 2004-2007 were as follows:

Mr M Lewis

Mr K Varty

Mr R Vohra

On behalf of the Society, the President thanked the retiring members of Council: Professor A Bradbury, Mr C Gibbons and Mr D Lambert. He also expressed his personal gratitude to the Officers of the Society and Council for their support during the year, and in particular thanked the Committee Chairmen for the work they had undertaken on behalf of the Society.

The President confirmed that Mr John Wolfe had been elected as President Elect for 2004-2005.

12. BVF SUBCOMMITTEE

Professor Horrocks reported from the first meeting of the BVF Subcommittee, which had been held earlier that day, chaired by Professor Sir Peter Bell. The Committee undertook to increase its fundraising potential during the year and sought the support of Members with local fundraising initiatives. Members were advised that an inaugural dinner of The Vascular Society and the BVF would be held on Wednesday 11 May 2005 at the Merchant Taylor's Hall, London, and he encouraged Members to attend. In addition, Mr Tim Lees was organising a ball in aid of the BVF at the Hilton Hotel in Newcastle on Saturday 10 September. The Committee would also be exploring the possibility of a patron for the BVF.

13. AGM 2005: BOURNEMOUTH

Professor Horrocks advised Members that the AGM in 2005 would be from 23-25 November at the Bournemouth International Centre, Bournemouth. The theme for the meeting would be education and training.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 24 November 2005 at the Bournemouth International Centre, Bournemouth.