

Archive

Summary Proceedings of Members' Meetings



The Members of Medical Research Scotland normally meet twice-yearly, when they consider applications submitted for research support and, in light of the available funds and the advice they have received from referees, decide which to award. The following summarise the main points of discussion at meetings since July 2004. In all instances, further information about particular topics may be obtained, if required, on application to the Trust Secretaries at: enquiries@medicalresearchscotland.org.uk

26 February 2010

Funding for Research - After consideration and discussion of all the applications received and the referees' reports on them, the Members agreed to award three Research Project Grants. The Members had previously scored a number of Progress and Final Reports submitted by current and recent grantholders. It was noted with pleasure that one of the Final Reports had scored very highly; the Progress Reports had, with one exception, been scored as being Satisfactory or better. After discussion, it was agreed that the Chairman should write to the individual responsible for the report deemed to be Unsatisfactory and also to the relevant Division within the host university, reminding them of the consequences of this failure to meet the Trust's Standard Conditions of Award.

Scottish Senior Clinical Fellowships Scheme - The Chairman reported on a meeting he had held with Professor Sir David Carter (Chairman of the Scheme), in respect of this scheme and, after discussion among the Members, it was agreed to continue to support the Scheme for a further (3rd) year.

Meet the Researcher Showcase Event - The Members received an update on plans for this occasion, to be held in Glasgow on Monday 15 March and which would be attended by HRH The Princess Royal. It was anticipated that more than 60 senior (5th and 6th year) pupils from schools in Glasgow and the West of Scotland would take part in the event, which will incorporate poster presentations by nine current grantholders and brief careers talks by some current and former scientific/medical Members.

Membership - The Chairman welcomed the two new Lay Members (Messrs Brian Duffin and Bruce Mann) to the meeting and noted both that this was the last meeting at which Professor Michael Steel and Mr Fred Dalgarno would be present, as they were retiring by rotation and further, that Dr Denise Coia had resigned recently, due to pressure of other work commitments. It was agreed that replacements with the appropriate skills sets and experience would be sought by advertisement in the near future.

Annual & Five-year Plans - The draft Annual Plan for 2010-11 was approved, subject to minor modification and it was agreed that the 5-year Plan would be finalised in light of the Members' imminent discussions on overall strategy.

Investments - the Members noted the quarterly report (to 31 December 2009) received from the Investment Managers and approved the recommendation of the Audit & Investment Committee that, further to completion of the tendering process, Martin Currie be reappointed for a three-year term.

28th August, 2009

Funding for Research - After consideration and discussion of all the applications received and the referees' reports on them, the Members agreed to award four Research Project Grants, two being subject to minor modification. They also agreed to award supplementary support to one of the four applications received under the Scottish Senior Clinical Fellowships Scheme and decided, in light of the experience of this first round, to consider further the criteria for Medical Research Scotland support prior to inviting applications for a second round. The Members had previously scored a number of Progress and Final Reports submitted by current and recent grantholders and it was noted that all were scored as being Satisfactory or better. Several post-completion follow-up reports were noted with interest.

Membership - It was noted that this would be the last meeting at which Professor Brown and Mr Alan Stewart would be present, as Mr Stewart would be retiring with effect from 31 August and Professor Brown from 14 November, both having served two terms, as a Member and as Chairman respectively. The Members also formally confirmed that Professor David Harrison would assume the Chairmanship with effect from the date of Professor Brown's retirement. It was noted that discussions were under way with respect to appointing a Lay Member with specific investment expertise as replacement for Mr Stewart, that another Lay Member would be sought in the near future and that a review of the number and skill set of the Scientific Members would take place early in 2010.

Annual Report & Accounts - the Members approved for signature the Annual Report & Accounts for the year to 31st March 2009. The Members also noted that the Medical Research Scotland Review 2008-09, proofs of which they had seen and approved previously, had been printed and was ready for distribution, accompanied by copies of the promotional DVD produced earlier in the year.

Research Strategy - it was agreed that Professor Harrison, as Chairman-elect, would coordinate the annual review of the Strategy, prior to an updated version being made available on the website.

Investments - the Members received and noted a report from the Investment Managers on investment performance for the three-month period to 30th June, 2009 and also that the Secretaries had received an

update from the Investment Managers earlier that week, which indicated strong recent performance on the investment portfolio.

Secretarial/Administrative matters - the Members considered several items, including the routine reviews of external services, approving the change of Auditors with effect from the current year and proposals for invitation to tender for the provision of Investment Management services.

13th February, 2009

Funding for Research - After consideration and discussion of all the applications received and the referees' reports on them, the Members agreed to award three Research Project Grants, subject to some minor clarifications. The Members had previously scored a number of Progress and Final Reports submitted by current and recent grantholders and it was noted that all were scored as being Satisfactory or better. The Members confirmed that, the three-year pilot having run its course, the named fellowship restricted to members of the Nursing, Midwifery & Allied Health Professions would no longer be offered. It was agreed that, in principle, Medical Research Scotland might be prepared to provide some support to the new Scottish Senior Clinical Fellowship Scheme, on the condition that in so doing, it would be able to ensure the maintenance of the Trust's reputation for only supporting work and individuals of the highest quality. The outcome of further discussions would be awaited with interest.

Membership - The Members agreed the process for finding and appointing a new Chairman (who would be a biomedical scientist) with effect from November 2009 and also that detailed consideration be given to seeking replacements, with appropriate expertise and experience, for two long-standing Lay Members who would be retiring by rotation in November 2009 and July 2010.

Full Economic Costing of research projects - the Members noted with interest a report from the Scientific Adviser of wide-ranging discussions and developments to date which were seeking to secure appropriate equivalence in Scotland to the situation pertaining in England & Wales with respect to the Charity Research Support Fund and look forward to learning more in due course.

Investments - the Members received a report from the Investment Managers on investment performance for the three-month period to 31 December 2008, augmented by a short summary document commenting more generally on global market performance and prospects for the coming months. It was noted that there is likely to be a reduction in the level of the investment income, both as a result of companies cutting their dividends and also the reduction in interest rates, but the Members were reassured by the level of brought-forward income, which means that funding can continue to be awarded going forward at a similar level, subject to applications meeting the Trust's high standards, and the Members are also, as mentioned above, looking at supporting the new Scottish Senior Clinical Fellowship Scheme.

Annual Review 2007-08 - it was noted with interest that the latest edition of the *Annual Review* had been short-listed in the 'Use of Design' category, for the AMRC Communication Awards and that the winners would be announced at a reception to be held in London in March 2009.

Secretarial/Administrative matters - the Members considered several items, including approving the implementation of the new online procedures for declaring possible Conflicts of Interest in funding applications and the resultant adjustment to the Procedures document; approving a draft Annual Plan 2009-10 and agreeing that a 5-Year Plan (2009-14) should be prepared.

29th August, 2008

Funding for Research - After consideration and discussion of all the applications received and the referees' reports on them, the Members agreed to award four Research Project Grants, subject to some minor modifications. The Members had previously scored a number of Progress and Final Reports submitted by current and recent grantholders and it was noted that all were scored as being Satisfactory or better. Several post-completion follow-up reports were noted with interest. The Members noted that no applications had been received for the Tyson Fellowship this year. It was agreed that there should be a detailed discussion at the next meeting about how best to use and recognise the Tyson Bequest in the future.

Annual Report & Accounts - the Members approved for signature the *Annual Report & Accounts* for the year to 31st March 2008. The Members also reviewed and commented on proof copies of the *Medical Research Scotland Review 2007-08*. Subject to some minor adjustments to the text, this was also approved by the Members for printing and distribution as part of the Trust's marketing and fundraising activities.

Research Strategy - it was agreed that this should again be reviewed and updated as appropriate, prior to being made available on the website.

Investments - the Members received and noted a report from the Investment Managers on investment performance for the three-month period to 30th June, 2008 and commented briefly on the current volatility in global markets.

Secretarial/Administrative matters - the Members considered several items, including approving the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Procedures documents following their annual review and minor revision.

12th February, 2008

Membership - The Chairman welcomed Professors Margarete Heck, Allan Mowat and Stephen Wigmore to their first meeting as Members. The Members unanimously re-appointed the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for a further year, noted a report from the Secretaries on membership rotation and agreed that they would discuss this matter further at their August meeting.

Funding for Research - After consideration and discussion of all the applications received and the referees' reports on them, the Members agreed to award three Research Project Grants, all subject to some minor modifications. The Members had previously scored a number of Progress and Final Reports submitted by current and recent grantholders and it was noted that all were scored satisfactory or better. The Scientific Adviser explained some adjustments to the reporting procedures and report forms, which were approved by the Members. It was noted that the new Set-up Report (required at 6 months) would serve to enable the Scientific Adviser to ensure that a project is running as expected.

Standard Conditions Applying to the Award of Medical Research Scotland Funding - the Members approved the minor amendments to these which were now necessary to accommodate the revised reporting procedures.

Research Strategy - having previously agreed that this should be reviewed and updated as appropriately on an annual basis, the Members noted the updated version.

Investments - the Members received and noted a report from the Investment Managers on investment performance for the three-month period to 31st December, 2008.

Secretarial/Administrative matters - the Members considered several items, including the possible further revision of the format and content of the *Annual Review*.

3rd August, 2007

Membership - The Chairman welcomed Dr Denise Coia to her first meeting as a Member and also noted with pleasure that Dr Graham Beastall (recently retired from the membership) had been awarded a CBE in HM The Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to laboratory medicine, commenting that the award was very well deserved.

Funding for Research - the Members formally confirmed the award of the second Tyson Research Fellowship to Dr Anna Sutherland and, after discussion, agreed that the Fellowship had a potentially valuable role and to review it in a further year's time. After consideration and discussion of all the applications received and the referees' reports on them, the Members agreed to award three Research Project Grants. The Members had previously scored a number of Progress and Final Reports submitted by current and recent grantholders and these were discussed. The report of the Scientific Adviser on the Research Open Day held in May was noted.

Standard Conditions Applying to the Award of Medical Research Scotland Funding - the Members approved the revised version of these and thanked Ms Nicolson and Dr Macnab for the time they had taken discussing the changes with representatives of the Scottish Universities and for reaching this conclusion.

Annual Report & Accounts - the Members approved for signature the *Annual Report & Accounts* for the year to 31st March 2007, subject to some minor adjustments to the wording of the text. The Members also reviewed and commented on the proof copy of the proposed *Medical Research Scotland Review 2006-07*, which is intended will be used for marketing and fundraising purposes. It was noted that although this only contains a short financial summary, the full Accounts will be readily available on request to the Secretaries. Subject to some adjustments in the balance of content, this document was also approved by the Members.

Investments - the Members received and noted a report from the Investment Managers on investment performance for the three-month period to 30th June, 2007. The Members agreed that henceforward, there should be no direct investment in alcohol-related stock.

Secretarial/Administrative matters - the Members considered several items, including the continued development of the online applications and review system.

2nd February, 2007

Membership - The Chairman welcomed the recently-appointed new Members to their first meeting and received the congratulations of all present on her award of an OBE in the recent Honours List. It was noted that Dr Graham Beastall was attending his last meeting, as he would be retiring from membership at the end of March having served two terms as a Member and had also been Deputy Chairman for the past year.

Funding for Research - after consideration and discussion of all the applications received and the referees' reports on them, the Members agreed to award two Research Project Grants. The Members had previously scored a number of Progress and Final Reports submitted by current and recent grantholders and these were discussed. It was noted that the annual Grantholders' Research Open Day would take place on Tuesday 29th May.

Investments - the Members received and noted a report from the Investment Managers on investment performance for the period ended 31st December 2006. There was subsequently discussion on ethical aspects of the charity's investment policy.

Secretarial/Administrative matters - the Members considered several items, including its Code of Conduct for Members, which had been reviewed and revised following independence.

4th August, 2006

Annual Report & Accounts 2005 -06 - having been circulated previously, the Members approved these for signature and agreed that they be given a limited printed circulation and a version made available on the Medical Research Scotland website.

Funding for Research - after consideration and discussion of all the applications received and the referees' reports on them, the Members agreed to award four Research Project Grants and confirmed the award (made earlier in the year following interview) of the Medical Research Scotland/Mrs Jean V. Baxter Medical Research Fellowship and the Medical Research Scotland/Mrs Mary Tyson Nursing, Midwifery & AHP Research Fellowship. The Members also considered and scored a number of Progress and Final Reports submitted by current and recent grantholders. Following detailed discussion, the Members further agreed to make significant changes to the level and type of awards available to applicants in future years.

Investments - the Members received and noted a report from the Investment Manager on investment performance for the period ended 31st June 2006.

Secretarial/Administrative matters - the Members considered several items, including the operation and development of its web-based grant application systems.

3rd February, 2006

Annual Report & Accounts - The Members learned that the *Annual Report & Accounts* for the year to 31st July 2005 were laid before the Scottish Parliament on 24th January, 2006 and that printed copies would be distributed by mail shortly and a version made available on the SHERT website.

Membership - The Chairman welcomed Mr John Naylor to the meeting as one of two newly-appointed Members. The second new Member, Professor Ian Greer, had been unable to attend the meeting. It was noted that four further potential new Members would be being interviewed in the near future. If all were subsequently appointed, the total membership of SHERT would be 13, with a majority of scientific/medical Members.

Awards - After consideration and discussion of all the applications received and the referees' reports on them, the Members agreed to award three Research Project Grants. The Members also considered and scored a number of Progress and Final Reports submitted by current and recent grantholders.

Investment Matters - The Trust's investment manager attended to report on investment performance for the period ended 31st December 2005. The Members approved changes to the Investment Management Agreement in light of the wider investment powers now in force by virtue of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Secretarial and Administrative matters - The Members discussed a number of matters including the operation and progress on development of its web-based grant application and review systems.

11th November, 2005

Annual Report & Accounts for the year to 31st July 2005 - the Members received and approved the 51st *Annual Report & Accounts* and authorised them to be signed. These will be forwarded to the Auditor General for Scotland for laying before the Scottish Parliament, prior to publication.

Investments - the Trust's investment managers attended to report to the Members on investment performance for the quarter ended 30th September, 2005.

Independence - the Secretaries confirmed that SHERT had become an independent charity with effect from 1st November 2005. The Members then considered and approved a number of documents relating to the proposed modus operandi of the newly-independent SHERT, including Procedures, Standing Orders and the procedures for the appointment of new Members.

Membership - the Members noted that Professor Jane Bower had resigned with effect from 1st November. She had been reappointed, beyond her original term of office, until SHERT's independence. The Members had previously agreed that it would be necessary, following the granting of independent status and the ending of the close relationship with the Chief Scientist Biomedical & Therapeutic Research Committee, for there to be an increase in the number of scientific Members. Accordingly, a selection process would be put in train immediately.

Research Fellowship for members of the Nursing, Midwifery & Allied Health Professions - The Members confirmed that the availability of this new award (see also below) should be publicised widely within the relevant academic and professional sectors in the near future.

Secretarial/Administrative matters - the Members considered several items, including the operation and development of its web-based grant application systems.

29th July, 2005

Research Grants - After consideration of the applications, the reports of independent reviewers and the advice of the BTRC, the Members decided to offer Research Project Grants to five applicants.

Change of Status - the Secretaries reported to the Members that the Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Bill had completed its passage through the Scottish Parliament on 30th June and that,

following the granting of Royal Assent, it was anticipated that SHERT would become an independent charity in October 2005.

Finance - the Trust's Investment Managers attended and reported to the Members on financial matters in general and the Members approved the notes on investment policy for inclusion with the Accounts, noting that changes may be necessary in future years, to comply with the detailed terms of the Charities & Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Standing Orders - the Members considered a draft and approved it, subject to a few minor amendments.

Membership - following discussion, draft procedures for the appointment and rotation of Members of the independent SHERT were approved subject to a few minor amendments.

Secretarial/Administrative matters - the Members considered several items, including drafts of the Trust's Annual Plan 2005-06, statements on Corporate Governance & Internal Control, Reserves Policy & Risk Management and the Audit Plan. All these were approved. The Members also considered other matters relating to publicity, marketing and fundraising once SHERT becomes independent. The operation of the first phase of the new website-based online grant application system was demonstrated.

12th November, 2004

Annual Report & Accounts for the year to 31st July 2004 - the Members received, approved and authorised to be signed the 50th *Annual Report & Accounts*. These were then forwarded to the Auditor General for Scotland for laying before the Scottish Parliament prior to publication.

Investments - the Trust's investment managers attended to report to the Members on investment performance for the quarter ended 30th September 2004.

Change of Status - the Secretaries reported to the Members on discussions with the Scottish Executive about drafting the sections of the Executive's proposed Bill which would enable the removal of NDPB status from SHERT.

Membership - the Members agreed to propose to the Chief Scientist Office that Members whose terms of office would normally come to an end in January 2005, be invited to continue to serve for at least the period which would ensure a smooth transition to independence for SHERT.

Secretarial/Administrative matters - the Members considered several items, including the operation of its web-based online grant application system and outstanding issues regarding its Fellowship & Scholarship awards.

16th July, 2004

Research Grant Awards - the Members considered the applications received and the peer-review reports on them and, after discussion awarded two grants.

Reports - the Members considered Progress and Final reports, as well as "post-completion check-up reports" on a number of grants previously awarded.

Investments - the Trust's investment managers attended to report to the Members on investment performance for the quarter ended 30th June 2004.

Future Status/Independence - the Secretaries reported to the Members on discussions with the Scottish Executive about the change of SHERT's status to that of an independent charity, which has been approved in principle by the Minister for Health and is awaiting a suitable legislative opportunity.

Freedom of Information - the Members considered and agreed to implement the actions required of SHERT to comply with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Audit and Secretarial matters - the Members approved the Trust's statements on Corporate Governance and Internal Controls and also approved new draft Annual and Five-year Plans.