



**MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)  
held via Zoom on Thursday 18th November 2021  
Registered Charity Number 1100648**

**Attendance & Apologies**

In attendance: Maria Bryant, Behera Kishore, Alex Miras, David Hughes, Graham Finlayson, Mary O’Kane, Nicola Heslehurst, Rebecca Richards, Rino Costanza, Simon Williams, Kevin Deans, Emillie Combet, Carolyn Summerbell, Clare Beynon, Nadya Isack, Rachel Batterham, Ken Clare, Georgios Dimitriadis, Lynsey Spillman, Dimitrios Koutoukidis, Patrick McGinley, Julia Mueller, Nerys Astbury, Victoria McIver

No apologies were received.

**Welcome from the Chair**

The Chair, Dr Maria Bryant (MB), opened the meeting and welcomed members attending online.

MB confirmed that all documentation in relation to the meeting had been circulated to members in advance. MB confirmed that members had been afforded the opportunity of voting on the Ordinary Resolutions set out at Item Number 7 of the Agenda, in advance of the meeting. The Chair reminded members that if they had opted to use a Proxy vote they should not attempt to vote again.

(NOTE A: copy of the resolutions and outcome of the voting process is attached to the Minutes as an Appendix).

MB confirmed that any member wishing to receive clarification on any of the matters raised during the meeting were invited to raise questions using the “Chat” facility. MB also confirmed that ASO welcomes comments from members by email.

**AGENDA ITEM 1**

**MINUTE 1/21**

The Chair confirmed that no questions had been raised regarding the contents and accuracy of the Minutes of the 2020 AGM.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the 2020 AGM be confirmed as a true record.

The Chair outlined to members that the Officers of the Board and the respective Chairs of the sub-committees would be providing short presentations on the work undertaken over the last year. Members were reminded that they were able to submit questions/points of clarification via the “Chat” facility. Members were also reminded that copies of all presentations were available on the ASO website.

## **AGENDA ITEM 2**

### **MINUTE 2/1/21**

Members received a verbal update and a slide presentation from the Chair on the activities of the ASO over the previous year. MB confirmed that, because of the ongoing COVID pandemic, the planned UKCO Congress 2021 had been cancelled. This was the second year that the ASO flagship event was cancelled. However, plans are now progressing for a face-to-face event in Lancaster in 2022, Belfast 2023 and Oxford 2024.

This year, in place of the Congress, ASO hosted a member only 2 day online event in September 2021 called Hot Topics. Sessions were focused discussions on: (1) The implications of recognising obesity as a disease; (2) post-pandemic priorities for prevention and treatment of obesity.

MB thanked everyone involved in developing the event. MB also thanked the session Chairs, Dr Giles Yeo and Professor Linda Bauld for facilitating the event. MB confirmed that ASO are planning to release papers for each of the topics and this workstream has started.

MB also confirmed that ASO hosted an early career researcher event, ‘SciComm 101’, the day before the Hot Topics event. This proved to be very popular and ASO have received some great feedback. MB offered her thanks to Dr Rebecca Richards for leading this event alongside a group of dedicated ECRs, including Dr Julia Mueller.

MB advised that with funding from Novo Nordisk, ASO have also continued to host monthly webinars including a range of topics with a varied group of presenters from across the world. The webinars have been used by ASO to build partnerships and relationships with our regional networks, and other organisations including EASO and the British Dietetic Association. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the webinars have raised the profile of ASO.

Since the last AGM, ASO have transferred the secretariat from BioScientifica to a joint appointment with Red Hot Irons and Simon and Gail Williams. This is working extremely well; balancing the organisational, technical and governance tasks led by Red Hot Irons with the communication, partnership and scientific oversight tasks led by Simon and Gail. During this time, Red Hot Irons have supported ASO by developing a new membership system and a new website. Simon and Gail have worked hard to build relationships with sponsors and partners and have recently launched a new ASO educational portfolio to be supported by Trustee Dr Nicola Heslehurst. MB offered her thanks to Red Hot Irons and Simon and Gail for helping to make this a seamless transition.

MB also acknowledged the work undertaken by Dr David Hughes with support from Red Hot Irons in relation to updating the ASO governance documentation.

MB reported that 14 applications were received for the 2021 grant awards, which focused on digital weight management. Completed applications were reviewed by ASO Trustees, plus additional external reviewers when conflicts of interest prohibited trustee review. Two grants were awarded and the recipients, Dr Georgios Dimitriadis and Dr Wendy Nicholls, will be invited to present their work at UKCO 2022. More details of their planned work can be seen on the ASO website. MB extended her

appreciation to Professor James Stubbs and the Research and Scientific Advisory sub-committee members for their efforts in setting up and awarding these grants.

MB reported that two trustees had resigned in 2021, Dr Abd Tahrani and Professor James Stubbs. On behalf of the ASO, MB offered her appreciation for their hard work during their time with the ASO and wished them both all the very best for the future. MB confirmed that Dr Rebecca Richards and Dr Alex Miras, have both agreed to take on the leadership roles for the Research and Clinical Practice sub-committees respectively.

MB confirmed that the ASO sought applications for new trustees and thirteen applications were received. MB thanked all applicants and encouraged members to consider standing for election in the future. MB also confirmed that, following a democratic decision from ASO members, five individuals have been nominated for appointment as new trustees. This proposal increases the total number of trustees to fifteen from the previous twelve. Members were advised that the ASO Board made this decision as the cost implications of additional trustees have been reduced as a result of the new blended approach to ASO operations, balanced against the needs to fill designated roles within the Association.

MB confirmed on behalf of the Board that ASO are looking forward to another year of activity, including continuing the webinar series and building and extending partnerships, including with the European Association for the Study of Obesity, the British Dietetic Association, The Nutrition Society and patient led organisations. MB advised members that it is hoped some of the ASO core activities (paused due to COVID), including the Centres for Obesity Management led by trustee Professor Batterham, will recommence in the next few months. year. The ASO flagship event, UKCO 2022, is planned as an in-person event next September in Lancaster, with a local organising committee led by Professor Jennifer Logue.

MB, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, confirmed that the trustees are all looking forward to an exciting year ahead and it is hoped that there will be more opportunities to see each other in person – and networking is something that MB feels that the ASO excels in.

No questions or points of clarification were received.

RESOLVED: The Chairman's Report be noted.

### **MINUTE 2/3/21**

Members received a recorded presentation and accompanying slide presentation from Dr David Hughes (DH), the ASO Secretary, who was unable to attend the meeting due to work commitments. DH confirmed that in conjunction with Red Hot Irons, he had concluded an internal governance review.

DH advised members that changes had been implemented to ensure that the ASO was compliant with the GDPR. He also confirmed that all relevant updates had been submitted to Companies House. The review of internal policies is ongoing, and members were advised that the following policies had been updated and will be uploaded to the ASO website after the meeting:

1. Financial Policies.
2. Publication, Endorsement and Representation Policies.
3. Sponsorship and Partnership Policies.

DH also advised members that the remaining ASO policies would be reviewed over the next twelve months and referred to members at the next AGM.

DH confirmed that the current membership fees are comparable to others in the market and currently there are no plans to change the level of fees, £60 for members and £30 for students. However, over the next year, consideration will be given to the introduction of a trainee and associate rate. Members will be advised of any planned changes. DH advised members that the membership numbers had reduced slightly over the year and, following a detailed review of the membership records over the last year, the following information has been confirmed:

5 Honorary members

325 Full members

125 Student members

DH acknowledged and offered his thanks to the Board members and the staff of Red Hot Irons for their advice and assistance over the year.

No questions or points of clarification were received.

RESOLVED: The Report of Dr David Hughes be noted.

#### **MINUTE 2/4/21**

Members received a verbal Report and accompanying slide presentation from Dr Rebecca Richards (RR) newly appointed as Chair of the Research and Scientific Advisory Sub-Committee following the resignation of Dr James Stubbs. RR, on behalf of the Trustees, offered her thanks to Dr James Stubbs for his hard work as Chair of the Research and Scientific Advisory Sub-Committee. RR gave a brief outline of roles and responsibilities of the Sub-Committee by reference to a slide presentation. RR confirmed to members that the Sub-Committee was looking forward to developing closer links with dedicated centres for personal and public involvement (PPI).

RR confirmed that the UKCO Hot Topics event was very well received, and Sci-Comm event linked with the Hot Topics event was also very successful.

RR highlighted the grants awarded this year by the Committee, previously mentioned by the Chair.

RR also took the opportunity to thank Ken Clare for his hard work in connection with the PPI membership scheme.

No questions or points of clarification were received.

RESOLVED: The Report of Dr Rebecca Richards be noted.

#### **MINUTE 2/5/21**

Members received a verbal report and accompanying slide presentation from Professor Graham Finlayson (GF), Chair of Communication, Networks and Partnerships Sub-Committee. GF briefly explained to members the roles and responsibilities of the Sub-Committee. GF highlighted that it had been a busy year for the Sub-Committee, the work undertaken assisting the review of the ASO website, co-ordinating responses to consultations, media statements, reviewing the content of the regular member updates, co-ordinating the monthly webinars and promoting the ASO through social media. GF advised members that the new ASO website is hosted by Red Hot Irons and its content has been much improved.

The ASO webinars have attracted a lot of interest and the current webinar series is full and scheduled to be completed in January 2022. Following the launch of the new and improved ASO website, the webinars have been integrated into the ASO website and the ASO YouTube channel has been retired.

GF offered his thanks to Simon and Gail Williams and Red Hot Irons for their assistance with these projects over the last year.

GF also highlighted to members that the content of the ASO newsletter has been improved and the ASO is continuing to develop its presence on social media with a view to encouraging and developing new sponsorship opportunities. GF advised members that he is planning an audit of the activities of the ASO Networks, of which there are ten. Network coordination is led by Dr Nerys Astbury and Professor Emilie Combet.

Members were advised that discussions are to take place in the next few weeks regarding the viability and planning of a third series of webinars. Members were also advised that patient representatives sit on all of the webinar panels.

GF also highlighted the work of the Sub Committee in the development of partnerships with EASO and WOF and latterly the Nutrition Society.

No questions or points of clarification were received.

RESOLVED: The Report of Professor Graham Finlayson was noted.

#### **MINUTE 2/6/21`**

Members received a verbal report and accompanying slide presentation from Dr Alex Miras (AM), Chair of Clinical Practice and Obesity Management Sub-Committee. AM briefly explained to members the roles and responsibilities of the Sub Committee.

AM confirmed to members that it had been a busy year for the Sub-Committee. Professor Rachel Batterham had been actively involved in high level discussions with policy makers at the House of Commons. The Committee members have also been active at meetings with surgical colleagues and other associations such as BOMMS. The Committee was responsible for submitting a response on behalf of the ASO to NICE in relation to the use of Saxendna. Members of the Sub-Committee were also involved in the arrangements of the UKCO Hot Topics event and progressing sponsorships for the event. Currently the Committee is overseeing the preparation of the 'outcomes report' in relation to UKCO Hot Topics 2020.

No questions or points of clarification were received.

RESOLVED: The Report of Professor Alex Miras be noted.

#### **MINUTE 2/7/21**

Members received a verbal Report and accompanying slide presentation from Mr Patrick McGinley (PM), ASO Treasurer. PM confirmed that the independently examined statements of accounts for the year ending June 2020 had been previously circulated to all members. PM highlighted for members the levels of total income for the year ending June 2020, details of expenditure and net assets. He explained to members that the ASO made a small loss in the year 2020. However, because of the changes to the organisational structure of the ASO it was anticipated that the losses would be reduced in the next year. PM also confirmed that, in conjunction with Red Hot Irons, he is reviewing the status of the ASO in relation to VAT and it is hoped that the ASO might be able to recover VAT payments. Additionally, the transfer of the ASO banking arrangements has now been concluded.

No questions or points of clarification were received.

RESOLVED: The examined Accounts of ASO and the Report of Mr Patrick McGinley be noted.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3**

#### **MINUTE 3**

MB formally announced the resignation of Dr Abd Tahrani and Professor Richard James Stubbs from the ASO Board. MB formally thanked them for their hard work during their term of office.

RESOLVED: The information be noted.

### **AGENDA ITEM 4.**

**Please see Minute 2/7/21**

### **AGENDA ITEM 5**

#### **MINUTE 5**

Members received the policies referenced in Item 5 of the agenda. MB highlighted that, as previously mentioned, ASO policies are in the process of a thorough review and update as part of the governance review undertaken by DH in conjunction with RHI. The policies listed have been amended to reflect current practices and relevant legislation. Members were advised that additional ASO policies will be reviewed over the next twelve months and circulated to members. It is also proposed that, in future, the Sponsorship and Partnership Policies would be reviewed on an annual basis.

No questions or points of clarification were received.

RESOLVED: The Financial Policies, the Publication, Endorsement and Representation Policies, and Sponsorship and Partnership Policies be approved, and members noted the intention to review additional ASO policies over the next twelve months and to review the Sponsorship and Partnership Policy on an annual basis.

### **AGENDA ITEM 6**

#### **MINUTE 6**

MB announced the award of an Honorary Fellowship to Professor Jason Halford, University of Leeds. Members were advised that the award was being made to Professor Halford to recognise his significant contribution to the field of obesity research and the activities of the ASO. Members received a short, recorded message from Professor Halford expressing his gratitude and appreciation for this honour.

RESOLVED: The Honorary Fellowship awarded to Professor Jason Halford be noted.

### **AGENDA ITEM 7**

#### **MINUTE 7a**

Members were asked to consider the reappointment of Essex Abel Limited as accountants to the ASO and their remuneration.

RESOLVED: To re-appoint Essex Abel Limited as accountants to the ASO, registered Charity, until the completion of the next annual general meeting of the Company at which accounts are laid and to authorise the trustees to fix their remuneration.

**MINUTE 7b**

Members were asked to consider the reappointment of Essex Abel Limited to identify an appropriate independent examiner to review the ASO financial accounts

RESOLVED: To re-appoint Essex Abel Limited to identify an appropriate independent examiner to review the financial accounts until the completion of the next annual general meeting of the Company at which accounts are laid.

**MINUTE 7c**

Members were asked to consider the appointment of new trustees

RESOLVED: to appoint the following trustees:

Professor Emilie Combet, Dr Georgios K. Dimitriadis, Sarah Le Brocq, Dr Julia Mueller and Mary O'Kane to the ASO Board of Trustees.

Meeting closed at 5.30pm.