

MINUTES of the meeting of the HPC Communications Committee held on Friday 27th September 2002. Park House, Kennington, London.

Present:

A Foster (Chairman)
S. Chaudhry
J. Stark

In attendance:

Mr. C. Middleton (Director of Communications/Secretary to the Committee)
Mr. M. Seale (Chief Executive & Registrar HPC) - Part

ITEM 1a **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from E. Price, C. McGartland, and M. Mackellar

ITEM 1b **MINUTES**

The notes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6th August 2002 were confirmed as a correct, record.

ITEM 2 **MATTERS ARISING**

It was asked that from now on Minutes should only show the Christian names of those participating. Titles such as Mr, Miss, Ms were to be dropped in favour of a more informal process.

It was further noted that the spelling of Chaudhry had been incorrect on previous minutes and that Eleanor had been listed along with Marc as Chief Executive & Registrar. This was to be changed.

Morag also attended the meeting on 6th August in full. Ann was the person who attended in part. Again this would be changed.

Ann wished it to be recorded that the media coverage in Belfast came about through HPC Communications activity and not through the PR agency.

ITEM 3 **REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS**

The Terms of Reference produced for the Shadow Communications Committee were updated and will be put forward to the Council in December with the wish that they be adopted as full Standing Orders for the Committee. (see attached)

ITEM 4 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION EXERCISE**

Chris said all public events were now complete. 4000 people had attended the events and in excess of 2000 replies had been received to the document. The process of collating these was ongoing. Chris stated a debt of gratitude was due to HPC staff and the Council members who had helped make these events a success.

It was agreed that the next stage was how to respond to this feedback and demonstrate HPC has listened.

A summary press release will be produced within the next two weeks aimed at the professional journals. It will outline some of the key statistics surrounding the Consultation exercise and inform people of the follow up events.

Marc expressed the importance of being able to pass a judicial review as being key to Consultation. Committee members stressed they saw the importance as being able to demonstrate HPC listened and that the vision of HPC remained positive.

ITEM 5 **MARKET RESEARCH**

Data from the raw questionnaire was distributed. Cleaner results would be presented to Council on October 9th and press activity would be planned around these results.

Ann stated that Council members would be happy to accompany Chris or others on lunches with journalists and stakeholders should that be seen as a route forward for communications.

ITEM 6 **UPDATE ON NEXT 3 EVENTS (Belfast/Cardiff/Edinburgh)**

Chris reported that the planning of the 3 events in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh was underway. He would be recommending that in the region of 50 individual registrants who had replied to Consultation be invited to the event nearest them.

Respective Health Ministers in Scotland, Ireland and Wales had been approached to attend and present at each event. The format for each event would be similar to the launch with an invited audience, short presentations and a brief Q & A session.

The role of Council at these events had not yet been determined. Chris said his recommendation would be that Edinburgh was a 3 line whip. The Cardiff and Belfast events in his opinion would not require full Council attendance. A list of potential invitees and the role of Council will be put to Marc next week for him to discuss with Norma.

ITEM 6a **BROCHURES**

Clarification was sought on the role of the committee regarding brochures. It was decided to liaise with Marc over this. Some kind of guidance was clearly needed to other committees on the production and style of brochures. It was asked if Newchurch or Chris was to produce this. Chris said he would ask Marc but was happy to do so. This would be further discussed at the next meeting of the Committee. The Committee would also agree on the titles they wish to be responsible for at the next meeting.

Jackie asked that they format be simple and that illustrations be used. Chris said he would contact the Communications Forum in relation to this.

Shaheen asked what the cost impact of getting Plain English to Crystal Mark the brochures will be. Chris said he would find out.

ITEM 7 **ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Ann wished to discuss the role of the Committee in relation to the rest of the Council. It was agreed that the Committee had a firm role to play in making Council aware of its public perception. The damage an unmitigated increase in fees could make to the image of Council was high on the agenda. The Committee agreed that unless the Council demonstrated it listened to people the exercise and HPC's image could be severely damaged. Jackie said the Finance committee had already discussed this topic. Chris said he felt it was the Communications Committees job to constantly reinforce this in the Council arena. It was agreed that Ann as chair of the committee would reinforce this in her presentation to Council in October.

It was agreed the Committee would do it's best to keep public perception of HPC high on the agenda when rules were being formulated.

Scenario Planning

Chris produced four negative articles that could potentially make the media as a result of the Council being unaware of its public perception. It was agreed one of these would also form a basis for Ann's presentation in October.

Copies of an OT chat room on the Internet relating to Consultation with HPC was distributed to members. It was agreed it should also be distributed to Council members at their October meeting.

ITEM 8 **CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

Chris produced a draft crisis management plan. It was agreed this should be worked up into a full plan. For the time being he would manage any crisis that broke. This would

be further discussed in November with the potential of it being adopted by Council at their December meeting.

AOB

There was none

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Health Professions Council Communications Committee will be at Park House, London on Monday 18th November 2002. 1100-1330

Chris was to circulate this date as an e-mail to all members.