

Minutes of a meeting of the Society Council

Held at Oxford & Cambridge Club 24th January 2013

In Attendance:

Wayne Bateman (Lay Member)

Dr Chris Forester (Chair)

Leigh Francis (Membership Officer)

Eimear McAllister (Chair of Conduct Committee – Lay Member)

Liz McElligott (Chief Executive)

Vicky Parkinson (Registration Administrator) Meeting Secretary

Steve Roche (Lay Member)

Gerry Willmore (Chair of Professional Standards Committee)

Apologies: Richard Harris (Lay Member)

1. The Chair opened the meeting at 10:50am.
2. Apologies were received from Richard Harris (Lay Member)
3. The Chair began the meeting with introductions from each member of the Council to introduce new members. The Chair explained his role is the overall strategy and ethos of the Society and to act in its best interests. Leigh Francis is responsible for membership services and benefits; Vicky Parkinson runs the administration of the Societies' registers; Gerry Willmore is head of professional standards and Liz McElligott, as Chief Executive, functions as the Society Registrar and oversees the registration function of the Societies. Our lay members present then introduced themselves. Steve Roche has an IT background and works in life coaching. Wayne Bateman worked in HR and recruitment before undergoing academic qualifications, and Eimear McAllister is a non practising Barrister who now delivers coaching to lawyers and is the Chair of our professional conduct committee.
4. The Chair gave an explanation to lay members of the regulatory history of counselling and hypnotherapy and the forthcoming PSA application was discussed. The history of the HPC involvement in statutory regulation and the controversies surrounding that coupled with the Coalition's decision to adopt an AVR scheme were noted. The Societies had supported this scheme from the beginning and the membership at large supports voluntary but not statutory regulation. The decision to apply to the PSA for AVR status was agreed by the Council.
5. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. It was not known whether the AVR process would be tenable for smaller organisations but it was agreed to attempt the application and to decide as things progressed whether it would be a tenable and sustainable use of Society resources to attempt AVR status.

6. The Council discussed the public protection priority of the AVR scheme. It was agreed that best practice would be to develop Societies through external assessment i.e council and committees together with an external validator and increasing lay representation. The difficulty of attracting lay volunteers was discussed. Council minutes would be made public from 2013. It was noted that the application to PSA makes Societies more accountable for their actions, and that public can be encouraged to look for PSA registered therapists.
7. The Chief Executive gave her report. She had been involved in the PSA workshops and project from the beginning and has overseen the improvements and changes to the Societies as a result of preparing for PSA over the past 18 months – 2 years. She reported that overall, the membership of the Societies were satisfied with the ethos and practices of the Societies but members would like to see the Societies achieve greater recognition. She was questioned over where the Societies source our members. A lot of members come through word of mouth and the networking of other members, with the remainder coming through accredited training programmes. The Chief Executive then reported that Leigh Francis had been employed to ensure that there was a greater firewall between the registration functions of the Societies and the membership services such as the newsletters and social media. The Chief Executive reported that our organisational members have grown with notable additions such as CRUSE and have the potential to grow further.
8. The Chief Executive reported that the Societies had conducted a thorough review of the complaints process and hired outside consultants in the form of the Clinic for Boundary Studies and Jonathan Coe. It was felt that it was especially important for public protection to have a fair, impartial process and the result was the new processes and the appointment of a lay Chair of the complaints panel who would assume duties shortly. This process was agreed. Lastly, it was noted that it was especially challenging to work out how to obtain feedback from actual clients and members of the public. A Society survey commissioned in 2012 using the mechanism of asking members to pass on a survey link to their clients yielded few results. A major challenge would be to find ways of soliciting public involvement.
9. Refreshments were served.
10. The Chair of the Professional Standards Committee reported following an interim meeting of the committee in January. It was confirmed that the Society utilised external training officers to visit training schools to assess teaching practice. The job of the committee moving forwards would be to attempt to further clarify and synthesise the estimated 600 or more existing documents relating to counselling standards from a wide variety of sources. The current points system was discussed and the decision of the committee to cease to allow client testimonials as part of individual applications was agreed on grounds of ethical suitability.
11. It was reported that the recent PS committee meeting discussed the source of applicants to the Societies and the need for more work on 'external, non-standard' applicants (i.e. applicants whose qualification routes, training accreditation etc were not already known by the Societies.) Lay Member Eimear McAllister noted the concept of Outcome Focused Regulation from her legal background. A discussion the similarities of this approach with course learning outcomes was discussed. It was agreed to investigate if could be of use to Societies.
12. The Societies' desire to retain a qualitative not quantitative approach to assessment which protects the diversity of counselling models and approaches was discussed. Counselling is

subjective and diverse the Societies hoped to keep a benchmark of standards that suits both approaches. A Lay Member asked if the Societies run courses. It was confirmed that the Societies only organise CPD courses by contracting externally and approving the content. There would be a conflict of interests in the Societies offering professional training as they are accrediting bodies.

13. Client Welfare Report. There were 6 complaints from 2012. 1 NCS; 5HS and 1. These complaints were discussed by the Council.

1. We received a complaint from member of the public about HS member. The complainant stated that member had seen them for a number of hypnotherapy sessions and had then disclosed information about the content of the sessions to third parties. This would be a clear breach of confidentiality and we investigated thoroughly. The outcome was that the member had not had any hypnotherapy sessions with the complainant. The evidence obtained from all parties indicated that the complainants claim was untrue.

Advised HS member concerned to discuss the whole issue with their supervisor.

2. Complaint from a client about member of HS regarding boundary violations within the therapeutic relationship. Evidence sought from all parties and decision of HS panel was that although member concerned had admitted to his actions and apologised his membership should be downgraded for 12 months (i.e. accreditation revoked) and during that time member to seek personal counselling and supervision [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Member can reapply to upgrade his membership at end of 12 months but must show evidence of personal counselling and write a statement to Show learning points and full understanding. (this registrant was a member of both organisations and the sanction was applied to both).

3. Concern rather than complaint – from client about hypnotherapy treatment offered by HS member. Essentially thought they should be given written advice sheet rather than just verbal information. HS officer spoke to member on the phone and followed up with a letter advising that in future he should give clients information in writing and not just verbally (referred to hypno-gastric band treatment).
4. Complaint from another therapist about misleading claims in advertising and misuse of title 'Doctor' by HS member. Member said it was all a 'genuine error', however we asked that he send all advertising materials to the Society to sign off for the next two years to ensure he was not making any more errors. He did not respond to this despite being sent emails and letters. Final letter sent to advise that if he did not respond he would be removed from the register – he did not respond he was removed from the register and he was told to remove all logos and membership references. Also informed GHR – (other large professional association) about outcome and they can request further details of the complaint if needed.

[REDACTED] Email complaint – about a posting a member had made on an online hypnotherapy forum. Both the name and the contact details of the complainant were not valid. Discussed with member and advised them to take down the posting although the content did not raise any concerns.

[REDACTED] Complaint about NCS member. Complainant was the daughter of the client and felt that relationship between her mother and therapist was inappropriate [REDACTED]

It was acknowledged that the new complaints process with an independent panel would be far more rigorous and appropriate than the Societies' previous processes. It was also agreed to allow the Society Council to view complaints provided they were anonymised. Generally the picture for 2012 was of " low level" complaints with some unfounded upon investigation. Lay Members questioned whether there were Service Level Agreements in place regarding the time that complainants, members etc had to respond. It was agreed to formalise these although there were benchmarks in place at the time. In addition, the introduction of Key Performance Indicators was discussed. It was agreed that these would need formalising so for example, response times by the Societies to complainants could be monitored effectively.

14. Lunch

Goals 2013. The Chair felt that the main goal would be to gain PSA recognition if this were possible. The goal following this was to have all new procedures and processes running fully in 2013.

16. Sub Committees. A meeting on 7th February of all sub committee members was scheduled and this would be reported back to Council. The only vacancy available is on the professional conduct committee where the lay person has dropped out. Wayne Bateman volunteered.

17. Closing Remarks. The next meeting schedule would be left open to accommodate any progress in the PSA application but would likely be within 6 months.

18. AOB : there being none the Chair closed the meeting at 3:40pm.

Minutes of a meeting of the Society Council

Held at Oxford & Cambridge Club 9th April 2013

In Attendance:

Dr Chris Forester (Society Chair)
Liz McElligott (Society Chief Executive)
Vicky Parkinson (Society Administrator) Meeting Secretary
Katie Spendiff (Society Membership Services Manager)
Gerry Willmore (Chair of Professional Standards Committee)
Eimear McAllister (Lay Council Member)
Steve Roche (Lay Council Member)

Observers

Rick Borges (Professional Standards Authority)
Ulrike Darbon (Professional Standards Authority)

Apologies:

Wayne Bateman (Lay Council Member)
Richard Harris (Lay Council Member)
Dr Phil Rees (Independent Assessor)

1. The Chair opened the meeting at 11.08am, giving a brief overview of the agenda and the tasks for the day. He welcomed all including the PSA observers.
2. Apologies were received from Richard Harris (Lay Member), Wayne Bateman (Lay Member) and Dr Phil Rees (Independent Assessor).
3. The minutes of the last Council Meeting held on 24th January 2013 were agreed, further to previous ratification from all by email.
4. Society chair, Dr Chris Forester, gave an update on the Societies 'application to the Professional Standards Authority AVR scheme. This referred to the recent site visit and the observation of today's Council Meeting.
Arrangements are in place for the CE and Chair to attend a formal interview with the Authority and the Authority will carry out a review of 3 complaint cases. Following this the PSA formal panel meeting will be on 3rd May after which we will receive a decision on the application. The Chair offered thanks to the Society staff for their effort in preparation of offices for the site visit. It was noted that the CE had provided concise and current information that demonstrated the clear processes and procedures operating within the Society. The PSA application has given an excellent opportunity to update information to ensure it is clear and understandable for the public/service users, and has resulted in positive changes for the future.
5. An example of a complaint case that was subject to the Society's new complaint's procedure was reviewed. Following initial apprehension about the implementation of the new procedure – the new system has proven to be more logical and objective. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Chair asked whether we should give the complainant information [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Lay chair of the PCC advised that the process within the legal profession is to send an initial letter to acknowledge the complaint, outline procedure and explain they would not hear from us again unless necessary.

An essential part of the role of the Lay Chair of the PCC is to provide independent feedback and decisions. She is confident with current process and happy to develop further for the future.

6. Refreshments served

7. The Council was asked to consider the Independent Assessor's (IA) report. The Chair gave a brief overview of the IA's role which is to assess the Society's processes and procedures (the IA has been asked to concentrate on all other aspects of the Society and not the complaints process, as this has recently undergone a major revision).

The initial plan for a Governance and Audit Committee with a Lay Chair has evolved into the role of IA as we realised that the person in this role needed to combine both independence and profession related experience.

The IA had created a report and a timetable of recommendations and this list was given out for to all to review. Related discussion points were:

- There needs to be distinction between the terminology of member and registrant. The Chair explained associate, professional, accredited and different grades. Confusion between what is accredited and what is good enough to practice. The idea of registrant is simply someone we declare is on our register and safe to practice, is a generic term for the public to know. Do the public know the difference between who is and who isn't safe to practice? We need to make it crystal clear to people who is safe to practice. A Member is anyone who is linked to the Society. In practice we have only listed registrants on the website. AVR is opportunity to provide clarity to the public, but there is a need make people aware of the term 'registrant'. Regulation v representation in legal terms matches the Society Registration vs Membership.
- CPD recommendations - already implemented raising hours to 30 per year. Eimear noted solicitors have to do 16hrs of cpd with 4hrs accredited. Societies seem high requirement.

- Are there legal changes that we need to be aware of, such as H&S, ASA and CRB checks? Vetting and barring scheme got squashed by last government. Currently going through courts at moment as cannot ask someone to declare their convictions as against their human rights. Waiting for outcome of court case as to what next steps are regarding CRB checks. If criminal findings are disclosed during application to join the Society this is assessed on a case by case basis. (in cases of serious issues such as violence then unlikely to be accepted on a training course and would therefore not contact the Society - trainers tend to be risk adverse)
- To review details change form at next Council meeting to allow a period to evaluate the scheme.
- Recommendations for a retirement policy, perhaps a one of fee for 'honoury' membership. To create a policy for this situation as rarely happens currently.
- The current points system to be dropped.
- Recommendations for a client hotline to be installed so that it is made clear how a member of the public can contact the Society. It will not be an emergency phone line.
- Approaches to patient groups recommended. Could we introduce client clinics to gain feedback? Felt that it was too sensitive and difficult to engage currently. However it would be a way to introduce a 'site visit' aspect for checking on premises of practitioner.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Site visit for IA is planned for June.
- To introduce by end of 2013 a separate hypnotherapy standards committee to ensure expertise is available.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Council ratified the changes proposed by the independent assessor with exception to the client feedback clinic visits.

8. Discussion about the possible conflict of interest created by the dual role of Eimear who is currently the Lay Chair of the Professional Conduct Committee and a Lay member of the Society Council (this is also relevant to Lay member Wayne Bateman who is not present today). Feedback from PSA Observer Rick Borges that the PSA Panel had noted this and would give advice in their final report [REDACTED]

9. Lunch

10. Membership Services Manager, Katie Spendiff, gave a summary of membership services including a report of CPD Course activities run by the Societies. The need for offering a variety of locations and course subjects was noted. Take up is healthy [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Courses often sell out. Certificates come from the Society providing evidence of CPD. [REDACTED] Receive good feedback from the members, enforces the positive benefit of running the CPD for members. Courses need to double in size for next year in order to cater for both new and existing members that have already attended the course the year before.

Facebook/twitter accounts benefit the Society by removing barriers in communication between members and the Society.

Future plans to create marketing brochures.

11. The senior administrator, Vicky Parkinson, gave a report on current membership numbers and a summary of the 2012 member's audit. The Societies have grown on average 32-40% over a 12 month period. After reviewing the 2012 audit – enhancements are in place for 2013 audit which will start in May.

The Society administration now has a new software system [REDACTED]

12. Chair of the Professional Standards Committee, Gerry Willmore, gave a report.

[REDACTED] Main discussion about current membership grades. To clarify membership grades to the public, such as who is and who isn't on the register. [REDACTED]

We need to manage a change carefully so that the members are happy and the public are easily able to understand. Will no longer use the word 'member' as can cause confusion. Move towards using the word 'Registrant' and 'Non-Registrant' – practicing and non-practicing. To include things such as 'accredited registrant-non practicing, accredited registrant-suspended non-payment, accredited registrant – senior practicing'. Wouldn't be able to drop the word accredited, and would possibly need to retain the Fellowship. Would like to minimise grades to either 'in/out'. Need to have links in the client area with hyperlinks to the relevant page with the concise information.

- [REDACTED] so moving forwards need to abolish the category of approved training to eliminate confusion. Only have accredited courses as a route to membership. Need to have some sort of 'quality checked distance learning course' as wording instead of approved. No objections to dropping approved training, to bring to council the replacement and firm proposals for membership grades.
- HS supervision, there is no definition of who a hypnotherapy society supervisor is. To contact existing to see what their supervision qualification relates to. Could crossover with CS supervisors but need to be aware of different modalities, ideal is to have supervisors dually qualified.
- Procedure manual of criteria for training courses [REDACTED] so that all eventualities covered and Societies are still able to function. To be in place by 2014.
- Committed to getting rid of points system as can cause confusion, new system replaces and is effectively the same process but does not allocate points i.e. you either have supervision or you don't. Still come to same outcome with or without points system.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Council approves decision to phase out the points process.

- Ideas to introduce an annual training school report. Initial thoughts are should include Health & Safety question in respect to the venue. Does it need to evolve in to a more obvious set of criteria and check list. Noted it is still a work in progress. Training school reports to include feedback on things such as staff training, response to any previous sanctions pass rate, course

content changes, complaints, feedback. A lot of points are works in progress so that at future council meeting can provide actual documents.

13. CE, Liz McElligott, discussed service user feedback. In 2012 we did a client survey that had a low response rate.

[REDACTED]

Pro's and con's to different types of surveys, focused on patient care.

Gaining feedback is difficult as if seeing within a practice there will be procedures to follow, but if in private practice how do you engage people?

14. No other business.

15. Thanks to all for attendance, next meeting dates to be advertised in advance, this meeting date was to fit in with AVR. Meeting closed at 15.10pm.

Minutes of a meeting of the Society Council

Held at Oxford & Cambridge Club 22nd July 2013

In Attendance:

Dr Chris Forester (Society Chair)
Liz McElligott (Society Chief Executive)
Vicky Parkinson (Society Administrator) Meeting Secretary
Katie Spendiff (Society Membership Services Manager)
Gerry Willmore (Chair of Professional Standards Committee)
Eimear McAllister (Lay Council Member)
Steve Roche (Lay Council Member)
Dr Phil Rees (Independent Assessor)

1. Apologies:

Wayne Bateman (Lay Council Member)

Richard Harris (Lay Council Member)

Lay member Wayne Bateman sent apologies on the day to advise that he would not be able to attend.

Lay member Richard Harris has been invited to each Council meeting but various reasons has been unable to attend. He did not respond to the invitation to attend this meeting.

Chair proposed that Richard be invited to stand down and the Society will seek a new Lay member for the council. This was agreed by Council.

CE Liz McElligott will write to Richard informing him of this decision and will then co-ordinate a search for a new Lay Council member – all asked to share ideas on this. [REDACTED]

2. Dr Chris Forester, Society Chair opened the meeting at 11.00am.
He welcomed the Society's Independent Assessor, Dr Phil Rees and those present at the meeting introduced themselves to Dr Rees, with the Lay Council members giving information about their backgrounds and how they came to be involved with the Society Council.
3. The minutes of last minute of the 9th April 2013 were ratified with no further comments.
4. Council were brought up to date with the information regarding the Societies application to hold an AVR under the Professional Standards Authority scheme. Following the last Council meeting on 9th April the Society has now achieved the AVR recognition.
As part of the process the Chair and CE attended a formal interview process with the PSA [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Following the panel hearing there was a conference call to advise the society Chair and CE that the registers of both the National Counselling Society and the National Hypnotherapy Society registers are accredited under the AVR scheme. The panel had the options of stipulating action points, learning points and/or conditions attached to their approval and the Societies were accredited with learning points.

AVR status means that the Societies will become greater stakeholders within the respective professions. The Societies are now taking every opportunity to promote the AVR scheme both within the professions and to a wider audience such as informing those in government health teams.

During the formal interview process a reference was made to the British False Memory Society (BFMS) who had been in contact with the Authority about their work. Rick Borges suggested that the Societies make contact with BFMS and the Society Chair contacted them to acknowledge their expertise within a specific subject area and to explore if the Societies could share information about their work with all of our registrants.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the Societies added a paragraph about and link to BFMS in the members newsletters to increase awareness of the work BFMS are involved in.

A general discussion followed about False Memory Syndrome – how it is defined and how prevalent it may be. Dr Phil Rees pointed out the therapy is there to treat, not create the problem. Discussed adding explicit information to the Society(s) Code of Ethics that memories can only be accepted as factual if checked against evidence. We have also referred to FMS in the risk assessment that was created as part of the PSA application process. None of those present had any direct encounter with FMS and whilst acknowledging its existence felt some caution needed in only referring to one particular organisation such as BFMS. Another source of information may be Patients UK who may have a ‘working paper’ statement that the Societies could adapt.

The final stage in the AVR process was attendance at a ‘comms passport’ meeting which gave clear instructions on advertising materials such as the correct use of the AVR logos. A toolkit of ‘do’s and don’ts’ was given out and CE Liz McElligott signed an agreement of terms and conditions of usage.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
The PSA Accreditation status is ongoing and renewable yearly – when there will be a follow up on any learning points specified. We aim to meet these requirements by the end of 2013 in time for 2014 renewal.

There was some discussion between the PSA and the Society CE and Chair in relation to one aspect of our complaints procedure: in cases where a complaint is made and then withdrawn, when the Society has evidence we must proceed and act upon the complaint regardless of whether the complainant wishes to proceed. This reflects the Societies responsibility in terms of public protection.

5. A break at 11.55am for refreshments.

6. Restarted 12.05pm. The Societies marketing plan is now being rolled out. Current rebranding is taking place to incorporate the new AVR logos into the current Societies materials and all Society documents have been updated with the AVR logo. We are monitoring usage via the website and members are required to sign that they agree with the terms and conditions of using the logo. Members are encouraged to promote the scheme and we are now exploring members suggestions [REDACTED] The Society will regularly follow up with members to find the positive benefits they experience from being on the AVR. Future plans include

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] - opportunities for networking and creating new links. We have had excellent feedback and engagement from all the members about the AVR scheme and have future promotion plans such as new membership packs to have a welcome letter including details of our face book and twitter sites.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

7. A report from Society Membership Services Manager - Katie Spendiff:

On track so far with action points from last Council meeting.

To continue to grow public profile [REDACTED]

- Ensure CPD courses are breaking even (if not making a profit) and plan to run in more areas for 2014.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

To create an online survey for members to provide feedback on CPD Courses to identify areas for improvement. Profits are reinvested to give scope for example offering occasional courses more cheaply or free of charge.

8. Report from the Societies senior administrator – Vicky Parkinson:

The new admin database has been fully installed and is now being adapted and streamlined to further match the Societies requirements. An update on membership numbers for both Societies show a positive an ongoing growth

9. Break for lunch at 12.52, meeting restarted at 1.30pm

10. CE passed round statement from PSA relating to their advice/decision on the possible conflict of interest of Eimear McAllister having a dual role as Lay Council Member and Lay Chair of the Professional Conduct Committee. The decision is that this is acceptable and that the Society's Independent Assessor produce an annual report to ensure no conflict of interest between the two roles. The Societies have instated a new Public Protection Officer - Faye Blackwell in response to the requirement for the roles of CE and PPO to be separated. Faye has processed her first case which involved an overseas training provider using the Societies details that had not in fact been approved/accredited by the Society.

11. CE updated the actions required from the Independent Assessor report:
Written policy document on firewalling to be done in September.
Life membership and retirement policies ratified by Council.
The CRB scheme has evolved into the new Disclosure and Barring scheme.
The current NCS 'points system' for individual membership applications to be phased out by September.
The IA site visit to the Society offices has been moved from June to August due to the admin staff being occupied by the implementation of the new CRM system.

[REDACTED]

2013 meeting dates have been scheduled in advance
Face book groups for committees has been de-activated.
Public Protection Officer and CEO/Registrar separation of roles

12. Report from the Chair of the Professional Standards Committee – [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Discussed Society's CPD requirements for registrants. Dr Phil Rees advises that CPD is required regardless of membership level whether a registrant for 1 year or 30 years. Discussed the requirement for Fellows of the Societies to undertake CPD activities. Keep framework as 'all registrants' to undertake CPD activities rather than separating requirements by membership grade. The Societies prefer to maintain their current ethos of a qualitative approach to CPD as opposed to a purely quantitative approach. CPD activities should be based on outcomes, and recommended hours as a guideline.

[REDACTED]

13. CE gave an update on engagement with different groups who focus on gaining client feedback in relation to their experiences of therapy. Membership survey results in relation to how therapists seek feedback and the effect of mental health cuts were shared and discussed.
14. AOB. There being none the Chair closed the meeting at 14.42pm and confirmed that the next Council meeting will take place on 18th November 2013.

Minutes of Meeting of the Society Council

Held at Oxford & Cambridge Club 18th November 2013

In Attendance:

Liz McElligott (Chief Executive)
Katie Spendiff (Membership Services Manager)
Vicky Parkinson (Senior Administrator) Meeting Secretary
Gerry Willmore (Chair of Professional Standards Committee)
Eimear McAllister (Lay Council Member)
Steve Roche (Lay Council Member)
Wayne Bateman (Lay Council Member)

1. Liz McElligott – CE - opened the meeting at 11.00am.
2. Apologies
From Society Chair, Dr Chris Forester
Society Chief Executive Liz McElligott will stand in and chair this meeting
Lay member Richard Harris was contacted after the last council meeting and has confirmed he is standing down from his role.
The Society will seek to recruit a new Council member.
3. The minutes of the previous meeting on 22nd July had been circulated to all prior to this meeting and were agreed by all.
As requested by the Professional Standards Authority the minutes of previous meetings (in redacted form) are now published on the Societies' websites.
CE advised Council that the Societies' Independent Assessor, Dr Phil Rees, is writing reports about his observation of the 22nd July Council meeting and his site visit of 6th August and these will in due course be published on the websites.
4. Society Senior Administrator, Vicky Parkinson, report.
The Societies have experienced steady growth throughout 2013.
Plans are in place to recruit an extra administrator to help with the impact that the continuing growth has had upon the existing team's workload.
The current team are getting to grips with the new computer software and it is becoming easier to understand. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
There have also been discussions about how the current telephone system can be upgraded to better cope with the growth in activity. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
In relationship to the Societies' membership numbers lay Council member Wayne Bateman asked whether there are more Hypnotherapists than Counsellors in the UK. This is not likely but the HS is the largest Hypnotherapy professional organisation in the UK and holds the first hypnotherapy register to gain AVR status.

5. Membership Services Manager, Katie Spendiff, report.

There are two more Society CPD courses scheduled for 2013.

Katie is now using the CRM reporting system to pinpoint locations of members and what CPD is relevant in which area. Members have been encouraged to give their feedback on the 2013 CPD course programme to assist with planning the 2014 CPD course programme and there are five new CPD events scheduled for next year.

The existing 'Grow my Practice' CPD course that has been offered since mid 2010 [REDACTED]

The Societies had a stand at the Labour Party annual conference and the Cam expo exhibition, to raise profile and gain contacts.

The Societies' use of social media has increased greatly [REDACTED]

The AVR accreditation resulted in a lot of updates and changes - logos, leaflets, websites, exhibition stand, etc.

Information on the activities of the different Society committees.

Currently recruiting for the new Hypnotherapy Professional Standards Committee – all HS registrants have been contacted with details.

At the beginning of 2014 will assess the need for new lay members and recruit as needed – we will contact all of our current organisational members and ask for them to advertise on the Societies' behalf.

6. Refreshments

7. Professional Standards Committee, Chair Gerry Willmore, report.

New committee member Lyndsay Cooper attended the last meeting of the Professional Standards Committee and brings a wealth of valuable experience to the Committee and the Societies.

The NCS has been approached by number of organisations seeking information on linking with the Society (and by association the AVR). Some discussion about clustering – still unclear how this might be applied despite the PSA's recent draft document on clustering. (The National Counselling Society and the National Hypnotherapy Society are considered to be a cluster).

The Societies' existing criteria and policies and procedures about membership for training providers and other types of organisations is being reviewed and updated.

Eimear raised the question of what would happen regarding any complaints that are made about a clustering organisation – acknowledged the importance of how a complaints process and other standards must be decided in advance and must meet PSA requirements.

8. Lunch

9. Liz McElligott, Chief Executive, report

A copy of the agenda for the PSA's annual meeting of AVR's was shared and used as a basis for discussion.

The Annual review of accreditation for both Societies' registers will need to be completed and returned by the end of March 2014. Actions resulting from the learning points and instructions from the initial accreditation will be used as a basis for this review.

A number of reports will be needed from the Societies' Independent Assessor and CE has communicated this and will aim to meet with IA in January.

CE summarised meetings and networking since the last Council meeting and reported that coming up before the end of 2013 are meetings with [REDACTED]

As an example of a broader view of public protection issues the CE shared an anonymised example of contact from a member of the public in relation to a concern about a therapist. The Society investigated and found the therapist was not a member of the Society (or any other Pa). Advice was given on other parties that might be able to assist (such as trading standards, the police). It is hoped that as the profile of PSA grows then this will reinforce the message with the public that they should only see a therapist who is on an AVR and therefore has to comply with high standards, code of ethics and a complaints process.

[REDACTED]

CE had a discussion with lay Council member Eimear McAllister ahead of the Council meeting and at this stage asked Eimear to address her proposal to Council. In summary Eimear believes that there is a conflict of interest relating to both her and Wayne Bateman acting as both lay council members and lay members of the Professional Conduct Committee. This conflict was raised with the PSA earlier in the year and they offered a mitigating solution (see minutes of 22nd July) that was presented to Council and agreed. Eimear has since given this some thought and shared an example of how a similar circumstance within another profession in fact created a conflict. So rather than mitigate the risk – it is better to remove the conflict of interest, and Eimear has proposed that she stands down with immediate effect from Council, and that Wayne Bateman continue with either the Council or the PCC lay role. Council unanimously agreed to the proposal.

CE offered thanks to Eimear on behalf of all at the Societies for her contributions to Council throughout 2013. We look forward to continuing to work with her in the role of Lay Chair of the Professional Conduct Committee. The Society will seek to recruit new lay Council members at the beginning of next year with a view to inviting them to the first 2014 Council meeting of 2014.

10. Any other business – there was no other business so CE thanked all for their attendance and moved to close the meeting.

11. CE proposed that in 2014 the Societies will schedule 3 Council meetings with the proviso to call extra meetings should the need arise. The Society will contact all lay members with proposed dates by the end of this year and aim to confirm dates and venues by early 2014. The meeting closed at 14.40pm.