Minutes of Rural Forum Steering Group Meeting

Minutes of the Rural Forum Steering Group Meeting held on Tuesday 15 November 2016
At Jury’s Inn, Edinburgh, commencing 10:30

PRESENT:

Dr Robert Lambourn Chairman
Dr Chris Clark English Representative on RFSG
Dr Chris Williams Scottish Representative on RFSG
Dr Michael Smyth Northern Ireland Representative on RFSG
Dr Malcolm Ward Outgoing Chair
Mrs Lifa Zvimbande Regional Engagement Manager, Northern Region

IN ATTENDANCE:

Paula Lythgoe Rural Forum Administrator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dr Ward welcomed the group. Each attendee gave a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>brief introduction to the group. Malcolm is</td>
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<td></td>
<td>stepping down as Chair of the Rural Forum Steering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Group (RFSG). Malcolm thanked Paula and the rest</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of the group for their support and also Lifa for</td>
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<td></td>
<td>securing a separate bank account for the Rural</td>
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<td>Forum. There have been a number of successes</td>
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<td>under Malcolm’s leadership including increasing the</td>
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<td>awareness of the Rural Forum to the College</td>
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<td>resulting in the membership now standing between</td>
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<td>700-800. Malcolm has run three successful Rural</td>
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<td>Conferences, two in Penrith and one in Glasgow.</td>
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<td>The group have made some useful contributions to</td>
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<td>consultations including liaising with the GMC</td>
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<td>on Rural Proofing Revalidation. Malcolm stated he</td>
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<td>was disappointed that the Training Initiative he</td>
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<td>had worked on with a number of stakeholders had</td>
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<td>been turned down for funding by the Scottish</td>
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<td>Government. Some outstanding aspirations are that</td>
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<td>Malcolm would like the Rural Forum to be</td>
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<td>recognised by the College as a Faculty and also</td>
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<td>to gain a Rural seat on Council.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Michael Smyth and Chris Clark also thanked</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Malcolm for his work as RFSG Chair.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Drs John Wynn-Jones, Sanjeev Maskara, Steve</td>
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<td>McCabe, Hal Maxwell, Mel Plant, Mrs Rebecca</td>
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<td>Hughes and Rachel Morris</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</td>
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<td>The Chair asked those present to be aware of their</td>
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<td>personal interests and to declare them if</td>
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<td>relevant to items discussed.</td>
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4. **INFORMATION GOVERNANCE**

The Chair reminded members present to be diligent regarding data security and information governance.

5. **OUTGOING CHAIR HANDOVER TO INCOMING CHAIR**

Malcolm handed over the meeting to the incoming Chair, Dr Robert Lambourn who is currently NE England Chair, but will step down at their AGM.

Dr Ward nominated Dr Lambourn and Dr Smyth seconded the nomination.

Malcolm welcomed Rob as new chair of the Rural Forum Steering Group (RFSG). Rob thanked Malcolm for chairing the Rural Forum Steering Group (formally the Rural Forum Standing Group) Rob thanked Malcolm for his hard work over the last 7 years and commended him on the Rural Forum section of the College website now being under the Faculties ‘tree’, the three successful conferences, the Consultations including the GMC Revalidation and working with Clare Gerada and Amanda Howe. Although the Initiative outcome was disappointing Rob feels that Malcolm’s ideas will go forward.

Michael Smyth will be retiring from his practice in December. Rob enquired if Michael would be keen to stay on the Rural Forum Steering Group as he is a valuable member. Michael agreed to remain on the group. Malcolm proposed Michael to remain and Rob seconded it.

6. **NOTES – RFSG Teleconference – 4 October 2016**

The notes of the previous Telephone Conference, held on Tuesday 4 October 2016, were agreed to be a true and accurate record.

7. **RURAL FORUM CONFERENCE & EDUCATIONAL EVENT**

The group discussed potential key note speakers for the Rural Conference next year. Chris Williams had previously emailed a list of speakers and has approached Graham Kramer the Scottish Lead for Health Literacy. Graham has provisionally agreed, but Rob in his Chair’s capacity will contact Graham and officially invite him to talk at the Conference.

Phil Wilson from the University of Aberdeen, Centre of Health Sciences for Rural Health based in Inverness was also suggested if Graham is unavailable.

Rob enquired if he should contact Nigel Mathers, Clare Gerada or Maureen Baker as possibilities for key note speakers. Clare could talk about Occupational Health for Scotland.

The previous Conferences have not had any representation from Northern Ireland and it was suggested that Dr Tom Black, Chair of BMA’s Northern Ireland GP Committee and Dr John O’Kelly current Chair of RCGP NI (although due to step down). Rob will contact Tom Black and ask him to talk about RCGP’s Role for Rural Members and if Tom is unavailable Michael will contact John O’Kelly.

Sponsorship was discussed. Paula has already secured 3 sponsors although one has queried the cost of £300 per stand. It was agreed that this fee is not negotiable. Lifa has also approached potential sponsors at the RCGP Conference and will forward their details to Paula.

Chris Clark also suggested Blood Pressure Monitoring Companies or locum agencies.
It was agreed that the delegate fees for the Conference would remain the same as previous years apart from Medical Students where it was felt that £20 was an appropriate amount. It was suggested that we could approach Faculty Chairs and ask if they would be willing to sponsor 5 members to attend the Conference and include in the letter how many of their Faculty Members are also members of the Rural Forum.

The group would like to encourage students to attend and wondered if we should approach GP Societies to enquire about funding medical students. Lifa also suggested that Paula should contact Stephane in Membership Experience at the RCGP to enquire if they would help fund medical students.

It was suggested that we contact the Scottish Practice Nurse Association to publicise the event as nurses are required to have Safeguarding training which is being covered on next year’s programme.

It was agreed that Child Protections should be scheduled first and CPR at the end with key note speakers and other topics in the middle of the event.

If the event is going to be recorded and streamed (North of Scotland Faculty have the equipment) speakers will need to be contacted to enquire if they are happy to be recorded and can opt out if they are uncomfortable with this.

We are trying to secure as many sponsorship stands as possible, but will need to check space outside the room. Is there enough space for 6-7 tables?

It was agreed that the Conference should host the AGM, immediately before lunch on the 11 March 2017. The Steering Group will be more structured like a Faculty Board.

8. **CLINICAL PRIORITIES**

The Rural Forum have been sent a document, RCGP Internal Consultation on our Policy and Campaign Priorities 2017/18 for comment by 9 December. (this date has been extended to the 22 December) All members have been sent the document for their individual feedback. The RFSG discussed their top three priorities and were all in agreement that:

1. Workload and fatigue (item 3 of consultation)
2. Workforce, Recruitment, Returners, Retention (item 1 of consultation)
3. Out of Hours (item 5 of consultation)

The list supplied by the College was not set in stone and there could be additional priorities listed if they felt it was appropriate. The group suggested that Academic Research in General Practice could be added to the list.

It was agreed that a Survey Monkey would be sent to the whole of the RF asking for their feedback, which would then be fed back to the College. Each individual could also feed back their response.

9. **GP FORWARD VIEW**

Unfortunately Rachel Morris and Simon Ashmore were unable to attend the meeting.

GP Forward View is for English Faculties only. Ambassadors have been appointed, but it is not clear what their remit is. Grants have been received from NHS England. Events for Faculty Officers will be held in Leeds and London. GP Forward View is a major item on the Council agenda. Rob will be attending Council on Saturday and will enquire how GP Forward View will affect remote and rural surgeries.
10. PURPOSE OF THE RURAL FORUM

The RFSG for many years have endeavoured to be recognised as a Faculty. The group feel that they can contribute a rural perspective to College. Lifa informed the group that to be recognised as a Faculty we would need to complete a business plan, which should include financing for two face to face meetings and four telephone conferences. Included in the business plan should be the aims and objectives, a proper officer structure and Annual Conference or social event. It should also include proposing to form a Fellowship Committee.

11. STRUCTURE OF THE RURAL FORUM

The group discussed if there should be a more formal structure to the Rural Forum Steering Group. Should the group nominate/appoint a Hon. Secretary, Provost and Treasurer? The initial business plan from 5 years ago will need to be revisited and incorporate these changes if agreed.

12. FINANCE OF THE RURAL FORUM

The Rural budget has been very unclear over the past 2-3 years. Initially the National Faculty Office would inform Paula of the rural budget and how much was set aside for doctors expenses for face to face meetings, travel, telephone conferences and any other incidentals. It was agreed that to help clarify how much is set aside for the Rural Forum that a meeting will be arranged to discuss this. The meeting will consist of Rob Lambourn, Rebecca Hughes, Rachel Morris, Lifa Zvimbande, Paula Lythgoe and if possible Helen Stokes-Lampard.

13. RECRUITMENT & RETENTION – WHAT CAN WE DO?

A discussion took place on how we can influence students and medical schools to choose rural general practice. A number of solutions are listed below.

1. Practice placements for school children with necessary paperwork in place
2. Encourage Medical School Admissions to give a positive view of rural medicine
3. Create a comprehensive register of potential host practices for medical students (already happening in a number of places but not nationwide)
4. RFSG to put together document about positives of rural general practice with possible video.
5. Book produced in Scotland about benefits of being a rural GP should be circulated to medical students.
6. Look at achievable targets. Promote a hub and spoke model with examples of federations.
7. Produce evidence models under threat with local solutions.
8. Ask members have they tried it and does it work.
9. Give examples in our area which have worked or haven’t worked and what have you learnt from your mistakes and role out to the rest of the Rural Forum
10. Produce a report on the above findings (items 6-9)
11. Produce a national database from all forum members who are willing to offer observational experience, electives, 6th form students, returners, F2s, GPRs and those wishing to change career. Ask the Forum who does this and who would like to do this?
12. Produce a survey for the forum asking who can host students etc, solutions and barriers. This should become an annual survey to keep it current/updated.

Hopefully we will receive enough meaningful responses so that they feel they are contributing to something worthwhile. As the survey will be time consuming...
Paula will enquire if there may be funding from College for the research through the Scientific Foundation Board.

14. **LINKS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

This item was not discussed. Carry forward to next meeting.

15. **WHERE WE SIT IN THE RCGP FACULTY STRUCTURE**

Although the Rural Forum section of the website sits alongside the Faculties websites they are not recognised as a Faculty. We hope to address this. See item 10.

16. **HOW WE INTERACT WITH CENTRAL COLLEGE**

It was disappointing to receive the letter from Nigel Mathers regarding our request to have a seat on RCGP UK Council turning our proposal down. The group discussed how we can interact with the College and decided that we need to keep communication between the RFSG and Central College going. They decided that they should respond to Nigel’s letter asking how can the Rural Forum interact with the College and how does he see the Rural Forum? They are also going to enquire if they can attend Council as an observer rather than have a voting seat.

In the meantime the RFSG will behave as a Faculty, keep communication going with face to face meetings documented.

17. **MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

Following on from the meeting held earlier in the year when several of the group stated they would be keen to attend media training. Unfortunately, due to short notice no-one from the group was able to attend the training. Paula enquired about futures dates, but none were planned for the foreseeable future.

18. **HOW WE CAN HELP APPROPRIATE MRCGPs BECOME FRCGPs**

This agenda item was discussed briefly. It was agreed that this item should form part of our business plan (see item 10). It is difficult to become a Fellow of the College as a rural GP. Although Faculties have Fellowship Committees it was agreed that if the RFSG became a Faculty they could form their own Rural Fellowship Committee.

19. **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

Paula had circulated the membership update prior to the meeting. There are now 785 members of the Rural Forum.

20. **NEW COLLEGE PLAN**

It was decided that the document circulated by Neil Hunt for response should be responded to individually.

21. **PHARMACISTS IN RURAL GENERAL PRACTICE**

Chris Clark circulated the Pharmacists in Rural General Practice and other Workforce Considerations document for information. Investments in pharmacy in England are being quadrupled over the next five years.

In Northern Ireland the Federations have employed a number of pharmacists, but in Scotland they have a different model. One of the main outcomes of the paper is to evaluate whether employing a pharmacist within the practice will
reduce workload for the GP.

22. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Paula informed the group that despite contacting AiT members of the Rural Forum to enquire if they would like to join the Steering Group there has been no response. Lifa informed Paula that if she contacts Tom Helps or Stephane Ringsell they will contact all AiTs to ask if they would like to be involved.

Bronagh from the RCGP Northern Ireland office has contacted Paula asking for information regarding the RFSG and what this entails. Bronagh hopes to help recruit a new NI member for the Steering Group and will update Paula.

23. **DATE OF NEXT TELEPHONE CONFERENCE**

Paula to email group with Doodle Poll link to arrange next telephone conference within the next two weeks.