Minutes of Rural Forum Steering Group Meeting

Minutes of the Rural Forum Steering Group Telephone Conference held on Tuesday 30 May 2017
Meeting Commences at 20:00

PRESENT:

Dr Robert Lambourn Chair
Dr Hal Maxwell Scottish Representative on RFSG
Mrs Jane Randall-Smith EURIPA Representative on RFSG
Dr Michael Smyth Northern Ireland Representative on RFSG
Mr Keith Wilkinson Regional Engagement Manager, Northern Region
Dr Chris Williams Scottish Representative on RFSG
Dr John Wynn-Jones WONCA Representative on RFSG

IN ATTENDANCE:

Paula Lythgoe Rural Forum Administrator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rob welcomed Keith Wilkinson, REM for the Northern Region to the group and asked the attendees for introductions and where they are based.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apologies were received from Dr Chris Clark, Mr Michael Critchell, Miss Rosannah Jackson, Dr Melanie Plant, Dr Malcolm Ward &amp; Mrs Lifa Zvimbande</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Chair asked those present to be aware of their personal interests and to declare them if relevant to items discussed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>INFORMATION GOVERNANCE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Chair reminded members present to be diligent regarding data security and information governance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>MINUTES OF MEETING TUESDAY 7 MARCH 2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 7 March 2017, were agreed to be a true and accurate record.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. MATTERS ARISING/ACTION LIST

Item 9 of previous minutes, EURIPA International Advisory Board Member. Hal was previously on the board and has informed Rob of what this entails. Rob is now the UK International Advisory Board of EURIPA representative.

7. CHAIR UPDATE

Rob has had recent meetings with Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Conservative MP for Berwick upon Tweed and also Professor Veronica Wilkie, Professor of Primary Care from Worcester University. This is to raise the profile of the Rural Forum and Rural General Practice and forge relationships. Rob is due to meet with Professor StJohn Crean, Executive Dean of UCLAN to discuss possible Rural Posts which will be based at the Whitehaven Campus.

Rob informed the group that he will be in the next edition of GP Frontline. They are due to conduct a telephone interview and a photographer will be visiting Rob’s surgery this week.

Rob and Jane are due to attend and have also been asked to facilitate one of the sessions at the Midlands and East Rural Health Conference due to take place on 19 July 2017 at Leicester Race Course.

Professor Simon Gregory, Director and Dean of Education and Quality, Health Education, England and Rob are due to hold a meeting shortly.

Mike Critchell and Rosannah Jackson attended the Rural Forum Conference and were keen to get involved with the Rural Forum and are now members of the RFSG. They are both enthusiastic medical students at Aberdeen University. Unfortunately, Mike broke his leg this week so they were unable to join tonight’s telephone conference, but hopefully can make the next one.

With the various meetings Rob has attended, both inside and outside College the Rural Forum are starting to be recognised by RCGP Council and outside bodies.

8. REFLECTIONS ON RURAL FORUM CONFERENCE & EDUCATIONAL EVENT

This year’s conference, although low attendance (19 delegates) had excellent feedback from all attendees.

The group discussed should this event continue in the future and if so what is the best way forward? Jane suggested promoting this as early as possible with a ‘Save the Date’ flier with strapline. John suggested perhaps running the day alongside/on the back of other conferences e.g. the Rural Primary Care Conference which takes place in Montgomeryshire and attracts 120-130 attendees. It was also suggested that if the Centre for Rural Health gets off the ground the Rural Forum could be a potential partner.

Perhaps a survey sent to the whole of the Rural Forum membership asking why they didn’t attend and what would attract them to attend.

9. RURAL FORUM AGM

The AGM minutes were kindly taken by Rob. The group were asked if there were any matters arising, of which there were none. AGM Minutes of 11 March 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.
10. **EUROPEAN & WORLDWIDE PERSPECTIVE**

John informed the group of the WONCA Conference and organisation. Previously it was seen as an organisation of old men from a rich world. This is now being rectified with gender equity and demographic equity, although obviously this is a slow process. The recent WONCA World Rural Health Conference in Cairns, 29 April-2 May unfortunately had a high price tag of $700 registration fee so many GPs from third world countries were unable to attend due to the high cost.

The Conference was about enthusing young doctors and students about Rural General Practice.

John informed the group that the 21st WONCA World Conference of Family Doctors which took place in Rio de Janeiro in November 2016 changed the structure of Rural WONCA, bringing in three tier executive and a Council which they hope to have 60 members. They wanted to encourage students and young doctors by holding an Assembly Forum to give presentations. They also hope to have regional groups from South Asia, South America, Africa Rural Group and Eastern European Group, although this has proved difficult with the military action in certain Eastern European countries.

A Rural Medical Education Guidebook has been launched with 70 chapters from 70 authors, there are some gaps which need to be filled, but this is now available in PDF version.

The Rural Student Network ‘Rural Seeds’ was launched in Cairns and had 400 members and growing. It is about engaging students and students are forming networks with monthly family medicine cafes. These are being broadcast on YouTube. The next café is due to take place on the 10 June hosted by Brazilian student, Mayara Floss.

The President of WONCA, Professor Amanda Howe is a keen rural convert and has previously been involved in Rural Forum matters. The group are keen to keep Amanda involved.

John will email a more detailed WONCA report in the next 3-4 weeks.

11. **INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT ON PRIMARY CARE**

This item relates to an email sent to Paula from Caspar Lückenbach, Research Fellow at University Bielefeld in Germany asking the Rural Forum for help with a research project on Problems of Ensuring Health Care Provision in Disadvantaged Regions, primarily rural areas. Paula forwarded Caspar’s email to the RFSG and a number of the members have responded. Caspar hopes to come over to the UK to interview/WebEx in June. Jane has contacted Caspar, but has yet to receive a response. Jane will chase this up.

12. **NORTHERN IRELAND UPDATE**

Northern Ireland is currently in limbo due to the General Election going on. No political decisions are being made, as yet.

The crisis in Northern Ireland before Christmas is still critical, with the demographic workforce, older, retiring GPS and fewer younger GPs to replace the retiring workforce.

Unavoidably small practices have had to close; including Michael’s single-handed practice when he retired. Fortunately a neighbouring practice absorbed Michael’s patients, but other practices in the area were not so fortunate with
some patients having to travel a 60 mile round trip to visit their GP.

Although there isn’t currently a ‘quick fix’ solution the future is looking more promising with an increase in the number of GP Registers being recruited and a new medical school in Londonderry due to open which will include a programme for students with a rural interest.

Dr Tom Black, Northern Ireland GPC Chair attending the national LMC Conference and spoke about Northern Ireland copying the semi-private system in the Republic of Ireland, which demonstrates the seriousness of the situation.

13. **EURIPA 2017 RURAL HEALTH FORUM AND CHRONIC MORBIDITY PROJECT**

Jane informed the group that the EURIPA Rural Network are in the same situation as the Rural Forum in that they are unable to get a seat on the executive board of WONCA Europe. It is difficult trying to get rural voices heard and that this is a slow process.

At the 22nd WONCA Europe Conference, due to take place in Prague, 28 June-1 July EURIPA are holding two workshops. A survey on Chronic Care in rural areas has been emailed to the whole of the Rural Forum. Jane asked the group if they would help by completing the survey.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FQT7ZN](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FQT7ZN)

The 7th EURIPA Rural Health Forum year in Crete on 2-4 November is on Rural Renaissance [http://euripaforum2017.eu/?page_id=1480](http://euripaforum2017.eu/?page_id=1480) Candidates are being called upon to submit an abstract. See programme and website for further details.

Rob has recently joined the International Advisory Board as a UK advisor. The board is building a picture of rural issues in other countries.

14. **MIDLANDS & EAST – RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE**

This item was covered in item 7.

15. **RESILIENCE EVENTS**

Emily Clinton who is based in CIRC at the College emailed Chairs to attend a series of events to share learning from the RCGP Peer Support Programme with local NHS England Teams. These events are taking place 26 June-6 July. Rob and Chris Clark are both unable to attend, being based in English practices. Rob asked Jane if she would be able to attend any of the offered dates. Jane will check and get back to Rob.

Rob suggested offering these meetings to the whole of the Rural Forum Group based in England. Paula will check if the database can filter to send out to England based members.

16. **COLLEGE COUNCIL MEETING**

The next Council meeting is due to take place on Saturday 24 June. Rob will be attending as North East England Representative, but can also put forward Rural Forum matters. Rob asked the group if there are any items they would like him to take forward to Council. GP Forward View one year on and Revised International Strategy are of interest. Chris Williams spoke about the 10 year review of the MRCGP and that in certain parts of Scotland it is difficult for trainees to find availability on AKT courses. It is thought that the MRCGP would
have more support for the enhanced curriculum.

17. **HHB & HMRC**

Malcolm had sent a letter to the group which he received from NHS Highland regarding Sessional Invoices. Unfortunately Malcolm was unable to join us tonight, but Chris Williams gave a brief description regarding this subject. In the UK there have been changes to Inland Revenue legislation. GPs that have been self employed have suddenly become the responsibility of HMRC. The tool provided is not suitable for GPs and NI and Tax is being taken at source. The implementation has been shambolic. Sessional doctors have been upset by these changes, with very little notification causing many issues. The advice given out by Health Boards varies hugely by interpretation of BMA. The group decided this is a BMA and GPC issue.

18. **PROMOTION OF RURAL FORUM GOOGLEGROUP**

Although the Google group has gone quiet recently when someone posts an interesting topic there are usually a number of responses. Although some posts may not generate lots of responses the message still gets through.

Rob suggested promoting the Google group in the next newsletter.

19. **RURAL GP TWITTER CHAT**

Tom Keating from the Press and PR Office in Central College has contacted Rob regarding a Twitter Chat about Rural GPs and how the RF feels it would benefit them. John has sent Tom details of the Family Medicine Café due to take place on the 10 June.

20. **HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN RURAL AREAS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

Rob informed the group this document is for information only. Jane informed the group that it is a really useful document and she wasn’t aware that the Local Government Association was working alongside Public Health England. Although the document is good, there is nothing in there for rural proofing for health. The National Rural Proofing Guide for Central Government has also disappeared. DEFRA had a Rural Proofing tool, but the DoH was not interested. WONCA are producing a Rural Proof Guide and the World Health Organisation (WHO) is Rural Proofing data sets.

21. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Nothing to report.

22. **DATE OF NEXT TELEPHONE CONFERENCE/FACE TO FACE MEETING**

The next face to face meeting will take place in September in London. Paula will circulate dates via Doodle Poll. Hopefully Amanda Howe and Helen Stokes Lampard will be able to attend. The next telephone conference will take place a few weeks before the face to face meeting. Paula to circulate dates.

CLOSE