

MINUTES OF THE 59TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR PERIOPERATIVE PRACTICE

Registered Charity No: 1118444

Held on Wednesday, 25 September 2024, at 7:00 PM, virtually via GoToWebinar

1. Opening Remarks

Alex Duke (AD), Chief Executive, opened the meeting and welcomed those present to the 59th Annual General Meeting reminding everyone only members are entitled to vote. AD talked through the voting procedure and advised polls would be shared on screen. Members would be able to select a yes or no response to place their vote, with the results being shared on screen and confirmed by the Chair. It was confirmed that the required number of regions were represented, and the meeting was quorate.

2. Apologies of Absence

There were no apologies of absence.

3. President's Report

Ruth Collins (RC) thanked AD for opening the meeting.

RC opened her address by expressing her pleasure in reporting on the progress and achievements of the Association for Perioperative Practice (AfPP) over the past year, highlighting that it had been a year marked by significant growth and accomplishments for the organisation.

A key highlight was the formal appointment of AfPP's new CEO, Alex Duke. RC noted that AD has brought extensive experience and expertise to the role and her leadership had already made a positive impact on AfPP.

She also highlighted the significant strides made in strengthening the HQ team, particularly in finance, marketing and education, which have enabled the organisation to better serve its members and enhance the services and resources provided.

In line with AfPP's commitment to continuous improvement, RC explained a new digital platform had been integrated offering a more seamless and user friendly membership experience. This initiative had been well received and had improved member engagement.

As part of celebrating AfPP's 60th anniversary, RC noted the multiple roadshows held across the UK, and a fantastic conference at Warwick University. These events offered valuable networking opportunities and showcased the important work being done by AfPP.

Throughout the year, the organisation remained committed to its strategic vision and was guided by a board representative of its membership. Board members were selected based on their dedication and commitment to the mission of AfPP.

RC shared how privileged she felt representing AfPP at the AORN conference in Nashville and the IFPN conference in Valencia. These experiences allowed her to connect with global colleagues, share best practices and influence perioperative care at an international level.

Looking ahead, RC expressed her excitement about the future under AfPP's new leadership. She announced that she will be passing the presidential mantle to Oliver Tierney in January 2025 and conveyed her confidence in his ability to lead AfPP with passion and dedication.

RC concluded by thanking all members, volunteers and staff for their continued support and hard work. She remarked that together, AfPP is making a meaningful impact on the field of perioperative practice and she looked forward to another successful year ahead.

4. Adopt the Minutes of the 58th AGM held on 22 November 2023

The Minutes of the 58th AfPP AGM, held on 22 November 2023, were made available online and by mail upon request. With no amendments raised, RC called for a member to propose the minutes as a true and accurate record and another to second the motion. Maxine Page proposed and Adrian Jones seconded, that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record.

5. Interim Chief Executive's Report

AD thanked RC for delivering the President's report.

AD opened her address by expressing how lovely it was to present to everyone. She noted that following her interim post, her position had become substantive in December 2023 and would be reporting on the results for the year ending March 2024.

AD stated that the last financial year was broadly one of consolidation, focusing on reviewing activities, expenses and returns on investments. The team carefully examined gaps within the organisation and identified key areas for strategic focus.

As a result of this review, certain activities were discontinued, such as the Togetherall membership, the provision of surgical skills workshops, the online Standards and Recommendations, and the online Audit Tool. The finances from these activities had been redirected into projects aimed at re-establishing AfPP as a prominent and aspirational resource for practitioners while remaining affordable.

Plans were made to strengthen educational output, one of the primary reasons members join the Association. The structure of the HQ team now includes additional resources to achieve this, with the appointment of a new education lead and a head of clinical department to work on the education strategy.

In terms of the Association's membership numbers, AD noted that during the year, the prospect of additional member benefits coming to fruition was limited, partly due to the new IT infrastructure not being operational. As a result, the expected decline in membership numbers occurred. On 31 March 2024, the Charity's membership stood at 5,648, a decrease of 682 from the same point in 2023. Although this further reduction was disappointing, AD assured everyone that it aligned with expectations and budget.

To provide some reassurance, AD shared that although this trend had continued into the current financial year, it had done so at a significantly reduced rate. The average loss per month had dropped from fifty-nine in the last financial year to just eight per month (excluding new free student membership numbers). The current membership was 5,796, which included 197 new free student members, an initiative launched on 1st September this year. The new marketing team are focusing on awareness, recruitment, and retention strategies, along with KPIs around these numbers in the current financial year.

The commercial work continued to thrive in the last financial year, with consultants supporting twenty-three hospital audit visits and accrediting twenty-one hospitals. Additionally, whole team training was completed at one hospital, along with a staffing review. To maintain a robust service, the process for ensuring that all consultants meet mandatory training requirements and hold current DBS checks has been reviewed. The consultant contracts have also been rewritten, and standardisation of reporting and training for consultants was currently in progress.

The annual conference was held in York once again and post-lockdown attendance in 2023 returned to typical numbers for both delegates and exhibiting suppliers. The conference was very successful, generating £16,800 above budgeted income and a total surplus of £70,000. The event attracted 406 delegates on site, along with representatives from thirty-nine exhibiting companies. Among the paying delegates, 36% were non-members.

AD noted that executing Regional Study Days has been challenging for several years, particularly regarding the recruitment and retention of volunteers. Despite this challenge, three Regional Study Days were held during the year, attracting 172 delegates. To avoid gaps in regional education, the AfPP Roadshow initiative was launched. The goal was to host seven educational events spread evenly and accessibly across the country, with dates and locations published for the entire year in advance. A new educational team was established, including regional leads, trustees, and HQ members, to ensure events could occur regardless of regional lead availability. The Roadshow also aims to attract new members by showcasing the value of educational events at a discounted price during AfPP's 60th Anniversary year, providing a celebratory "taster" experience. While much of the planning took place in the reported financial year, the first actual event was in May 2024, falling within the current financial year.

The popularity of webinars continued, with nine live webinars attracting 546 delegates and an additional 356 delegates participating in on-demand webinars.

The Charity's peer-reviewed academic journal, the JPP, maintained its impact factor of 1.2, as indexed in the Web of Science, ranking 186 out of 290 in the surgery category. The editorial team and the newly formed Writers SIG group volunteers are actively working on initiatives to promote writing for the Journal, ensuring that articles remain relevant to the day-to-day activities of perioperative practitioners.

AD highlighted continued collaboration on several significant projects, including participation in various groups such as the Centre for Perioperative Care Collaborative (CPOC), Faculty of Perioperative Care, Royal College of Surgeons England's Robotics Network, British Association of Day Surgery (BADs) Core Competencies Documents, and SAFE OR. These efforts further AfPP's mission to improve patient care through the ongoing development and promotion of leading standards for perioperative practice and practitioners. Specific projects include:

- Surgical Burns Action Group
- GIRFT - Elective Surgical Hubs
- Joining Hands to Reduce Surgical Site Infection Project
- NHS England – Peri-Operative & Theatres Workforce Programme
- Three ISO Standard projects related to sharps containers, catheters, and needles

AD noted that AfPP contributed to several significant projects and was proud to have been consulted and represented in these initiatives

Looking to the future, beginning with the current financial year, many planned activities and initiatives had already come to fruition, such as the launch of Radius (the CRM system) and the new website, making both live and on-demand webinars free for members, adding the EBCSCO e-library, testing the

Education Team and the roadshow concept, improving the structure of commercial audit reporting, making student membership free, and introducing a newly qualified rate, as well as an organisation pays membership feature. All these items were conceived and planned in the last financial year, allowing them to go live now.

In summary, AD expressed excitement about the key building blocks put in place across all departments, enabling the creation of an AfPP that is worthy of practitioner membership, not just for today, but for the future. The organisation will continue working hard to remain relevant to practitioners at all stages of their careers.

AD moved on to express personal thanks to several individuals and group. She expressed gratitude to the trustees for their time and dedication to the Association, as well as their support and trust in her, which she deeply appreciated. AD also made a special thank you to RC, the outgoing president, acknowledging her as an inspiration. She thanked Julie Quick and her team of associate editors and reviewers for their continued dedication to producing the esteemed Journal.

AD emphasised that the various volunteer networks, including SIGs, Regional Leads and Link Members, are instrumental in delivering AfPP's messages to a wider audience. She expressed gratitude to the team of consultants who maintain standards in hospitals and, of course, to all members for their continued support, passion, and dedication to delivering safer patient care.

Finally, AD thanked the HQ team for wholeheartedly embracing and delivering in a year of significant change, praising their incredible work. She concluded by thanking everyone for their time and passing the floor to Carol Livingstone (CL), the Finance Manager, to provide a summary of the financials.

6. Financial Summary

CL opened her address by thanking AD and reminded everyone that the Accounts had been published on the website, with all members notified via email.

She noted that the Accounts had been independently audited, with the report included in the Accounts and confirmed there were no adverse findings.

CL shared that the results for the year showed an overall very healthy surplus of £142,000, which was hugely positive, especially compared to the forecasted deficit that was expected for the year.

She outlined the main reasons for such a difference from the budget:

- Wages costs lower than expected due to not recruiting staff as early as expected (£56k saving)
- Less spent on events, simply putting on fewer events like Study Days (£27k)
- Commercial activities higher than expected, mainly hospital audits (£22k more surplus)
- No depreciation expense on the new CRM Radius system, which didn't come into use until April 2024 (£55k less expense)

CL explained the large surplus was reassuring and was needed after a few years of deficit, resulting from the pandemic and the reduced activities of the organisation. However, highlighted that all of the above savings were simply due to the timings and delays of certain activities, which had resulted in the expectation of a deficit for the current financial year.

She emphasised the importance of looking at the bigger picture, starting around five years ago and looking ahead to the next five years, focusing on the changes being made in the running of the organisation to improve what is being provided to members.

CL reviewed the organisation's free reserves, stating that at 31 March 2024, the balance sheet showed reserves of £934,918, all of which are unrestricted. However, added £399,324 of this related to fixed assets, including the investment in the new CRM Radius system. When this amount is removed, the free reserves readily available are £535,594, which is comfortably above the amount considered required by the Reserves Policy (£477k).

She confirmed that the board is satisfied with the Charity's financial position. CL concluded by thanking everyone and handed back to RC.

RC personally thanked CL and the finance team for their hard work in preparing the Accounts.

RC proceeded to address matters pertaining to voting, indicating that there would be two votes during the meeting and outlined the process by which attendees would cast their votes. RC confirmed that no proxy votes had been received prior to the meeting.

7. Receive the Annual Report & Accounts 2023/2024

The Annual Report had been available online. RC confirmed that no comments had been received in relation to any aspect of the Report and requested a vote as to whether the Annual Report for 2023/24 should be received and accepted. The required majority voted in favour.

8. Appoint the Auditors for 2024/25 and beyond

The Trustees of the Association for Perioperative Practice periodically review the provision of external audit services to uphold the Association's commitment to good governance. In line with this practice, RC reported that a competitive tender process for the role of external auditor had recently been conducted.

RC noted that Saffery Champness had served as our auditors for the past few years. However, as part of our regular review, proposals were invited from three separate audit firms, including Saffery Champness. Following careful consideration and thorough discussions with each firm, the board made the decision to appoint Armstrong Watson as the Association's new auditors.

RC highlighted that Armstrong Watson has successfully completed their first audit with positive results and the board recommend that they continue in the role of external auditors for the 2024/2025 financial year.

RC concluded by stating that we look forward to collaborating with Armstrong Watson and maintaining our high standards of financial oversight and governance.

RC asked if it was the wish of the members that Armstrong Watson continue to be appointed as auditors for the 2024/25 financial year. The required majority voted in favour of this motion.

9. Officers/Trustees for 2024/2025

Turning to matters of continuing office:

RC reported that the current Elected Trustees are Oliver Tierney, Julia Spencer, Nadiene Deane, Maxine Page, and Lisa Nealen.

She noted that Oliver Tierney took up his position as President Elect in January 2024.

RC shared that she would step down as president in January 2025, with Oliver Tierney set to succeed her. Following the process outlined in the Articles, the trustees unanimously agreed that she will continue as Immediate Past President for a term of one year.

RC informed the members of some changes to the Board of Trustees. She mentioned that Jen Maher, Elected Trustee, had stepped down from her role on the board after accepting the position of Education Lead at HQ. Additionally, Julia Spencer would be stepping down from her role in December due to work commitments. RC expressed gratitude to both Jen and Julia for their dedication and service during their time as trustees.

In light of these changes, RC indicated that the election process had been initiated to fill these two vacancies. She confirmed that the process was now almost complete and anticipated welcoming two new trustees in January 2025 to continue the important work of the board.

Alongside the elected trustees, RC noted that there is also the option to engage up to four non-elected trustees. The board considers the skills and support needed in alignment with the business strategy and the board's skill set.

RC concluded by stating that the current non-elected trustees are Lisa Tierney, Alison Venn, and Louise Dye.

At this point in the proceedings, RC asked the membership if there were any issues they would like to raise with the board or trustees within the context and formality of this Annual General Meeting. She encouraged members to raise a virtual hand if they wished to ask a question.

There were no questions raised during the meeting.

10. Any other business and Close

There being no other business, RC, on behalf of the Board and Chief Executive, expressed her gratitude to all for attending, as well as for their continued support, commitment, and dedication to the organisation. She noted that it had been an honour to serve as President and wished Oliver Tierney luck in his upcoming presidency. RC officially closed the 59th AGM.

The date of the next AGM will be published in due course.