



BRITISH SOCIETY FOR ALLERGY AND CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY
DIGITAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday 2nd October 2020
8am – 9am

Number of Attendees 49
Quorate 21

Minutes drafted by Mrs F Rayner

1. Approval of 2019 Minutes

A copy of the 2019 minutes and other documentation were circulated to the membership prior to the AGM, these can also be viewed [here](#). The 2019 AGM minutes were approved by members at the 2020 AGM via the online poll.

2. Report from BSACI President (Professor Adam Fox)

The president began his report by saying that this year, more than any other year, in our lifetime, we have faced incredible challenges on so many levels. BSACI have risen to these challenges and like many, have adapted our work accordingly. He said you may recall that it was around July 2020 that we took the decision to move our physical meeting online when we realized that it was not feasible to have a face to face meeting. Moving to an online platform in July meant that we needed to make some changes fast. As a result we amended the registration fees, contacted all our industry partners, renegotiated contractual agreements - the main one was with Harrogate. We needed to find an online provider who could build a platform to match our expectations. We redrafted the budgets, changed our marketing strategy and pre-recorded the majority of the sessions in case any presenter had technical difficulties on the day. This has been a significant undertaking and it would not have been possible without the hard work of a dedicated team.

The President thanked Dr Tom Marrs (BSACI Scientific Programme Lead) for all his hard work these past 12 months with the BSACI meeting, and hoped members agreed

with him that this year's programme is outstanding. This will be Dr Marrs last meeting. The President thanked him for his vision, drive, enthusiasm and expertise, over the years in developing the scientific programmes for the BSACI Meetings over the years which have been so well received and benefited so many. Dr Marrs has been ably supported this year by Dr Nandinee Patel who will be taking over as Co-Deputy Scientific Programme Lead with Dr Natasha Gunawardana. The President thanked all those who assisted with the meeting this year including, Abstract Lead, Dr Tammy Rothenberg and all those involved in the 2020 programme planning meeting as well as those involved in the regular two weekly operational meetings.

Professor Fox thanked sponsors, Mylan, Thermo Fisher, Novartis, Sanofi for their support for the meeting. He said as we say farewell to Dr Marrs, we would like to welcome Dr George Gkimpas as the new BSACI Scientific Programme Lead. Dr Gkimpas (Paediatric Allergist -Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust) was successful in his application for the position earlier this year.

Professor Fox started his report by saying that the majority of work BSACI undertakes is carried out by BSACI committees/groups and representatives. The leads from each of these sit on BSACI Council and meet approximately three times a year. There are currently 25 members on BSACI council, seven of which are elected by the whole membership, next year, five places will become available as the following council members term would have come to an end:

Dr Zara Zolkipli, Dr Andrew Whyte, Dr Mich Lajeunesse, Professor Judith Holloway, Professor Adnan Custovic

The BSACI Honorary Secretary term of office will also come to an end next year, nomination papers will be sent out to the membership for this position as well as for the council places. He urged anyone who wished to be involved in the strategic direction of the society to send in their nomination.

To help support the membership during the pandemic BSACI developed a range of resources which we published on the BSACI website under 'COVID 19 Resources' section. These began with the winding down of routine adult and paediatric services in late March/early April. We worked with patient organisations drafting the most common Q&As that came in via their helplines to ensure there were consistent responses given out for patients. On the website there are resources that signpost to various organisations, our specialty specific resource is also published on the RCP website. He thanked everyone who contributed to this section in particular Dr Andrew Whyte for developing the 'BSACI Allergy Service Recovery Document'.

Over the summer BSACI ran a series of three service recovery webinars for the membership so we could all share and learn from the experiences of others, these can be found on the BSACI website [here](#).

During these webinars we achieved a high-level engagement with the membership and as a result we plan to continue developing these by providing a wide range of

topics that can be delivered in three talks over an hour every two months. Details of the topics, when they are happening, and how to access these, will be sent by email.

Professor Fox said that he and the trustees wrote to the membership about concerns relating to inclusion and diversity which was prompted by the health inequalities highlighted by poor outcomes for COVID patients from BAME backgrounds as well as the wider societal issues. With the profound inequalities that many in our society face, BSACI are committed to playing our part in minimizing these by developing a policy around 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion'. A working party was set up and Dr Thirumula Krishna was chosen as its chair. The WP had their inaugural meeting in July and in September discussed their short, medium and long-term objectives. Work has begun to collect data to enable the group to identify and address any potential gaps with respect to 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity'. We very much look forward to working with the group in developing this policy especially as we start to look at developing our society leadership structure.

In addition the RCP has invited the BSACI to become a founder member of the 'Inequalities in Health Alliance'. At the start of 2019, the RCP established an advisory group on health inequality. The group then developed a strategy for the RCP to make sure they are supporting members to reduce health inequality in their daily practice. The RCP wish to campaign collaboratively on some national policy aims and through the 'Inequalities in Health Alliance' and have identified three aims of the IHA which are;

- To develop a national strategy for action on the social determinants of health.
- Trigger the socio-economic duty, section 1 of the Equality Act 2010, to require public bodies to adopt measures to address inequalities resulting from the social determinants of health
- Adopt a child health in all policies approach to decision-making and policy development, given the importance of the early years for life outcomes

Professor Fox said that he was pleased that the Society was going to be involved in this as a founder member.

Professor Fox spoke about of BSACI bid to host the 2022/2023 WAO Meeting, and said BSACI were not successful in our bid to host a WAO Meeting, but to host the WAO International Scientific Conference instead. As result BSACI have been working with WAO to host a joint BSACI/WISC meeting in Edinburgh in April 2022 and are currently in negotiations with them to move forward with an agreement that everyone is comfortable with. The BSACI Annual Meeting will be held at the same time, so there will not be a stand-alone BSACI meeting in 2022.

Amongst everything that has taken place this year, BSACI new website was redesigned and launched in June. This forms part of our key strategic plan to improve communication and engagement between the membership, the allergy community and with all our stakeholders. The new website also allows members to log in and update their membership details and marketing preferences so that

members only receive the communication they want to receive. Members can now renew their membership online through the secure online checkout and those wishing to join can do so online. We would like to thank Ben King – BSACI Membership Officer for his work on this. The new website can be viewed here www.bsaci.org

Professor Fox said after almost 5 years as Editor in Chief of CEA Professor Graham Roberts will be stepping down at the end of the year. It was at the time of Professor Roberts taking over as Editor of Clinical & Experimental Allergy that the journal moved from paper to online only.

Since taking over Professor Roberts has established a monthly Editor in Chief editorial with a focus on topical news and issues. He has been an active user of social media and has used Twitter to promote CEA on this platform. Overall Professor Roberts has commissioned review articles and editorials that are highly cited (thereby strengthening the impact factor of the journal) which BSACI and the whole allergy community are grateful for.

Taking up the reins in January will be Dr Robert Boyle and Dr Mohamed Shamji. Together their aim is to build on the success of Professor Roberts work by significantly raising the international profile of Clinical and Experimental Allergy during their tenure as Co-Editors in Chiefs, and are currently working on developing a plan to achieve this. BSACI very much look forward to working with them over the course of their tenure.

As children were preparing to return to school, together with Allergy charities, BSACI wrote to the Department for Education in England, Scotland and Wales requesting that clear guidance be issued in relation to the provision of emergency treatment to children experiencing a severe allergic reaction/anaphylaxis in the context of social distancing measures that were in place due to COVID-19. We have now received replies from the Scottish Government – Deputy First Minister for Education and Skills, John Swinney and Kirsty Williams, Welsh Minister for Education, offering assurances that the concerns raised have resulted in updates to national guidance. Further details can be seen on the BSACI website [here](#).

A report from the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Allergy and the National Allergy Strategy Group (NASG) will be launched in due course, the launch was delayed due to the pandemic. The report is titled ‘Meeting the Challenges of the National Allergy Crisis’ and makes recommendations that there should be a national allergy plan led by a designated DHCS or NHS lead with sufficient authority to implement change.

It recommends the expansion of the specialist workforce as a priority and that training programmes prioritise allergy so that specialists of the future are appropriately trained and can safely deliver care. That all GPs and health care professionals in primary care have knowledge of allergic disease and that allergy is included in the GP curriculum and exit examination. The report recommends the need for local commissioners to be fully aware of the allergy needs of their population and ensure access to adult and

paediatric allergy consultants and pathways of allergy care. He said we will keep members updated once this report is ready to be launched.

Professor Fox finished his report by thanking BSACI council members, and in particular the trustees, Dr Susan Leech, Dr Nicola Brathwaite and past president Dr Shuaib Nasser for all their input, guidance and support this past year. He said it was very much a collective effort on the part of everyone involved at BSACI of which he was very grateful for. He particularly thanked Fiona Rayner whom he said had been enormously supportive over the course of the year.

Professor Fox then followed this report with a presentation on the implementation of the strategic aims and said he was delighted to report they had either been completed or were in process.

The key strategic items are:

The National Allergy Strategy Group report which he mentioned earlier in his report which has been held off from being launched due to the pandemic. With regards to influence he said our levels of engagement with other organisations such as the MHRA, FSA, DoE and DHSC have increased and are ongoing. In the context of the year ahead our focus internally is around 'Leadership and Inclusivity' which overlaps with plans around Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity with the aim of reviewing the current leadership and governance structures of the society.

With regards to governance and transparency we have standardized the Terms of Reference (ToR) for BSACI committees and reviewed current ToR with our committees, these will be finalised over the course of the coming months and published on the website. All vacancies on committees will continue to be sent out by email to the membership asking for expressions of interest this will help widen inclusivity. The aim of this process will reflect our organisational values by increasing representation from around the country.

Our financial focus is around the annual meeting as this year (due to the pandemic) as our annual meeting needed to be moved online, this combined with the move to not seek further sponsorship from manufacturers of Infant food formulas has meant that BSACI are projecting a deficit with regards to the annual meeting.

BSACI will be continuing with the National Education Strategy, he thanked Professor Holloway for leading on this through the pandemic. The strategy was going to be brought to the AGM this year, however this has not been possible due to the pandemic. Professor Fox thanked all those who have been involved in developing this strategy, the output of this will be sent round for member consultation.

Professor Fox finished by talking about membership engagement by building on the COVID 19 webinars that have been developed by BSACI recently which have been well received. To further engage members on future webinars he welcomed thoughts on topics that could be covered.

3. Secretary Report (N Brathwaite)

Dr Brathwaite said there were 93 new membership applications a list of these were pre-circulated to the membership in advance of the AGM and is available together with the rest of the AGM papers on the link on the screen. Members were asked to ratify these by using on the online poll. These members were approved by the whole AGM.

Dr Brathwaite said currently we have 965 members of which 49% are clinical members, 21% are Nurse and Allied Health members, Juniors members account for 19% of the membership, and 6% are retired members, 1% are students and honorary members and 4% non-clinical.

Dr Brathwaite said those who have not yet set up their online account via the new BSACI website will need to do this asap. It is here that members will need to renew their annual membership, also those who had previously set up a Direct Debit will need to set this up online now. Details on the steps that need to be taken to do this have been sent out by email. Should you need any help with this please email Ben@bsaci.org

4. Ratification of Proposed Rule Changes

Dr Brathwaite said BSACI are proposing the following amendments to the current rules of the society, which we feel best reflects the current climate in which the society operates in these are:

- (a) Those whose primary role in industry is scientific (which may involve some aspect of sales and marketing) would be eligible to join the society at the discretion of council.
- (b) To approve a new BSACI Registry for Immunotherapy (BRIT) Sub-Committee. The committee will be responsible for developing and maintaining a national registry for patients receiving immunotherapy.

NB: The vote was ran, however members asked whether these could be run separately. These were then re-run at the end of the AGM so members could then vote for each rule separately. Both rules were then approved.

However as there was a narrow margin of agreement for accepting (a) those whose primary role in industry is scientific, it was noted that council will need to mindful of the strength of feeling of those who voted at the AGM when considering these applicants.

5. Treasurer's Report & Appointment of Auditors (S Leech)

Year Ending July 2020 Income and Expenditure

- Dr Leech said income had come in £22,465 over budget. Income was budgeted at £291,806 however actual income was £314,271. This was due to an increase in royalty income of around 27K. The 2019 Harrogate Meeting

was successful and exceeded the income budget by £8685. We also had a larger refund on VAT than projected. We however had a loss of 10K this year due to lack of advertising in Allergy Update.

- We were budgeted to spend £314,747 however actual expenditure was £310,318. The main variances were premises costs which were lower due partly to staff working for home since March. There was an increase in our contingency budget due to redecoration work carried out in the office. We also appointed a professional negotiator to work on our behalf to agree a new contract with Wiley Blackwell who publish the journal (Clinical & Experimental Allergy). The journal provides around 50% of our income so its important to ensure we have a favourable contract in place for the next five years.

Summary of income and Expenditure

	Budget	Actual	Variance
• Income:	£291,806	£314,271	£22,465
• Expenditure	£314,747	£310,318	£4,429
Surplus £3,953			

Annual Meeting 2020 Income and Expenditure

	F2F Meeting Budget	Actual Virtual Budget on 28/09/2020
Income:	£200,000	£92,260
Expend:	£156,624	£111,459
Total:	£43,376	-£19,199

The budgets were drafted for a face to face meeting however we redrafted the budgets based on a virtual meeting instead. Income is from registration and sponsorship and registration income is much less than last year, due to a reduction in the registration fees. It is expected there will be a loss of around 19K, however this is considerably less than if we were to have continued with a face to face conference which was not possible.

The last deficit of £2034 was back in 2014, since then BSACI Meeting has always had a surplus. Dr Leech said it is likely more income will be generated as people register on the day as well as after the meeting to watch the meeting 'On Demand'.

BSACI Income & Expenditure Projected Budgets for Year Ending July 2021

	2021 Proposed Budgets	(2020) Actual
Income:	£317,204	£314,271
Expenditure:	£317,204	£310,318
Deficit/Surplus:	£0.00	£3,953

Income is projected to be lower this coming year due to 23K less in royalty income as projected by Wiley Blackwell, but mainly as in 2019 we had a surplus of £24,685 from the annual meeting and in 2020 we are projecting a £19,198 deficit (Our financial year runs from August 1st – July 31st). As a result Dr Leech said we would need to transfer £80,368 funds from our investment portfolio so we are able to have a balanced budget.

Dr Leech said BSACI have now disinvested in fossil fuel investments and companies involved in the transport of fossil fuels.

Members are asked to ratify the income and expenditure budgets for year ending 2020/21. Members voted and these were approved.

Subscription Rates for 2021/2022

Dr Leech said every two years BSACI increase the subscription rates by around 3%, however this year we are asking the membership to approve an increase of 5% due to the current financial constraints. We also wish to add a nominal fee of £10.50 to the retired member category, the reason for this is that as the society grows there will be a steady increase in numbers in this category of which so far been free. The table below shows the current rates of membership and the proposed increase.

Membership category	Current rate	Proposed new rate
---------------------	--------------	-------------------

Student Member	£10	£10.50
Junior member	£52	£54.60
Clinical Member	£134	£140.70
Nurse and Allied health professional	£52	£54.60

Non-Clinical Member	£66	£69.30
Retired Member	£0.00	£10.50

Dr Leech hoped that retired members will continue to be engaged with the society and feel that they receive value for their nominal subscription fee. Example: In the reduction to the annual meeting registration costs and access to the online journal.

The majority of members voted in favour of the increase to the subscription rates, therefore this was ratified.

Accounts for year ending July 31st 2019 submitted to the Charity Commission in March 2020

Dr Leech said the following accounts were submitted in March 2020 and combined income and expenditure from the BSACI Annual Meeting and BSACI investments.

Year Ending	2019	(2018)
Income:	£703,561	£756,300
Expenditure:	£631,044	£665,587

Re-appointment of Auditors

Dr Leech said BSACI would like to continue working with or accountants Sawin & Edwards, who have continuously provided BSACI with a high-quality set of accounts.

A vote was undertaken to re-appoint Sawin & Edwards and overall the majority of members voted in favour of reappointing Sawin & Edwards.

After the vote Dr Leech said that the current tenant in the BSACI office was moving out and the accountants were moving in. As a result a question came in from a member asking whether there is any conflict of interest having the accountants rent space within the BSACI Office

As a result after the AGM BSACI contacted Sawin & Edwards who then contacted their governing body. A response was sent to BSACI which was shared with the membership concluding that there is no perceived threat to the Examiner's (Sawin & Edwards) independence in respect of the Independent Examination of BSACI's annual accounts. Members were asked to take a revote via Survey Monkey the day of the AGM to reappoint Sawin & Edwards based on this conclusion. This was undertaken and as a result 94.8% were in favour of the reappointing Sawin & Edwards.

On this occasion BSACI should have declared the potential conflict of interest prior to the vote and apologise.

6. Clinical & Experimental Allergy – Report from the Editor-in-Chief

Professor Roberts said he hoped everyone has seen the many articles that have been published in the journal this year, alongside of which he has tried to increase awareness of via social media activity. He said the Impact Factor of the journal has gone down and as a result has spent time with the publishes to ascertain the reasons for this which he said, is essentially driven by a huge reduction in self-citations. He said we are not citing articles in the journal as much as was the case a few years ago. If this can be reversed, then the Impact Factor will increase, which is a challenge for anyone submitting papers to CEA.

He said the time from submission of manuscript to publication has been reduced which was good, this has really gone down dramatically with the online platform, particularly over the past two years where it has been a major focus.

Last year the amount of downloads increased as a result of tweets, 2020 is expected to be similar which it is hoped will lead to more articles for the journal. Professor Roberts finished his report by wishing the new editors the best of luck as they take over in January 2021 as the new Co-Editors in Chief.

7. BSACI 2020 Annual Meeting (T Marrs)

Dr Marrs firstly thanked everyone for their patient as we learn to adapt to this new system as we go along by actively managing it. He said he was proud to be part of the annual meeting over the past 6 years, three years as Deputy Scientific Lead followed by a further three years as Programme Scientific Lead. He said he mainly wanted to thank the key linchpins who have made this meeting happen. In particular he was grateful to the organising committee for overseeing the logistics in the run up to the meeting as well as during the meeting itself. Every two weeks there is a teleconference where those involved are busy problem-solving gathering ideas and networking, its been a huge pleasure working with them. The logistics of organising the first virtual meeting has been challenging as you can imagine! However at the same time it enables us to spread our reach nationally as well as internationally.

Dr Marrs thanked Medivents BSACI's Professional Conference Organisers (PCO) for their tireless efforts in putting the conference together and for their professionalism their support has been fabulous. The programme planning committee has been crucial from the start and in addition to those he thanked Dr Nicola Jay, Dr Sophie Farooque and Professor Adam Fox who were parachuted in to advise on some crucial aspects of sessions, including an excellent ethics session. This was asked for when we were reviewing the feedback from a Survey Monkey questionnaire sent to the membership additionally we have the 'Overcoming inequalities' session also.

In addition to the usual awards we have involved a politician Jon Cruddas MP in the session on 'Meeting the Challenges of a National Allergy Crisis' it is important to have a variety of involvement in the meeting which is reflective on how widely represented allergy and our society is.

Registrations are as follows:

	Everyone but not including on-site	Paying delegates
2020	418	339
2019	628	493

Dr Marrs said the 2020 numbers are not far off the WAO WISC Meeting that has taken place this year. In terms of sponsorship we have lost two thirds of income due to BSACI decision not to take sponsorship from formula milk manufacturers this combined with moving to an online platform proved to be difficult for some companies which meant they were unable to attend.

Sponsorship

4 event sponsorship packages (£21,825)

3 Satellite symposia (£31,000)

Total income from Exhibitors (£4,400)

Advertising space in the programme (£2,940)

Dr Marrs said we were able to minimize the losses thanks Medivents and Fiona.

The abstracts submissions fell this year. Last year we had 131 this year 79 with no Basic Science submissions, therefore we need to increase our representation to this group next year. Undergraduate abstracts have fallen compared to last year, this is mainly due to BSACI unable to provide scholarships to students this year. Dr Marrs said he was very proud by the values BSACI has and how this has been transmitted through the conference with wide representation and that we have been able to provide an interactive forum for people to be able to network with one another.

First Sight Media our online platform providers have been making adjustments as we go along and we have been impressed by what they have been able to achieve.

Next years' conference takes place from 7-9th Oct, Dr Marrs will now be handing over the reigns to Dr George Gkimpas and Deputy Scientific Co-Leads Dr Nandinee Patel and Dr Natasha Gunawardana.

8. Results of the Election

Professor Fox said there are two positions available -BSACI Treasurer and President Elect.

We had one nomination for the position of Treasurer this was from Dr Sue Leech therefore Dr Leech has been duly appointed for the second term in office.

Secondly there were two excellent candidates for the position of President Elect. Professor Fox said you will recall BSACI ran a hustings webinar with both candidates, Professor Graham Roberts and Dr Andrew Clark. As a result the members voted in Professor Graham Roberts as President Elect.

Professor Fox took the opportunity to thank Dr Andrew Clark for considering the position and for taking part in the hustings and giving us an insight of his vision for the society.

Professor Roberts will take up office as President Elect directly after the meeting and as President in October 2021.

9. Ratification of Two Documents (A Fox)

Professor Fox said having pre circulated the following two documents to the membership he now wanted to ask members to approve each one.

- (i) 'Industry Interaction Policy' which provides guidance on how BSACI will work with industry in the future. This was sent to council and was ratified and then sent out for membership consultation.

Members voted on this and the overall the majority of members voted to accept the policy, therefore this was ratified.

- (ii) 'Resolving Complaints Process in relation to work of BSACI Committees' this has been developed to assist those who wish to make a complaint about the conduct of business within the society, specifically regarding an individual member of a committee and or Chair.

Members voted on this and the overall the majority of members voted to accept the process, therefore this was ratified.

10. Any Other Business

A message was sent by a member asking BSACI to declare any potential conflicts of interests prior to voting in future. This was duly noted.

11. DATE OF THE 2021 AGM

Friday 8th October.