



SVEPM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NO. 27

Date: Thursday 27th March 2008
Time: 12.00 pm
Location: Liverpool, UK.

MINUTES

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Gareth Davies, Bruce Gummow, Matthias Greiner, Hans-Hermann Thulke and James Wood.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting No. 26 held on Thursday 29th March 2007 at Dipoli, Espoo, Finland.

The minutes of AGM No. 26 were approved as a true and accurate record of the business conducted.

3. Matters arising (not otherwise on the agenda)

No other matters were raised.

4. President's report

Richard Newton (RN) as President of the society presented his report to the AGM. He thanked the plenary speakers and took the opportunity to recognise the importance of preventive medicine and to also re-iterate the ethos and reason for the society being the promotion of both veterinary epidemiology and preventive medicine. RN noted that this conference was the most important role for the committee and also the most rewarding. RN acknowledged the team effort that contributed to the success of the conference and thanked all involved in the organisation of the meeting. RN reserved special thanks for the local organisers, Gina Pinchbeck and Susie Robinson and their team. RN recognised the long lead in time involved in the organisation of these conferences and congratulated local organisers.

The President reported a total of 238 registered delegates from 25 countries, including 59 students. RN noted that the number of students was growing year on year and that this was seen as good progress for the Society.

RN thanked the delegates for their continued active participation in the conference that resulted in lively debate during most sessions.

RN thanked Louise Kelly for her continued efforts as Honorary Treasurer, noting that the auditors had commented on the excellent job she continued to do for the society. RN thanked Tim Parkin for his work as Honorary Secretary and noted that the minutes from the pre-conference committee meeting had already been produced. RN thanked Lis Alban for her work as Junior Vice President in the coordination of editing of the proceedings. RN commented that the system of editing the proceedings, using the whole of the committee to edit papers for different sessions, was working well.

Finally, RN thanked Edmund Peeler for his long service on the committee and for his work as Senior Vice President in the last year. RN recorded the great work he had contributed to the society even when travelling to New Zealand during his year in office as President. Edmund Peeler will maintain his role as website contact and ensure the website remains updated through the next year.

The President noted that this year the committee was seeking views of the membership on two issues about future conferences that would be presented later in the AGM. RN was happy to take questions. None were forthcoming.

5. Secretary's report

Tim Parkin (TP) reported that he had fielded correspondence from a number of sources on behalf of the society. These had related to conference organisation, registrations and potential pre- and post-conference workshops that were not followed up this year but may be pursued in future conferences. One request for use of the SVEPM email list had been politely declined, noting that the use of this list was strictly reserved for SVEPM communications.

TP reported that the SVEPM details had been updated for the Yearbook of International Organisations (www.uia.org) following a request from this organisation.

TP had made contact with the secretary of the Association for Veterinary Teaching and Research Work and also identified the dates of future British Small Animal Veterinary Association conferences. The aim was to limit the likelihood of date clashes for future conferences.

Finally, TP recognised that a number of members may not have received all mailings through the year and asked for members who felt that they were not receiving emails to ensure that they were fully paid up members and to email current email addresses to Louise Kelly (Honorary Treasurer) or Tim Parkin (Honorary Secretary) in order to update the membership list.

There were no questions arising from the Secretary's report.

6. Treasurer's report

Louise Kelly presented the current state of the Society finances. There remained a reserve of £47,733.42. The net income (£7,427.81) for the current financial year was a reflection of the successful conference held last year in Finland.

LK noted that the totals relating to memberships and proceedings were not multiples of £20 due to posting costs.

LK requested that members check that they were paying the correct standing order of £20 and not £10, and to alter if necessary.

The current membership totalled 258 individuals from the following countries:

UK – 143

Rest of Europe – 90

North America – 10

South America – 3

New Zealand and Australia – 5
Africa – 5
Middle East – 2

Finally LK recorded that Tim Parkin would act as Honorary Treasurer from June 2008 for 12 months to cover her maternity leave. RN added that it was important that a committee member located in Scotland act as Honorary Treasurer as the SVEPM bank account was held with the Clydesdale Bank located in Scotland and that access to the account holding branch was occasionally necessary.

There were no questions arising from the Treasurer's report

7. Election of officers and committee members

The positions of Senior Vice President and President are automatically filled by the President and Junior Vice President from the previous year.

Therefore for 2008 – 2009 the following positions will be occupied by:

Position	Holder 2008-2009
Senior Vice President	Richard Newton
President	Lis Alban

All Officers of the Society with the exceptions of President and Senior Vice President are elected or re-elected annually at the AGM. Nominees for the forthcoming year were elected unopposed as follows:

Position	Holder 2008-2009	Proposer	Seconder
Honorary Treasurer	Louise Kelly	Richard Newton	Lis Alban
Honorary Secretary	Tim Parkin	Lis Alban	Dirk Pfeiffer
Junior Vice President	Dirk Pfeiffer	Richard Newton	Lis Alban

No objections to these nominations were received and they were returned as elected.

With Edmund Peeler completing his term on the committee and Dirk Pfeiffer becoming Junior Vice President one position as ordinary member of the committee was vacant.

Two nominations were received by the deadline of 21 days prior to the AGM. These were:

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
Karen Coyne	Gina Pinchbeck	Rob Christley
Christine Fourichon	Lis Alban	Richard Newton

Two tellers were elected without opposition from the floor:

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
Dirk Pfeiffer	Tim Parkin	Richard Newton
Lis Alban	Edmund Peeler	Kristien Verheyen

Karen Coyne and Christine Fourichon introduced themselves to the membership and stated their reasons for standing for election.

A secret ballot of the membership was held and votes counted by the elected tellers.

Christine Fourichon was subsequently elected as an ordinary member of the executive committee.

8. Election of auditors

The President (RN) recalled that Frazer Menzies was elected as auditor at SVEPM AGM 2007. During the course of the year Roger Eddy stepped down as auditor. It therefore became necessary to identify a second auditor before the accounts could be signed off. Dominic Mellor was therefore asked if he would act as auditor until he could officially be nominated at the current AGM. Dominic Mellor has agreed to continue in the role, if elected. His nomination was therefore proposed by Dirk Pfeiffer and seconded by Richard Newton. Dominic Mellor was elected as auditor without opposition.

9. Production and editing of the proceedings

The President said he was very pleased that the proceedings were again available in time for the conference and that the special edition of Preventive Veterinary Medicine for SVEPM 2007 was also in press before this meeting and due to be published shortly. RN explained the new procedure for editing proceedings coordinated by the Junior and Senior Vice Presidents using the whole of the committee to edit the sessions that they were due to chair. RN also acknowledged Alex Russell's continued contribution to the editing of papers for the proceedings.

RN thanked Mike Thrusfield for his continued help with the printing, archival and distribution of proceedings. RN also thanked speakers for their cooperation in the production and formatting of proceedings.

Rob Christley asked if there were any further thoughts on the placing of past proceedings on the SVEPM website.

RN replied that this had been considered in the past, but was concerned that as a copy of the proceedings was a benefit of membership placing past proceedings on a freely available website may have a negative impact on membership numbers.

Dominic Mellor also stated that web publishing may compromise the authors' ability to publish elsewhere.

Louise Matthews noted that some authors may not wish for non-peer reviewed work to be freely available.

RN concluded that this matter would be discussed at future committee meetings.

10. Format of future conferences

RN invited Koen Mintiens (KM) (ordinary executive committee member) to present on the potential options for the format of future conferences.

KM outlined the pros and cons of moving to parallel sessions. The committee wished to hear the views of the membership after an informed debate.

Marcus Doherr asked if the number of abstract submissions had increased in the last few years and if this had been taken into account during discussions on this topic.

RN replied that last year a record number of 106 abstracts had been submitted, but that it was normal to have 70 – 80 abstracts per year and that this number had been increasing by about 5 abstracts per year over the last few years.

Ed van Klink pointed out that it may be difficult to decide which sessions should be parallel.

KM suggested that perhaps the more narrow or specific topics would be chosen to run in parallel.

Katharina Staerk pointed out that it was often difficult to predict how many delegates would attend different sessions and therefore it would be difficult to ensure room sizes were suitable.

Laura Green stated that she would like to see postgraduate students being given greater opportunity to present work and that perhaps there could be a single parallel session dedicated to post graduate students who had not yet submitted theses.

Stuart Reid commented on the experience of the Conference for Research Workers in Animal Disease in the USA where this issue had been addressed a number of times and that a certain degree of frustration had developed among the delegates in terms of a lack of distinction between sessions. Stuart Reid also stated that delegates do not have to attend all sessions and that SVEPM should not become another ISVEE (International Symposium for Veterinary Epidemiology and Economics). Finally Stuart Reid suggested that a post graduate student session could run as a Wednesday morning workshop.

Alex Cook stated with the number of projects completing each year outnumbering the number of papers presented perhaps parallel sessions would be a good move.

Lis Alban stated that parallel session at the SafePork conference had been successfully introduced in the past few years.

Victoriya Volkova commented that multiple sessions would not necessarily equate to good student presentations.

Rowland Kao felt that one of the strengths of this conference was its intimate and friendly nature and that very large sessions were perhaps losing some of the appeal.

Marcus Doherr agreed with Laura Green that a student session may be a good idea.

Louise Matthews and Dominic Mellor suggested that a longer conference format may be considered.

Graham Medley pointed out that the current strict selection criteria ensured that the invitation to speak was still valued by the speaker.

Kenton Morgan stated that both types of format worked well at other conferences. He felt that there were three issues:

- i. In order to allow more delegates to present perhaps one session could be dedicated to shorter presentations.
- ii. A monitoring group of individuals may be required to ensure the quality of extra presentations was maintained.
- iii. Parallel sessions may also increase numbers at the conference. However, he admitted that this did not appear to be a problem at the moment.

KM summed up that there were two options:

1. Keep as the current single session format.
2. Allow some change to the format.

By way of a show of hands there was clear majority of the membership in favour of retaining the current conference format.

11. Locations of future conferences

RN introduced this item by stating that the tradition had been for 2 conferences in the UK followed by one outside of the UK, but that there was an increasing call from non-UK members to host the conference. RN invited members of the society to approach members of the committee to express an interest in hosting future conferences.

Simon More (ordinary executive committee member) introduced the three options that the committee were considering:

1. Maintain status quo – i.e. 2 UK and 1 non-UK.
2. Move to alternate UK and non-UK conferences.
3. Allow freedom of location dependent on approaches from different members to host the conference and to select on the quality of the bid.

SM presented arguments for each option and RN opened the debate to the floor.

Marcus Doherr commented that perhaps the number of locations available to hold a conference of SVEPM size was becoming limited in the UK.

RN stated that SVEPM was indeed a growing society but that as yet there were still several locations large enough to host future conferences in the UK.

Alex Cook stated that the increasing European nature of the membership was very good and as such this was a strong argument against maintenance of the status quo. He also felt that accessibility to the conference location should be an important criterion when selecting future conference locations.

RN confirmed that accessibility was an important consideration and that the committee welcomed potential organisers to present a number of potential options within an overall bid.

Nils Toft suggested that change of locations were important to increase participation and collaborations from other countries such as those in Eastern Europe.

Frazer Menzies stated that the original reason for a three year cycle had been to ensure that during an ISVEE year the SVEPM conference would be in a UK location, where historically greater attendance had been achieved.

Ed van Klink asked what the pattern of potential organiser bids had been recently.

RN stated that they had been predominantly non-UK in recent years. RN stated that SVEPM 2009 would be London, SVEPM 2010 would be France and that further expressions of interest had come from Germany.

Laura Green noted that the committee membership was now more European and that it was therefore perhaps inevitable that more conference organisers would come from outside the UK as committee membership often accompanied conference organisation.

RN agreed with Laura on this point and called for a show of hands on the three options presented by Simon More. A large majority of the membership favoured moving to option three allowing freedom of future conference locations.

RN stated that this would be further considered at the post-conference committee meeting.

12. Nominations of life members

RN stated that this was a very enjoyable role for the President to acknowledge many years of contribution to the working of the society. He announced that Keith Howe as a founder member (on the executive committee between 1985 and 1989; President 1987-1988; organiser of two conferences in 1989 and 1993) had been nominated to receive life membership of the society. The role that Keith Howe played in running a successful meeting in 1993 went a long way to getting the society back on a strong financial footing.

Keith Howe graciously accepted the honour of life membership and stated that his association with SVEPM had undoubtedly been the most rewarding aspect of his career. He felt it was very important not to lose the culture of the society and was glad to see the growing importance of veterinary epidemiology in many fields and hoped to see its continued progression.

RN stated that the committee would be happy to accept further nominations for future life members.

12. Any other business

Katharine Staerk, speaking on behalf of the European College of Veterinary Public Health (ECVPH), was aware of the importance of SVEPM to the

population medicine sub speciality of ECVPH. There was an interest for ECVPH to have a more visible role at SVEPM and that ECVPH may be interested in getting involved in organising or supporting specific sessions.

Kenton Morgan questioned whether the surplus finances in SVEPM accounts could be used to support SVEPM students at ISVEE.

RN stated that students at SVEPM get the best possible deal for SVEPM and that the committee would like to maintain the healthy surplus to cover years when the conference was unable to break even and also to enable delegate costs to be held down when the SVEPM annual conference is held in locations that are more expensive. RN also stated that the committee followed a formula designed to maintain the financial security of the society.

Marcus Doherr stated that those interested in holding pre- or post-ISVEE workshops should make contact with organisers before July 2008.

Simon More stated that following the unsuccessful bid by German colleagues to host SVEPM 2010 the committee would consider this for future conferences.

13. Date and venue of next meeting

The next AGM (no. 28) will be held on the 2nd April 2009 at Imperial College, in London.

RN closed the AGM and thanked members for their attendance and participation.

Tim Parkin
(Honorary Secretary)