



SVEPM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NO. 30

Date: Thursday 24th March 2011
Time: 12.00 pm
Location: Leipzig, Germany.

MINUTES

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Katharina Staerk, Richard Newton and James Booth.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting No. 29 held on Thursday 25th March 2010 in Nantes, France.

Stuart Reid proposed and Koen Mintiens seconded acceptance of the minutes of AGM 29. The minutes of AGM No. 29 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the business conducted with no alterations required.

3. Matters arising (not otherwise on the agenda)

There were no matters arising.

4. President's report

Louise Kelly (LK), as President of the Society, presented her report to the AGM as follows:

LK thanked the delegates for attending the conference and in particular thanked Dominic Mellor for his excellent opening plenary and was sure that the Gareth Davies lecture to be given by Dr Karin Schwabenbauer would be well received.

LK also thanked all workshop organisers, noting that there had been very good feedback on these workshops so far.

LK praised the organisers of the conference, Hans-Hermann Thulke and his team for producing such a well organised conference. She also thanked all sponsors listed in the front cover of the conference proceedings.

LK commented on the work of the committee in reaching out to countries with less well established veterinary epidemiology groups, noting that in its first year three conference bursaries had been awarded. These had been awarded to one German delegate currently working in Australia, one Hungarian delegate currently working in the UK and one Portuguese delegate. In addition, the committee had piloted the video recording of the opening plenary to investigate the feasibility of placing conference talks on the SVEPM website sometime after the conference to further reach out to delegates who were unable to attend the current conference.

LK asked for further proposals to host future conferences noting that for 2014 these should be with the committee by August 1st 2011. SVEPM 2012 will be held in Glasgow, UK and SVEPM 2013 will be held in Madrid, Spain.

LK reiterated the process of scoring of abstracts stressing that all abstracts were scored blind to the author name(s) and that due to the format of the conference with only 21 slots for talks this was always a very competitive process. This year there had been 93 abstracts submitted.

LK noted that although the number of delegates was lower than previous years she felt that what was important was quality not quantity.

LK also noted that there had been a suggestion from one of the members of the Society that we make a donation to any veterinary epidemiology groups located in Japan that may have been affected by the recent earthquake and tsunami. LK asked the floor if they had any contacts in Japan that we could approach to facilitate this. None were forthcoming. Nevertheless this proposal was agreed by the membership after being proposed by Fraser Menzies and seconded by Ann Lindberg. LK agreed to take this back to the committee for further discussion.

Finally LK reserved special thanks for Dirk Pfeiffer who was standing down from the committee as outgoing Senior Vice President.

Tim Parkin, as Honorary Secretary, requested that members from the floor propose and second acceptance of the President's report. Kristien Verheyen proposed and Ed van Klink seconded acceptance of the President's report.

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 mostly related to conference organisation and registrations.

TP noted a significant rise in the number of enquiries for copies of past proceedings in the past year.

TP noted that the SVEPM members' subscription rate for PVM would remain at Euro 150 per annum. At present four SVEPM members take advantage of this discounted subscription rate.

Finally, TP was pleased to announce that there were now many fewer emails being returned. He noted that the few that were consistently returned were those belonging to members who were not in attendance at the current conference and that therefore it may be difficult to improve on the situation any further.

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

LK requested that members from the floor propose and second acceptance of the Secretary's report. Liza Rosenbaum Nielsen proposed and Jane Murray seconded acceptance of the Secretary's report.

6. Treasurer's report

Kristien Verheyen (KV) presented the accounts for 2009/2010 which were approved and had been signed off by the auditors. Total income had been £6,385.56. Total expenditure had been £6,721.92. Net income for the year had been £-336.36. The total balance for the Society, as of November 2010, was £59,880.91. KV noted that the 2010 conference balance of £8,015.10 had not been included in these accounts as those funds had been received late from the conference organisers in Nantes from the previous conference.

KV reported that there were currently 236 members of the Society from 27 different countries, distributed as follows:

UK & Ireland – 149
Scandinavia – 22
Benelux – 16
Other European – 31
USA and Canada – 8
New Zealand and Australia – 6
Other – 4

KV explained that there was an issue with new members for each conference, in that they currently pay £20, to become a member for the conference, in February or March but then should be required to pay £20 to renew membership in May of the same year. This created extra work for the Treasurer and also potentially results in delegates remaining as members for one year only (i.e. not renewing in May). KV proposed that for new or rejoining members £40 (equating to two years of membership fees) should be requested to avoid this problem. It was noted that this had been the process in the past.

There was some discussion from the floor with a few members being reluctant to back this proposal. However, a vote on the proposal was taken having been proposed from the floor by Teresa Martinez and seconded by Michel Bigras Poulin. The proposal was passed by a large majority with only three votes against.

Michael Pearce asked about the possibility of establishing a Euro bank account as well as a Sterling account in order to avoid exchange rate costs. Dominic Mellor noted that this had been investigated in the past and that it had proved impossible for a UK resident to have a Euro account.

Stuart Reid questioned the apparent trend in falling numbers of delegates at the conference, noting that there had been 250 in London in 2009, 200 in Nantes in 2010 and just 140 in Leipzig this year. He asked if the committee were concerned by this drop in numbers.

LK responded that it was indeed disappointing to see a number of members not attending the conference this year. It was noted from the floor by Lis Alban that there were other similar conferences taking place this year and that it is possible with the economic downturn that delegates are having to be more selective in the conferences they choose to attend.

Stuart Reid asked at what number of delegates the current conference organiser had budgeted to break even.

Hans-Hermann Thulke replied that this had originally been set at 200 delegates but subsequently further budgetary cuts had been made so that the Society would not lose money on the conference.

Stuart Reid thanked Hans-Hermann for this and was grateful that the conference had been underwritten in this way.

Peter Cripps commented that although he loved SVEPM we should be aware that most institutions “flourish and die” and we should be prepared for SVEPM not being relevant in the future.

Kenton Morgan noted that as part of the Contacts and Concepts workshop he had asked why people attend the conference. He suggested that finding this out from all delegates, and reasons for non-attendance from members, would be a good exercise for the committee to undertake.

It was agreed that in addition to the post-conference feedback questionnaire for delegates, a questionnaire for non-attending members should be circulated within a week of the conference.

Kenton Morgan also suggested that perhaps the Society balance sheet needs to take a bit of a hit in the next couple of years (by way of reduced conference registration fees) in order to encourage increased attendance. He also suggested, if possible, that an analysis of sustained membership from year to year be performed to identify if those becoming members in order to register for the conference actually remain members in future years.

Dominic Mellor (as one of the Society’s auditors) noted that the Society budget breaks even every year and that the accounts had a healthy surplus and that we should not be concerned about losing money at some conferences.

Paul Robinson asked that we actively recruit new members from the rest of Europe.

Michel Bigras Poulin noted that it was an expensive conference for him to attend due to travel but it was the one conference where real debate was generated due to the unique structure of the conference without parallel sessions and extended presentations. He questioned whether it may be possible to produce an edited debate for those not attending.

LK noted that the Committee were currently discussing ways to reach members who could not attend the conference in the form of videos placed on the Society website some time after the conference.

Louise Matthews noted that it was conference attendance that was important and not membership numbers in terms of both finances and also successful conferences.

LK requested that members from the floor propose and second acceptance of the Treasurer’s report along with keeping the membership fee at £20. Maarten Weber proposed and Lis Alban seconded acceptance of the Treasurer’s report

and the maintenance of the £20 membership fee. These were accepted by a show of hands. KV reminded the membership that the membership fee was due on or around the 1st May annually.

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 2011 – 2012 the following positions will be occupied by:

Position	Holder 2010-2011
Senior Vice President	Louise Kelly
President	Christine Fourichon

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 2010-2011	Proposer	Seconder
Honorary Treasurer	Kristien Verheyen	Tim Parkin	Louise Kelly
Honorary Secretary	Koen Mintiens	Tim Parkin	Ann Lindberg
Junior Vice President	Tim Parkin	Louise Kelly	Koen Mintiens

Acceptance of these nominations were proposed by Ed van Klink and seconded by Marcus Doherr.

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

One nomination was received by the deadline of 21 days prior to the AGM. This was:

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
MARNIE BRENNAN	TIM PARKIN	DOMINIC MELLOR

LK congratulated Marnie on her election to the committee.

8. Election of auditors

LK reported that Dominic Mellor and Fraser Menzies had both agreed to continue to act as auditors of the Society accounts. Stuart Reid therefore proposed and Michel Bigras Poulin seconded their nominations. No objections were received from the floor and Dominic Mellor and Fraser Menzies were therefore elected to serve as auditors for the forthcoming year.

9. Production and editing of the proceedings

The President said that as far as editing the proceedings were concerned all had gone well and according to time schedules. However, there had been a delay by PVM in getting the special edition published this year, but that this delay was being followed up immediately after the conference. Teresa Martinez noted that there had been 11 papers submitted of which 6 had been accepted. LK also thanked Mike Thrusfield for continuing in the role of Keeper of

Antiquities and noted the work he continued to do with regard to ensuring SVEPM proceedings continue to be distributed to members unable to attend the meeting.

LK also asked the membership if they used the CD contained within the proceedings. By a show of hands a substantial proportion of the membership indicated that they did indeed use the CD.

10. Nominations of life members

LK requested that nominations for life membership come from the membership.

11. Any other business

No further business was tabled.

12. Date and venue of next meeting

The next AGM (no. 31) will be held on the 29th March 2012 in Glasgow, UK.

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

Tim Parkin
(Honorary Secretary)