



SVEPM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING No. 29

Date: Thursday 25th March 2010
Time: 12.00 pm
Location: Nantes, France.

MINUTES

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Katharina Staerk, Graham Medley, Fraser Menzies, Dominic Mellor, David Brodbelt and Gareth Davies.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting No. 28 held on Thursday 2nd April 2009 in London, UK.

Kristien Verheyen proposed and Louise Kelly seconded acceptance of the minutes of AGM 28. The minutes of AGM No. 28 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

Dirk Pfeiffer (DP), as President of the Society, presented his report to the AGM as follows:

DP stressed the importance of communication and as such he was delighted to see so many at the conference this year and was happy to see the PVM special edition published well before the target date of the start of the current conference.

DP noted that planning for future conferences was well underway and that in 2011 the conference will be held in Leipzig and in 2012 the conference will be held in Glasgow.

Further proposals were welcomed for future conference locations from 2013 onwards. DP acknowledged the proposals from potential future conference hosts that had already been received. DP wished to clarify deadlines for such proposals:

1. By August 1st (2.5 years in advance of the year of hosting) complete the proposal form and submit to the Honorary Secretary.
2. Further information may be sought by the committee during August
3. Committee discuss proposals at the September committee meeting.

So, for example, for SVEPM 2013 proposal forms should be with the Honorary Secretary by August 1st 2010.

DP thanked the plenary speakers for their contributions. DP also commented on the success of the workshops this year and the fact that all were well attended which the committee took as a sign that a good variety of workshops had been offered.

DP praised the local organisers, particularly Christine Fourichon and Thierry Hoch. Following on from last year DP said that he knew how much work was involved and what an enormous effort it was that local organisers made on behalf of the Society. He particularly praised the fact that Euro 16,000 was raised in sponsorship for this year's conference.

DP thanked the delegates for making the effort to again attend the conference. Maintaining delegate numbers at between 200 and 250 individuals at each conference was a good achievement.

DP also thanked Lis Alban (LA) for her time served on the committee as at the end of this conference she would be standing down from her position as Senior Vice President. He noted that he and Lis were elected to the committee in the same year but that Lis had received more votes than him! DP commented that LA had been a very big influence on the Society.

DP also thanked Simon More and Koen Mintiens who were stepping down from the committee having served their three-year terms as ordinary members. He noted that Koen was standing for re-election.

DP went on to mention the following notes:

1. Free registration and two nights' accommodation for one workshop organiser at future conferences.
2. That Teresa Martinez (TM) had been co-opted to the committee as PVM special edition editor.

Finally DP asked delegates to complete feedback forms which would be available immediately after this AGM.

Dirk Pfeiffer asked for questions related to his report. None were forthcoming.

Tim Parkin, as Honorary Secretary, requested that members from the floor propose and second acceptance of the President's report. Simon More proposed and James Wood 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 small increase in SVEPM members' subscription rate for PVM to Euro 150 per annum. At present five SVEPM members take advantage of this discounted subscription rate.

TP commented on continued links and correspondence with ISVEE and ECVPH with respect to reciprocal arrangements for conference advertising. He stated

that these links would be pursued in the coming months and that this would include discussion with members of ECVPH council on how best ECVPH and SVEPM can compliment each others work.

TP stated that the committee handbook would be uploaded to the SVEPM website after this conference having been updated with the AGM SOP and guidance notes for PVM special edition that had been prepared by Lis Alban, Kristien Verheyen, Teresa Martinez, Richard Newton and Gina Pinchbeck.

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.

DP requested that members from the floor propose and second acceptance of the Secretary's report. Gina Pinchbeck proposed and Liza Rosenbaum Nielsen seconded acceptance of the Secretary's report.

6. Treasurer's report

KV presented the accounts for 2008/2009 which had been approved by the auditors. Total income had been £70,547.20. Total expenditure had been £59,572.10. Net income for the year had been £10,975.10. The total balance for the Society was £60,217.27. KV also reported that the printing of the Proceedings for 2009 had not yet been paid as SVEPM had yet to receive an invoice. The quote for this was £2558.67.

KV reported that there were currently 260 members of the Society from the following countries:

UK & Ireland – 161
Scandinavia – 33
Benelux – 20
Other European – 27
USA and Canada – 8
New Zealand and Australia – 5
South & Central America – 3
Other – 3

KV noted that the constitution required that the membership vote on the level of membership fee for the coming year. KV proposed that this remain at £20 for this year. This was accepted by a show of hands. KV reminded the membership that the membership fee was due on or around the 1st May annually.

DP requested that members from the floor propose and second acceptance of the Treasurer's report. Stuart Reid proposed and Francois Beaudeau seconded acceptance of 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 2010 – 2011 the following positions will be occupied by:

Position	Holder 2010-2011
Senior Vice President	Dirk Pfeiffer
President	Louise Kelly

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	Koen Mintiens	Louise Kelly
Honorary Secretary	Tim Parkin	Kristien Verheyen	Lis Alban
Junior Vice President	Christine Fourichon	Dirk Pfeiffer	Tim Parkin

Acceptance of these nominations were proposed by Simon More and seconded by Darrel Abernethy.

With Lis Alban, Koen Mintiens, Simon More and Teresa Martinez completing their terms on the committee and Christine Fourichon becoming Junior Vice President, four positions as ordinary member of the committee were vacant. Teresa Martinez was co-opted to the committee with responsibility for editing of the PVM special edition. In light of this it was decided that three ordinary members should be elected to the committee.

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

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
DARRELL ABERNETHY	DIRK PFEIFFER	FRASER MENZIES
MARNIE BRENNAN	ROB CHRISTLEY	PETER CRIPPS
ANN LINDBERG	GEORGE GUNN	DIRK PFEIFFER
KOEN MINTIENS	TIM PARKIN	KRISTIEN VERHEYEN
LIZA ROSENBAUM NIELSEN	LIS ALBAN	NILS TOFT

Ed van Klink and Jeroen Dewulf volunteered to act as tellers.

A secret ballot was held and after each member present had selected three of the five nominees to be elected to the committee Ann Lindberg, Koen Mintiens and Liza Rosenbaum Nielsen were duly elected as ordinary members of the committee.

8. Election of auditors

DP reported that Dominic Mellor and Fraser Menzies had both agreed to continue to act as auditors of the Society accounts. Tim Parkin therefore proposed and Lis Alban 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 he was very pleased that the proceedings were again available in time for the conference. DP 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.

10. Nominations of life members

DP nominated John Wilesmith as a Life Member of the Society for his work, amongst others, on BSE and TB indicating that he deserves special recognition from the Society. DP therefore proposed and requested a second from the floor. Ann Lindberg seconded this nomination.

11. Proposed change to the constitution

The proposed change to the constitution had been circulated in advance of the AGM and DP requested the views of the membership.

DP read the proposed change as follows:

“Members of the executive committee who attend the conference (but excluding local organisers who already receive free conference registration) will be entitled to a £300 rebate from the conference registration fee. The existence of and size of the rebate will be reviewed every three years at the AGM to ensure that it remains financially sustainable. Changes to the size of the rebate will be decided upon by a simple majority vote of members present at the AGM.”

Stuart Reid asked whether such a change could simply be enacted through the by-laws of the Society and not the constitution. He also asked why the committee felt a rebate for committee members was deemed to be necessary.

DP replied that as committee members were expected to attend the conference it is appropriate to subsidise their registration. He also stated that not all committee members were necessarily in a position to be able to easily identify funds to attend the conference every year.

Lis Alban commented that if the committee was to continue to have a membership that was derived from all aspects of veterinary epidemiology, including industry, it may be necessary to enable some form of rebate.

Gina Pinchbeck asked if such a rebate would result in an increase in conference fees.

Christine Fourichon stated that it had been accommodated in the conference budget for this year in case of a positive outcome of any vote. However, she also stated that this had been offset by the fact that committee members had not claimed for the first night accommodation at the conference as had been the custom previously.

Keith Howe agreed with Stuart Reid that this was not a constitutional issue and suggested that the committee should simply claim travel expenses for attendance at committee meetings pre and post each conference. He

suggested that the item be removed from the agenda and that it be dealt with through the by-laws of the Society.

DP agreed to take the item off the agenda and to deal with expenses for committee members as suggested by Keith Howe.

12. Potential use of LinkedIn for the membership

Koen Mintiens introduced this concept, following discussion at the AGM in 2009. He said it would complement the Epi-vet list and provide an additional source of information for the membership. There were no further comments from the floor and it was agreed that this was a good idea.

13. Measures to encourage wider participation of “smaller” veterinary epidemiology nations

Lis Alban (LA) introduced this topic for discussion, stating that it was one of the aims of the committee to increase the membership of SVEPM from countries that were currently under-represented.

Simon More commented on the experience of ISVEE in Chile and how this had resulted in a significant increase in interest in veterinary epidemiology in that country. He also commented that the committee may take the view that it should manage the risk of taking SVEPM to a country in, for example, Eastern Europe, given the healthy state of the finances.

James Wood stated that he would support ideas to widen participation, especially if it resulted in students from Eastern European countries being able to attend the conference. He also suggested that any assistance for individuals should be generous and cover both travel and registration costs.

Sabine Dippel commented that it might be sensible to also consider assistance for currently unemployed members of the Society.

Peter Cripps asked how much it was advisable to maintain as a surplus in the Society's bank accounts, commenting that £60,000 was probably not sufficient to cover potential losses.

DP agreed with Peter Cripps that this was a crucial issue but did also comment that it had become customary for the local organisers to take out insurance against losses at recent conferences.

Teresa Martinez suggested that the same money used to fund individuals to attend the conference could be used to make video recordings of sessions that could be placed online. Thus, potentially enabling a much wider audience to access the conference material.

LA stated that she was encouraged with the comments from the membership.

DP stated that the issue would be further examined at future committee meetings.

14. Any other business

No further business was tabled.

12. Date and venue of next meeting

The next AGM (no. 30) will be held on the 24th March 2010 in Leipzig, Germany.

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

Tim Parkin
(Honorary Secretary)