

RCN Scotland Board

Minutes of the RCN Scotland Board meeting held virtually/in person,

09.00-15.00 on Friday 8 September 2023

OPEN SESSION

Present:

North Sector

Jackie Leith (JLe)

June Ramsay (JR)

Katherine Dumigan (KD)

+#Martin Macgregor (MM) Vice-Chair

East Sector

Lesley Cunningham (LC)

Jane Gibson (JG)

Hilary Nelson (HN)

Allina Das (AD)

West Sector

Derek Clark (DC)

Julie Lamberth (JL)

Sandra Milne (SM)

Greg Usrey (GU)

Chair

Other Seats

Jasmin Clark (JC)

Tobias Kunkel (TK)

Council

Trade Union Committee

In attendance:

Colin Poolman (CP)

Gush Uppal (GU)

Norman Provan (NP)

Luci Pollard

Carol Harris (CH)

Philip Coghill (PC)

#Nicola Gordon (NG)

#Ross Sanderson

Director, RCN Scotland

Director of Group Finance

Associate Director, Employment Relations, RCN Scotland

Board Administrator, RCN Scotland

Communications and Public Affairs Manager, RCN Scotland

Scotland Lead for Pay, Terms & Conditions

Policy Manager

Policy Advisor

Apologies:

Martha Gill

Professional Nursing Committee

*left before the end of the meeting

+joined after the start of the meeting

#joined the meeting virtually

Martin Macgregor was not present for this part of the meeting

Norman not at meeting

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed the Board to the open session.

2. Minutes of the meetings held on 1 June 2023

These were noted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Update from the Board Chair on Confidential Session

3.1 No additional members or staff joining the Open session, so no update was required.

4. Communications and Parliamentary update

4.1 Carol Harris, Communications & Public Affairs Manager spoke to this item. She gave the board an update on the priorities. The Student Round table was a success with student nurses describing their challenges and also their passion for nursing. Representatives from the Conservative party and SNP were at the meeting. Subsequently RCN met with SAAS and some actions have come out of that meeting. Further information has been sent to the student nurse attendees to encourage them to engage further in a variety of ways.

4.2 The parliament has returned and RCN continues to lobby on safe staffing and other issues. An Older People's commissioner is being proposed, a recommendation that was raised at Congress, and RCNS is supportive of this.

4.3 Reps conference communications and the Nurse of the Year Awards are also being prepared.

5. AGM update

5.1 Colin Poolman, Director, spoke to this item. The AGM was held as a hybrid model with three resolutions.

5.2 Resolution 1: Extension to Council members' terms of office (ordinary resolution)

This resolution related to newly elected Council members whose terms of office were due to expire on 31 December 2023. Members were asked to vote to approve an extension of terms until 31 December 2024.

The resolution was passed with 82.46% of members who voted supporting the resolution.

5.3 Resolution 2: Member subscriptions (ordinary resolution)

This resolution asked members to approve a further five-year dispensation for Council to set membership subscriptions, until 31 December 2028.

This resolution was passed with 74.83% of members who voted supporting the resolution.

The RCN's Standing Orders stated that subscription rates can only be set by members in General Meeting. This restricts the financial planning which is needed to run an organisation of our size and creates enormous financial risk and instability. Consequently, through a series of AGM resolutions since 2011, members have given Council dispensation to set these rates. Council has only used this dispensation once – an increase of just 1% in January 2014. Council is not seeking an increase at the present time, in recognition of rising prices hitting members' pockets, current levels of pay awards across all sectors, and the strength of our own membership numbers. However, subscription fees cannot remain at 2014 rates indefinitely, and it is important that Council is able to plan the RCN's finances in order to provide financial stability and sustainability. Have say your We will continue to do everything we can to deliver effectively and efficiently for members in these challenging times.

5.4 Resolution 3: EGM Threshold (special resolution)

This resolution related to the threshold needed to call an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), how requisitions for EGMs are submitted and authenticated, and how member resolutions can be submitted to General Meetings which have already been called.

This was a special resolution with three elements requiring a two-thirds majority for each. The first and second elements were related, with the outcome of the first superseding the second if it met the required majority. This meant that if over two-thirds of members who voted supported the first part of the resolution, the second part would not need to be voted on.

The first part of the resolution was passed with 82.16% of members who voted supporting the resolution. The third part of the resolution was passed with 85.48% of members who voted supporting the resolution.

This means, going forward, 5% of the total RCN membership will need to support calls for an EGM for it to proceed and a process will be put in place to give members a direct route to submit items and speak to Council directly at their meetings.

Both KPMG and Carr recommended that the College reviews the threshold at which an EGM can be requisitioned. In relation to the ease in which members can call an EGM, Bruce Carr KC said, "It creates fear, paralysis and substandard decision making. It also gives a small number of members (0.2%) a disproportionate ability to affect the organisation. It is very damaging and should be changed so that when an EGM is called, it is done on the basis of a properly representative community within the College." By following the examples of similar organisations, we want to ensure this process is balanced, representative and that the whole College positively benefits from member democracy. This resolution proposed a threshold of 5%, which is in line with the Companies Act.

(Members were also asked to vote for a lower threshold of 2.5% should the 5% not be passed.) This resolution also means a change to the way in which EGM petitions are submitted and authenticated and is designed to avoid a repeat of the misuse of members' personal information and uphold the security and ensure confidence in the process of requesting this type of meeting. It's important that members can raise concerns and direct the future of the RCN. Therefore, alongside democratising the threshold needed to call an EGM, members were also asked to vote to enable Council to set out a clear path by which members can submit resolutions on to the agendas of General Meetings which have already been called.

- 5.5 The first resolution helps ensure continuity. The second, enables Council to raise subscriptions. The third resolution was a little more contentious regarding the EGM threshold and it was carried with a large majority.

Discussion

It was noted that the in-person attendance was low and it was asked whether the AGM and Congress could be held at the same time. The Board noted that the timing was due to financial reporting issues.

6. Policy Update

- 6.1 Nicola Gordon, Policy Manager spoke to this item. She asked the Board to note that there is some internal work undertaking the development of internal strategies and focussing on the benefit to members. Often the timelines are long and it is important to ensure that members are aware of the work and progress.

7. Nursing & Midwifery Taskforce

- 7.1 Colin Poolman, Director, spoke to this item. The Nursing and Midwifery Taskforce was set up following an RCN meeting with the Minister. The Board noted that this Taskforce was putting some pressure on the administration of the government. There are four groups: culture & wellbeing; attraction; education; and wellbeing. There have been two meetings of the Taskforce. The separate groups have also met. The Taskforce is made of many different stakeholders and the RCN is building good relationships with those individuals and organisations. Some trade unions were initially slow to engage in the process but they are now seeing the benefits of being involved. The Board noted that there will be both short- and long-term benefits. The Board will have a further update in December.
- 7.2 The Board noted that if there is significant political change within the SNP then that may impact the work of the Taskforce. It was agreed that the membership of the taskforce will be shared with the Board.

8. Board Dates for 2024

- 8.1 Luci Pollard, Board Administrator spoke to this item. She asked for the Board to agree the Board dates set out in the paper. In addition, she asked that any development sessions held in the last quarter of the year should avoid September, this would enable staff and the Board to better support student recruitment during that month.

Discussion

It was noted that the island member had more difficulties with travel due to the limited flights. She commented that moving the Board meeting to Friday meant that she could not travel home that day. It was noted that the move of the development day to Thursdays, with the Board meeting being held on a Friday, was to support attendance at the development session.

It was clarified that there was no wish for anyone to feel excluded and that the hybrid model would continue. It was also suggested that the Board meeting could be held elsewhere. This proposal may incur additional costs, as it would require the hiring of a room to accommodate the meeting and technology to support the event being hybrid.

The Board agreed the following dates for Board meetings and development sessions 2024:

Thursday 15 February – Board meeting
Friday 16 February – development session
Friday 24 May – Board meeting
Thursday 12 September – Board meeting
Thursday 5 December – Board meeting

In addition, there will be a number of virtual development sessions when required.

9. RCN Scotland Reps Conference

The Conference will be held on 2-3 November, in the Delta Hotel, in Edinburgh. The booking system is now open. The programme has been developed alongside the Board subgroup. The Board noted that Dr Mike Murray will be the after-dinner speaker.

Discussion

It was noted that some new representatives had not received the invitation to apply email. Carol Harris, Communications & Public Affairs Manager agreed to follow this up. The Board were keen to encourage as many activists to attend as possible. It was agreed that a template for an attendance certificate will be shared with the Board.

10. Council Update

- 10.1 The Board noted the updates.

Discussion

A member had asked about the extension of the Chief Executive's contract. She is in an interim role. Council was keen to ensure stability for the next year given the issue of pay across the four countries. Council has asked her to extend a further year on the understanding that during this period the substantive role will be

advertised.

11. Trade Union Committee Report

- 11.1 The TU Committee representative spoke to this item. He highlighted that the seat for the North West has now been filled by Mark Butler. Seven key areas have been identified to be mapped into the RCN strategic plan. NHS pay, terms and conditions; health & social care pay; pensions; health and wellbeing; improve the number and reach of reps and active members; reps and active members learning and development; equality, diversity and inclusion. More joint meetings will be held with the PNC.

12. Professional Nursing Committee Report

- 12.1 The report was noted.

Discussion

Simulation hours – the Board noted that there can be up to 600 hours for students. It was felt that this should not be about lack of placements, but unfortunately this has been the reason why most universities have been using this method. In England placement providers are getting funding. The issue of lack of resource to support additional simulation hours in Aberdeen was highlighted. The Director noted that this was touched on at the Taskforce. The NMC is represented on the Taskforce. The NMC is currently considering the number of practice hours required.

13. Nursing Support Worker Committee Report

- 13.1 The report was noted.

14. Student Committee Report

- 14.1 The report was noted.

15. Board members' Reports

- 15.1 It was noted that a new Chief Executive will be starting in Forth Valley soon.

16. Any Other business

Branch Funding.

The Chair urged Board members to help ensure that branch plans by February 2024.

It was noted that Glasgow held a hugely successful event. A report is currently being written and this will be shared with the Board. It was suggested that in the future events options that could be shared across branches.

Legal Win

RCN Scotland won £485k for a member who was assaulted at work. This member is willing to do media communications around this.

Feedback from student recruitment

Feedback had been received that the bags were a bit lacking. It was highlighted that branches can add to the bags, should they wish. It was suggested that that branch contact details could be shared with student members as they join.

Accreditation/Disaccreditation

The branch should do both processes. This is part of the AGM process. Branch officials are urged to work with the Patch team to ensure that this process is carried out appropriately. It was agreed that a review of the process should be undertaken for Board and branch officials.

End of the Open Session.