

Minutes of Assembly Meeting held on 26th March 2025 at 66 East Smithfield

Present: Claire Anderson (CA) - Chair, Adebayo Adegbite (AA), Danny Bartlett (DB), Jonathan Burton (JB), Ciara Duffy (CD), Ruth Edwards (RE), Brendan Jiang (BJ), Gino Martini (GMa), Geraldine McCaffrey (GMC), Matt Prior (MP), Tase Oputu (TO), Eleri Schiavone (ES), Lynne Smith (LS), Audrey Thompson (AT)

In attendance: Paul Bennett (PB), Karen Baxter (KB), Avril Chester (AC), Rick Russell (RR), Laura Wilson (LS), Elen Jones (EJ), Liz North (LN), Catherine Walker (CW) – item 5 only, Lauren Cheetham (LC) – minutes, Sophie Hughes (SH) – minutes

Apologies: None received

Observers: 7 observers joined the meeting

Item	Paper	Notes and actions	Action by
Item 01 Welcome & Apologies		No apologies received.	
Item 02 Items for Noting		<p>The following items were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Code of Conduct & Remit of Assembly and COG b) Declarations of interest GMC, ES and BJ declared amendments – ACTION to update and recirculate for approval c) Minutes of the Open Business Assembly Meeting 20th November (noted and approved) d) National Pharmacy Board Reports e) President's Report f) Treasurer's Report g) Education & Standards Committee minutes of 19th February 	LC/SH

		<p>h) Education/Professional Development report</p> <p>i) Science & Research Committee minutes 13th February</p> <p>j) Inclusion & Diversity update</p> <p>k) 2025 Events update</p>	
Item 03 Matters Arising		None	
Item 04 UKPPLAB		<p>CA reported on the March Board meeting which approved the diagram circulated separately to the Assembly meeting pack – this diagram is the culmination of the vision and common purpose work Assembly members will recognise from their attendance at recent webinars. Next steps are for each organisation to take the diagram through formal approval with their governing bodies (i.e. Assembly) with a view to publication on individual websites in June and co-ownership of the document going forward.</p> <p>Assembly APPROVED the diagram.</p> <p>LN was pleased with the outcome and participation, praising both the effort involved and its success. GMC appreciated the opportunity for collaborative discussions about development of the vision, which aligns with the principles of how we work. Despite concern over the likely attendees at the public and patient group-focused webinars being limited to the very interested, LS was pleased to note the breadth of attendees asking interesting questions. CA welcomed the input as a different lens on pharmacy. She reported a further meeting to be attended by herself and PB.</p> <p>PB highlighted the continued strong working relationship formed between RPS and the Advisory Board through the good office of the President in representing RPS. He reflected on the division of subcommittee activity e.g. LN's representation for engagement and comms, PB for scope and practice. Subcommittee work is referred to in the recently published Advisory Board paper.</p> <p>He praised endeavours made by Sir Hugh Taylor and the Board Secretariat to ensure all items were communicated, and recommended Assembly members review the scope of practice if they haven't done so recently as a particularly interesting topic for RPS consideration and one likely to become a worthwhile debate.</p>	

Item 05 Museum Policies	<p>CW joined the meeting and reminded Assembly that Museum policies must be reviewed every five years for accreditation purposes, and welcomed any questions on the policy pack. CA thanked CW for the tour given to FIP colleagues.</p> <p>To LS's question, CW reported that we have no formal timetable for item disposal. We are auditing the collection at present as a long-term goal, averaging 1000 objects per year out of a total of 40,000, with 3000 so far complete. We cannot dispose of anything until we understand the scope of the collection, at which point we will develop a disposal policy. We make a note upon finding damaged or duplicate items, and we have an arrangement with Rentokil to dispose of drugs as part of the Controlled Drugs process and update which we can extend further to ensure safety.</p> <p>LS asked what happens in CW's absence given that one paper indicated she is the sole person with Museum authority. CW reported that her absence is mitigated differently by policy e.g., accessing the basement store can be done by a Facilities team member; RPS Head of Finance, Facilities and Estate is named on the Controlled Drugs policy so we have contingency.</p> <p>LS praised CW's exemplary covering document. EJ praised the immense amount of work CW has undertaken in both the Welsh and Scottish offices to obtain licenses and maintain both the required rigor and professional standards needed for the collection, in addition to maintaining safety and broadening the scope of our heritage work to include outreach to the local community and making the museum a child-friendly and fantastic experience. CW reported 160 visitors during the 2024 Open House season, which demonstrates interest in the collection and the importance of maintaining it accurately. GMc also extended her thanks for a significant set of papers and the assurance they provide as to our high standards and the safeguarding of the collection for members and the wider public.</p> <p>CW is now looking into how to improve sustainability and develop income streams such as eCommerce and a shop. We are currently limited in our application for grants etc. as we are not a charity, so there is more work to do on diversifying income streams. EJ highlighted the digital infrastructure that allows us through a microsite to make the collection available to those who are unable to attend the office; CW added that the website is enabling the collection to work harder to promote items that would otherwise be unavailable in storage. EJ also reported regular social media posts which have received good interaction.</p>	
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	<p>In answer to RE's question on how volunteers are sought, CW reported a waiting list following a role application that was put out last year. We had to tighten the description to narrow the 70 initial volunteers down. She further reported close working with the Retired Pharmacists Group (RPG).</p> <p>Assembly members discussed the important focus on children to the betterment of the profession and what further services we might provide to engage them. PB praised the hard work to fulfil our role as custodians of the heritage of the profession, and questioned how we manage our similarly-minded members who might wish to donate items. CW pointed to the clear guidelines in our Collection Development policy of what we can and can't accept, such as duplicates. Whilst it is a shame to turn objects down, we endeavour to advise other avenues to donate to, e.g. local history museums and archives.</p> <p>CW confirmed to GMa that we loan objects fairly regularly to a number of different organisations, especially across London but also country-wide, e.g. Erasmus House, RCN. A strong website will be a useful tool to help others understand what we have to offer. She also confirmed working with the Society of Apothecaries on a 3-day course on the history of pharmacy, and we are looking at creating a workshop for primary school-aged children after we obtain feedback from teachers as to what might be useful. She reported a good working relationship with the British Society for the History of Pharmacy (BSHP).</p> <p>In addition to the older objects in the collection, CW reported focus on developments that are happening now, including 30 diverse recordings across the breadth of pharmacy about their experience of Covid-19 – editing recordings takes time, but we aim to make them available on the website in due course. The principle of contemporary collecting to ensure we don't have gaps means we try to monitor the landscape to gather examples of medicines involved in public conversations; we are embarking on another project that examines pharmacy over the last 50 years which represents the careers of our RPG, so we'd like to capture the extent of the changing profession before the information is lost.</p> <p>CW explained the formal accession process we undertake when a museum piece comes to us and is catalogued; there is a grey area if the object is not accessioned. CA thanked CW for an informative item and extended her appreciation for what the museum adds to the building and organisation.</p> <p>Assembly APPROVED all proposed changes to the Museum policies.</p>	
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Item 06 Constitution & Governance Review	<p>CA was delighted to announce that RPS Members voted in favour of change and for RPS to become a Royal College. PB further announced that Members have voted in favour by way of the Special Resolution Vote in support of the proposed changes to the RPS Royal Charter and to our transition to Royal College, confirming our intention to register as a charity and move to become the Royal College of Pharmacy. The proposal includes the intention to create a wholly owned limited subsidiary for publishing activities.</p> <p>A total of 6,144 votes were cast, a turnout of 31.4%. 4,369 (71.1%) voted in favour and 1,775 (28.9%) voted against.</p> <p>PB welcomed the result and extended his gratitude to Members for their participation and support in this historic decision, whether for or against. This process is only the start of the journey RPS must now take via the necessary steps of the Privy Council, Charity Commission and OSCR, with a view to completing the process by Spring 2026. He gave thanks to the RPS team and Assembly members for putting this resolution before Members and Fellows, and called for union behind the democratically determined position of the newly constituted Royal College of Pharmacy.</p> <p>National Board Chairs GMc, JB and TO each thanked staff and Country teams, and looked forward to working together, bringing all along on the journey regardless of how they voted and making the Royal College of Pharmacy the best organisation it can be. They each welcomed the commitment to the profession demonstrated and gave thanks for the rigor and challenge brought by the exercise. RE expressed gratitude at being part of the process and at enabling the organisation to be fit for the future for the next generation of young pharmacists coming through. She also praised the coordination and time put into the Communication work.</p> <p>CA reported this move as part of her vision since joining the EPB 10 years prior, as well as a letter written to PJ in support. As we mature, we will provide support to achieve excellence in our profession. She was excited for the younger generation of pharmacists who are about to become prescribers, and hoped that all members would come with us on the journey, even those who disagree, so that we may develop the College together. All those who belong to the College have a voice and a part to play as we move forward together.</p> <p>PB suggested that as this phase concludes, an immense amount of work and engagement will be undertaken to reconstitute RPS to become the Royal College of Pharmacy. As part of the transition through Privy Council and Charity Regulator agreement, it is important that there be continuity in the organisation</p>	
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Item 07 Any Other Business		None.	
Item 08 Date of the Next Meeting		Noted that the next meeting will be the Induction Day 15 th July and Assembly Meeting 16 th July 2025.	