

Minutes of meeting 1st March 2007

Confirmed Minutes of a meeting of the Communications Committee of the British Orthodontic Society held on 1 March 2007 commencing at 2.00 p.m. at BOS Headquarters, 12 Bridewell Place, London EC4V 6AP

Members present:

Chris Kettler Executive Secretary, BOS, and Committee Chairman
Gavin Barry Editor, Clinical Effectiveness Bulletin
Caroline Holland BOS Media and Public Relations Consultant
Friedy Luther Editor, Journal of Orthodontics
Baz Parmar Editor, BOSNews
Ann Wright Society Administrator, BOS

By invitation: Andrew Hayward-Dunn, Dodds the Printers

07/1 Welcome by Chairman

Chris Kettler welcomed members to the meeting. He explained that this Committee's activities would be more extensive than those of the Media Committee which the Communications Committee has replaced. Chris gave a brief resume of communications from the publication of the BSSO Transactions and Notices of Meetings in the 1960s and the twice yearly BAO Newsletter, through to what he termed "media mania" in the 1990s when a considerable amount of money was spent on hiring a public relations company with very little to show for it. At that point it was decided to handle public relations in house and the Media Committee was formed with a remit of reactive rather than pro-active public relations. The first Chairman appointed was Jonathan Sandler and the Committee was active and very effective. The Specialist Practitioners Group (now the Orthodontic Specialist Group) retained Caroline Holland as their media consultant. Caroline was subsequently invited to handle media and public relations for the Society, an appointment which has proved very beneficial to the Society over the last few years.

Chris Kettler commented that enquiries from the public are dealt with differently now from some years ago when the public was not actively helped. The Society now recognises its duty to the public as patients in line with the Society's charitable aims which include assisting the public. The spin off from the help sometimes given to patients/patients' parents is that a situation involving a BOS member can be diffused and prevent the patient making a formal complaint. The BOS office still handles a number of patient enquiries but the majority are now passed to the Executive Secretary to answer.

07/2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from David Tidy.

07/3 Prior notice of any other business

There was none.

07/4 Role of the Committee

Chris Kettler read out the role of the Committee as indicated in the Restructuring document:

The Chairman will be the Executive Secretary. Member of the Board. The members will be: Journal Editor, Newsletter Editor, Website Editor, Editor of the Clinical Effectiveness Bulletin, Media Spokesman. The role will be to co-ordinate the communications of the Society with members and with the public. The Media Spokesman to have a major input into this Committee.

The Society publications are:

Journal of Orthodontics published four times a year

BOSNews published three times a year

Orthodontic Business Supplement published three times a year (insert of BOSNews)

Clinical Effectiveness Bulletin published once a year

Annual Review published once a year

Wired: published on an ad hoc basis for members to buy for patient use

Various Advice sheets for members and patient information leaflets

07/5 Role of Executive Secretary in Communications

The Executive Secretary will liaise with Caroline Holland on a regular basis and with other members of the Committee as necessary. From October 2005 to February 2007, around sixteen months, the Society received approximately 162 enquiries from the public. Chris estimated that he received a similar number of enquiries from BOS members. The Committee discussed the possibility of preparing a generic response for similar enquiries which the BOS office could automatically send out. However, there is usually a specific element to each enquiry. It was suggested that one way of handling this would be to have standard letters available but to add in a personalised paragraph for each individual enquiry. Chris Kettler produced an analysis of the enquiries received from the public. More than five enquiries were received on the following topics: accessing free orthodontic treatment; querying the cost of treatment; queries on low IOTN and whether treatment under the NHS was possible; jaw surgery; patients transferring from overseas; waiting lists. In addition, there were several requests to provide contact details of orthodontists in a given area. A major issue recently requiring effective and clear communications was the situation with Mercury and the provision of orthodontics in parts of Essex. Mercury was the preferred bidder for a contract (placed directly by a special unit at the Department of Health) to provide some medical care in parts of Essex. A contract to provide some orthodontic treatment as well was added to the specification later.

07/6 Role of Media Spokesman

Caroline Holland responds to media enquiries made to her directly or via the BOS office. She has also helped write statements on various topical issues. These are available to hand out to journalists and/or to place on the BOS website in the public area. At the moment, Caroline is

actively preparing the second edition of Wired: , the new patient newsletter. Sample copies will be sent to members and members will be able to order further copies.

Gavin Barry commented that the Journal and the Clinical Effectiveness Bulletin do not receive much exposure outside the Society. Chris replied that the Clinical Effectiveness Bulletin will be available on the public area of the new BOS website and non members can subscribe to access the Journal

The Committee discussed a suggestion from Chris and Caroline that editors of the Journal and the Bulletin should alert Caroline in advance of publishing any material that might be of interest to the public, contentious or political. This would give the Society time to prepare a response if one was needed or a press release highlighting a particularly interesting article of wider interest. Friedy Luther, Journal Editor, believed that this was outside the remit of an editor, could blur lines and would compromise her position as well as the standing of the publication. The risk was that the JO could be linked with 'political activity' which could then lead to the JO just being seen as a political organ and no longer impartial which was unacceptable. It would be discredited as a source of unbiased information.

Caroline cited the case of Bill Shaw who contacted BOS to advise that his research from some years ago which appeared to show no psychiatric benefit from orthodontic treatment, was about to be publicised. This gave time for a response to be prepared and placed on the BBC website. Caroline was disappointed that she had been aware that a paper by Ama Johal indicating the opposite, was to be published in the BDJ. Had she known, she could have used this to counter Bill Shaw's results. The press release highlighting the article written by orthodontist Tania Murphy on her orthognathic surgery published in the JO was considered very successful at raising the subject outside the specialty. Friedy accepted this had been a reasonable action to take but said it was a one off situation, an exception. It was agreed that a possible solution was to release the contents list to Chris and Caroline as the edition of the Journal or Clinical Effectiveness Bulletin goes to press. Gavin Barry and Friedy Luther will take this suggestion back to their editorial board/committee for consideration.

07/7 Role of BOS office

The BOS office plays a key role in communications by answering emails and telephone calls from Society members and members of the public or, if unable to assist, by directing emails and telephone calls to the person most able to deal with the particular issue. Ann Wright directs calls to Caroline as required and also liaises with her over certain issues. She also helps directly with the editing and production of BOSNews and liaises with Dodds the printers over all aspects of Society printing.

07/8 Communications with the public

Caroline Holland is instrumental in coming up with new ways of helping the public understand orthodontics. Chris invited Committee members to let him have any thoughts on a proactive approach to communications with the public. Other aspects of this agenda item have already been discussed elsewhere.

07/9 Communications with members

The Executive and the Chairman of the Orthodontic Practice Committee are increasingly using email to communicate with members. This is a quick and inexpensive way of keeping in touch with them and letting them know about topical issues. A letter was sent to the membership indicating that future correspondence with them would be by email and asking them to advise the BOS office of their email address if they had not already done so. The BOSNews does not contain much political material and, because it is only published three times a year, cannot be used to advise members of very current issues given that events happen so quickly. Friedy suggested that the current topics could be highlighted on the website. Gavin Barry reported that he receives a weekly email summary from the Glasgow College which he always reads – he will forward a copy to Chris. He suggested the BOS could consider doing this on a regular basis. Members do not necessarily attend the AGM to understand what is happening in the Society. Putting a summary of the minutes of Trustee and Board meetings on the website will help to inform them – this has already been agreed by the Board.

07/10 Communications with outside bodies

The Society is trying to build up a good relationship with the BDA and has had two meetings with Peter Ward. The BDA Curator has been helping with the BOS archive/museum. Chris Kettler attends the Implementation Working Group at the Department of Health and the Society Executive has had several meetings with the CDO.

07/11 Co-ordination

This item was discussed at the end of the meeting. The Committee agreed that the meeting had been very useful. Chris Kettler and Caroline Holland will liaise on a regular basis and Chris will email the rest of the Committee as necessary.

07/12 Journal of Orthodontics

Maney publish the Journal on behalf of the Society. The contract with them comes up for renewal in December 2008. Chris has met Blackwell who are very keen to be considered for the contract and have indicated they are more likely to achieve an “impact factor” for the Journal. Blackwell have said they believe Maney are principally “printers” not “publishers”. Friedy advised that the need for an “impact factor” is not as important for UK authors as in the past although she accepted it was still important abroad. The number of times a paper is referred to is the crucial factor in determining “impact factor”. The view of the Editorial Board is that it would be good to have an impact factor but is not overwhelmingly important. One of the reasons behind the new prize being sponsored by Maney is to raise the profile of the Journal. The Board of Trustees will decide on the award of the contract but the advice from Friedy is to leave publication of the Journal with Maney.

07/13 Website

The website is scheduled to go live on Friday. An email will be sent to members advising them. The members’ area will be accessed by a generic username and password for the time being. Each Group and Committee should have an author who will keep their pages of the website updated. These pages will be submitted to an administrator who will need to approve them for publishing on the site. Telephone training is available from Cubik for website authors and administrators. Chris has already published the agenda for this meeting of the

Communications Committee on the site. There will be an orthodontic forum available for members to use.

07/14 BOS News

There was little more to say. The Committee discussed having a regular feature diarising events over the last four months to give members a précis of what has happened, particularly politically.

Baz Parmar is happy with the relationship between the BOSNews and the Orthodontic Business Supplement. The concerns of Joe Noar, Ethics Committee Chairman, regarding the editorship of the OBS have been resolved.

07/15 Clinical Effectiveness Bulletin

The CEC Bulletin is published once a year and sent to all members. It will also appear on the new website. Gavin Barry reported that more articles have been submitted earlier this year which would allow two issues to be printed instead of one. Publishing a second edition would mean that articles do not wait so long to be published and readers have a more manageable publication to read.. Andrew Dodds from the printers confirmed that this would not make too much difference to the overall costs. The Committee discussed using colour in the publication particularly as the lines in the graphs are quite difficult to differentiate between when only different shades of black are used, as at present. Andrew suggested that a small number of pages in colour might be the answer – perhaps the outer pages in colour and the other pages as before. The Orthodontic Business Supplement has full colour only on the outside front and back cover and this has proved very effective. Andrew agreed to provide Gavin with costings for various print permutations including the use of two or four colours. Advertising could also be considered to offset the extra costs. Gavin commented that finding FTTA to referee the audit papers was difficult. Ann offered to send an email to FTTAs on Gavin's behalf.

07/16 Other Publications

The Society publishes advice sheets for members and patient information leaflets. It was agreed that the advertising rates should be looked at and that the OBS (and the Clinical Effectiveness Bulletin if advertising is agreed by the Clinical Standards Committee) should be included in the advertising rate card alongside the BOSNews and Journal.

07/17 Any other business

There was none.

07/18 Future meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 6 March 2008, 1.30 for 2.00 p.m.

Meeting ended at 4.25 p.m.