

**BRITISH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION MEDICAL SOCIOLOGY GROUP Annual General Meeting**  
**Minutes of the General Meeting**  
**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015, 13:00 – 13:30**  
**Bar Area, Galleria Restaurant, Rodger Kirk Centre**

Thirty six members of the BSA Medical Sociological Group attended the meeting. It was chaired by co-convenors Ewen Speed and Fiona Stevenson. Elaine Forester was responsible for minute taking.

**1. Minutes of the 2014 AGM**

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2014 and available to view on pages 157 to 159 in the conference programme, were agreed to be accurate and correct.

**2. Matters Arising** – A huge thank you from Ewen Speed and Fiona Stevenson to all of the MedSoc committee for organising this year's conference.

**3. Convenor's Report** - This report was delivered by Ewen Speed.

There has again been an overwhelming interest in the 2015 MedSoc conference resulting in the largest number of bookings to attend the conference to date. There were 259 delegates in 2010, 305 in 2011, 334 in 2012, 362 in 2013, 366 in 2014 and 369 this year. So the overall summary from the conference is very positive and the outlook for future years is that the conference is going from strength to strength.

The 47<sup>th</sup> Medical Sociology Conference received 406 abstracts, a 17% increase on 2014, 199 were offered oral presentation slots, with 171 presenting after speaker withdrawals, with 24 posters and 8 symposia/special events including the committee events: Cost of Living Symposium (organised by Ewen Speed and Simon Carter, and kindly hosted by Danny Dorling). As noted above, there continues to be an increase in the number of delegates attending the conference with 369 delegates confirmed to attend this year, 248 for the full conference and 60 as day delegates. The committee maintained the number of funded places again this year with 24 (1 withdrawals) allocated to Postgraduate Students, 4 to unwaged and 4 to sociologists outside academia and 29 funded places allocated to committee members, BSA Staff and invited speakers. There continues to be a healthy international interest in the conference with 24% of delegates attending the 2015 conference coming from overseas. This figure is a 66% increase from 2014. This year there has been an expansion to the "Mentoring Corner" thanks to an increased number of mentor volunteers. In 2014 we had 3 mentors and this year 12. The feedback from these sessions has been mixed at the moment and the future of this feature will be discussed at the next MedSoc meeting to be held in November. "Pecha Kucha" presentations continue in the programme following their successful trial in 2014. The committee would like to encourage submission for symposia and special events for the 2016 conference. The committee would also like to thank the Wellcome Trust for hosting a Special Event relating to "Sociology Funding Opportunities".

**Early Career Researchers' (ECR) Event** – The fourth annual event has taken place at the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference with 41 attendees. The MedSoc committee would like to thank the organising committee Tim Banks, Sarah Hoare and Matthew Lariviere (co-opted to help while Tim was unavailable) for the work they have undertaken to make this a very successful and well attended event. This event was fully supported by the committee in the form of complementary accommodation and reduced registration fees to all attending. To ensure continuity of the PGRS work, Sarah Hoare will remain on the committee for the 2015-16 year, with a new PGRS member elected during the AGM. There was an additional ECR day held at Cambridge University on the 22 June with 16 delegates attending. The committee supported this event allocating £500 towards the event costs and supporting 5 funded places allocating £50.00 to each.

**Report from the 'Medicine, Health and Illness Stream' at the BSA Annual Conference April 2015:** 80 papers were submitted to the stream, 57 were offered oral slots, 8 'roundtable discussion' and 5 poster slots, with 10 withdrawals from the conference programme. The committee would like to thank Paul Bissell for delivering the Stream Plenary for 2015. The MedSoc committee would also like to thank Sally Brown and Kate Weiner for all of the work undertaken to ensure the success of the Medicine Health and Illness Stream and for helping to promote Medical Sociology. Ex-MedSoc committee member and Co-Convenor Kate Weiner will be stepping down as the co-stream co-ordinator and will be replaced by ex- MedSoc committee member Julia Hiscock for the 2016 conference. Sally Brown will continue as the co-stream co-ordinator. The abstract submission deadline is 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and the stream co-ordinators would like to encourage more symposia/special event proposals. Ian Rees Jones is confirmed as the Medicine Health and Illness stream plenary for 2016.

**Regional / Special Interest Groups** – There continues to be very buoyant activities from most of the Regional Groups, the current active regional groups are East Midlands, North West, North East, South West, Wales, West Midlands, London, Scottish, South Coasts and Yorkshire. All regional groups are self-sustaining and can draw on a fund of money which will remain at £400/year per group to help support their activities. The Special Interest Groups of the Sociology of Mental Health and the Applied Qualitative Health Research had previously received £400 of funding, the committee increased this funding in 2014 to £800 and this will continue for the Jan – Dec 2016 financial year. Two new Special Interest Groups have been set up this year “Deconstructing Donation” and Environment and Health”. New proposals are welcome from regions who currently do not have a study group. Please contact any to the MedSoc committee for more information.

#### **4. Financial Report** – Ewen Speed presented the financial report

At the end of the financial year (31<sup>st</sup> December 2014) the BSA audited accounts show a credit balance on the MedSoc account of £129,072 compared with £157,411 in 2014. Again the funds were utilised in the year so that reserves decreased in line with planned expenditure. The conference fees increased by £15 for a full conference registration, but continue to be below the 2009 prices of £285.00. Based on current forecast figures for this year's conference at the University of York it is anticipated a planned deficit of just over £23,000 will be generated (based on 359 delegates), compared to a £10,000 deficit from last year's conference. This deficit has been planned to spend down the surplus fund and has been undertaken by the following measures: 1) maintaining reduced fees for BSA members, 2) funding 32 free places for the conference, 3) supporting the early career researcher event 4) funding the Cost of Living blog and MSo, 5) supporting the regional and special interest groups. Based upon the forecasted deficit for the 2015 conference, the closing balance for 2015 should be about £94,149. Demand to attend the conference remains extremely high having reached full capacity seven weeks earlier than the registration closing date. Communication continues to be focused upon with the further development of the Cost of Living Blog.

Reduced spending (in terms of activities) is planned for the 2015-16 year to maintain the reserves at their current planned level of £94,000. All the planned spend down measures are fully reversible and if not financially sustainable can easily be removed from the group's yearly activities.

The financial slides will be available on line for all to view through the Medical Sociology Group part of the BSA website. A view will be taken regarding the 2016 registration fees towards the end of 2015 and registration will open spring 2016 for next year's conference.

#### **5. MedSoc Committee Nominations**

There is 1 Postgraduate Researcher (PGRS) member vacancy

3 nominations were received

Votes were collected at the AGM and after a count of votes Jenni Remnant from Newcastle University was elected as the PGRS representative.

#### **6. Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness – Trustee's Report delivered by Jonathan Gabe**

Post Graduate International Conference Travel Grants received twenty six applications and ten were awarded.

The Mildred Baxter Post-Doctoral Fellowship received eight applications with two awarded.

Symposia and Workshop Support Awards received five applications during the spring of 2015 but none were received for the previous autumn of 2014. All five applications were supported.

Research Grant Development Awards received seven applications during the year with three applications being approved.

As well as supporting the continuing work of the editorial team in Cardiff, the Trustees intend to advertise and fund up to two Mildred Baxter Fellowships, twenty Postgraduate travel awards, eight symposium/workshops and four research grant development groups. All details can be found on the Foundations website.

#### **7. Sociology of Health and Illness – Editor's Report delivered by Ian Rees Jones**

Original submissions to the journal have increased year on year with 593 submitted during the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015. The acceptance rate for the past year has been just under 26% compared to 21% in the previous year. The Impact Factor for the journal dipped this year to 1.665. This is partly related to the growth in the number of papers published. The queue from acceptance to print publication currently stands at 8 months. The journal has an early view section on the web site. The journal are undertaking a wide range of publicity and marketing activities including virtual abstracts, social media, a redesigned web site and improved links to media outlets. Gareth Thomas and Rebecca Dimond came into post as new book editors in October 2014 and will be in position for at least three years. Ian thanked everyone who has undertaken reviewing for the journal and encouraged new reviewers to register.

## **8. Sociology of Health and Illness – Board Nominations delivered by Justin Waring**

The constitution of the BSA Medical Sociology Study Group states that two journal board members will be elected at the annual MedSoc AGM. Feedback from last year's vote at Aston University was that relatively low attendance at the AGM and the established voting convention did not necessarily give all delegates an opportunity to vote. At the spring 2015 board meeting this was discussed and the decision was made to trial a new approach where voting would be available to all delegates over the first two days of the conference. This was subsequently approved by the SHI and MedSoc boards and the new approach is being trialled this year. The process will be reviewed and further ratified at the next SHI board meeting. As this new approach involves a change to the constitution it is being presented to the AGM for deliberation. One comment from those attending the AGM was that this new election process may undermine the importance of the AGM. This comment will be feed back to the board for further discussion. A count of all voting will take place when the poll closes at 17:00 on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September and the winners will be announced on the conference notice board as in previous years.

The new writers prize for 2015 has been awarded to D Martin for 'Architecture and Healthcare: a place for sociology'.

## **9. Cost of Living Blog – delivered by Sasha Scambler**

The Blog continue to post every week throughout the year except Christmas week. They have received more than 95,000 page views in the first 3 eras of the blog and over 41,000 people accessed the blog in this time. In the past twelve months over 16,000 users accounted for almost 29,000 page views. The number of users has increased but users are accessing less pages, suggesting they are coming to the site specifically to look at a particular post. This ties in with the fact that most visits are on Mondays and Fridays when the new blogs are posted. The current ranking on Google is 5. The site had visitors from across the world with the majority of readers in the UK and North America. This year the site has been optimised for mobile devices and this has resulted in a 5% increase in those accessing the site from mobiles and a further 5% from tablets. There are now 7 members of the editorial collective. The managing co-editors are Simon Carter and Ewen Speed with Editors Hannah Bradby, Charlie Davison, Adan Fletcher, Sasha Scambler and Catherine Will.

## **10. Phil Strong Memorial Prize**

Ewen Speed reported that this year the Phil Strong Memorial Prize received one applicant: Elizabeth Sutton from the University of Leicester will receive the award the £1,200 to go towards her field work in Patient Safety.

## **11. Any other business**

The next Annual General Meeting will be held at Aston University, Birmingham during the 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Thursday 8th September 2016.

The minutes of the 2015 AGM will be printed into the programme of the 2016 conference.