



Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 6th August 2002

Belfast

From Secretary to Committee

MINUTES of the meeting of the HPC Communications Committee held on Tuesday 6th August 2002 at Belfast Hilton Hotel, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Present:

Ms. A Foster (Chairman)
Mrs. S. Chaudry
Mrs. C. McGartland
Miss. M. MacKellar (part)

In attendance:

Mr. C. Middleton (Director of Communications/Secretary to the Committee)
Mr. M. Seale E. Price (Chief Executive & Registrar HPC)
Prof. Norma Brook (President HPC)

ITEM 1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Ms. J. Stark, Miss. E. Price

ITEM 2 **MINUTES**

The notes of the meeting held on Monday 27th May 2002 were confirmed as a correct record.

ITEM 3 **MATTERS ARISING**

Ms. Chaudry raised the matter of the Consultation document not containing the line 'This document is available in the following languages' in the actual languages themselves. The suggestion was that this should be included in future publications.

The Consultation Document did not receive the Crystal Mark from the Plain English Society due to the amount of legal wording it contained. Other HPC documents would however be submitted in the future. Several attempts were made but their changes could not be implemented on this occasion.

A Q&A for Council members regarding the Consultation Exercise had not been produced as it was deemed inappropriate by the Chief Executive and Communications Director. A brief on what to expect at the events had however been produced and been circulated to Council Members. Committee members still felt a Q&A would have been helpful with specific answers to specific questions being provided.

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Mr. Middleton reported that attendance at the events had been far greater than expected. As such several venues had been changed for later events to accommodate anticipated numbers. The locations where venues had been changed were London, Brighton, Liverpool and Edinburgh. The highest attendance to one single meeting to date had been 175 in Leeds; the lowest was 34 in South London. On average the HPC was seeing 100 people per meeting. The main issues to come out of the events were CPD, Grandparenting, Protection of Title and Fees.

Miss MacKellar stated that she had received complaints from several of her colleagues that the Mini Prospectus had arrived too late for them to attend events. The Committee agreed that the document should have gone out earlier. Mr. Middleton explained the delay was due to the insertion of a flier outlining the changes to the venues he had previously mentioned. They were however now being distributed at around 10,000 copies per day.

In general the events seemed to be being received well. The Chair of the Committee asked that thanks be passed onto Eleanor Price for her work in organising them.

It was reported that Newchurch will be responsible for the gathering and analysis of the Consultation data. Ruth Bacon has been hired to co-ordinate the HPC side of things and will work with Newchurch to ensure our information gathering is fair and correct.

Ms. Foster asked how many members of the public were turning up to the meetings. Mr. Middleton replied that the vast majority of attendees were registrants.

Mr. Seale stated that the public would be engaged through market research with the results being published in conjunction with our feedback document. Ms. Foster stated she had not heard about the market research. Mr. Seale said it had been put before Council as part of his reports. Ms. Foster requested that the Communications Committee be kept up-to-date with its progress. Mr. Seale said he would do that when the results were complete.

Ms. Foster asked if the events had received any media coverage. Mr. Middleton explained that Harvard Health had been engaged specifically on this project but to date results had been disappointing. On a brighter note Prof. Norma Brook was to do a live interview on BBC Radio that afternoon in Belfast about the event. That interview had been arranged directly by HPC.

MARKET RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Copies of the proposed Market Research Questionnaire as previously mentioned by Mr. Seale were put before the committee for their ratification and comments. This was signed off by the Committee.

FEEDBACK/RE-LAUNCH EVENTS

Mr. Middleton informed the Committee that work was progressing with the planning of the three meetings mentioned in the Consultation presentation. These will be held in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh and will launch the HPC's feedback from consultation, draft rules and re-launch under new rules respectively. Dates have yet to be confirmed but it was proposed to have them on , November 5th , December 1st and April 5th (2003). More details would be provided later but the Committee was in general agreement that the format should be similar to the successful QEII launch event on April 17th this year.

HPC BROCHURES

The Committee were presented with a proposed list of brochures which it is felt should be published in order to fulfil our obligations under the Order in Council. The committee were asked to consider which ones they wished to produce and oversee. The committee would report back at the next meeting on this.

AOB

None

ITEM 8 HARVARD HEALTH – LAUNCH MEDIA REPORT

Harvard presented a report on the media coverage HPC received from the launch event in April. They presented the following figures;

National and regional radio – 11,061,968
National press – 1,083,477
Professional publications – 262,275
Regional press – 432,993
Total circulation/listening figure – 12,840,713

It was agreed that copies of the coverage received would be made available for Council members. Harvard would discuss with Mr. Middleton the format these are to be presented in.

Ann Dawson requested details of the events locations to identify the relevant MP and Labour backbench Chairmen. Ms. Dawson would then draft letters to be sent out by HPC to these people encouraging them to attend Consultation events.

It was indicated that a meeting had taken place with Mr. Middleton to discuss future strategy and that those talks were still on-going.

ITEM 8 AOCB

There was none.

Date of the next meeting was confirmed as:

October 10th during the two day away day. (This has since been altered to Friday 27th September).