

Minutes of the ABPCO AGM

Tuesday June 17th 2025 – via conference call 9.30am – 10.45am. The meeting was recorded via Zoom and is available on the ABPCO website.

Member Attendees: Allison Garoghan, Antony Deacon, Charlotte O'Sullivan, Claire Sutton, Clara Lloyd, Debra Nightingale, Elaine Miller, Emma Duffy, Emily Bexley, Fiona Hims, Gayle McGuinn, Gaynor England, Gema Rodriguez, Gemma Savage, Georgia Glasswell, Heledd Williams, Jamila Bray, Jess Mason-Rowle, Jessica Letters, Jessica Mason-Rawle, Jo Powel, Johnny Martinez, Kat Johnson, Kate Sargent, Katie Bolton, Kaylie Hodges, Kerstyn Zeslawski, Kirstin Aram, Laura Wilson, Leanne Planche, Leonie Postma, Lizzie Butler, Luke Smith, Madalina Marincas, Margaret Ann Miller, Martin Linfield, Micheal Foreman, Nathan Bolton, Nicola Williams, Paul Cuthbert, Paul Gentry, Paul Swain, Pauline Beattie, Rob Eveleigh, Rose Padmore, Samantha Salisbury, Samantha Shamkh, Sammy Connell, Sanj Kumar, Sarah Dietrich, Sarah Vaughan, Sasha Dickson, Steven Daun, Susan Hayden, Tamsin Treasure-Jones, Zackary Puttock

Apologies: Garth Halliday, James Lee, Sarah Byrne, Sarvjit Wunsch

Item 1 – Opening Remarks by Sammy

Code of conduct.

Welcome, introductions and today's agenda.

The meeting is recorded and is being reviewed by AI (Snapsight).

Introductory video shown – highlights of the year.

Item 2 – Minutes of the 37th Annual General Meeting (Chair)

Emma Duffy proposed, and Nicola Williams seconded that the minutes of the 37th AGM held virtually on Tuesday 11th June 2024 be APPROVED and signed as a correct record. AGREED unanimously.

Item 3 – Constitution Change – Pauline

We propose an additional membership category, Allied Membership. This has been scrutinised by the Accreditation and Executive Committees and the proposal is;

Criteria: Self-employed in a consultative role to the association meetings industry. They do not meet the criteria of existing membership categories.

Benefits: As per the associate and full categories, but without access to tenders.

Cost: £250 ex VAT per annum (pegged between full and associate)

Application: In the first instance by invitation only. Referred to the Association Director and endorsed by the accreditation committee and the executive committee.

Rose Padmore proposed and Sarah Dietrich seconded and the majority of attendees raised their hands in agreement. AGREED unanimously.

Item 4 – Adoption of accounts for financial year ending 30th April 2025. Kate Sargent

Kate presented a report on the audited accounts. She noted that the official audited accounts are available from Heather Lishman if anyone would like to study them. They show an income of £222,409 (highest ever income) giving a surplus of £59,140 which gives the organisation a healthy headroom for moving forward and investing in our future.

Our financial goals are:

- Strengthen a financially strong, relevant and forward-thinking ABPCO
- Strengthen retention of loyal followers and attract new audiences
- Generate new revenue streams
- Foster change and strengthen agility
- Be responsive to changing member needs

Kate reported an increase in running costs due to increased marketing and events support, but also noted a healthy surplus of £59,140 for the next financial year.

Steven Daun proposed, and Rob Eveleigh seconded that the accounts be adopted.

Pauline thanked Kate for a digestible presentation of the accounts.

Item 5 – appointment of auditors for the financial year 01/05/2025 – 31/04/2026

Kate recommended that we remain with the accountants Jon Essam & Co Ltd.

Samantha Shamkh proposed, and Madalina Marincas seconded.

Kate confirmed the reserves policy, developed with Heather, to manage the association's finances and retain funds for unforeseen circumstances – objectives, numbers and how it looks currently.

Kate thanked our Industry Partners for their ongoing commitment. Our industry Partners and Members continue to help us maintain the level of fees and activity for all members. Our aim is to keep corporate membership at the same proportions of total membership, i.e. a maximum of 1 industry member to every 2 full members.

Item 6 – Year in Review

Pauline re-iterated the mission, vision and values and the key strategic goals and explained ABPCO's progress with these.

- Excellence – our ongoing economic impact survey, and our profile and voice in the industry
- Learning – events now CPD accredited
- Belonging – 'you said: we did' actions
- External voice – sponsorship and advocacy, developing partners and industry relationships

A member engagement video was shown.

- Membership growth – 200 PCO members by 2027 – this needs more work, we are not where we want to be yet but heading in the right direction. We have had a growth in associate members and in-house PCO members. We are committed to a diverse membership.

- Organisational growth - £200k in revenues by 2027 – on a growth track – and exceeded this in the last set of accounts, so we will revisit this goal with the new executive.
- Increase segmentation to strengthen value proposition and attract early careers – we continue to support students to attend our key events, have a wider breadth of task-forces and are growing our special interest member groups, we continue to support Elevate and FF15 mentoring programmes.
- Amplify external voice – supported by a redesigned website and relevant research – see the presentation by Debra Nightingale, and how we work with advocacy partners – see the slides from Leanne Planche. Noted the special interest groups and taskforces, student events and after hours events.
- Be the voice of the PCO supported by relevant research into EDI and sustainability – we have an events code of conduct, have worked on a neuro-inclusivity checklist and are looking at how we minimise any barriers to entry. We have worked with Carbon Consultancy to track and offset the carbon footprint of our Festival of Learning, we have a new member group to focus on sustainability. Focussing on EDI we now have a set standard which includes every yet where possible to have a wellbeing room and the Eastside rooms have installed a wellbeing room as a legacy to our event.

Our annual calendar – 49 events, 1000+ delegates, great feedback and now CPD accredited.

The excellence awards – attracted a 25% increase in attendees, 50% more entries, 50 to the newcomers' reception. Thanks to Blackpool for hosting.

The Festival of Learning - we focus on elevating our events to inspire our members, and to be the 'must-attend' event - 70 more delegates, 90 to the newcomers' reception, sponsored students and the introduction of the innovation hub.

Pauline introduced Debra, and thanked her for the past year, and the positive impact she has had.

Item 7 – Comms and PR – Debra

Debra outlined the new comms strategy aimed at a younger, broader audience. Simple messaging, retelling the ABPCO story. We have had a multi-channel integrated campaign focused on current and potential members. Our communications acknowledge that ABPCO means something different to everyone, and aims to highlight #myABPCO as being part of something greater. We presented a membership showcase at Confex, promoted the economic impact survey, celebrated the short-list, winners and sponsors of the awards and generated FOMO for the festival. Debra's call to action was for all members to send content and videos to her.

Item 8 – The ABPCO Executive Committee

Heather led a thank-you to those members leaving the ABPCO Executive committee; – and thanked them for their contributions. This included the past-chairs Emma Duffy and Sarah Byrne, as well as Garth Halliday, Samantha Salisbury, Jane Elsom, Steve Daun, Gemma Savage and James Musgrave.

This year there is a large transition as we increased the size of the executive 4 years' ago to give extra support for the taskforces etc.

Delighted to welcome; **Zackary Puttock** - Association of Anaesthetists, **Jessica Letters** - The Royal College of Psychiatrists, **James Lee** - IOM3, **Gema Rodriguez** - TFI Lodestar, **Kirstin Aram** – Worldspan, **Nicola Williams** - Seren Events Ltd, **Leanne Planche** - ACC Liverpool, **Laura Wilson** - Aberdeen Convention Bureau.

Kate Sargent proposed, and Rose Padmore seconded that the election had been held correctly, and that these positions be ratified.

ABPCO Committee

Name	Category	Role	Appointed	Period	Time left on Exec at June 25
Gaynor England	Full Agency		June 2022	3 years	1 optional
Samantha Shamkh	Industry		June 2022	3 years	1 optional
Kate Sargent	Full agency	Treasurer	June 2023	3 years	1 year + 1 optional
Katie Bolton	Full In-house		June 2023	3 years	1 year + 1 optional
Madalina Marincas	Full Agency		June 2023	3 years	1 year + 1 optional
Sarjit Wunsch	Full In-house		June 2023	3 years	1 year + 1 optional
Sarah Vaughan	Full In-house		June 2023	3 years	1 year + 1 optional
Sammy Connell	Full In-house	Co-Chair	June 2023	3 years	1 year + 1 optional
Pauline Beattie	Full agency	Co-Chair	June 2024	3 years	2 years + 1 optional
Zackary Puttock	Full In-house		June 2025	3 years	3 years + 1 optional
Jessica Letters	Full In-house		June 2025	3 years	3 years + 1 optional
James Lee	Full In-house		June 2025	3 years	3 years + 1 optional
Gema Rodriguez	Full Agency		June 2025	3 years	3 years + 1 optional
Kirstin Aram	Associate Agency		June 2025	3 years	3 years + 1 optional
Nicola Williams	Full Agency		June 2025	3 years	3 years + 1 optional
Leanne Planche	Industry		June 2025	3 years	3 years + 1 optional
Laura Wilson	Industry		June 2025	3 years	3 years + 1 optional

Item 9 – The ABPCO Association Director

Pauline announced that Heather Lishman (Association Director) will be retiring on the 12th December. The recruitment process will start soon, and we hope to attract significant interest. Therefore, a third-party recruiter will be used. Any questions or interest can be directed to Pauline.

Item 10 – Key goals – looking forward

Taskforces and Member Groups

Pauline updated on the terminology moving forward for taskforces (supporting the strategic direction of ABPCO) and special interest member groups (adding value to our members, giving a space to collaborate and share knowledge) and outlined those that will be active from this point (see slides).

Presentations from selected taskforce leads.

Growth taskforce – Steven Daun and Samantha Shamkh - see slides. An independent research activity has been undertaken to gather insights from members and non-members. A few key take-aways to be considered, including; the learning offering segmentation, the communication of how welcoming we are, a re-look at the application and payment process, a refresh of our member value proposition, the signposting of mentoring and how we engage across all our different platforms. Samantha's call for action is to join this taskforce to formulate an achievable outcome.

Advocacy taskforce – Leanne Planche – see slides. Leanne thanked all participants of the economic impact survey, and shared the key findings, which were all positive, with anticipated further growth. The current advocacy partners were highlighted and a new methodology for assessing these and future potential partners through a set of criteria and a scoring matrix. This will give us a more realistic view on whether we should partner and the expected benefits for each party.

Learning taskforce – Samantha Salisbury – Samantha discussed the work of the event learning taskforce, inking the year round calendar of events and the abstract submission process and curating of content for the Festival of Learning, and other initiatives like monthly coffee chats and additional networking opportunities. CPD accreditation has been implemented this year. She called for more members to join the taskforce and more input into the content strategy.

Social media taskforce – Madalina Marincas - Madalina shared the goals of increasing awareness and engagement for ABPCO through Instagram and LinkedIn – with a particular focus on authenticity and live activity at our key events. She reported successful results, with a significant increase in followers, engagement and unique views.

The Excellence Awards – Sammy Connell - discussed the upcoming awards ceremony taking place in Manchester on 12th December, highlighting its importance in recognising the industry and encouraging submissions for multiple events. The submission deadline is the 4th August at 9am. Please let Heather know if you are happy to judge. We have 3 award sponsors and one headline sponsor still available.

The date for the next Festival of Learning was set for 29-30 April 2025 at Nottingham Venues.

ABPCO will be looking for PCO support for the upcoming awards and Festival of learning – a tender will be communicated in the summer to ABPCO members.

A call out to get involved with taskforces, member groups, judging and being ABPCO advocates. Sammy and Pauline thanked the members for being active and creating an inclusive community and thanked the committee and Heather for their hard work and commitment.

Item 11 - Questions from the membership - none

Item 12 - AGM and members meeting closed at 10.45 am

A recording was made of the event – and will be published with the minutes on the website.