

Reflections on Bpf Closing Event of the Governance Review

2nd June 2018

Introductions

This event was attended by the Board and with approximately 45 members and staff in attendance. It was facilitated by Tim Dartington and Olya Khaleelee. The timetable included both Plenary and small group discussions.

The day was introduced by Julian Lousada, in his role as Chair of the Board. He clarified that although it is entitled a Closing Event, the day is not the end but the beginning of a new phase in the transition of bpf with renewed discussion of its mission, accountability, professional identity and public face.

The aim of the day was to help the Board to prioritise the concerns of the members, so as to agree a programme of change that would have the active support of the membership, both those who have been active and those who have felt disenfranchised since the merger. Now was the time to develop an authorised structure and acceptable roles with clear tasks and, with that in mind, he clarified the findings of the Governance Review, a report on which has been sent to all members.

He described how the task of the Governance Review had arisen from a growing concern that bpf was not working effectively as an organisation. He saw the threefold tasks as including governance structure, identifying the key areas of concern and thirdly of engaging all members in taking ownership of bpf for their own development and for the survival of the organisation.

In this way the Board were trying to emerge from the perception that the bpf has a top-down structure and wanted to encourage the membership's participation, mobilising the capacity to build an organisation in which people play all sorts of parts. He pointed out that it will not work unless participation increases and the isolation of the leaders is reduced. Finally Julian thanked Miranda Feuchtwang for her leadership of the Governance Review which could not otherwise have happened.

He then introduced Mike Owen, who is the new interim CEO and would be available for about a year before the appointment of a full time CEO can carry on the work begun by the Governance Review, which he saw as a central part of trying to take responsibility for bpf's needs.

Mike Owen introduced himself as having had 15 years experience in the commercial sector, 4 years in the NHS and 12 years in consultancy in not for profit organisations and membership bodies, an area he understands well. He added - to some amusement from those attending - that he had in fact also been a CEO in the funeral care sector as well as in the IT sector. He saw his job as a catalyst to help 'push us along'.

Summary of Governance Review

With Tim Dartington having clarified the timetable for the day (see Appendix), Julian then spoke about the central issues that had arisen from the Governance Review, listed in the membership packs.

The main suggestions were:-

- To clarify the task of the Board as one of providing overall strategic direction, dealing with maintaining the legal and charitable requirements, including finance, HR, risk, property and legal requirements: in short, its task is the safekeeping of the organisation and ensuring it can endure. For this there are 5 elected Trustees, a Chair and Vice Chair, 3 elected Trustees from the membership and 3 externals or co-opted Trustees who can bring specific expertise to bear, e.g. legal. This Board would meet 4-6 times a year rather than with its current frequency.
- To set up an Operational Committee functioning as an executive committee responsible for implementing the strategy/policies. Membership is to be agreed and will include Chairs of Associations and representatives from all the key "functions" within bpf as well as having in attendance the CEO and the Vice Chair who would be the communication channel with the Board. This committee would deal with all the detailed matters that need to be enacted.

Following questions clarifying the functions of these two bodies, this part of the meeting came to a close.

Small Group Discussions

Participants then split up into four groups and were invited to take up their roles as '*citizens*' of the bpf to work on determining the three most important issues from all the things that need attention, which they felt should take priority.

The groups discussed the financial situation including the fact that the trainings are not financially viable and, as they are the essence of the bpf, how best to protect them. They discussed the scientific life of the bpf, the need for emphasis on the wider community, the after-effects of the merger, how the bpf has inherited the financial problems of the three merged organisations and the sale of two of the three buildings. Discussion included how to be businesslike without being a business.

Staff present in the groups pointed out that how we see ourselves and how the outside world sees us is rather different, because the inner world of the bpf is presently dominated by in-fighting. But they pointed out that what the public are interested in is the bpf as an organisation with three modalities and that these modalities are the most important issue but are seen by the public as separate from the Associations.

Group discussion was also preoccupied with why members have turned away and considered the fact of no scientific life, lack of communication, and a lack of recognition, leading members to withdraw to their own practices. A notable exception was the Jungians who are very good at bringing in their newly qualified members to help with committee work and take an active part in institution building.

There was a sense of a 'tribal' Association identity rather than an integrated bpf identity and this tendency to splitting was evidenced in the impending loss of the BPA, which will be going independent in the Autumn. The discussions also included concern about the loss of two CEOs in these first years of the merged organisations and how best to build an identity from the Associations. Part of this included a concern about Mapesbury Road and the need to create a new future home for the organisation.

Initiatives from the small group discussion included:

Membership identity and libidinal engagement including the regions -

- with support for a residential conference in 2019, to be held annually thereafter;
- a new building/home, of both practical and symbolic importance;
- the development of a Clinic;
- the need to improve IT access and website;
- staff review to improve communication between staff and members;
- the need to celebrate the qualification of new members.

Organisational identity -

The proposal from the current Board that the Board should become a more strategic body, meeting quarterly, made up of elected members and co-opted trustees, with legal, financial, communications/IT expertise was generally accepted. There would be an operational committee which would be concerned with the implementation of policies.

Moves to put this in place could begin immediately, before the AGM.

Public engagement, public face.

- A scientific programme would consolidate bpf identity and create good will. It will also offer roles to new members.
- Set up an innovation team to develop new ideas, courses etc.
- Set up a research, marketing & development team;
- Have a conference and events organiser.

The Board members had an opportunity to respond to the presentations from the small group meetings and described their own concerns: an awareness of the finances, of risk, an anxiety about being pilloried for their actions, the need for better communication, better clarification of task, how to build on the bpf's identity and also concern about the future of the building. This latter point was spoken to particularly by Mike Owen, the interim CEO.

Dynamics

The dialogue of the afternoon plenary, hearing from small group discussions and the responses of Board members and the CEO was an opportunity to observe a certain dynamic, where explorations of bpf development got widespread support but were accompanied by a reversion to 'tribal' loyalties linked to the Associations.

Whereas the small group discussions had given space to minority voices – for example – the experience of Jungians of being patronised or worse by psychoanalytic colleagues – now the anxiety moved to the majority voice that felt a threat of disenfranchisement in accommodating to the needs of other disciplines and affiliations.

For a time, in the discussion, we saw how tribal identities could undermine the bpf identity, held more strongly by newly qualified members and trainees, and also staff, so that a positive sense of bpf citizenship could be seen to be fragile in supporting substantive changes.

Observation of this dynamic allowed for a recovery of common purpose, as the discussion developed further, and this itself led to a member interpretation that the different Associations had experienced the merger as a narcissistic blow leading to hatred and a blaming of each other for the compromising of their own identity. The BPA leaving was another blow. It was noted that libidinal engagement involves some risk – one action at the expense of another.

A minority of the total membership were present to experience this dynamic, but those who were not there may understand that dissatisfaction and disgruntlement were well represented, and that those present may be thought of as broadly representative of the wider membership in their expression of their desires and dissatisfactions. There was appreciation of the contribution of staff members who attended the day and were active in the discussions.

It is also true that in a sense you had to be there to experience directly the struggle to release energy in the letting go of past disappointments. Those present were encouraged to talk with colleagues and to post comments on the members website.

We may think that the challenge now is not to the failings of a tired leadership but the taking up of roles in the new structure.

Mention was made of a proposal for a conference of the three Associations on the 6th anniversary of the merger which has already been planned for next year with the title: 'Now we are Six' and would be linked with the work of the Scientific Committee.

Review

The day ended with a short review in which it was acknowledged that around a third of the membership had been consulted in this governance review process. Nominations for a new Board and Operations Committee will be invited as this Board stands down.

Tim Dartington and Olya Khaleelee

7th June 2018

APPENDIX

Bpf Closing Event of the Governance Review

2nd June 2018

Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust

120 Belsize Lane NW3 5BA

Programme

10.00	Registration and Coffee
10.30-11.30	Introduction - Julian Lousada: Aim of the day Introduction of new interim CEO: Mike Owen Plan for the day: Olya Khaleelee and Tim Dartington Reports on Governance Review: Julian Lousada Discussion and comments
11.30-11.50	Coffee Break
11.50-13.15	Consultation on recommended actions. Small group work to determine the three most important issues from all the things that need attention, to be prioritised first.
13.15-14.00	Lunch (CEO and Board members to be available for discussion over lunch)
14.00-15.15	Sharing of consultation on recommendations and agreeing them in Plenary
15.20-15.50	Responses to discussion on recommendations by CEO, and Board members
15.50-16.00	Review of the day

