Chair’s report to the Annual General Meeting 2021

Thank you to everyone who has joined us in this, our second virtual AGM, held within POGP’s first e-conference, which has brought in a record number of participants.

As Covid related restrictions are still determining organisational behaviour I have had an interesting first year as Chair with no face to face meetings either with the Board Trustees or with any of the groups that POGP work with. Clearly this has had some practical and indeed financial advantages, but the Board and I have all missed meeting up to continue the work and set the plans but also to cement the friendships and support that we all offer each other. We look forward in the year ahead to meeting up again and welcoming new members to the Board not over zoom.

As I write about my first year as Chair, I reflect on the legacy from Katie Mann of digitisation leading to improving the access to information, facilitating business dealings and sharing our resources more widely. The greater prominence of our website and more accessible communication channels for patients and professionals has brought in many more requests for engagement by POGP in the fields of pelvic, obstetric and gynaecological health at a patient, member, local, national and international level. We now have an Engagement and Endorsement process for all our collaborations which will build organisational memory and help shape our future goals.

Much of this year has been spent on getting our Charity ‘house’ in order responding to the Charity Commission requirements for documentation, policies and contracts to be in place. Whilst not setting the heather alight with excitement, this has been an opportunity to reflect on the importance of due process when running a member organisation. Our responsibility to meet our objectives and to look after POGP for its 1000+ members has been key to this work.

We remain a professional network of the CSP and have had the opportunity this year to work with the Society on several projects bringing pelvic health expertise to wider policies on behalf of and with the CSP. We are looking forward to more of the same and as the significance of the role of the pelvic health physiotherapist is highlighted in Guidelines and NHS policy, we want to work with the CSP to keep pelvic health at the core of the physiotherapy profession. We are very excited about being a partner in Physiotherapy UK 2022 providing the opportunity to demonstrate how our speciality is central to so much in the wider health and rehabilitation agenda.

The Trust Board have officially ‘met’ five times this year plus additional evenings to try and keep on track, make timely decisions and explore new roads of development. We have recognised that the POGP organisation needs administrative support beyond that which we have at the moment and are at the final stages to bring on a company who will help us create new opportunities for member engagement and growth as an organisation.

POGP is about its members, and everyone has had to adjust to new ways of working, communicating and teaching this year. Our area representatives have continued to be our local links supporting members and non-members in their respective pelvic health journeys. Thank you to Rachel Viva for overseeing the POGP map of members networks.

In addition to the Board work, some Trustees are Chairs of their own subcommittees which are the bread and butter of POGP producing content, policies, publications and providing support to the Board to achieve completion in our programme of works. Thank you to all subcommittee members including the new members who have recently joined.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Journal subcommittee under Dr Gillian Campbell who work with the editorial team to produce our highly respected journal which members value enormously.

Meanwhile our treasurer Miti (Rach), without subcommittee, has overseen many of the required changes to comply with being a charity, and to streamline our financial systems helped considerably by Karen Armitage. POGP are a much more financially efficient organisation as a result.

The POGP tutor team are members too, and they have all put in many hours on our behalf to keep the POGP tutor programme on the road. We have continued to provide opportunities for physiotherapists to start or continue their learning throughout the pandemic. We are all looking forward very much to resuming face to face teaching at full capacity but acknowledge that we have had an opportunity for learning about what members want and going forward POGP hope to keep flexibility a key component of our teaching programme. None of the course continuation success would have been possible without the huge effort from Karen Armitage and Ruth Hawkes as the Course admin team.

We say goodbye to three Board members today.

Katie Mann thinks that 15 years should do it and having guided me through my first year as Chair, heads off to other things in life. It will not be the same. Katie has provided that rare combination of knowledge, leadership, resilience with warmth and friendship. She will be much missed and we thank her for such dedication to CPPC, ACPWH and finally POGP.

Shirley Bustard is also stepping down today. She has worked across the POGP network going from Journal Editor to Education subcommittee to Board member with a research portfolio. We thank her very much for all her input and developments and hope to build on her research legacy on the next phase of POGP.

Alex Frankham also steps down today from her position as the Board Secretary. She has completed her term whilst juggling work in her Jersey practice and bringing up her small children. And yet still has had the energy to bring a fresh and dynamic view to the Board work. We thank her for her contribution to POGP as a charity with its house in order and are delighted that she stays on as tutor.

To conclude, I begin my second year as Chair excited about the possibilities for POGP. I see opportunities for more member engagement, building an education programme that will provide physiotherapists with the nuts and bolts to become pelvic health specialists and I look forward to working with my Board in this journey.

Kate Lough

Chair POGP