



DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING

A meeting of the COSCA Board was held on Monday 21st of August 2023 from 11 am to 1pm.

1. PRESENT

Jan Kerr	Chair
Birgit Schroeter	Vice Chair/Accreditation – Counsellors and Trainers
Jill Whitfield	Rurality
Stuart Valentine	Relationships
Eleni Kepelian	Lay Representative Co-optee
Alison Shoemark	Research
Caron Westmoreland	Statutory Agencies
Brian Magee	(in attendance)
Christina Oliver	(Minute Recorder)

2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The chair welcomed Board members and commented it was nice to see everyone and acknowledge that we were back on zoom after most of us having the chance to meet face to face for the last meeting. JK welcomed Christina Oliver to her first meeting.

Apologies: Tatjana Hine & Daniel Reilly

Linda McLachlan was not present.

3. CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

No conflicts of interest.

4. MINUTES OF MEETING

4.1 Board Meeting of 15th May 2023

Paper previously circulated.

Decision: Consent granted for minutes.

4.2 Redactions of Minutes: 15th May 2023

No redactions were suggested.

4.3 Matters Arising: 15th May 2023

JK invited BM to speak to any matters arising; BM stated that there were no matters arising.

OVERVIEW

5.1 Information on items 5.2, 5.4, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.13, 5.14 and 5.15

Paper previously circulated.

JK reminded Board members that it had been previously agreed that any questions or queries relating to these items should be raised before the meeting.

JK thanked BM for overview and stated it covers quite a few of the Agenda items.

DEVELOPING, COMMUNICATING AND MARKETING COSCA:

5.2 COSCA Corporate Affairs Group

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK stated that normally there is a CAG report submitted before the Board meeting. However, the meeting of the Corporate Affairs Group is due to take place on 28th August 2023 after the Board Meeting. Normal pattern of the Corporate Affairs Group meeting before the Board meeting will resume and the report to Board from CAG meeting will be submitted to the Board in November 2023 and not the meeting in August 2023.

5.3 Board Members Area of Interest Report

Paper previously circulated.

JK thanked SV for his very detailed, comprehensive report, and found the pie charts, tables and graphs helpful in providing a visual representation of the figures and stats.

JK asked SV if he wished to add anything. SV commented on the issues surrounding funding for counselling but acknowledged that he had funding in place for Relationship Scotland until March 2025.

5.4 COSCA Grant from Scottish Government 2023-24

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK stated that the grant from the Scottish Government had been paid to COSCA as well as the full grant for the next period.

JK thanks Brian for his perseverance and is gratified this has paid off.

DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING SYSTEMS AND STANDARDS:

Increasing Access to Services

5.5 COSCA Ethic Committee

Paper previously circulated.

JK acknowledged that the Ethics Committee Notes from 27 June 2023 had been received and that the complaint had been followed through.

BS commented that she likes that COSCA assesses an organisations complaints procedure rather than imposing a new one on them.

Increasing Access to Training, Knowledge and Information:

5.6 PSA's Accredited Registers Scheme: Quality Mark Campaign

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK states that at time of her membership renewal she recalls COSCA asking her to make sure there was proof of the PSA logo on her website and acknowledges that COSCA has been very diligent with this and that the Quality Mark Campaign will have little effect on them.

BM adds that at the time when PSA survey was sent to its registrants across all registers, that the registrants using the PSA logo was down by 25%, whereas COSCA was still sitting at 100%.

5.7 COSCA Register of Counsellors & Psychotherapists: Annual Check

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK acknowledges that COSCA has achieved the accreditation of the register for this coming year without any recommendations or issues.

BM highlights that COSCA received a positive report regarding guidance on referrals.

5.8 PSA Registers Update

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK states that PSA will invite accredited registrars to an online meeting in September this year, where it plans to outline the guidance of good practice and complaints handling. COSCA will be required to send a survey to its registrants on diversity and protected characteristics by October 6th 2023.

BM adds that the questions will need to be developed so that they are not in any way discriminatory and find a way for people to answer anonymously so that that are not exposing any hidden disabilities they do not want us to know about. COSCA will then have to find a way of analysing that data and reporting it back to PSA.

5.9 COSCA Annual General Meeting 2023

JK states that the AGM was due to be held on the 6th of September but has now been cancelled.

JK invites BM to update us on this issue.

BM advises that 14/15 people is the lowest number of attendees required for an AGM. He explained that the number of attendees were lower than that for weeks and that the meeting would not be viable to go ahead with the low numbers presented at the closing date.

5.10 COSCA Annual Trainers Event

Paper previously circulated.

Flyer has been advertised for this and includes all details of venue and information.

5.11 Counsellor & Trainer Accreditation Workshops

JK invites Brian to share information on this.

BM tells group that the workshop has happened and that they were well attended, and we will continue to deliver these.

5.12 Counselling Practice Placements

JK invites Eleni to share her information.

EK shares information on increasing access to services and access to male counsellors to practice placement.

BM informs group that COSCA have recently introduce a four-way protocol for counselling practice placements, which involves the training provider, the placement provider, the student and the supervisor all to be in agreement about the fitness to practice and the placement which must be managed through the whole process. This can be found under Diploma Validation Guidelines.

INFORMING AND INFLUENCING POLICY MAKING

5.13 Mandatory Reporting of Child Sex Abuse

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK talks of the possibility of it becoming mandatory to report child sex abuse and if introduced in Scotland it would make it a criminal offence not to report suspected sexual abuse of children, so there would no longer be a discretionary choice in this.

5.14 Scottish Government Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK states that for the next academic year colleges and universities are still receiving funding.

5.15 Scottish Government New Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK acknowledges the new strategy has been published, that there has been reference made to counselling within this, and that hopefully accredited registrants will be given some sort of recognition.

6. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Developing, Communicating and Marketing COSCA:

6.1 Financial Report to June 2023 & 6.2 Report of the Treasurer to June 2022

Paper previously circulated.

JK thanks TH for preparing these reports and figures and as noted earlier the government grant has been received for last year budget and this will be appearing quarterly in the figures.

Decision: Consent was given to report.

6.3 COSCA Memorandum and Articles of Association – Review

JK states that OSCR requires the Board to review and look at this periodically. It is also timely to discuss whether in principal the Board would agree to revise the Memorandum and Articles of Association to allow us the option of holding the AGM online as long as this is legally permitted by company law.

The Memorandum and Articles would need to be changed in order for COSCA to hold the meeting online.

BM adds that Anderson Starthearn is looking at COSCA's Memorandum and Articles and the previous guidance that had been given by Brodie's. Anderson Strathearn will come back to us shortly with a view on this.

Decision: Consent was given to the report and the investigation of holding the AGM online.

7. RISKS

7.1 Assessment of New Risks to Clients

Verbal report

JK invited any potential new risks for clients. The group entered a discussion regarding Disclosure Scotland and that certain items such as drink driving charges, assault charges, etc. are not disclosed and that there is a risk involved when we rely on a disclosure check as a complete document when it is not.

BM suggests that there is opportunity to add to the risk matrix under the business section of the matrix. The entry would be connected to the risk of the overuse/misuse of either inaccurate or out of date information. This would help highlight the importance of not only having police checks but also using other systems to make sure that someone is safe to practice as a counsellor.

Board members were happy to have this addition to the risk matrix looked into.

8. INCREASING ACCESS TO SERVICES

8.1 Equality, Inclusion and Diversity

Verbal report

Discussion took place with main point being, the mentality surrounding Male counsellors. Consideration was given to the fact that some female clients do want to work with male counsellors and that often a client is offered the choice.

BM requested the details of the organisation previously mentioned to get their rational on this – EK advised she would check with the individual providing the information and pass it on to Brian and the group.

9. DEVELOPING, COMMUNICATING and MARKETING COSCA

9.1 COSCA Trustees' Report 2022-23

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK invited the Board to join her in offering formal congratulations to the COSCA Staff for their excellent performance in meeting over 90% of the performance indicators laid down in the development plan. As well as noticing that, the finances have been audited without any stipulation.

Decision: Consent was given to report.

9.2 Board Appointments 2023

Paper previously circulated.

JK invited the Board to adopt the appointment of the following nominees:

Area of Research – Dr Martha Pollard

Area of Ethics – Lisa McGilvray

Decision: Consent was given to the adoption of the nominees.

9.3 Board Elections 2023

Paper previously circulated.

JK acknowledges the vote has been advertised several times, and there has been no response to this. We would now like to consider the co-option of someone suitable to this vacancy and propose that if a suitable candidate were found we would offer to co-opt this person for up to three years.

Decision: Consent was given to co-opt.

10. INFORMING AND INFLUENCING POLICY MAKING

11. DEVELOPING and PROMOTING SYSTEMS and STANDARDS

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 27 November 2023, 11 am to 1 pm in the Barracks Conference Centre, Stirling

BM invited the board to thank Alison for her contribution to the Board, as this would be her last meeting.

The meeting closed at 1pm.