# sbns new logo

# SOCIETY OF BRITISH NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS

**Confirmed Council Minutes**

**Meeting 28 October 2022**

**RCS Eng - 4th Floor Meeting Room**

**10:30 am**

**Attendees  
SBNS Officers:** President: Mr P. Whitfield, Immediate Past President: Mr A. Jenkins, Hon Sec: Mr P. Grundy,

Treasurer: Mr N. Mendoza, Meetings Secretary: Prof. P. Hutchinson

**Elected Council Members:** Mr R. Trivedi, Mr C. Barrett, Ms K. Whitehouse, Mr S. Sinha, Mr L. Thorne, Prof. A. King, Mr C. Wigfield, Ms J. Grieve, Prof I. Kamaly-Asl

**Ex Officio Members:** BNJ Editor: Mr N. Mukerji, NICE Coordinator: Prof. N. Gurusinghe, EANS/WFNS Reps: Mr J. Timothy & Ms T. Karabastsou, BNTA Rep: Ms M. Pitsika, RSCI Rep: Prof. C. Bolger, Lay Rep: Mrs S. Woodward

**Sub-Specialty Leads:** Prof. K. Ashkan – Functional, Prof. M. Wilson – Trauma, Mr R. Vindlacheruvu – Vascular,

**In attendance:** Senior SBNS Administrator: Mrs S. Murray, SBNS Administrator: Mrs Alix Gordon, Mrs C. Turner, SBNS Research Manager

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| 1. | Apologies: |
|  | Mr R. Dardis, Prof. M. Jenkinson, Mr S. Thomson, Mr N. Philips, Mr L Alakandy, Mr S. Cooke, Mr A. Tyagi, Mr R. Edwards, Mr P. Plaha, Mr. I Robertson, Mr J. George |
| 2. | **Receive & Confirm Minutes of Council Meeting held on 29 July April 2022 and matters arising Appendix 1**  The minutes were approved apart from a minor change.  The President reviewed the actions and the following were noted:   * Surgical Care Practitioners (SCP) Working Party – Mr Thomson has not progressed this as yet. * Duty of Candour Policy - Prof. Hutchinson reported he has contacted Mr Basu with a view to adapting the SBNS DOC Policy.   All other actions have either been completed or will be addressed at this meeting. |
| 3. | Announcements |
|  | A call for nominations for the post of SBNS Treasurer was send out last week.  Marina Pitsika was welcomed to the meeting as the new BNTA Chair.  The President informed council that he has asked Mr N. Mendoza to be the next SBNS Vice-President with the remit to promote Global Neurosurgery and he has accepted. This will involve setting up an exchange programme with third world countries and working with the RCS and WFNS Global Surgery projects. |
| **4.** | Receive & Note the following Documents |
| a | **List of Society Officers, Council Members and Representatives** **- Appendix 2**  It was noted that Mr McFarlane is stepping down as a neurosurgery representative on the DVLA Panel. If anyone is interested in replacing him please contact the SBNS office.  **Action**: All Council  **Action:** S. Murray to update the Officers List. |
| b | **Applications for Membership – Mr P Grundy** - **Appendix 3**  **Approved**  All were approved. |
| **c** | **Council Demographics** – **Appendix 4** |
|  | Mr Grundy stated that there is still a need to collect more detailed demographics of the membership and council as part of the EDI initiative. He appreciated that this will involve a lot of additional administrative work and the membership database on the SBNS website will need to be reconfigured. It was suggested the admin team liaise with the RCS/other similar associations to see what information they store on their respective members.  **Action:** The EDI Group and SBNS Administrators to work out an action plan to progress the above changes. |
| **5.** | President’s Report – Prof. P. Whitfield – Appendix 5 |
|  | The President talked through his report and informed council that as he commences his presidency he had a number of actions and ideas he would like to report on and to seek council’s views on:   * **Name Change Ballot** – **Appendix 5a**  At the AGM in Blackpool it was agreed that a further ballot of Full, Associate and Senior members would be sent out giving members two options: leave the name unchanged: SBNS or change it to  “Society of Neurological Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland: SNS – GBI” It was agreed that having a 3rd option of “abstain” was not necessary.  A covering letter (Appendix 5a) and the comments from the previous ballot would also be included in the correspondence. A two thirds majority of those that voted would be required for the vote to be carried. Prof. Bolger queried why we have not gone for the option of Society of British and Irish Neurological Surgeons (SBINS) as it was the option originally put forward. The President stated that the name options were discussed again at council and at the AGM and it was felt SNS with the strapline of Great Britain and Ireland was the best option.   **Action:** S. Murray to set up ballot an notify members - **Done**   * **SBNS Constitution Update** - Mr Trivedi has agreed to take on the role. There are several elements that need to be reviewed in line with the growing membership and our EDI policy. If council have any suggestions for improvements please contact Mr Trivedi via the SBNS Office. **Action:** M. Trivedi and all Council * **Website update** – Council were in agreement that the SBNS Website is long overdue an update. The president asked for volunteers to set up a working party to assist the SBNS Administrators and move this forward. The last call for nominations for council included a request for someone with an interest in websites and Mr Trivedi was the successful candidate. He admitted he was not an expert on website per se, but was willing to assist the admin team, review content, design elements and quotes etc. Ms Pitsika also volunteered to help. Ms Whitehouse was not present, but it was noted that she had also expressed an interest in being involved. **Action:** R. Trivedi, M. Pitsika, K. Whitehouse, A. Gordon & S. Murray to liaise, compile list of requirements and obtain quotes. * **National Video Library** (educational resource) Prof Whitfield informed council that he was keen to set up an online video library for trainees. Council felt that there were already very good free resources on the internet, the downside is they are mostly American. A good UK version may be more appealing to our trainees. Mr Mukerji reported that there are tutorial videos on the ebrain site, but they are linked to modules. If the SBNS wanted to set this up they may be able to host it on the ebrain platform with a link to the SBNS website and agreed to speak to the JNC President. The President stated he would be keen to get this started and if anyone on council is interested or knows of someone who would be willing to take this on please contact the SBNS office. **Action:** N. Mukerji and all Council * **Telephone Helpline** – The President stated that he has been thinking about setting up a telephone helpline for some time and it has become more pertinent in light of the recent suicides within the specialty. Council applauded the idea, but many felt from personal experience that trainees are very reluctant seek help for fear of being identified, neurosurgery is a very small specialty. They may feel more comfortable speaking to someone outside their specialty. The other concern was it would need to be managed by trained counsellors. Mr Kamaly stated that he is still trying to get his Mentoring scheme off the ground. He feels this would be a great way to identify vulnerable trainees before things escalate. Another suggestion put forward was pairing each trainee with a ‘buddy’ for the first five years, that way they can look out for each other and no one will feel they are a being singled out. Ian Kamaly was happy to develop this, targeting consultants rather than trainees. He believes trainees already have the Liaison Member network. **Action:** I. Kamaly * **Consideration of Reps for Nations** - Currently the only nation not officially represented on council is Wales. The President would like to propose that one of the current Welsh based council members take on this role and going forward when advertising for council members we ensure that each of the nations is represented. The proposal was agreed. **Action:** Mr Whitfield to write to Ms Whitehouse and Mr Nannapaneni who are both based in Cardiff to see if they would take on this role.  **Done** * **RSPAs – Job Approvals -** This was discussed at the last Council meeting. This role is currently carried out by the SBNS President, other associations have their regional RSPAS carry out this task. The President would prefer to nominate a council member to oversee this task. It is also thought the RSPAs may be discontinued. The RCS have requested the SBNS nominate a Representative to represent neurosurgery on their outreach department. * **SBNS Medal** – The Society Medal was last awarded in 2019. Ideally one should be awarded annually at an SBNS meeting. If anyone has any suggestions to whom the next award should go please submit a citation to Suzanne before the next council meeting. A list of the current medal holders is available on the SBNS website.  <https://www.sbns.org.uk/index.php/about-us/sbns-medals/> **Action:** S. Murray to circulate a list of Senior Members to Council - Done * **Ancillary testing in BSD** – **Appendix 5b & 5c** The President informed council that since the presentation at the last Council meeting he and Prof. Hutchinson have been corresponding with Dr Manara and he has agreed to their recommendations as detailed in Appendix 5b and 5c. The main point was that ancillary testing must not become normal practice. He was now happy for the SBNS to endorse the Guideline.  **Action:** P. Whitfield inform Dr Manara that the SBNS is happy to endorse the guideline and include our logo – **Done** |
| **6.** | **Equality and Diversity Group Update -** Mr P. Grundy / Ms K. Whitehouse - **Appendix 6** |
|  | Mr Grundy presented the EDI report, which was prepared by Kat Whitehouse, for comments and approval. The general consensus was that it was, overall, an excellent report, it was well written and the results were clearly presented. There was some concern that it may not be a true reflection of the SBNS as only a small percentage of the membership had completed the survey - there were only 189 respondents (18% of the membership). Mr Grundy stated that regardless of numbers there were still 113 reported cases of bullying, harassment and undermining (64% of those who responded). This is unacceptable and needs to be addressed along with other unpleasant issues raised. It was noted that Neurosurgery is not the only surgical speciality in which these issues occur.  Mr Grundy highlighted that the report also included a list of the positive actions that have already been carried out and 10 areas where the EDI Group plan to make further improvements. For example: exploring why there has been a 5% increase in trainees leaving the national training scheme and what we can do to support them, getting a more accurate picture of the SBNS demographics and improving communication. Positive discrimination when seeking new council members was not favoured as we already put out an encouraging statement with the call for nominations.   Mr Grundy asked Council to review the report in more detail and let him know if they have any further suggestions or comments.  Council commended Ms Whitehouse and the EDI Group for their hard work. It was proposed the report be circulated to the membership, published on the SBNS website and possibly in an external journal.  **Action:** All council to forward their comments to Mr Grundy ASAP EDI Group to Circulate the final version to the membership and investigate publishing externally |
| **7.** | **Reports from Sub-Spec Leads** |
| **a** | **Prof. K. Ashkan – Functional Lead - Verbal** The BFNS Meeting in Newcastle last week was a great success. Prof. Ashkan paid tribute to the hosts, Claire Nicholson and Alistair Jenkins, for their hard work, the academic and social programmes were excellent. It was the BFNS’s first face to face meeting in 3 years and there was a good representation from most neurosurgical units.  He would like to propose that the abstracts from this meeting and other sub-speciality meetings be published in the BJN, perhaps there could be an annual online edition specifically for this purpose? He stated he would be happy to discuss this with the BJN Editor outside of this meeting.  He informed council that his term as President of the BFNS is coming to an end and elections are due to take place. |
| **b** | **Prof. M. Wilson – Trauma - Appendix 7a**  Prof Wilson informed council that he has reviewed the NICE Head Injury Guidelines and has outlined his concerns in his report: hypopituitarism, Biomarkers, Modified Denver Criteria for undertaking a CTA and the removal of some relevant pages from the original guideline. He has agreed to liaise with Prof. Hutchinson and Prof. Gurusinghe in order that his comments could be included in the submission to NICE on behalf of the SBNS.  He also reported on the current Trauma related clinical trials, particularly MAST and the Sugar or Salt are under target and requested council to encourage recruitment within their units. |
| **c** | **Mr R. Vindlacheruvu – Vascular - Appendix 7b**  The next BNVG meeting will be held in Cambridge in February 2023. Budgets are tight and they would welcome some financial support from the SBNS for the educational programme. There are plans to have sessions on bypass and mediolegal aspects.  Credentials and Interventional Neuroradiology – The GMC has endorsed the curriculum for Mechanical Thrombectomy in acute stroke. The lead dean will be Prof. Geeta Menon who is also the lead dean for clinical radiology. The SBNS will need to work with the BNTA to get our trainees involved. Competence should be the main consideration not numbers or duration. Manchester is a good example to follow. Funding will also be a key factor. |
|  | **Mr R. Vindlacheruvu - Green Surgery Meeting – Appendix 18**  Mr Vindlacheruvu reported on the Green Surgery meeting he recently attended on behalf of the SBNS. There was good representation from all specialties. Their main focus was reducing the carbon footprint by developing an evidence based guide for surgical practice. They aim to do this through public health and prevention programs and working with manufactures to produce items which can be reused rather than recycled. They have requested each surgical speciality consider strategies within their field which can be shared. A lot of their ideas were aspirational with a tight timeline, but all were commendable.  The SBNS will need to be proactive and develop ideas before we have rules imposed on us. It was suggested that Mr Vindlacheruvu approach the subspecialty leads by issuing a questionnaire.  **Action** R. Vindlacheruvu to prepare a questionnaire for circulation. |
| **8.** | **Finance** |
| a | **Treasurer’s Report & Financial Statements - Mr N. Mendoza** - **Appendix 8a & 8b**  The Society’s finances remain stable. The decision to invest funds has been put on hold until the market stabilizes. Two of the Nepalese bursary winners had a very successful trip to the UK and have submitted a report to be published in the SBNS Newsletter. The 3rd Nepalese Bursary winner who was unable to travel will be given an opportunity to come over next year as soon as it can be arranged. There are plans to continue with overseas bursaries and extend it to other parts of the world – with a two way exchange.  Prof. Bolger informed council that his unit in Dublin have started an exchange with South Africa. They have found that long term exchanges work best for the experience to be worthwhile. |
| b | **Report from BJN Editor – Mr N. Mukerji** **- Appendix 9**  Mr Mukerji informed council that he received 10 good applications for the recent advert for an unpaid a BJNS fellow, despite the initial controversy, and he has appointed 2.  He sought council’s views on the following:   1. The publishers want there to be 2 independent reviewers to make a decision on a manuscript, but he feels that in some instances, to hasten processing, one reviewer (senior/subject expert) + AE or EIC; should suffice? – **Council was in full support of peer review** 2. Website – direct link from SBNS works ok? – **Yes** 3. Should a print version be provided to every department? **Council felt this was not necessary** 4. BJNS Fellows - if they present an audit related to the BJNS he would like to request they receive free registration – **Council agreed**   Publication of abstracts from the BNRG and subspecialty meetings was discussed briefly. If space is a concern, annual online publications would be an option as it would be beneficial to the trainees. It was agreed the President would liaise with Mr Mukerji outside of the meeting. **Action:** P. Whitfield and N. Muukerji - **Done** |
| **9.** | Society Meetings |
|  | **Report from the Meeting Secretary – Prof. P. Hutchinson – Appendix 10**  The Blackpool meeting was a great success and feedback from the meeting was very good from delegates, invited guests and sponsors. Negative feedback was that there was insufficient time for questions. Keeping to time on sessions is a recurring issue at SBNS Meetings, chairs need to be more forceful and cut off speakers who overrun. The prize system was reviewed and along with a monetary and free dinner ticket prizes for the top oral and top poster presentations, certificates were also awarded to the best presentation in each oral topic session.  Cork Meeting 29-31 March 2022– The British Skull base Society have confirmed they will be joining the meeting and we have already have several guest speakers confirmed. There are also plans to run sessions on Hypermobility and gamma knife for AVMS. The Hot Topic session worked well in Blackpool and ideas put forward so far for this meeting are SRS and Commissioning. Colleagues from the Dublin unit have agreed to support the meeting and Prof. Bolger’s band has offered to provide entertainment at the Gala dinner.  St. George’s Meeting, 13-16 Sept 2023 – Venue Twickenham Rugby Ground. Sports Injury has been suggested as the theme. The BNRG were to join the meeting, but it is up for discussion with the host and the AC Chair.  Mr Whitfield suggested that Global Neurosurgery and Human factors would be good topics for future meetings. Mr Wigfield informed council that he recently attended the Human Factors day at the RCS and would be happy to forward a list of speakers which he thought particularly stood out.  **Action:** C. Wigfield to forward list of speakers. **Done** |
| **10.** | Commissioning & Delivering High Quality Neurosurgical Services |
| a. | National Neurosurgical Audit Programme – Mr A. Helmy – Appendix 11  Mr Helmy’s report was received and noted. He was not present at the meeting.  It was noted that the advert for the NNAP fellow went out last month with a closing date of 31st Oct. |
| b. | NHS England Update - Mr P. Grundy  Mr Grundy informed council that the National Clinical Director role has gone to David Cumming, an orthopaedic Surgeon. He was disappointed that a neurosurgeon was not selected, but he has since discovered that there is likely to be a further appointment from the complimentary specialty (i.e. neurosurgery). Interviews for membership of the new CRG will also be taking place, two council members, Crispin Wigfield and Mark Wilson have applied and will hopefully be appointed.  The Transformation Programme Work Plan continues and the work has been placed on the futures platform and there are a series of webinars members can tap into.  **Low Volume Surgery** – **Appendix 12** Mr Grundy presented a list of criteria for various low volume surgical procedures. He requested that council review the list and forward any comments or concerns to him. Once signed off it will be used as a platform for commissioning.  **Action:** All council to feedback on the Low Volume table. |
| c. | NICE Update - Prof. N. Gurusinghe – Appendix 13 |
|  | **DRAFT – Head Injury: assessment and early management Guideline update - public consultation** The closing date for comments to be sent to NICE is 4th November.  Prof. Gurusinghe informed council he has reviewed the lengthy document and made some observations (see report).  The consultation was notified to Full members of the SBNS and one response was received. Council agreed for the SBNS response to be finalised with advise from Prof Mark Wilson (Trauma Lead) and Prof. Peter Hutchinson in his response to NICE on behalf of the SBNS. **Action:** N. Gurusinghe  **- Done**  **DRAFT -SAH guideline – privileged consultation with SBNS** The Guideline is to be published on the 23rd November with no further public consultation. NICE have made some modifications after our various meetings, but there are still 3 sticking points (listed in the report) which he fears will result in a stalemate.   He has further meeting with NICE on 7th November with Kay Nolan and Rupert Franklin and he has invited Mr Raghu Vindlacheruvu to join him. If NICE do not agree to our changes we have 3 options:  1. Accept the guideline with its flaws knowing we have done our best 2. Endorse it with reservations 3. Reject it  After some deliberation it was agreed that the SBNS should not accept a guideline that in our opinion could put patients at risk due to a missed diagnosis and we should therefore not endorse it if we have significant concerns about safety. Members at the AGM were also supportive of this stance.  The President will review the draft guideline and advise NG and RV regarding further actions.  **Actions:** P. Whitfield - **Done** |
| **11.** | **Education/Training/Research** |
| a. | **Report from Chairman of SAC - Mr S. Thomson - Appendix 14**  The report was received and noted - Mr Thomson was not present.  The President highlighted that here are vacancies for 4 SAC members and the position of National Selection Lead – these will be advertised shortly. Senior trainers were encouraged to apply. |
| b. | **Report from the Workforce Planning Rep - Mr S. Sinha - Verbal**  It was noted that there are currently approximately 57 CCT holders without a substantive consultant posts. The figure was thought to be higher (70), but that figure may have included CCT holders who had been without a consultant post for over 4 years and have probably found jobs in other areas. Regardless of the discrepancy, 57 is still a not a good position to be in.  **National selection**  We will aim to recruit 25 trainees in 2023. There is a growing concern regarding academic trainee selection, we need to keep this proportional and fair. Once solution would be to raise the threshold for this group either at shortlisting or selection. They need to be good at the practical side of neurosurgery as well as the academic. Stephen Price, a member of the SBNS Academic Committee is looking into this. |
| c. | **Report from Chairman of Intercollegiate Examination Board – Mr L Thorne – Appendix 15**  Mr Thorne informed Council that he has recently been appointed as the SBNS rep on the Examination Board and has been asked to report on behalf of Mr Dardis. The October exams were the first to involve volunteer patients since COVID hit, but this was only for the long cases which involved two intermediate cases – 20 mins each. A greater number of marks are awarded for these sessions as they are thought to improve the reliability of the clinical section. Patient feedback is not sought as there are too many mitigating factors.  The international diet will be held in January in Malta.  There is still need for more examiners – it is a very rewarding role. Council were asked to spread the word in their units. |
| d. | **Report from the BNTA Chair – Ms. M. Pitsika**  Ms Pitsika stated that she has only just been appointed to the role and will submit a report at the next meeting. |
| e. | **Report from the Academic Chair – Prof. M. Jenkinson & Mrs C. Turner - Appendix 16** |
|  | Recruitment to trials remains a big concern and council were asked to encourage recruitment in their units as many are at risk of closure. Prof. King stated that the SCiL trial is unlikely to hit its target – they need to recruit at least 2 patients a month from each centre. Prof. Bolger said he may be able to help if it extends to Dublin. Prof. Hutchinson suggested having another trial update in Cork to encourage recruitment.  The next BNRG meeting will be on the 24-25 November in Leeds. The plan was to have joint BNRG/SBNS meeting at the Autumn SBNS meeting in London in 2023, but the AC have reservations as to whether this is the right decision and are going to liaise with the Meetings Secretary and the Host. |
| **12.** | **Report from the WFNS/EANS Reps – Mr J. Timothy and Ms T. Karabatsou – 17** |
|  | Mrs Karabatsou reported that she attended an EANS meeting in Belgrade earlier this month. It was an excellent meeting with good academic content, however, representation from the SBNS was disappointingly low. The EANS would like to see more involvement from their member societies especially with the sub-specialty groups and faculty. If anyone is interested please contact her or Jake.  She was pleased to report that WFNS are working toward reaching an amicable solution to the recent unpleasant situation regarding voting issues and after discussion with Mr Timothy they have decided to defer drafting a statement from the SBNS.  Ms Karabatsou requested her term of office be extended by two years as COVID has prevented her and Mr Timothy engaging with the WFNS/EANS as much as they had hoped and the same extension was granted to Mr Timothy last April.  Council agreed.  **Action:** P. Whitfield to send a confirmation letter to Ms Karabatsou - **Done** S. Murray to amend the officers list - **Done** |
| **13.** | **Reports from RCS Representatives** |
|  | **RCSI Rep – Prof. C. Bolger – verbal**  Prof. Bolger stated there was not much to report other than the Irish government are pushing to reduce the length of training and increase simulation training. |
| **14.** | Any Other Business |
|  | **None** |
| **15.** | **Date of Next Meeting** 27 January 2023 – venue to be confirmed. **Proposed future dates - Please mark you diaries**  **28 April 2023** – Possibly Awayday meeting hosted by the Southampton Unit  **28 July 2023** **27 October 2023** |