



Minutes of the EPSIG Executive Committee 7pm 12 March 2024

Via MS Teams

Present (alphabetically):

Reem Abed, Riadh Abed (RA, Finance Officer), Tom Carpenter (TC), Nikhil Chaudhary, David Geaney, Adam Hunt, Paul St John-Smith (PSJS, Chair), Annie Swanepoel.

Apologies received: Muzaffer Kaser, Elena Titova-Chaudry.

1. PSJS welcomed those present and announced the result of the recent election process where the new chair and finance officers of EPSIG will be Riadh Abed and Annie Swanepoel respectively. They will take up their new roles in June. Also, Paul will be the new newsletter editor from June. The date of the AGM was agreed to take place on Friday 6 September at 2:30pm via zoom.
2. RA presented a brief finance report outlining that our bottom line reserves stand at over £15K. However, there is considerable uncertainty as to whether these funds 'belong' to EPSIG or to the college as in a recent correspondence with the Treasurer, it was explained that all reserves go into the general college fund and thus belong to the college rather than to individual SIGs.
3. Tom Carpenter gave feedback on the recent 2nd Trainee Engagement Workshop held on 1 March. It was pleasing to hear that the attendees expressed very positive responses both about the workshop and about EP generally and the analysis of the feedback may be written up into an article for publication at a future date. However, it was unfortunate that around 10 registrants did not show up on the day which meant that several trainees on the waiting list who were keen to attend were unable to do so. This is despite the fact that Tom had sent a reminder the week before asking people to let him know if they were not attending and that there were people on the waiting list. Two measures were considered to try to reduce future non-attendance. One was to charge attendees (this option did not receive sufficient support and was therefore rejected), the other was to request confirmation of attendance 10-14 days before the event and those who fail to confirm lose their places and are allocated to others. It was decided to maintain this event as free for trainees in the UK and Ireland and offer the opportunity to present a poster to trainees who wish to do so (as long as it has some evolutionary content). Also, the

possibility of running a clinical scenarios type workshop was discussed, and Nikhil indicated there may be funding available for this. We may consider running an initial session with practical advice on how to give effective evolutionary explanations followed by the actor session. It was suggested that the event should be open to mental health professionals in general rather than only to psychiatry trainees but this can mean a potential reduction in the number of places available for trainees.

4. Nikhil Chaudhary confirmed that it should be possible to bid for funding for the catering of next year's Trainee Workshop from the Cambridge University Impact fund but explained we should not consider this to be guaranteed as it is a matter of timing and what/when we ask for other things. Tom has mentioned a workshop with actors and other activities which would also need to be pitched at the correct level.
5. A core group for the running of the Charles Darwin Essay Prize was formed with the following membership: Annie Swanepoel as coordinator and Reem Abed, Nikhil Chaudhary, Paul St John-Smith as members. The core group will decide the criteria for applications and timings. The 2 winners will be offered 10 min slots at our forthcoming symposium in November. The total prize money should not exceed £500 which is what has been budgeted for (core group: please note).
6. There were no specific updates on the newsletter other than the fact that the 34th newsletter had been issued and there will be a new editor (PSJS) from June.
7. RA updated the group on the arrangements for the 6th International EPSIG symposium due to take place F2F on 22 November 2024 at the college. We still have 6 confirmed speakers but there was a slight change in the program with one speaker withdrawing and being replaced.
8. Adam Hunt reported on the progress of the YouTube channel. It is currently producing around £20 a month and this has accumulated around £1200 in total. Adam has subscribed to a sound improvement software that improves the sound of our webinars and this costs £10 a month. Also, he reported to the group his plan to set up a charitable Foundation for Evolutionary Psychiatry that will enable donations to be received that can be used to promote EP. He has asked a number of our group to become trustees of the foundation and is planning to go ahead with the application shortly.
9. Reem Abed gave a brief update of plans to survey both medical students and medical schools on teaching evolutionary biology in medical courses and its perceived benefits. There are a couple of trainees and students collaborating with her on this important project including Elena Titova-Chaudhry.
10. David Geaney and AS updated the group on the half-day meeting organised jointly with the Philosophy SIG with Iain McGilchrist. This has been sold out for some weeks and there is a waiting list. There are 18 booked for the post-event dinner at the college.
11. RA reminded the group of 2 EP meetings taking place this year, one 1-5 July in Erice, Sicily and the other 5-6 August in Durham. Details in the latest newsletter.
12. AOB: Reem Abed suggested that we consider providing space in one of our events for discussion of evolutionary aspects of the phenomenon of Incels (a speaker was suggested).

13. Date of the next meeting: this will be at the AGM via zoom on Friday 6 September at 2:30pm.