President’s column

Sue Gardner

Contact Sue Gardner via the Society’s Leicester office, or e-mail: president@bps.org.uk

It is customary for incoming Presidents to begin their first column with information about themselves, but you can read about me at www.bps.org.uk. I would much rather focus on how we can work together for the benefit of psychology, the world we live in and each other.

The membership survey is being collated (thank you for responding) and this will provide us with useful information and feedback. It helps to know members’ views when the Board of Trustees is making decisions. It may also help you to understand what is happening in the Society at the moment.

I hope that as a member you are able to contribute to and benefit from debates and other activities through some of our member networks. The Branches, Sections, Special Groups and Divisions often provide the initial incentive for people to join the Society as these are a great way to get involved and updated. They are represented on Boards and meet on the Representative Council, which is an important forum to ensure that everyone shares views and informs the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees brings together the honorary officers, the chairs of Boards, and the chair and two others from the Representative Council; the chief executive (who is in charge of running the Society) and the senior management team, together with the staff in the Leicester and London offices, make things happen.

Given our membership of 48,000 it is all too easy for us to make assumptions about each others’ priorities. My priorities would be to strengthen our position as a learned society, to ensure that psychology is disseminated widely to inform decision makers in government and elsewhere, to define and maintain our standards (including maintaining GBR), to provide more support for members and to plan for a positive future. Are these your priorities, or would you propose alternatives?

Supporting members is an issue high on the agenda for the Board of Trustees and several areas of work are now coming to fruition. The Society is launching the Learning Centre (see p.323), the new training and development portal. It will provide information on training and professional development courses and events, and is also home to the myCPD system to record any professional development that you undertake. Our aim is for the Society to be the leading source for professional development in psychology in all its aspects.

We are reviewing the benefits for members, streamlining processes, improving the information technology and ensuring that we are welcoming as an organisation. We are keen to reach out to A-level, undergraduate and postgraduate students, to establish corporate membership and to retain members over time. We are also reviewing member networks to strengthen links and improve efficiency. A draft plan will be finalised and send out for consultation.

To disseminate the work of members the Society liaises with a wide range of other organisations including the devolved governments throughout the UK. We respond to consultations, comment on proposals and continue with activities ‘Bringing Psychology to Society’. This is our raison d’être as a charity, and it seems especially important at this time to contribute to decision making in our world at large.

Although we are changing as part of natural evolution there are two additional reasons for some of our current work. These are statutory regulation and our financial position. As I write, the legislation has just been tabled so the original start date of 1 July 2009 for the Health Professions Council (HPC) to implement regulation for applied psychologists is still looking possible. I suspect that many of us have concerns about this new system, its implementation and how well it will protect the public, but there will be advantages. The HPC has more legal powers for those who are not practitioners appropriately and the Society will be freed from all ‘fitness to practise’ investigations, which take time and money, thus enabling us to...
reinvest these resources in other activities. It is important that we maintain our standards and our review of member networks has this in mind. We will be working with the HPC to ensure a smooth transition.

As the Society will no longer be regulating members, the Professional Conduct Board will be winding down its functions in the lead up to the opening of the HPC register. I would like to thank all those people on the Board and on the Investigatory Committee as well as associated staff for their hard work over many years. I have only been involved directly over the past year, and the regular arrival of parcels containing six-inch deep bundles of papers has alerted me to how much work has been undertaken behind the scenes over many years. The Society is very grateful for this contribution and for the input of Joop Tanis, as PCB Chair, to the Board of Trustees.

It will not have escaped your notice that there is a recession. Not only has there been a reduction in income from investments but their market value has also fallen over the year, which has had to be represented in our end-of-year figures. There have also been increasing costs in other areas. Our chief executive, Ann Colley, and the senior management team have worked hard to keep costs down but we are going to have to take additional measures within the next year. The good news however is that we made £10 million last year from subscriptions, conferences, books and other activities. This would have given us a very healthy balance if investment revenues had been maintained and expenses and salaries had only increased as predicted. We intend to streamline our operations until there is a more favourable financial climate.

We continue to develop our links with other psychology organisations around the world, and I am grateful to Liz Campbell for agreeing to attend the European Federation of Psychologists’ Associations later this month in Brussels. Liz has travelled widely over the last year on behalf of her employer, using these trips to make contacts in India and Europe throughout her own presidential term. This can only have increased the understanding and collaboration between ourselves and others.

I would like to end by thanking Liz for all her hard work. I look forward to benefiting from her advice and support. That also reminds me to thank friends and colleagues for their messages of goodwill and suggestions for my own term. Needless to say, these suggestions are contradictory, but that’s the fun of being part of the British Psychological Society.

Legislation to enable psychologists to be taken into statutory regulation was tabled in March at Westminster and Holyrood. The Department of Health (DH) and the Health Professions Council (HPC) have to proceed on the basis that the legislation will be passed. They have informed the Society that they are still working on 1 July 2009 as the date that the register will open. On that date the Society will no longer be responsible for judging fitness to practise as a psychologist.

In January the Society’s President, Dr Liz Campbell, wrote to the appropriate parliamentary committees pointing out that if legislation excludes a significant number of practitioner Chartered Psychologists (those without an adjectival title) then the public will not be as fully protected as they should be. The Society believes this is a failing in the legislation and hope the committees scrutinising the statutory instrument will agree.

Membership
Any Chartered Psychologist who does not currently have a Society adjectival title, and who wants to practise under the protected titles, should apply for full membership of the appropriate Society Division by 20 May 2009. Only the details of Chartered Psychologists with an adjectival title (either current or in the past) and a current practising certificate will be automatically sent to the HPC. However, there can be no guarantee that all applicants will be accepted, as each case will be considered against the appropriate current membership criteria.

In reference to those who will be eligible to be entered on the HPC Register, the legislation states: ‘[the] “BPS register” means the aggregate of the entries in the register maintained by the BPS that relate to holders of practising certificates who are or have been full members of one or more of the divisions of the BPS in respect of the following branches of psychology: clinical psychology; counselling psychology; educational psychology; forensic psychology; health psychology; occupational psychology; and sport and exercise psychology’.

Those not in that position and who wish to continue to practise will have to apply to the HPC via their grandparenting routes, details of which can be found at www.hpc-org.uk, or visit the HPC information stand at Annual Conference.

Our future
Statutory regulation will bring changes to the Society, and the Trustees have already initiated discussions and have set up small working groups to help shape our future. As part of this process, the Society’s honorary officers will hold informal face-
to face sessions at the Annual Conference. They are keen to hear members’ views on the future of the Society: ‘Our Future’ sessions take place at the Society’s information stand in the main foyer of the Holiday Inn, Brighton Seafront on Wednesday 1 April (3.30pm–4.30pm) and on Thursday 2 April (2.30pm–3.30pm).

If you would like to contribute to the Our Future discussions, and you are unable to attend the conference, e-mail your views and ideas by 31 May to: ourfuture@bps.org.uk.

**Regulatory affairs**

To allow for a smooth handover, changes are already being implemented. The winding down of the regulatory affairs service at the Society’s Leicester office has started, and planning for the handover of cases has been undertaken with the HPC. Complaints received by the Society after 20 February are on hold until this transfer occurs. All parties are being kept informed on a case-by-case basis. The Society will introduce a new and simpler membership conduct process. Plans for this are being drawn up to go out for consultation among members.

**Programme accreditation**

Our Quality Assurance Team has been working with the HPC to coordinate accreditation processes. The Society will continue to accredit undergraduate, conversion and postgraduate programmes for membership purposes, including chartered membership. The HPC will accredit postgraduate programmes that lead to statutory registration. Letters explaining these changes have been sent to programme directors and heads of department nationwide.

We do not yet know the outcome of the HPC’s consultations on the standards of proficiency and threshold level of education and training required for registration, but please check the Society’s website for regular updates. Meanwhile, more information on the HPC’s course approval process is available from www.hpc-uk.org.

**Keeping you informed**

Now that the legislation has been tabled, further information on all developments can be found at www.bps.org.uk/statreg.

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**CONSULTATIONS ON PUBLIC POLICY**

Society members were again active in responding to consultations during February, with six responses having been submitted at the time of going to press and a further four due for submission by the end of the month. Brief details of a selection are provided below; full details of all are available via our website (www.bps.org.uk/consult).

The Society broadly welcomed the Department for Transport’s proposals on Road Safety Compliance, although, some proposals were overly tentative [e.g. those concerning the limits for psychoactive drugs]. The response noted that the benefits of safety engineering may be countered by riskier driving behaviour – a fact that is routinely overlooked – and that sanctions may do little to enhance an adequate safety culture. The importance of education was highlighted and it was suggested that this may be best directed at those too young to hold a driving licence.

Responding to the Department of Health (DH), the Society viewed their proposed End of Life Care Strategy: Quality markers, as providing a useful guide to service commissioners and providers. It was noted that previously validated measures had, on the whole, been identified to facilitate this process, but the need was noted for further research on the application of some measures across different settings. It was suggested that measures of quality of life might also be useful in identifying important outcome measures of successful end-of-life care.

A further DH consultation – Developing the Quality and Outcomes Framework: Proposals for a new, independent process – was welcomed as having the potential to increase independence and transparency and to help keep the Framework a live and flexible way of rewarding good practice in primary care. Further development of the proposals was considered necessary, though, if those who are traditionally less likely to have access to GP services are to be reached. The Society hoped that an explicit recommendation would be added for the inclusion of the early diagnosis and treatment of common mental health problems as an indicator. It was recommended that experts in health behaviour change and in medical geography and epidemiology be included in the proposed Panel.

NICE’s draft guidance When to Suspect Child Maltreatment, was considered useful, but the omission of school as a source of child maltreatment was raised as a serious oversight. The inclusion of additional material covering neurodevelopmental disorders and behavioural/psychological signs was recommended.

NHS Quality Improvement Scotland’s Draft Standards for Neurological Health Services: were seen as likely to benefit patient care. However, given the amount of work undertaken by psychologists in Scotland for patients with neurological disorders, the lack of reference to psychological services was both disappointing and surprising. The range of contributions made by psychologists across a number of conditions was highlighted and the importance emphasised of addressing psychological needs at all stages of diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and long-term management.

The preparation and submission of the Society’s responses to consultations on public policy is coordinated by the Policy Support Unit (PSU). All members are eligible to contribute to responses and all interest is warmly welcomed. Please contact the PSU for further information (psu@bps.org.uk; 0116 252 9926/9577). Details of active and completed consultations are available at: www.bps.org.uk/consult.
The Society is launching a Learning Centre this April, as part of plans to enhance and develop the services offered to members. The Centre will be an online portal for professional development, showcasing the latest CPD opportunities relevant to psychologists.

**A catalogue of events**
The Learning Centre will feature a catalogue of Society professional development events. The Society hosts over 100 professional development events, workshops and conferences every year across its member networks. All courses listed in the CPD directory are ‘approved’ to Society standards. The courses use experienced facilitators, have clearly defined learning goals and are monitored for quality. Forthcoming events organised by the Society include:

- Advanced Motivational Interviewing
- An Introduction to Working with the Media
- Expert Witness – Presenting Evidence in Court
- Teaching, Training and Delivering Information
- Challenges for Applied Psychologists in the NHS
- Behaviour Change Interventions: Design and Evaluation
- Counselling Psychology in Health Settings: A Framework for Modern Practice

Following requests from members we are also introducing an event approval scheme for external course providers. Courses can gain a badge of CPD approval and be listed in our CPD directory and website. Courses approved by the Centre meet the Society’s CPD standards. For information about gaining the ‘BPS Learning Centre Approved’ badge and for details of our CPD standards please visit www.bps.org.uk/learningcentre.

**myCPD**
To help our members compile reflective CPD logs and to demonstrate their commitment to CPD, we have redesigned and updated our online CPD planning and recording system. This is now available to all Society members. myCPD helps users structure their professional learning and assess how their activities impact on their portfolio of professional skills.

myCPD can also be used to create and download Adobe pdf versions of CPD logs to use when planning professional development activities with employers and for the purposes of a regulator’s CPD audit. For example, Society members who become ‘registered’ with the Health Professions Council (HPC) will be required to maintain a ‘continuous, up-to-date and accurate record of their CPD activities’. Not only will maintaining a CPD record be part of the requirements of the new regulator, it is also likely the Society will operate some CPD monitoring processes in the future for the purposes of determining attainment of a membership grade and/or maintenance of a specific status/award (such as Chartered Scientist).

Members can register to use the CPD recording system by visiting www.bps.org.uk/learningcentre and selecting ‘myCPD’ (this only takes a few minutes).

**Advice and guidance**
The Learning Centre’s resources area provides information and advice about good practice. The experience gained from undertaking our own CPD monitoring processes will be of great value in helping to inform the support the Society can provide. In addition to advice from the Society, members can discuss topical issues affecting their professional practice by visiting the Learning Centre’s online forum.

**A significant development**
Simon Bowen, the Society’s Membership Support and Services Director, said: ‘The Learning Centre represents a significant development in the way we advance and diffuse psychology and support our members. And this is just the beginning, as we have some exciting innovations planned – watch this space.’

For more information, see www.bps.org.uk/learningcentre, e-mail learningcentre@bps.org.uk or call 0116 252 9916.

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**BID NOW FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GRANTS**

The 2009 round of funding for public engagement grants is now open, with up to £14,000 being available to take psychology to society. Applications are invited for imaginative and sustainable projects, aimed at opening up psychology to any of the following audiences:

- policy makers – such as politicians, civil servants, local government, religious leaders/groups, employer groups, etc.
- specific groups within the general public – such as influencers (e.g. parents) or service users
- students at secondary and further (pre-tertiary) level

Further details are available from www.bps.org.uk/grants or from the Publication & Communication Board’s Policy Adviser (suzanne.jefford@bps.org.uk; 0116 252 9577). Also see the advertisement on p.329.
Celebrating the century maker

The British Journal of Psychology publishes its 100th volume this year. The Society's flagship journal has helped to shape the history of psychology with influential articles written by world-class researchers. To celebrate this, we are marking the publication of Volume 100 with a special issue ‘Celebrating a Century of Psychological Research’. Five articles, each written by legendary figures, will be reprinted alongside commentaries by contemporary world leaders: Piaget: Children's understanding of causality; Watson: Is thought subvocal speech?; Bartlett: The relationship between thinking and feeling; Gibson: The theory of direct perception; and Cattell: The structure and measurement of personality and individual differences.

This volume will highlight the contribution of these figures and examine key historical developments offering a synthesis between the historical and the contemporary. Published in April 2009, we will be giving readers the opportunity to access this important issue free for the whole of May (via www.bpsjournals.co.uk). Thereafter, members will be able to purchase an annual subscription to the journal at the privilege member rate of £23 (£16 for student members).

Membership survey update

Many thanks to the 10 per cent of members who responded to the Membership Survey 2009. Your responses will provide valuable insight into members' needs, priorities and views on how the Society is performing in key areas. Sharing your views will have a direct contribution to setting the Society's objectives and provide an improved understanding of where to focus our efforts to better meet the needs of members. A full report on the responses received (including a breakdown by grade of membership) is to be considered by the Trustees in April.

Further details including an executive summary will be made available on the website in due course.

NEWS FROM THE BOARDS

Research Board
24 February 2009

Consultations The Board contributed to submissions from the Joint Committee for Psychology in Higher Education to the ESRC review of its Research Ethics Framework and revisions to the ESRC postgraduate training framework. Concerns were expressed about the level of ethical scrutiny in the Research Ethics Framework and the onerous requirements that may be imposed on ESRC-funded researchers. Other concerns related to: guidance on the importance of informed consent; criminal records bureau checks; and then implications of the Human Tissue Act 2004 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The Board was particularly concerned over the revisions to the postgraduate training framework and the proposal to introduce Doctoral Training Centres and Doctoral Training Units, and the implications this may have for the level of funding for postgraduate research training in psychology and the social sciences more generally. For further information on these matters, please contact Dr Lisa Morrison Coulthard on lisa.morrisoncoulthard@bps.org.uk

Book award 2009 The recipient of the Book Award for 2009 is Professor Alan Baddeley for his book Working Memory, Thought and Action.

RAE outcomes The Board discussed the outcomes of the exercise and the potential implications for the funding of psychological research. Some concerns were expressed about the overall ratings for psychology when compared with other disciplines in science and social science. It was noted that the Association of Heads of Psychology Departments had received a presentation from Professor Vicki Bruce on behalf of Professor Dianne Berry (Chair of the Psychology RAE Panel) and that Professor Berry will be attending the next meeting of the Board to discuss the future of research assessment under the Research Excellence Framework.

Vote of thanks and outgoing chair At the AGM in April, Professor Martin Conway will step down as Chair of the Board. The Board sincerely thanked Professor Conway for his hard work and contributions to the Society during his term of office. Dr Judi Ellis is warmly welcomed as the incoming Chair 2009/12.

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### Organised by BPS Conferences

BPS conferences are committed to ensuring value for money, careful budgeting and sustainability in the current economic climate.

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### CHARISTERED STATUS & STATUTORY REGULATION

20 MAY 2009

The HPC Register is due to open to psychologists in July 2009 *(subject to final legislation)*.

The deadline for applications for Chartered Status and Full Membership of a practitioner Division is midday on 20 May 2009. If elected, you will be transferred automatically to the HPC Register.

For full details visit [www.bps.org.uk/membership](http://www.bps.org.uk/membership)