



Palliative Care Works

Chairman's Report – 2023-24

This is my second report as Chair and I would like to start by thanking my fellow Trustees, for all they do. For everyone's hard work, dedication and commitment to the cause and all that is being done to keep PCW fit for purpose in this ever-changing world, and this of course includes the invaluable support we receive from Sue Lakie our administrator.

The changes I mentioned in last year's report have been successfully implemented and I congratulate Fiona Rawlinson and Ruth Alderton for settling in so well as new Trustees. They are presenting at today's conference. We are an evolving organisation only too well aware of the huge need for PC training in LMIC and it could be argued in some places here in the UK, and whilst funding for us to deliver training remains a critical issue, so is having sufficient number of Trustees able and available to deliver training, mentoring, and consultancy should we be asked to do so.

It's making the connect between the need, what we can offer, how to bid for the work and having the resources both in terms of personnel and financially to deliver. For the benefit of others reading this report, it's important to point out that some of our work does also come from donor led projects where a need for training has been identified, with PCW contracted to deliver training working alongside in country partners who can be Ministry of Health, NGOs or FBOs.

So as part of our succession planning for the future, highlighted in last year's report, a small working party led by Fiona is taking this forward, looking to strengthen the Board across key areas identified in the Skills Audit initiated by Jane Appleton, my predecessor as chair. I am happy to report we have two potential new Trustees whom we are hoping will join the Board next in 2025 but that still leaves the Board needing two more Trustees to replace this year's retirees.

So, there is work to be done urgently on this and I am hoping that by this time next year as I step down as Chair and retire from the Board, I will be able to report that additional Trustees have been appointed to ensure we remain a robust organisation capable of attracting expressions of interest which translate into work.

We are mindful of our responsibilities around ethnicity, diversity and inclusion to which PCW remains totally committed.

I mentioned Trustees retiring and I am very sad to report that Karilyn Collins and Michael Minton, two founding Trustees, have decided to step down. To say they will be greatly missed is a huge understatement. They leave a formidable and impressive legacy around their contributions towards developing and strengthening palliative care in lower middle-income countries not only through the training programmes but also their commitment to ongoing mentorship.

Karilyn has nurtured PCW's very strong link with Tanzania, initially through her beloved Muheza Hospice, then the Tearfund Diana Fund Lake Region project, and, more recently, her exemplary leadership and management of the Four Hospitals program in SE Tanzania funded by the much-lamented DFID.

Amongst Michael's many contributions, including his mentorship on the SE Tanzania work, he has led the very successful Conference team, for more years than he probably cares to remember. It is generally acknowledged how important PCW's annual conference is in the sector's calendar. The continued relationship with Professor Heather Richardson and her colleagues on the Education and Professional Development Team at St Christopher's Hospice, is something PCW greatly values, and we always look forward to welcoming St Christopher's international students to our conferences out of which several long-term relationships have sprung. Michael's extensive knowledge and experience of palliative care in India has happily led to new friends for us at PCW, as witnessed by contributors to today's conference, several of whom it should be pointed out are also former students of Professor Rawlinson at Cardiff!

All this in addition to what Karilyn and Michael have brought to the Board meetings and day to day workings of PCW. Thank you both, you will be most definitely missed on the Board but we're delighted you will be remaining involved as Associates.

Our accounts are presented today and my thanks at this time also go to the finance team of Charles Campion Smith, PCW's Treasurer Trustee, Isobel O'Connor our Honorary Treasurer, for keeping the accounts and to Philip Brough, our accountant adviser, for preparing PCW's accounts for independent examination as required by the Charity Commission. As previously reported, our only income is through grants badged to individual projects but in which management costs for administration are now included. It is a precarious state and without Ruth Wooldridge's tireless work on grant

applications, for which as always, we are hugely grateful, our financial situation would be much more vulnerable. Currently we are very grateful to the Souter Trust and the Sir Halley Stewart Trust for their grants reported on in my report last year.

I am pleased to report that the 5 films about palliative care that we made thanks to the SHST grant programme continue to be seen as making a helpful contribution to palliative care training and advocacy and, as an acknowledgement of that, Ruth was invited to a reception at the Trust where a select few, PCW included, were asked to describe what had been achieved with the grants. Keeping our profile in this arena can only be good for us.

The Board continues to meet four times a year and I am happy to report that PCW's 2023 Conference, our 10th, was held immediately after last year's AGM. Entitled, 'The Changing Landscape of Palliative Care Education' with a keynote address from Professor Heather Richardson, its proceedings can be found on PCW website. I would like to take this opportunity of paying tribute to Michael Minton's inspirational leadership of PCW's Conference team as he leads us into his final Conference immediately following this AGM.

I can confirm that PCW's Governance policies are regularly reviewed and updated and appropriate training and refreshing undertaken by the Trustees, again overseen by our Administrator.

Mark Ewins our webmaster continues to update the website, looking to meet one of last year's objectives, helping to raise PCW's profile. And I'm delighted to say we now have a Donate button on our updated website.

Before reporting on what's been happening in this last year, I'd like to mention our Associates to whom we are very grateful for their support, for the stimulating WhatsApp group conversations and exchanges and indeed to the wider circle of friends and colleagues here in the UK and internationally, several of whom are here for our annual conference which follows. Through these rewarding connections, some of which have come as a result of Associates having obtained higher education qualifications under Professor Fiona Rawlinson at Cardiff University, the possibility of some promising work around collaboration on training is emerging, especially around refresher courses. With colleagues at Pallium India and at the Bangalore Hospice Trust, with the executive committee of Zambia's National Palliative Care Association and also with the Paediatric Oncology Department at Bugando Hospital in Mwanza, Tanzania. This is exciting new territory for us but again can only happen if PCW is up to strength.

So what has PCW been doing in the last year? Apart from going to parties!

Ever mindful of how PCW's training leads to improvements in the care of people with life limiting illness and their carers, I am pleased to report that the survey looking at the impact of our training that was outlined in last year's report is well underway. Fiona Rawlinson is leading on this and will be presenting to today's Conference.

As part of our commitment to mentoring, we are developing a series of information sheets around aspects of palliative care. Charles Campion Smith is leading on this and his first, on morphine usage, has been well received. More will follow depending on requests from colleagues so thank you to Charles for that.

I am delighted to report that following the highly successful completion of last year's THET Nursing Fellowship/Nursing Now Challenge supporting colleagues in Tanzania, (please see last year's report), PCW was able to obtain funding for a second round which is now entering its final three months. The two Fellows concerned are proving to be excellent champions and I'm delighted to report that presentations on this work also feature in today's conference. Charles Campion Smith who leads on this work and our Associate, Simon Pennell will continue to make themselves available and keep in touch with the students after the end of the course in December; support clearly greatly valued by the teams there.

Following on from the well documented success of the SE Tanzania project, which again is being reported on at today's conference, this THET project has been a particularly rewarding experience. It has undoubtedly strengthened relationships not only with these colleagues in SE Tanzania and the Tanzanian Ministry of Health but also with THET to whom PCW is most grateful for their support. Congratulations to all concerned.

Whilst PCW remains absolutely committed to delivering face to face training on site, we are well aware of the expectation to explore ways of delivering some elements of training online and in fact we have been asked by various organisations to consider doing this. I don't propose to expand on this except to say this is work in progress and over the course of this coming year we will be looking in more detail at models of blended learning. This may well be through the collaborations I previously mentioned, and I will be in a better position to report on this next year.

Which brings me to the Lesotho training to which I referred in last year's report, and which is the only training project PCW has at the moment. Having been delayed for reasons beyond PCW's control, I am delighted to report that these have been resolved

and at the beginning of November PCW will be delivering a face to face 5-day basic PC Toolkit training to 24 multi-professional hospital-based colleagues in Maseru. Our thanks to Dr Paul Myres of the Wales and Africa Health Links Network (WaAHLN), Tebello Lepheane, the founder of the Starlight Oasis of Hope Hospice in Lesotho, the Lesotho Ministry of Health and to Gillian Chowns, lead supreme for PCW. for getting us to this point. Again, I don't propose to say more as there is a presentation on the background to this during the Conference. Suffice to say we are very excited to be back teaching face to face, which is after all what PCW is all about.

Thank you

George Smerdon
Chair
Board of Trustees Palliative Care Works
October 2024