

Annual General Meeting of the Health Sciences Libraries Group, held at the Headquarters of the Western Health Board, Merlin Park Regional Hospital, Galway at 11:00am on Tuesday 30th May 2000.

MINUTES:

1. Delegates were warmly welcomed by Tony Linnane, Western Health Board Head of Library Services. In his welcoming address, Linnane briefly summarised the work done to date on the new, but as yet not officially opened, medical library and teaching facilities.
2. With apologies from Gay Doyle (SLI), Suzanne Feeney (OLC), Niall McSweeney (UCC), Gillian Smith (MER), the AGM then commenced with Margaret Dillon (LRH) in the Chair and the minutes of the last AGM (HSLG/AGM/98-99) were read. There were no non-agenda matters arising.
3. Ann O'Byrne (DDH) reported on the activities of the 'Group in the past year, listing the meetings held, guest speakers, product training and the work of the committee. Although their reports were following, mention was made of the work completed by the various sub-committees. One exception was the progress report by Ann Murphy (TAL), who had earlier telephoned to apologise in advance for her absence due to car trouble, on civil service recognition of the special status of library staff in the public sector. Luckily, Ann Murphy later joined the meeting and summarised the work done to date.
4. The Treasurer's Report was presented by Margaret Dillon on behalf of Gillian Smith, who was indisposed. Briefly, the current balance in the 'Group's account is £2,467.00. Some of this year's income (£950.00) was derived from the £10.00 collected from each copy of the Irish Health Libraries' *Journal holdings list* sold to participating members. The British Library Internet Training Day was also quite successful financially, leaving the 'Group with a profit of £400.00. The only expenses incurred related to travel and accommodation for the various speakers invited during the year.
5. Margaret Dillon next presented the Chairperson's Report, commencing with a resume of her activities on the Executive Board of the Library Association of Ireland, to which she was elected in 1999. With copies of the L.A.I. *Annual Report 1999* to hand, the new panels created by the Executive Board were described and the initial impact of the Healthcare Libraries Panel detailed. Unfortunately, our Chairperson was not elected to the Executive Board for 2000-1 and the various commitments of the Healthcare Libraries Panel will be co-ordinated by Executive Board member Beatrice Doran (MER), who has agreed to act as Convenor. Following discussion, Margaret Dillon was nominated to attend forthcoming meetings of the Healthcare Libraries Panel as a non-voting Observer, on behalf of the Health Science Libraries' Group. Further discussion on the status of personal and institutional membership of the L.A.I. resulted in a request for all delegates to ensure that they make every effort to become personal members, as institutional membership does not confer any voting privileges. It was also agreed that Pat McMahon, President of the L.A.I., would be invited to a future committee meeting of the Health Sciences Libraries Group.
6. Muriel Haire (INO) next reported on the Working Party on Inter-Library Lending, which had met during the year to look into certain policy issues such as minimum membership requirements to the scheme, journals holding policy, standardisation of usage statistics, payment for the annual updates and limits to the length and number of requests by post or fax from any one library. A set of draft rules had been drawn up and circulated to committee members before being adopted and tipped into the February 2000 update of the *Index to Irish Healthcare Libraries Journal Holdings*. This update lists some 2,566 journal titles available from 59 members throughout the country. Following the practice established in recent years, these members will be circularised in the coming autumn with requests for any changes/amendments to their holdings, for inclusion in the February 2001 update. The point was also made most forcefully that all participating members must purchase the *Index*. It was brought to the attention of the meeting that some members still to buy their copy of the *Index* and were using an older update or worse, a photocopied version. This practice is both

unfair to the other members, and also illegal. The feeling was expressed that these libraries should be publicly named in order that they may be dropped from the scheme.

7. Other complaints which had been made known to the committee during the year concerned the continuing use of incorrect forms by certain libraries and the practice of posting articles directly to requestors, rather than the requesting library. Any changes to the *Index*, such as revised 'phone or fax numbers, are to be e-mailed directly to the membership list, not to Muriel Haire, who will only be incorporating this information into the next update. In summing up, it was mentioned that the possibility of an online version of the *Index* was to be explored by the Working Party. Finally, on a point of information, it was stated that Gay Doyle will be presenting a paper on this co-operative scheme at an international conference on librarianship in Tel Aviv next August.

8. Brid McGrath (Consultant Librarian) gave a presentation on present and future information training needs of health board staff. With funding provided by the Dept of Health and Children, special training courses have been run in all of the health board regions on Medline, Cinahl and Cochrane for nursing staff, at no cost to the hospital or health board. The comment was made that some health boards were better than others in availing of this service which, unfortunately, was only aimed at nursing staff at present. Feedback is limited currently, but one problem known to exist is the lack of access to networked PCs for follow-up training by individuals, as frequently such PCs are located in the matron's office or some equally inaccessible location, often for security reasons. The present service should ideally be expanded to include voluntary hospitals and other staff besides nurses, but this is outside the present brief as defined at present. In the ensuing discussion the point was made the timing of such courses is extremely important. In summing up, McGrath can be contacted via e-mail at bridmcgrath@eircom.net if anyone wishes to learn further about this service.

9. The next item on the agenda was the election of a committee for 2000-1. Breslin stated that nominations had been received from the existing committee members present and, as there were no other names received, all were deemed elected. The new committee, which will shortly meet to elect officers is as follows:

Bernard Barrett (SEH)
Catherine Breslin (SGH)
Timothy Collins (UGM)
Margaret Dillon (LRH)
Tony Linnane (WHB)
Fiona Morley (CGH)
Anne O'Byrne (DDH)

It was also decided to ascertain from outgoing committee members not present whether or not they wished to participate in the new committee, with a view to co-opting them on to the committee at a later stage, if they so wished.

10. Under Any Other Business, McGrath brought to the attention of the meeting, the present staffing levels of the Dept of Health & Children library services. Since the departure of Aidan Beatty in 1999, no successor had been appointed. With other staff having left since and not replaced, the library service is now in crisis. McGrath asked if the 'Group could lobby the Department or the Minister for Health, and the L.A.I. Healthcare Libraries Panel, the raise awareness of this issue. Following discussion, it was felt that a meeting with Aidan Beatty might be useful in clarifying his previous position.

11. There being no other business, the A.G.M. ended at 1:45pm and delegates retired to an excellent lunch in the Western Health Board staff restaurant, which was followed at 3pm by a tour of the new library and its facilities, under the guidance of Tony Linnane, Petrina Mee and Martin Wallace.

Compiled by:
Timothy Collins (UGM),
11th May, 2001.