



**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023**  
**Virtual NEC Meeting facilitated via Zoom.**  
**8.00 pm – 10.00 pm**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Mary Jordan	National Chairperson	MJ	Brid Buckley	North Dublin Branch	BB
Siobhan Leacy	National Hon Treasurer	SL	Siobhan O Riordan	South Dublin Branch	SOD
Karen Canning	PRO	KC	Mairead O' Dwyer	South Tipperary Branch	MOD
Mary Osakwe	Administrator	MO*	Deidre Farrell	Roscommon Branch	DF
<b>PRESENT</b>			Mary Jordan	Waterford Branch	MJ
Margaret McClean	Cavan/Monaghan Branch	MM	Anne Hennessy	Wexford Branch	AH
Maria Galbally	Carlow Branch	MG	Mairead Dowling	Wicklow Branch	MD
Noreen O Dwyer	Clare Branch	NOD			
Jennifer Fitzgerald	Cork Branch	JF			
Deirdre Gillespie	Donegal Branch	DG			
Siobhan Leacy	Kildare Branch	SL	<b>APOLOGIES</b>		
Caitriona Lynch	Kilkenny	CL	Debbie Maher	Midlands	DM
Joan Twohill	Limerick/Nth Tipp	JT			
Sarah Hall	Mayo Branch	SH			

**MEETING OPENED**

Mary Jordan (National Chairperson) opened the meeting at approximately 8.05pm to allow for all branch Reps to be logged in via Zoom facility and thanked everyone for attending.

**NEC MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 2022**

Minutes from the previous NEC meeting were sent to all members prior to this meeting for comments and to be approved. MJ read through all of the main sections of the minutes and asked if there were any questions or changes to be made. No amendments were requested. Therefore, the minutes from 5<sup>TH</sup> December 2022 were formally adopted.

**APOLOGIES AND CORRESPONDENCE**

We have received correspondence from the Charities Regulator. They have received our new Articles of Association. They have assigned a caseworker to go through it in detail and will revert back to us with any changes needed in due course.

**FINANCIAL UPDATE**

MJ showed all attendees the overview of the IGPNEA National Bank account and explained the figures.

Opening balance on 01.01.2023 was €220,033.89

Closing balance to date is €27,587.13

MJ explained the section to the left is an overview of the income totalling €71,477.47

And the information to the right is an overview of the expenditure totalling €18,1924.23

The income does include €39,856 of 2023 membership subscriptions, €12,975 from webinars, etc and €15,333.00 from the new Principles Course. Mary gave an overview of the breakdown of the expenditure: salaries, Educational grants, NEC meetings, day to day running of the association, etc.

MJ asked if there were any questions.

No questions asked.

MJ advised that MO would send a copy of this overview with the slides from the meeting tomorrow.

### **CENTRALISED BANK ACCOUNT**

MJ explained that all of the paperwork from the branches seems to be coming in mixed up. As there are some new treasurers, we would like to schedule a meeting with all of the branch treasurers to go through the paperwork. MJ is proposing 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 8pm. JT asked could this be open to branch secretaries too as sometimes it is them that process the paperwork. MJ agreed this is a good idea and said she is happy to allow the branches to open this to any committee member that they feel would benefit from the meeting.

### **CEO POSITION**

MJ explained that we have previously discussed introducing this role and now we need to move forward and discuss in more detail.

MJ mentioned there were some questions around the title of CEO. What does CEO stand for? Chief Executive Officer? Chief Education Officer? MO added that the usual title is Executive not Education.

MJ added that we had discussed previously that we may not even use the CEO title and call it something else, but her fear is outside bodies will say I don't want to speak to xxx, I want to speak to the chair, like I always do. So the CEO sets a level that everyone understands.

MO added if the term CEO is used then it needs to be the traditional wording of it and not change to Chief Education Officer otherwise that will confuse outside bodies. KC said she agreed.

MJ explained the areas that now need to be discussed in detail and decisions made:

- Position title
- Paid position
- Number of hours / weeks
- Contract length
- Terms and Conditions
- Interview process
- Ideal candidate
- Job description
- Advertising of post
- Remuneration scale
- Reporting structure for CEO
- Reporting structure for admin and membership officer
- Redefining of national chair role
- Implementation timescale
- EGM to ratify the position
- Agree at conference REPs meeting

For the Job description MJ added that we do not want to double up on the admin role. They are two very different roles, so we need to ensure this is clearly defined.

Legally we have to advertise the role outside of the association for transparency.

We would need an EGM to ratify the role. Our Articles of Association already allow for paid roles so they would not need amending. But the members would still need to agree on the role.

Once this is all worked on, we will have a NEC rep meeting at the conference. This then allows the branch reps to be able to claim travel expenses to and from the conference as the meeting will take place.

JF asked if we really need to advertise it externally if we had a good internal candidate.

MJ replied, yes legally we do. She has said that she would be interested in applying. She holds her hand up to that. But that does not mean that anyone else in the association would not be equally qualified to apply. Because MJ is the sitting chair, when the position does come up, she would need to resign as chair to enable her to apply.

JT mentioned that she is only filling in for their branch's NEC Rep at this meeting, so she was not aware the CEO role was even mentioned. It sounds like it has already been decided to go ahead with it. But she is surprised that nothing has been worked on in terms of the job description, etc. so the branches can see the benefit of having a CEO.

MJ responded that the reason for the CEO role is that it is no longer viable for a chair to be expected to give up 26+ hours a week on a voluntary basis. Basically the job specification would be what the chair is currently doing.

KC replied that as well as the workload for the NEC needing to change, there is also the professional standing of the role. It is important that we have a constant face of the association year on year to represent the association.

MJ added there will be a lot of questions around the role, so what she would like to do is go over and back with the Branch Reps between now and the conference to discuss these points. Then at the conference at the NEC Reps meeting we can sign off on this.

MJ mentioned things like an interview panel will need to be decided on her thoughts were a current NEC Officer, a current NEC Rep, an independent HR person and someone familiar with the Charities Regulator, like our accountant Ben Lewis.

MJ asked for all branches to give feedback to their branch about this and prepare questions for the NEC Rep meeting.

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE**

MJ passed over to KC to update on the Education Committee.

KC explained that it has been a very busy start to 2023 for the IGPNEA's Education Committee (Roisin Doogue, Karen Canning and National Chair Mary Jordan).

We continue to work with ICGP's Fintan Foy, Dr Brendan O'Shea, Dr Diarmuid Quinlan re securing a Post Graduate course for General Practice Nurses which would best meet the educational needs of our GPN colleagues.

Progress on the PG Certificate in General Practice Nursing continues in TUS< Athlone, and we are due to meet with them again.

Along with these plans we are keen to also explore the possibility of a Post Graduate Diploma, leading to Masters level or higher, with other HEI's.

We wrote to Prof Liam Flynn, School of Medicine, University of Limerick re the possibility of a PG Diploma in General Practice Nursing in conjunction with the School of Nursing.

Following on from our last update, Roisin, Dr Brendan O'Shea (ICGP) and Karen attended a very successful & positive in-person meeting in the School of Nursing & Midwifery with Pauline Meskell Head of the Department of Nursing & Midwifery and her colleagues Martina Giltenane and Sylvia Murphy, where we discussed possible avenues of development in relation to post graduate education for GPNs.

We all agreed that face to face meetings are always so much better than online ones.

Currently we are tidying up our curriculum document prior to forwarding it to the School of Nursing for review. A follow-on meeting will follow.

Funding is always a major issue and again we explored the possibility of receiving funding from Slaintecare.

UCD contacted our committee recently regarding their new Graduate Diploma in Primary Care Nursing Practice by the School of Nursing & Midwifery & Health Systems and the School of Medicine. They are planning a Programme Steering Group and have asked for a IGPNEA representative. Roisin Doogue has agreed to attend.

Our Principles of General Practice Nursing course has gone very well in January/February.

We had 30 participants. The feedback was very good. At the end of each module the attendees evaluated it. There were comments like, they had learnt so much, their practice is safer, etc. Some even went to the effort to email MO additional positive comments. Which is great.

We had the first skills day in Portlaoise, there were different stations. KC did an immunisation one, Roisin did a Cardiovascular one, Medguard equipped the room and had an ECG station. There were 2 diabetes stations, wound and respiratory. The feedback was brilliant.

The March intake is starting soon. We have all 50 places fully booked and already 23 booked for September.

One common feedback from the course was the start time, so we have moved it to 2.30pm to accommodate any mums collecting their children from school.

### **ARTICLE OF ASSOCIATION UPDATE**

MJ explained we are still waiting for feedback from the Charities Regulatory Authority. As soon as we do receive approval from the CRA and EGM will need to be called to ratify the new articles. We will send any further updates as soon as we receive them.

### **CONFERENCE AGENDA**

MJ shared the new conference agenda. She highlighted that the conference would start earlier on the Friday this year as there is such a demand for speakers. MJ ran through each speaker and topic.

MJ mentioned that MO would be opening ticket sales to the conference via the IGPNEA website shortly.

JF asked for a reminder of the conference fees. MO confirmed the early bird price is €80, single day rate €60. Full price after the early bird ends is €120 and the non-members price is €200 (2 days), €100 (1 day).

JF asked can branches offer again this year to reimburse their members conference fees. MJ responded that the branches could reimburse up to 100%, some branches do a portion of the

fee, E.G €50. But this is entirely up to the branch. MJ highlighted that now there is a NEC rep meeting at the conference, the NEC rep can be reimbursed from branch funds for the cost of their travel to and from the conference.

### **CONFERENCE EDUCATIONAL BURSARIES**

MJ mentioned that SL has done a lot of work on this to come up with some new and interesting ideas. We will still have the Educational Research Bursary award with the prize of €1000. Then we have the Clinical Award. We normally have one case study, but the pharma companies are so keen to sponsor that this year we have two. Immunisation and Obesity, both with €1000 for each. Details of all of these will be going out to members soon as well as being published in the next Journal.

SL was tasked with new ideas as the pharma companies want to sponsor education as well as have a stand. SL gave an update on what she had been working on. She had looked at ideas like the European Society of Cardio, they have a 3-day conference in Amsterdam. So we could get a company to sponsor the cost of the tickets, flight, and accommodation. There are many more conferences abroad so this could be a very nice addition to our awards. MJ added that she thinks this is a really good idea. But as she had discussed with SL time is getting short now for the conference so maybe this is better to explore properly for 2024? SL agreed as we have already missed some of the early bird prices for the overseas conferences.

SOR added that she has been fortunate enough to have had a pharma company pay for her to attend a conference abroad before and they paid for everything, so it was really good.

JT also agreed she had too. But added her only concern is that this would then allow us to pay for a member to attend an overseas conference and pay the hotel, etc. But we are not allowed to pay for accommodation to attend our own conference here in Ireland.

MO added that if a Pharma company sponsored this, they would be paying for the hotel, etc out of their own funds as sponsorship. No IGPNEA money would be spent on the hotel, etc.

MJ said she hears Joan in what she is saying. But it is not IGPNEA refusing to pay for accommodation. The CRA will not allow it. MJ agreed with MO. If this sponsorship happens, no IPNEA funds will be spent on the travel or accommodation.

### **SIILO**

MJ gave an update on Siilo. It is becoming harder for the Association to use. So we are looking at should we abandon it? It is not used by nearly 50% of members. We have had very poor service since the change of account manager back in October of last year. When we challenged Siilo about this, their response was: we got a hefty discount and they have limited staff to deal with us, so we need to do the work ourselves. However, this is very time consuming. It utilises admin and membership officer time.

We are proposing we return to WhatsApp. Each branch chair would maintain their own group. Making it easy for them to add and remove members as needed. We will set up a National WhatsApp group for Branch REPs, Branch chairs, Branch Treasurers and also a WhatsApp Association group to disseminate education / learning / news.

As well as the time element, Siilo has confirmed in writing that the €1000 +VAT yearly charge was only for three years and from February 2024 this will increase significantly to €5000 +VAT per year.

MJ asked if anyone was against this idea? All agreed that the service and fee is not good, so we need to move away from Siilo.

MJ advised that we need to stay on the Siilo network until after February 2023 when our contract expires. However, we will just not use it.

## **NON RGNs AS ASSOCIATION MEMBERS**

MJ informed everyone that she recently completed an analysis of the membership for a journal article she is writing. This was analysing 947 members. 3 of the members are male. It came to light that we have more than one member of the association that is not a RGN and is a direct entry midwife. We also have a member that registered on the ID division of NMBI. Three members in total that are not RGN's.

MJ highlighted it is not our remit to police who work in general practice. It is also not our remit to safeguard that GPN works within scope of practice. IGPNEA can inform and advise but we cannot police. It is the role of NMBI and the individual registrant. Our Articles state "must be working in General Practice", the Articles do not state a member must be a Registered General Nurse.

Should we change the wording in our Articles to state they "must be an RGN working in General Practice"?

KC asked, as an association should we not be doing everything we can to safeguard our role? MJ said she 100% agreed, we have recently had an email from a GP wanting her nurse to do the Principles of General Practice Nursing course. She is on the NMBI register as a Intellectual Disability nurse not an RGN. Therefore, we did not allow her to become a member or take part in the course.

MJ added the nurses that are members, but not RGN's have been members for a long time.

DG asked, does it not state in the terms that a GPN has to be an RGN? MJ confirmed, yes, in Circular/89, but our articles do not state they have to be an RGN. Do we want to change this? NOD asked, is that really for us to decide? Is it not for the GP to decide as they employ the nurse. MJ agreed, but we do need to stipulate who can be members of our Association.

MG said she thinks we should change it.

JF raised the point that if you are not an RGN and become a member of IGPNEA and you do our education, you could then refer to what you have learnt to back yourself up. And this leaves us open as they should not have that information as it is outside of their scope.

MJ agreed and added, this has already become an issue as an Intellectual Disability nurse managed to get onto the cervical screening programme and she should never have been allowed to do that. This has now gone to a fitness to practice committee.

MJ reiterated it is not for us to police if they are an RGN or not, but we can police who is a member of IGPNEA.

Everyone agreed that this should be changed. JT added that maybe we speak to the 3 nurses that are members first to give them the heads up. MJ asked if we want those 3 to remain members.

MJ continued to go through the data she analysed for the article. 38% of members are dual qualified. 35 have 2 or more qualifications. 3 have more than 3 qualifications.

MJ also looked at the data on age. 4 of our members are over 70. The majority of our members are over 50. This is very enlightening as all of these will be eligible for retirement over the next 10 years or so. In order for Slaintcare to be rolled out we are going to need more and more nurses. ICGP are calling for the numbers to be doubled from 2000 to 4000. However, unless we make it attractive to work in general practice this is never going to happen. So ICGP / HSE are going to have to bite the bullet and give a properly funded pathway with proper T&C's, contracts, remuneration in line with our HSE colleagues to achieve this.

MJ added we also looked at the number of sessions worked by members. 9% work a full week. The majority work 6 sessions a week and very few work less than that.

All of this data is forming an article in the March journal.

### **BRANCH ITEMS**

MJ had received no items from the branches to discuss in advance of the meeting.

MJ asked if there was anything any branch wanted to address?

AH replied, she knows this is old now, but some members are still asking her about it. Has the €1000 covid payment over now, is there nothing we can do?

MJ responded that there is in fact a letter going into the march journal. It was sent to a GPN who had applied for the covid payment, it had been refused and no further discussion was to be offered as this decision had been made in line with the unions.

JF added that when the vaccine centres opened, she worked both in GP and the vaccine centre for 8 months and also in the nurse on call. But she has been told no, she is not entitled to it. Also her colleagues working in the testing centres, who were extremely front line and at risk have been told no. It's very disappointing.

### **AOB**

No other business was discussed.

### **NEXT NEC REPS MEETING**

The next NEC meeting will be Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May (conference) at 11.15am and Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June, 8pm via zoom

### **MEETING CLOSE**

MJ thanked everyone for attending and looked forward to seeing everyone in person at the conference.

MJ officially closed the meeting at 10.10pm