



Funding Research into Spinal Injury

**36<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting  
Fri 22nd Nov 2024  
Sarum College Salisbury**

## MINUTES

### Attendance:

#### Trustees and Patrons

Emeritus Professor Ian Swain (IS)	Chair
Rob Tylor (RT)	Vice Chair
David Reddin (DGR)	Former Chair
Mrs Mary Mullin	Trustee
Emeritus Professor Mike Craggs (MC)	Life Patron
Professor Nick Donaldson (ND)	NSC Chair
Matthew Pearce (MP)	Researcher
David Temple (DT)	Trustee
Emeritus Professor Peter Ellaway (PE)	Trustee
Mark Thornton (MT)	Trustee (online)
Pippa Giles	Finance Manager
Dr Karen Reddin	Member
Stephen Croft (Chair and Sec, Sec)	Director

#### Apologies:

Chris Prentice	Trustee
Abbey Williams	Trustee
Charles Ranaboldo	Trustee
Nessie Owen	Patron
Max Levene	Patron

### ITEM 1: CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

1.1 The new Chair welcomed everyone to the AGM, his first in the role of Chair.

### ITEM 2: MINUTES from AGM 2023

2.1 **Minutes – approval & signature.** No comments or concerns were raised and the Minutes were approved:

Proposed: DR  
Second: PE

Signed: Chair of Trustees, Emeritus Prof Ian Swain

**ITEM 3: REPORT BY DIRECTOR**

**3.1 Aim of AGM.** Sec opened by saying the aim of the AGM was not to repeat the Trustees' meeting, but to inform the wider membership, particularly through the Minutes, of INSPIRE's current issues and progress. He added that we must try to bring more of our 300 or so Members along to the AGM in the future, but this is not going to be easy. When invited, no items were submitted for this meeting.

**3.2 Overview.** Sec reviewed the year in his 4 'P's:

**Projects**  
**Purse**  
**People**  
**Profile**

**PROJECTS**

**3.3** The National Research Programme (NRP) consists of 5 Projects at a total value of £756,106. NEUROMOD II, SPINAL PAIN, PAIN PREDICT and TRUNK FUNCTION have all now finished and Final Reports for each have been submitted; we therefore now await final bills for all but SPINAL PAIN. Sec has written to the Trusts that granted funds to SPINAL PAIN, explaining what had happened (the project was not finished by the PI) and they have accepted that some limited research had been undertaken.

**3.31** Sec said BIONIC BLADDER continues to attract funding (more than £100k so far), while REHAB RHYTHM has been slower in doing so. REHAB RHYTHM is well underway but has only attracted some £20k so far; Prof Stuart Baker (the project's PI) is to put in another application to the RFU IPF for an additional £35k from them. Sec will be seeking further funding for a Brainbox Q7 'brain machine' for Neuronavigation from the generous Squire Foundation.

**PURSE**

**3.4 Audit.** INSPIRE's Accounts are now available online on the Charity Commission's website. Sec went over INSPIRE's Income and Expenditure, provided by our auditors, and highlighted the headline figures:

<b>FY</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Net Income/Expenditure</b>
2021/22	£232,646	£266,615	(£33,969)
2022/23	£268,423	£162,322	(£25,487)
2023/24	£165,818	£264,136	(£98,318)

Notes:

1. To date, unaudited income for FY 2023/24 is approximately £101,057, while expenditure is running at around £147,606.

**3.41 Current balance and Affordability.** As at date of this meeting, the balances were:

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Balance on account	£357,962
Amount owed to the NRP	- £484,980
<b>Net project liability over current assets</b>	<b>- £127,018</b>

**3.42 Consequence of this liability:** this therefore means the Director and his team, with the help of the new Chair and Vice Chair, have to work harder to raise more funds from sources other than just Trusts or Foundations and spend more prudently.

**3.5** Abbey Williams, a new Trustee, is currently preparing a Fund Raising Strategy looking out to 2027, which will be presented to the Trustees at their next meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

**3.6** Our new Directory of Social Change searchable software package (part funded by RT) has more than 7,500 Funds on its database, which will make finding potential donors much easier in future.

**3.7** MC asked whether we know what the new Government has proposed by way of support to charities and has supplied the following link which gives an idea of how Labour will approach the charitable sector: <https://www.pmm.co.uk/news/the-new-labour-government-what-do-charities-need-to-be-thinking-about/>. MP cautioned that the Government would be listening to the really big players in the field of research and therefore smaller charities like ours would not necessarily get a look in. Sec said we could also look to our MP and INSPIRE Patron, the Rt Hon John Glen, to help us when he can. MC asked if can target politicians with power and influence to attend our next HofL event and Sec said he would do so. [INSPIRE's HofL event will be either week beginning 5<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> May, tbc]

## PEOPLE

Sec highlighted the following changes:

**3.8 New Trustees.** Two wonderful new Trustees have joined us: Abbey Williams is working already for an Autism charity, while Mark Thornton is himself SCI and has put the Sec in touch with an organiser of bike rides to raise money (called 'Just Pedal').

**3.81** Sec thanked the Trustees for all their help, advice and guidance in making his job easier. He added that Jonathan Rudge, Sue Borrett and Jo Suddaby-Smith had all left as Trustees this year and said we will thank Jonathan more formally at the HofL event in 2025.

**3.82 Thanks to outgoing Chair.** Sec paid special thanks to the outgoing Chair, David Reddin MBE, for his dedicated time as an excellent Chair of INSPIRE over the last 3 years.

**3.83 Dedicated Trustee and NSC Members' Access.** Sec outlined the problems creating a 'Trustees-only' access point on the INSPIRE website, but this had finally been achieved and was up and working. Our IT wizard, Joe Henstridge, is now working on setting up the same access for NSC members.

**3.84 NSC Members.** Sec thanked members of the NSC, who are outstanding in their fields of research and give up their time freely for the benefit of INSPIRE. AMRC rules stipulate that members of the NSC have to change every 6 years, so we have said farewell to Prof Andrew Jackson, replaced by Dr Michael Grey of Loughborough University, and Dr Mariel Purcell has been replaced by Dr Eimear Smith, Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine, National Rehabilitation & Mater Misericordiae University Hospitals, Dublin. Dr Ed Chadwick of Aberdeen University has also departed under the AMRC rules, but has yet to be replaced.

## PROFILE

**3.9** Sec stated that INSPIRE is in talks with the senior leadership of the SIA, with a view to publishing some details of our projects in the SIA magazine and generally having a more symbiotic relationship with them, while maintaining our independence and focus on research.

**3.91** Max Levene has raised well over £10k for INSPIRE and the RFU IPF, being interviewed by BBC Cornwall, BBC Norfolk, The Salisbury Journal and BBC TV South. This has raised our profile too and Sec's aim is to have up to 100 volunteers in 2025 who raise up to £1000 each, which will swell our coffers and provide a strong secondary source of income for INSPIRE.

ACTION: Sec

**3.92** IS suggested that one way of raising our profile is to have presentation to the scientific press annually at the Royal School of Medicine, which would involve the PIs and other scientists. RT said we need to do more as a charity to work with other SCI charities and make ourselves more visible in the charity sector for everything to do with SCI.

Action: Sec/IS/RT

## ITEM 4: ELECTION OF AUDITORS

**4.1** INSPIRE is mandated to re-elect auditors each year. Sec said Fletcher & Partners provide an excellent service and remain one of the few firms in the Salisbury area prepared to undertake charity audits. The meeting was asked to endorse the re-election of Fletchers as auditors:

Proposed: DGR  
Seconded: IS  
Vote: Unanimous

**4.2** PG and Sec are hoping to persuade Geoff Thomas, who leads on the Audit of INSPIRE's books, to come on board as a Trustee when he retires (which should be soon). Geoff would be a real asset to the charity and has already shown an interest in it.

## ITEM 5: AOB

**5.1 Max Levene.** MM asked if it would be a good idea to send a letter of thanks to Max for all his hard work in raising funds for INSPIRE by climbing Mt Kilimanjaro. Sec said he would be delighted to do so.

Action: Sec

**5.2 ‘Accelerating the Healing of Pressure Ulcers (AHPU)’ project, submitted to INSPIRE.** ND said the treatment of Dr Liang Liu and her project ‘Accelerating the Healing of Pressure Ulcers’ did not show INSPIRE in a very good light.

**5.21** The AHPU project came about as a result of a request by INSPIRE for a project on Pressure Ulcers in 2017. Liang took it on from Dr Anne Vanhoestenberghé when she moved to a new university and revised the Application before submitting it to the NSC in 2022. The NSC requested changes to it and the project was resubmitted for their consideration in 2023; it was then accepted by them and came to the Trustees, who then rejected it, largely for being too general in its approach. The points were made to Liang who replied with answers to points raised by the Trustees; ND asked that in future this did not happen, instead all communication with the PI should come from the Director, after discussions with the Chair of the NSC.

**5.22** ND asked that the remits of the 2 Committees be made clearer, so this sort of misunderstanding would not happen in future. ND also said we do not want to look like the ‘Grand Old Duke of York’, with the NSC saying ‘yes’ and the Trustees saying ‘no’. He suggested the Sec makes clear on the website that a decision on funding a project was subject to the agreement by both parties – agreement on the science from members of the NSC and agreement to the funding by the Trustees.

Action: Sec

**5.23** ND also suggested the PI be invited to present their project to the Trustees, either in person or online, which could allay some of their fears or misunderstandings straight away. He added that external review by an independent expert in the field could take place before the Letter of Intent was submitted. MC urged a non-disclosure document be in place if an independent scientist were involved, so that the details of a project is not ‘leaked’ to other scientists.

Action: Sec

## **ITEM 6: AGM 2025**

**6.1** Date tbc, depending on venue. Sec to advise all when date and venue have been agreed by the Trustees.

## **ITEM 7: CLOSURE**

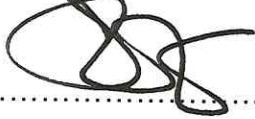
**7.1** There being no further business, the meeting closed at 16:30

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Stephen Croft  
Director

25 Nov 2024

**TO BE SIGNED**



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PP

Emeritus Professor Ian Swain  
Chairman of Trustees

Date: 25 Nov 2024