

No time to be sentimental

About two weeks ago the Royal Pharmaceutical Society celebrated its birthday. Reaching the age of 167 is not a cause for much razzmatazz but some people may reflect on the implications for the Society's next milestone — its 170th anniversary on 15 April 2011. That occasion may not be marked at all because by then, if the Clarke Inquiry's recommendations come to pass, the new professional body that will emerge from the Society and other interested organisations should already be established. (It is expected to be in existence at the same time as the General Pharmaceutical Council on 1 January 2010.)

There is no time to be sentimental. In order to reach that point in such a short time Clarke has suggested that the Society should establish a transitional committee, with an independent chair and which is also independent of the Society's Council, but with representatives from the major stakeholders, which include the Society itself and those groups that have actively expressed an interest in joining forces with it to establish the new professional body (p493).

It is likely that the new body will still function under the Society's existing Royal Charter. However, since membership will be voluntary, it will need to be seen as being sufficiently different from the Society in order to appeal to a broad church of pharmacists and members of the wider pharmacy community. One of these differences might be a change of name. The main task of the transitional committee will be to develop a prospectus for the new professional body so that potential members can make an informed choice about whether or not to join (*PJ*, 19 April, p466).

So far so good. However, in addition to the groups who are "in" (such as the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK, the British Pharmaceutical Students' Association, the College of Pharmacy Practice and the UK Clinical Pharmacy Association), Clarke rather oddly recommends that organisations like the Company Chemists' Association, the Pharmacists' Defence Association, the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee and the National Pharmacy Association should also be invited to take part.

The Journal has nothing against these organisations and, arguably, they do fine jobs for their members. But it could equally be argued that some of them might have something to lose in terms of the services they offer to their own members, for example, were the new professional body to be successful. There would seem to be some potential conflicts of interest if they were to have a voice on the transitional committee equal to that of the major stakeholders. In addition, the group seems rather England-centric and there are bodies in Wales and Scotland whose views could be more central to the deliberations.

Juggling all those different views and making sure that decisions are made only in the best interests of the new professional body will be a hard task for the chairman of the transitional committee and *The Journal* wishes him or her the best of luck.

Editor and editorial director

Olivia Timbs
Tel 020 7572 2414

Deputy editor

Andrew Haynes, MRPharmS
The Society section
Tel 020 7572 2421

Managing editor

Graeme Smith
Letters and other contributions
Tel 020 7572 2426

Editor — PJ Online

Michael Thompson
Tel 020 7572 2428

News editor

Harriet Adcock, MRPharmS
Tel 020 7572 2415

Senior news and feature writer

Dawn Connelly
Tel 020 7572 2427

News and feature writers

Tom Moberly
Tel 020 7572 2417
Matthew Wright, MRPharmS
Tel 020 7572 2430

Senior contributions editor

Lin-Nam Wang, MRPharmS
Continuing professional development
Tel 020 7572 2413

Website controller — pjonline.com

Gowan Clews
Tel 020 7572 2418

Personal assistant to the editor

Emma Kerby-Evans
Tel 020 7572 2414

Administrative assistant

Pauline Heslop
Branch meetings, copyright, permissions
Tel 020 7572 2422

Journal oversight board

Tim Albert
Noel Baumber, FRPharmS
Soraya Dhillon, MRPharmS
Niall Dickson (*chairman*)
Steve Wicks, MRPharmS

Director of sales and marketing

Peter Goacher

Office administrator — sales

Jo Cook

Website manager — pcareers.com

Clare Knights

Display advertisement manager

Stuart Thomas

Advertising sales executives

Karla Magill
Jing Wang

Head of publishing services

John Wilson

Production manager

Joanne Marks

Production assistant

Hillary Carter

Managing director

Charles Fry