03-04 Annual General Meeting: Membership Strategy, Financial Position, Education and Publications Update

Meeting Information

> Date: 2026-03-04 1900hrs to 2005hrs
> Location: [Zoom]
> Participants: [Helen Ward] [petewayne] [Abigail David] [Flor Taboada] [Jan Stewart]

Meeting Notes

- In memoriam acknowledgement
  - Eric Pelham - A former co-chair, remembered as a strong presence and “force of nature”, was honoured.
  - The meeting briefly marked his passing before proceeding.
- Approval of last AGM minutes
  - Motion: Adopt minutes from last year’s AGM (stated as 2025).
  - Proposed by [Helen Ward], seconded by [petewayne]; passed unanimously.
  - Conclusion: Minutes adopted.
- Officers’ reports overview
  - The committee focused on Chair, Secretary, Membership, Marketing, Education, Practitioner support, closer links with BAFEP, and Beaver Press.
  - Working groups pooled ideas and delivered outputs efficiently.
- Membership status and challenges
  - Membership split: Advanced Practitioners and Practitioners; despite new joiners, there was a net loss of 7 members.

    - Small year-on-year declines persist; this is a key driver for the marketing and education working groups.
    - Resource constraints due to a small committee; emphasis on recruiting new committee volunteers.

- Publications and communications
    - ESSENCE magazine: production paused when the editor stepped down; the delayed “autumn” issue is expected within weeks (by the Gathering or early April).
    - Member newsletters and “Essence Essentials” paused due to lack of resources.

- Committee changes and acknowledgements
    - [Helen Ward] is stepping down as Chair (after ~12 years across roles, including ESSENCE editor).
    - Thanks to Koko (Membership Secretary), Susie (Education), Pete Secretary/Webmaster), and Howard (Treasurer) for major contributions.

- Secretary’s report ([petewayne])
    - Nine committee meetings were held; minutes are available on the website (now current after a move).
    - Public liability insurance renewed from 1 March (annual).
    - Ongoing support to the committee and members.

- Treasurer’s report (delivered by [petewayne] on behalf of Howard)
    - Accounts (year ending 30 April) prepared on a going-concern basis; agreed by the committee and signed by the Chair; to be published on the website.
    - Slightly lower income in 2025 due to lower membership.
    - Expenditure broadly similar to 2024; increases in website and Gathering costs.
    - Retained deficit for 2025 is not an issue given reserves.
    - Cash reserves at 30 April: £35,000, with £10,000 reserved for the 2025/26 Gathering; c.£25,000 free funds.
    - Conclusion: Financial position stable; accounts to be published.

- Marketing report ([Abigail David])
    - Marketing working group established; strategy and implementation plan developed.
    - Practitioner talk pack in progress to support public talks, social media messaging, and practitioner outreach.

    - Aim: Build foundations for visibility, practitioner support, and membership growth.
    - The pack will be presented at the Gathering and made available on the BFEA website.

- Practitioner Officer report ([Flor Taboada])
    - Pro Exchange: 20 sessions over the year (themes included flowers, vibrational essences, astrology, water, self-care, and other modalities).
    - Strong positive feedback; supports community, CPD, and inclusion (some non-professional friends also attend).
    - Replays available; a growing library of content.

- Education report ([Jan Stewart])
    - Tutor handbook largely rewritten and “ready to go”.
    - Tutor recruitment has been difficult; Chelmsford course starting soon; Fintown course underway.
    - New potential tutor: Aruna Lam; first course in Cantonese with live elements in Hong Kong; progressing well.
    - Education group functioning as a collaborative team.

- Co-rep update (Bach Centre liaison) ([Jan Stewart])
    - Loss of Stefan affected continuity; current contacts: Judy (admin) and Howard (courses) at the Bach Centre.
    - The Bach Centre runs the website for the initiative; collaboration not yet active.
    - Planned focus: approach insurers who insure inappropriate courses/people; consider involving education leads (Sam or Judy), or proceed independently while keeping them informed.

- Research and MyMOP (Meaningful Measures) ([Jan Stewart])
    - MyMOP now licensed via Meaningful Measures (costs apply).
    - Tutors struggle with this area; plan to develop training/support so students can conduct research using MyMOP and feed data into BFEA systems.
    - Aim: Revive research activity.

- Beaver Press and online shop ([Jan Stewart])
    - Rationale: mainstream and small-press options for essences-related publishing have diminished; Beaver Press to support members with ISBNs, e-books, and print at reasonable cost.
    - A prepared book by Carol Rudd will be taken forward (requires digitisation).

    - Additional titles in development (including [Jan Stewart]'s works on Edward Bach).
    - Plan for a website shop to sell books and other items; channel creative outputs from the community.

- Website and social media ([petewayne])
    - Site software up to date but needs regular maintenance; pages updated (renewals, committee, Pro Exchange, Gathering).
    - Traffic analytics in place; insights helped target marketing by geography.
    - Significant traffic from AI scraping noted.
    - Social media focused on the Gathering and Pro Exchange; Facebook ~2,300 members (static); Essence Essentials ~445 subscribers (static).
    - Marketing working group to review future web/social structures.

- Vote to accept officers' reports
    - Proposed by [Helen Ward], seconded by [petewayne]; passed by majority.
    - Conclusion: Reports accepted.

- Constitution updates
    - No changes proposed at this meeting.
    - The committee recognises amendments/corrections are needed; updates to be collated and planned for 2026–2027.
    - Conclusion: No immediate changes; updates expected in the next year.

- Election results and adoption
    - Voting open 2 Feb – 3 Mar; 31 votes from 71 members (~43% turnout).
    - Elected: Abigail David (Chair), Jen Gerard (Treasurer), Flora (Practitioner Officer), Jan (Research Officer and Co-rep Chair). Some roles remain unfilled.
    - Motion to adopt election results proposed by [Helen Ward], seconded by [petewayne]; majority passed.
    - Conclusion: New committee adopted.

- Membership subscriptions (2026–2027) (led by [Abigail David])
    - Proposal: No change to current subscription rates; due 1 May with a payment option.
    - Vote passed by majority.
    - Conclusion: Subscription rates unchanged; due 1 May.

- Student membership category

    - Motion: Implement student membership offering accredited course students a free 1-year membership during training (no voting rights), with newsletters and Pro Exchange access.
    - Proposed by Jan Stewart; seconded by Pete Wayne.
    - Vote passed by majority.
    - Conclusion: Student membership category adopted.

- Any other business and thanks
- Extensive thanks to departing and continuing committee members and volunteers.
- Anticipation of the upcoming Gathering and continued Pro Exchange participation.

Next Arrangements

- Governance and reporting
    - [ ] Publish the approved unaudited accounts for the year ending 30 April on the website.
    - [ ] Plan and communicate the constitution review timeline for 2026–2027.
    - [ ] Engage with insurers regarding recognition of the lead body and appropriate course/practitioner coverage.
- Membership and subscriptions
    - [ ] Implement the new student membership category and update membership systems and communications.
    - [ ] Renew and communicate the 1 May subscription process and payment options.
    - [ ] Recruit for open committee roles and confirm volunteers.
- Publications and marketing
    - [ ] Release the delayed “autumn” ESSENCE magazine by the Gathering or early April.
    - [ ] Present and upload the Practitioner Talk Pack at the Gathering and on the BFEA website.
    - [ ] Progress Beaver Press: digitise and publish Carol Rudd’s book; set up the online shop.

Education and research

- [ ] Develop tutor/student support for MyMOP/Meaningful Measures and integrate research data collection.