

Trustees report 2020

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2020.

Objectives and activities

The objective of the Society is to advance the science and practice of technical cardiology and allied subjects by the promotion of improved standards of education and training.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charities Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

Achievements and performance

2020 was a challenging year for SCST and everyone working within the NHS. The impact of COVID-19 has been immense, and yet it has also allowed us to demonstrate our commitment, skills and professionalism in these testing times. Not only have colleagues been under pressure to work differently, they have been asked to do so with reduced staffing levels and in ways where there was limited evidence base to support them in this challenge. SCST has continued to provide support not only to its members, but also to the wider profession - facilitating colleagues to connect and share information like never before.

Although the normal activities of SCST have been restricted, what we have achieved is amazing. All members of Council are volunteers and yet were on active duty in the front line. It is testament to their dedication that they have continued to contribute towards the work of the Society despite clinical pressures. SCST has continued to develop its strong links with other bodies such as National School for Healthcare Science (NSHCS) and Academy of Healthcare Science (AHCS), as well as playing an active role within the Healthcare Science Workforce Partnership Board and the BCS Cardiac Physiology Group. We continue to work with specialist interest group such as British Society of Echocardiography (BSE), British Heart Rhythm Society (BQRS) and British Heart Valve Society (BHVS). The work of the Education Committee deserves special recognition this year as they have worked so hard to find ways to move us into the virtual world so quickly.

The highly anticipated launch of the new website was hindered a little by the demands of COVID-19 and this resulted in SCST being reliant on social media in order to get messages out quickly and easily. SCST's Facebook page in particular has been extremely successful in connecting people working in cardiac science, and in increasing awareness of what we do as a professional body. It now has 2,300 members and is used for sharing thoughts and best practice as well as any news items pertinent to our profession. Over the coming year we will be aiming to make more information available via the website, including a wealth of resources to assist those of us working in busy clinical departments. The 'ECG of the Month' always brings a large number of people to the website and some interesting discussions.

The 2020 National Update meeting was moved to a virtual platform, resulting in the highest attendance since its launch nine years ago. The meeting saw delegates gain insight into 'hot topics' by a host of high profile colleagues. Unfortunately we were not able to host the annual SCST Excellence Awards or the abstract submissions this year, however we look forward to them returning at the 2021 meeting.

We continue to be supported by EBS in terms of day-to-day administration, and by BCS in terms membership administration, for which we are grateful. Going forward we encourage all members to seek ways in which they can play an active role within their professional body. No matter how small the contribution, every single one of us is important and is what keeps the Society alive and vibrant and relevant for its members. Together we will continue to be the voice of cardiac science and make a real difference.

Financial review

Thanks are given to the Honorary Treasurers of the SCST branches of Northern Ireland and Scotland for maintaining their respective accounting systems and providing timely financial information.

The year 2020 was unusual, with many of SCST's normal activities being curtailed due to COVID-19. This has led to a reduction in income from exam and course fees, although some courses were hosted virtually towards the end of the year. This was mitigated by close controls over expenditure resulting in a net surplus of £10,951 (2109: £17,947) for the year.

Exam candidates who had registered and paid fees for the expected exam in March 2020 had their places put on hold - that exam is now anticipated to take place in Summer 2021. This income has been prepaid (£16.7k) and will be recognised next year. Unfortunately, venue costs had been incurred with no refund for cancellation.

The majority of the debtors have been provided against as uncertain. Debt recovery work is continuing, however no further re-assurance has been gained as we close the 2020 accounts.

Council and other meetings have been held virtually, resulting in lower travel and hotel expenses.

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between 12 and 18 months' normal expenditure. The trustees consider that the expenditure during 2020 has not been 'normal'

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to those risks.

