



## **Minutes of the EPSIG Executive Committee 7pm 5 December 2023**

### **Via MS Teams**

Present (alphabetically):

Reem Abed, Riadh Abed (RA, Finance Officer), Tom Carpenter (TC), Nikhil Chaudhary, David Geaney, Paul St John-Smith (PSJS, Chair), Geoff Lawrence-Smith, Derek Tracy.

Apologies received: Agnes Ayton, Adam Hunt, Muzaffer Kaser, Annie Swanepoel, Elena Titova-Chaudry.

1. PSJS welcomed those present and gave a brief report on the recent meeting of the chairs of the SIGs that took place at the college in November. He reported that the EPSIG membership numbers as of the end of November 2023 stood at 2863. Although we are the third smallest SIG (and the second newest), we are one of the fastest growing SIGs year on year.
2. RA presented a brief finance report outlining that our bottom line reserves stand at £16.2K which is the result of the accumulated surpluses from our successful symposia.
3. Tom Carpenter reported on the plans for the Trainee Engagement Workshop on 1 March 2024 and informed the cttee that we have 10 registrations so far. We are hoping for 25-30 and the maximum would be 40 excluding faculty. We will try to publicise this event to try to increase registrations.
4. Nikhil Chaudhary confirmed that the Cambridge University Impact funding included £750 to cover for catering for the Trainee workshop and that the bill for this should be sent directly to him.
5. The updates on the Charles Darwin Essay Prize and from the Newsletter editor were not available as Annie was unable to attend. However, PSJS confirmed that we plan to go ahead with the essay prize in 2024. Derek Tracy suggested that we should think about setting the threshold higher with specifying subjects for the essays and expecting a standard that would be suitable for publication in mainstream psychiatric journals. This would benefit both the participants (with their CVs) and EPSIG (in fulfilling its mission to disseminate evolutionary thinking to the mental health community). This suggestion met with unanimous approval by the cttee.
6. RA reported on plans for the 6<sup>th</sup> International EPSIG symposium due to take place F2F on 22 November 2024 at the college. All 6 speakers have been confirmed and we have a great lineup. This includes: Simon Baron-Cohen, Nicholas Humphrey, Zana Clay, Daniela Sieff, Reem Abed and Henry O'Connell. An eminent and very diverse

range of speakers from multiple disciplines that include: Psychology, Philosophy, Primatology, Anthropology and Psychiatry.

7. Reem Abed gave a brief account of plans to survey both medical students and medical schools on teaching evolutionary biology in medical courses and its perceived benefits. There are a couple of trainees and students collaborating with her on this important project.
8. David Geaney reported on the final arrangements for the joint half day event EPSIG and PIPSIG in hosting Iain McGilchrist at the college for presentations and discussion of his work on hemisphere asymmetry and its relevance to mental health. This will take place on 5 April at the college followed by an optional dinner also at the college. This event will be advertised imminently.
9. RA reported on collaborations with the Irish EPSIG where RA and PSJS participated in a conference in Ireland in November and Annie Swanepoel contributed to a separate event in Ireland later on in the month. Also, the WPA EP Section webinars are under way, the first took place on 30 November by Laith AlShawaf on Evolution and Emotions and this will be posted soon on the EPSIG YouTube channel. The other speakers in this webinar series are: Paul Gilbert, Jerome Wakefield and Nichola Raihani. RA also reported on an invitation he received from the Medical students' PsychSoc which will be held in Sheffield in January and he has been invited to speak to the students on EP which is the first time this has happened.
10. AOB: Reem Abed suggested that we consider providing space in one of our events for discussion of evolutionary aspects of the phenomenon of Incels. The controversial issues around this subject were noted but also the noted was the relevance of better understanding mating functioning and strategies to evolutionary psychology and psychiatry. There may be opportunities to include this subject in future events but to be done sensitively.
11. Date of the next meeting was set for Tuesday 5 March 2024 at 7pm via MS Teams.

