

THE ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEES

Registered Charity Number 1091329 Company Limited by Guarantee



Trustees Annual Report & Accounts

Year End 31st March 2011

CONTACT DETAILS

The Association of Research Ethics Committees

Registered Charity Number: 1091329

Company Limited by Guarantee No:4400948

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The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 1985, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2010. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in March 2005.

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Incoming Chair's Report.
November 2010 – April 2011
Mark Turtle

Taking up the post as chairman had not been on my or AREC's agenda until various personal and practical factors lead us in autumn of 2010 to modify the plans that we had previously made. I was therefore particularly grateful that my predecessor, David Anderson-Ford, had guided our Association so well during his term of office and that it was a very tidy organisation from the beginning of my stewardship allowing me to ease myself into the role without undue haste.

Having been an Officer for some years, I naturally had some ideas about developments that would like to support and policies to be pursued. In terms of organisation, the current arrangement of having a chief executive officer as the core of AREC, working in close consultation with the Chairman, seems to me both sensible and practical and is a model that I will endeavour to perpetuate. The regular dialogue with Officers of the Association, carried out in the main by teleconferencing, is also effective, financially efficient and will be continued. This background preparation facilitates the engagement of Council at their quarterly meetings although I would like to this improved. There remains the issue of communication with our members, which being Research Ethics Committees as opposed to individuals, continues to pose obstacles.

Funding remains a concern. NRES, the body through which we work with regard to the NHS Committees, has itself been subject to reform and financial constraint but we remain confident that we can continue to work with them in a constructive but independent manner. As far as the University section is concern, we remain clear in our view that not only should there be a universal acceptance of a standard of practice within which they should operate but also that AREC should play a leading role in this.

With regard to educational meetings, local workshops appear to have been a successful format and so will continue to form the main thrust of our service to members. We ask that REC's throughout the UK continue to communicate their requirements to us, both in terms of subject matter and location, so that we can work with them in order to set up future sessions. The Journal will continue to be an important aspect of AREC although we are closely examining the practical aspects of publishing in order to balance the benefits of the journal as against the costs and other risks to the Association. Engagement with the general public, especially those invited to be subject to research, is another area that we will be examining, not least because grants from supporting agencies may be available to assist with this work. Similar comments could be made regarding a European dimension.

I conclude this brief report by saying that I see the Association as currently operating on a sound basis but that we must face an uncertain future with

care and imagination. May I thank our CEO, Jackie Maull, for having the patience to work with and support me and look forward to a strong working relationship to drive forward our ambitions for the further development of AREC.

Dr Mark Turtle
AREC Incoming Chair
November 2010

Outgoing Chair's Report

April 2010 – November 2010

David Anderson-Ford

As my tenure as AREC Chair draws to a close, I am pleased to be able to state with confidence on behalf of the Officers and Council of the Association that we have driven forward the considerable agenda that we put before members at the beginning of my Chairmanship.

As members may be aware, our Chair Elect, John Hudson, is unable to take up the position of Chair in November, and we are deeply indebted to Dr. Mark Turtle who has agreed to fill this vacancy. Under his stewardship, the Association will strive to fulfil its obligations, as well as continue implementing new initiatives and providing best value for our membership.

Detailed discussion, informed by the Business Plan, continued to identify three priority objectives in order to further the interests of a robust, vibrant Association, ie:

- the further provision and/or co-ordination of information, guidance and training;
- offering enhanced support to members in their task of research ethics review, and;
- the influencing of policy relating to research ethics review according to members' expressed wishes.

The key over-arching and unifying element remains, i.e.

To seek to provide a truly representative voice for the Association's membership, whilst also providing value for money.

Translating policy into practice.

- **Appointment of New Editorial Team**

Roger Rawbone successfully steered Research Ethics Review through its first six years of publication. Highly regarded by AREC members, the Journal has continued to develop, with the recent launch of the online version being made accessible to all AREC members. The investment AREC has made into this new venture gives additional value for money for our members in this difficult financial climate.

It was, therefore, a very difficult pair of shoes to fill when Roger announced his decision to stand down as Editor. However, I am delighted to be able to announce that we now have two young and very gifted Co-Editors in Dr. David Hunter and Dr. Sarah Edwards. I would like to welcome them, and wish them every success with the future editorship of the Journal.

- **AMS Review**

In April 2010, AREC was invited to respond to a call for evidence concerning the Review of Regulation and Governance of Medical Research conducted by the Academy of Medical Sciences. Working in partnership with Professor Andrew George, Chair of NREAP (National Research Ethics Advisory Panel), a joint response was formulated on the basis of detailed in-depth discussion between the two organisations, in consultation with their respective memberships. The resulting joint response was submitted to the Academy on 1st June 2010. A second call for evidence was issued in August 2010, and again, both organisations worked to produce a joint response, which was submitted to the Academy in September.

Although the Report has not yet been published, AREC has enjoyed representing the view of its membership in this matter, and has enjoyed the opportunity to work closely with NREAP – positively embracing the possibility of an opportunity to work with them again in the future.

- **Surrey University Training Day**

AREC has received a number of enquiries, both from members and non-members, and from all sectors of the REC community, asking about the possible provision of Training Days and Workshops.

In June 2010, I delivered a training session at the University of Surrey Research Ethics Committees and departments. Subjects covered included; the role, remit and conduct of URECs, what can and cannot be reviewed, informed consent, regulation of research and case studies. The day was highly successful for the University, and indeed for AREC, a follow up training session is being planned. The work undertaken in planning for this training day has resulted in the compilation of a generic training pack, which can be adapted and tailored to the particular needs of any future training requests. AREC is keen to pursue the continued development of its training programme to all Research Ethics Committees.

- **HEFCE bid**

Two years ago, the University Development Committee of AREC commissioned a report on the policies and operating procedures for research ethics which were to be found across the university sector. The conclusion was that, whereas all the universities examined signed up to the basic tenets of research ethics, there was considerable inconsistency in stating concrete principles and, still more, in having standard operating procedures. In terms of public accountability of HEIs for the ethics of their research, this was regarded as unsatisfactory. The Report, therefore, was complemented by debate, over two well-attended seminars, to hammer out a series of principles that ought to govern URECs, and then a number of university representatives were asked to show how their models of REC structures fitted these principles. Our conclusion from this pilot work was that many universities would welcome central

guidance and a system for providing quality assurance. To enable us to undertake a pilot study into the feasibility of establishing, first, standards to which universities should aspire, and second, a system for accrediting or kite marking policies, standards and procedures, AREC sought funding from HEFCE. Unfortunately, no grants are being made at this time by the Funding Council, but AREC feels strongly that this pilot study is of great importance to the REC community, and will continue to actively pursue alternative sources of funding to enable progression.

- **AREC Conference 2010**

As outgoing Chair, I was delighted to open the AREC Annual Conference, and welcome delegates to our presentation on the theme of 'Special RECs, Special People'. I am pleased to be able report a very successful and well attended Conference, with excellent Speakers and enthusiastic and knowledgeable delegates – all of whom are, indeed, special people sitting on special RECs.

With a degree of sadness, I now hand over the baton, and burden, of Chair of the Association of Research Ethics Committees, to my colleague Dr Mark Turtle. Mark has served as Honorary Treasurer for a number of years, and has stepped up to Chair of the Association at very short notice. I have no doubt that under Mark's leadership, AREC will continue to grow and mature, working with its members to develop and implement exciting new initiatives, whilst safeguarding their interests. I wish him every success for the future.

David Anderson-Ford

Outgoing Chair, Association of Research Ethics Committees

Chief Executive Officer

Jacqueline Maull

Along with most other Charities and Not for Profits, AREC has had to face the impact of the current financial difficulties faced by organisations in both the public and private sector. As reported in the Annual Report 2009/2010, AREC Trustees had the foresight to recognise the potential funding issues which could arise, and took steps accordingly to reduce the costs of running the Association whilst providing best quality service to its members.

However, there is no doubt that both the University and NHS Sector have been heavily impacted by financial restraints which will have a serious knock on effect for our organisation.

Membership uptake in the University Sector is good, with most members renewing, and potential new members being identified and enrolled.

However, membership in the NHS Sector is expected to drop considerably. NHS RECs have seen a series of mergers and closures, resulting in a smaller pool of potential members for AREC to attract. A change of funding available to RECs via NRES may also have a detrimental effect on membership uptake at the end of this year.

The AREC three year Business Plan is referred to on a daily basis in order to balance our aims and objectives with revenue.

Points of Interest

- It was agreed that we reduce the number of Conferences held each year to one; AREC Annual Conference and AGM, to be held in November of each year.
- AREC began to rollout the Regional Workshop programme.
- An Events Coordinator was appointed to organise and conduct a programme of Regional Workshops.
- AREC Strategy Group met five times this year, but conducted four of those meetings via conference call, cutting both financial cost and reducing our carbon footprint.
- Online access to the 'Research Ethics Review,' was made available to members within their subscription costs.
- AREC University Development Committee continues to thrive, with an enthusiastic and broad ranging membership.
- AREC responded to two calls for evidence concerning the Review of Regulation and Governance of Medical Research conducted by the Academy of Medical Sciences. Working closely in partnership with NREAP, responses were made in the timeframe indicated. AREC look forward to reading the resulting publication.

- Strong and trusting relationships between the organisation and NRES, NREAP and REC Administrators continue to be formed.
- A new Editorial Team was introduced, following the retirement of Roger Rawbone. A sad farewell, and grateful thanks to Roger for all of his hard work, and a warm welcome to our new young team.
- David Anderson-Ford came to the end of his Chairmanship of AREC. David worked hard for two years, giving both of his time and experience. From a personal perspective, I could not have hoped for a more supportive and inspiring Chair to work with in my early days with the organisation.
- It was with great sadness that I learnt our Chair Elect, John Hudson, would be unable to take up the position of Chair in November 2010. A man of great knowledge and experience, his absence will be felt by all. However, Dr Mark Turtle, our Honorary Treasurer, stepped into the role at very short notice, and I am delighted to be working with him.

There is no doubt that we have made good progress during this year, implementing a strategy that will bring long term benefits to both AREC and its membership.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank members for their loyal support, both to AREC, but also to me personally – it is very much appreciated.

Jackie Maul
Chief Executive Officer

3. About AREC

Celebrating 13 years this year since the first group, which was to become AREC met, the organisation continues to thrive.

The concept of AREC was first discussed on 13th March 1998 and became an independent self-governing organisation on 12th March 1999 with a broad aim to offer an independent voice to Researchers, Government Agencies and the Media on behalf of Research Ethics Committees throughout the UK.

AREC is funded through membership to the organisation which is open to Research Ethics Committees within the National Health Service, Universities and the Independent sector, who review research involving human participants.

The Association is organised by Sector, each of which elects members to the governing council every two years. This governing council is supported by a paid member of staff based at the AREC Head Office.

The Association of Research Ethics Committees is a registered Charity and as such is controlled by its governing document, The Memorandum of Association November 2006. AREC is also a Company Limited by Guarantee as defined by the Companies Act 1985.

The principal activity of AREC in 2010/2011 was that of a national, independent, self governing body for all Research Ethics Committees in the NHS, Universities, Independent Sector and Research Establishments, which review the ethics of research involving human participants.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 1985.

Principal Activity

The principal activity of the company in the year under review was that of a national, independent, self governing body for all Research Ethics Committees in the NHS, Universities, Independent Sector and Research establishments, which review the ethics of human participant's research.

Research Ethics Review

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. The organisations Risk Report is illustrated in Appendix c.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:

Signed:.....

Date:

Dr Mark Turtle (Chairman) – Trustee

AREC Vision

AREC's Vision is of Human Health and Well-Being, attained through ethical research and the application of its results.

AREC Mission

AREC's Mission is to foster excellence in research involving human participants that will enhance human health or well-being by:

Educating regulators, investigators, supervisors and sponsors of such research about the ethical imperative for respect for persons and the ethical standards to be achieved as they evolve;

Giving support in other ways needed to those engaged in the ethical review of human research;

Influencing policy so as to improve the conduct and regulation of research involving human participants and its ethical review.

AREC Aims

To assess the educational and training needs of those involved in ethical review and of those engaged in the conduct or supervision of research involving human subjects and plan, organise and provide or coordinate training by various means to meet those needs.

To identify and offer membership to all committees in the UK that provide ethical review of research involving human participants in or outside of the NHS.

To keep contact with its members and associate members in order to be continuously aware of their other needs that stand in the way of excellence in ethical review and to find ways to meet them including the establishment of national and regional networks to discuss topics of mutual interest and encourage co-operation between its members.

To provide a collective and authoritative voice on policy matters founded upon the consensus views of its members and associate members and by espousing and promoting these views, be a leader of opinion on ethical standards and their application in research involving human participants.

To maintain an effective system for collation, storage and exchange of relevant information

To publish materials to keep its members and associate members appropriately informed.

To make effective use of information technology and the Associations website for similar purposes.

To employ staff with competencies to promote these aims.

To work with those having similar aims.

4. AREC Council

AREC Council is made up of six Officers and 9 members of AREC's Representative Sectors

Officers

Mr David Anderson-Ford	Chair to November 2010
Dr Mark Turtle	Chair from November 2010
Dr Timothy Stibbs	Chair Elect
Dr Debashis Mandal	Honorary Treasurer
Rev Keith Lackenby	Honorary Secretary
Mr M John Hudson	Vice Chair

Members

Dr Ronald Atkinson	NHS/Northern Ireland Representative
Mr Roy Evans	NHS/Wales Representative
Prof Anthea Tinker	University Representative
Dr Gella Richards	University Representative
Mr Laurence Goldberg	Independent Sector
Dr Roger Norgate	Social Care
Mrs Lorna Carter	University Representative
Dr Niki Bannister	University Representative
Dr Margaret Rees	NHS Sector

Staff

Mrs Jackie Maul Chief Executive Officer

Jackie joined AREC in April 2008 and works to develop the strategic future of the organisation in conjunction with AREC Council. Jackie has overall responsibility for the operational management of AREC and seeks to further member participation and client satisfaction.

5. Business Meetings

AREC is governed by AREC Council via a number of business meetings scheduled regularly throughout the year.

AREC AGM

The Annual General Meeting of AREC is held during the winter conference and is attended by AREC members. Major changes to AREC business is proposed at the AGM along with elections to the Board of Trustees. This years meeting was held in London on 13th November 2010.

Major decisions taken included:

- Nominations to the Board of Trustees were deemed elected. No vote was required due to the matching of nominees to vacancies.

AREC Council Meetings

Council meetings include all AREC Council members and is chaired by the AREC Chairman.

The purpose of Council meetings is to discuss all major AREC business and to make decisions on proposals made regarding AREC strategy, operational matters, appointments and major financial issues, as well as to receive information on Membership and the wider contribution and success of AREC.

3 Council meetings were held in 2010/2011 on the following dates:

9th June 2010	-	London
6 th October 2010	-	London
16th February 2011	-	London

Some of the decisions taken by council this year have included:

- Authorising the closure of the AREC Healthcare Subcommittee.
- Consideration of alternative publishers of Research Ethics Review.
- Review of the Constitution.
- Participation in AMS Review in partnership with NREAP.
- Provision of Patient Information Leaflets.
- Sourcing funds to promote kitemarking for University Sector.

Strategy Group

The Strategy Group consists of all AREC Officers, plus the Chief of Operations and is chaired by the Chairman. This group has the main responsibility for the direction of AREC and the preparing of proposals to be made to Council.

There have been 5 Strategy Group meetings this year on the following dates:

29 th April 2010	-	Conference Call
21 st July 2010	-	London
13 th December 2010	-	Conference Call
19 th January 2011	-	Conference Call
14 th February 2011	-	Conference Call

The main bulk of the work undertaken by the Strategy Group in 2010/2011 included:

- The appointment of a new editorial team for the Research Ethics review.
- Recommendations to Council for the consideration of new publishing partner for the Research Ethics review.
- Deliberations on AREC response to the AMS Review.
- Appointment of alternative Chair, due to ill health of Chair Elect.

AREC University Sector Committee

The University Sector Committee is chaired by AREC's Vice Chairman, and is open to members of the University Sector Research Ethics Committees to support the work of University Ethics Committees and to develop training and events to enhance their work and understanding.

There have been 3 University Sector Subcommittee meetings this year

13 th July 2010	-	London
2 nd November 2010	-	London
1 st February 2011	-	London

Main discussion points during the year included;

- Accreditation
- Raising AREC Profile
- Seminars
- Media and Marketing

6. Membership

Membership of AREC is offered to all Research Ethics Committees throughout the UK and Europe. These committees are from a variety of Sectors including Independent, National Health Service and Universities. Membership to AREC is via an annual subscription which is payable at the end of the calendar year for membership from January to December for Universities and the Independent Sector, and April to March for NHS Sector.

The Membership rates for 2010/2011 were:

NHS Committees	-	£850.00
University Committees	-	£500.00
Independent Committees	-	£500.00

At the 31 March 2011 this membership stood at 180 as follows:

NHS	58
Independent	2
University	76

NHS membership has decreased, due to mergers and closures within the NHS REC sector.

Membership to AREC provides the following benefits to members:

- Training Conferences/open meetings/forum:
Opportunity to learn from other REC's, air views, discuss problems and receive membership rates for Conferences.
- Access to information:
Keeping abreast of latest developments, network with members and receive the AREC Quarterly Journal, Research Ethics Review.
- Inclusion:
Creating a collective voice and contributing to AREC consensus opinions to effect an authoritative organisation and voice.
- Accreditation for Universities:
Working towards a university-wide system of accreditation, in order to provide assurances that the quality of UREC decision-making is fit for purpose
- Support:
Receive independent advice on research governance matters and assistance with standardisation of REC's Constitution and SOPs.
- AREC Council Elections:
Individual members having the opportunity to stand for election to the AREC Council, to represent the views from the 'grassroots' and to further develop the Association and explore opportunities to increase partnerships.

7. AREC Conferences and Events

AREC has held 1 conference in 2010/2011.

Winter Conference 2010

12th November 2010

Holiday Inn, Bloomsbury

'Special REC's, Special People'

Welcome and Opening Address

Mr David Anderson-Ford

Outgoing AREC Chairman

Keynote Speech

Professor Sir Gordon Duff

'In search of the 'appropriate' regulation'

Robert Dingwall AcSS, Dingwall Enterprises

'Nanotechnology, providing solutions to today's challenges'

Professor Peter Dobson, Oxford University

'Who's afraid of the Big Bad Gene?'

Andrew George, Chair of NREAP, Imperial College London,

AGM

Workshops

Feedback and Panel Debate

Closing Speech

Dr Mark Turtle, Incoming Chair of AREC

AREC Regional Workshops

AREC has held one workshop in 2010/2011

Regional Workshop

9th February 2011

Strathclyde University

'Developments in Ethics in Scotland'

Welcome and Opening Address

Mr David Anderson-Ford

AREC Immediate Past Chair

'Creating a storm – turning data linkage into a blizzard of communication'

Dr Violet Warwick, SHIP Programme Manager, University of Dundee

'The Scottish law on children and other vulnerable groups'

Professor John Blackie, Law School, University of Strathclyde

'Gifting Tissue for Research'

Ms Jane Hair, Deputy director, NHSGGC Bio-repository

Breakout sessions

Feedback and debate

Dr Judith Godden and Mrs Liz Condie

University Sector Seminars

There has been 1 seminar held in 2010/2011

Seminar 5

17th February 2011

BIS Conference Centre, London

Digitisation: Big Word, Big Impact

Welcome

Dr Timothy P C Stibbs

Chairman of the AREC University Development Committee, and
Secretary, Manchester University REC

AREC Council Chair Elect

Lorna Carter

Chair and Seminar Co-ordinator

Global Networks

Professor William Dutton, Director Oxford Internet Institute, Oxford University

Key Issues in the Digital 'Court'

John Hull, Head of Intellectual Property, Memery Crystal, London

What Difference does IT Make?

Dr Penny Duquenoy, School of Engineering and IS, Middlesex University

Case Studies

Panel for feedback and Q&A session

Final Plenary

Lorna Carter

Vice Chair Oxford Tropical Research Ethics Committee (OXTREC);

Vice-Chair AREC University Development Committee

8. Research Ethics Review

The official journal of AREC, Research Ethics Review is a quarterly published journal, aimed at Research Ethics Committee members and the wider research community. The outgoing Editor, Dr Roger Rawbone was supported by two AREC members, Paula McGee and Mike Bone who served as Associate Editors until November 2010. The incoming Editorial Team took over in November 2010. This team consists of Joint Editors, Dr David Hunter and Dr Sarah Edwards, with Associate Editors, Dr Sean Jennings, Georgia Testa and Dr Zuzana Deans.

Research Ethics Review was renamed Research Ethics for the first edition of 2011. The design and print face was adjusted slightly, and the 'Roger Rawbone Research Ethics Student Essay Competition' was announced, in recognition of the hard work and dedication shown by the outgoing Editor.

The Journal is now in its 7th year of publication and has plans to develop further in coming years.

The full Annual Report of Research Ethics Review can be found in Appendix a.

9. Future Plans and Developments

Over the next three years, AREC will continue to;

- Examine ways to cut costs
- Implement cost cutting measures

- Consider and review membership fees for
 - *NHS Committees*
 - *University Committees*
 - *Independent Membership*
 - *Associate Membership*
 - *Individual Membership*
 - *Overseas Membership*
 - *Corporate Membership*

- Will endeavour to expand the services on offer with regard to;
 - *Training*
 - *Kite Marking*
 - *Auditing*
 - *Workshops*
 - *Consultancy*

- Implement of an effective marketing strategy

- Increase sales of Research Ethics Review

- Investigate possible avenues of sponsorship
 - *Conference stalls*
 - *Advertising in Journal*
 - *Workshops*
 - *Advertising on programmes*
 - *Advertising on website*

Twelve years on from original conception it is inevitable that changes will be required to modernise AREC in order to ensure it functions effectively. This is both as a business and as a credible source of support to its members and to the independence of Research Ethics Committees as a whole.

10. Financial Position and Accounts

AREC accounts this year were reported on by Cheadles Chartered Accountants, based in Staffordshire and the full report prepared by them can be found in Appendix b.

Research Ethics Review
Annual Report 2010

Roger Rawbone, Editor

Volume 6; Nos. 1-4; pp 1-172.

Research Ethics Review has now completed its sixth year of publication as a quarterly journal supported by The Association of Research Ethics Committees (AREC). The contract with the publisher – Smith-Gordon Co. – continues to be renewed on an annual basis following the initial three year period. The four issues of *Research Ethics Review* were published on schedule during the year on 22nd March, 24th June, 23rd September, and 16th December.

The Editorial team has continued to be directed by the previously defined and agreed purpose and objectives stated as:

The purposes of *Research Ethics Review* are:

- To promote, provoke, host and engage in open and public debate upon the ethical issues arising from research on humans and from the review of such research, and
- To contribute to the education of researchers and reviewers of research in these ethical issues.

In these purposes, *Research Ethics Review* pursues better research, better review of research and, ultimately, benefits to the future subjects of research worldwide.

To achieve these purposes *Research Ethics Review* provides:

- A worldwide forum in which ethical issues on the design, conduct, publishing and dissemination of research are discussed with a view to developing best practice. This includes topical issues, breaking news, under-addressed subjects, research methodology, and research about research.
- An educational resource to researchers, members of RECs and all those concerned with promoting high standards of ethical research
- An independent perspective on research governance and the processes by which this is operationalized.
- An accessible, readable resource about research ethics and ethical review which was the official journal of the Association of Research Ethics Committees.

As noted in previous annual reports it has been an ongoing concern that the journal has failed to attract a wider readership; and, in parallel with this, a sufficiency of quality material for consideration of publication (see statistics

presented below). Whilst the journal has reached the membership of ethics committees it has failed to reach the wider research and academic audience to which it aspires.

At the beginning of 2010 an electronic version of *Research Ethics Review* became available which allowed a full access to the table of contents for all issues and a restricted, password protected, access to the full text of all issues for members of AREC committees and journal subscribers.

However, despite this electronic development, concern was being expressed as to the format and scope of the journal and a number of meetings were held between AREC, the journal editorial team and the publishers to discuss possible future options. As editor I had steered *Research Ethics Review* through its first six years and although the journal was successfully established within the REC community it was broadly agreed that it needed to develop further. On reflection I concluded that this would be best achieved through a change at the helm to seek new ideas, items and features to keep the journal on course to reach its strategic goals. I thus decided that it was time to step down and allow 'new blood' to take *Research Ethics Review* forward. Accordingly, in June 2010, I gave AREC notice of my intention to relinquish the post of editor as from the end of the year – that is RER Vol6 No4 would be my final issue. I made this decision public in my editorial of RER Vol6 No3.

The outcome from the discussions with AREC and my decision was a full review of the journal by AREC Council as a result of which AREC has restated its future long term commitment to the support of *Research Ethics Review* as its official journal. Thus during the latter part of the year AREC appointed Sarah Edwards and David Hunter as joint editors of *Research Ethics Review* and they took over the positions of Associate Editors in the autumn for Vol 6 No 4.

The administrative side of the journal publication continued to be managed on a day to day basis by the Editor with support from the AREC Director of Operations. Procedures for the tracking of papers and for peer review have been maintained. The office of the AREC Director of Operations has responsibility for the management of AREC membership distribution and liaison with CLE.

For the larger part of the year Paula McGee and Mike Bone had continued to serve as Associate Editors with the journal also being supported by its International Advisory Board. Their assistance and support throughout the year are acknowledged and we are grateful to all those who have positively contributed to the journal both as peer reviewers, and as authors of submitted papers.

The Journal continues to subscribe to the Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE).

Journal statistics:

Published	Vol 1 : 005	Vol 2 : 2006	Vol 3 : 2007	Vol 4 : 2008	Vol 5 : 2009	Vol 6 : 2010
Editorials	4	4	4	4	4	4
Invited editorials	1	0	3	0	1	1
Original papers	11	11	11	12	10	14
Short reports	0	4	5	8	3	2
Conference presentations	7	4	6	5	3	1
Meeting reports	-	-	3	5	3	4
Debate/Misc	1	0	1	0	4	1
Case studies	2	3	4	4	4	2
Web alerts	2	2	1	3	0	0
Correspondence	1	10	6	6	4	7
Book reviews	0	1	1	3	1	3
AREC News	4	4	4	3	2	3
'Series' articles					5	3
No pages	147	152	146*	172	166	172
Rejected						
Papers/articles	4	3	2	4	0	3

* increase in page size Vol3 No1 onwards

Country of origin:

Original papers/short reports/conference papers						
Received in	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
England	20	22	22	22	15	14
Scotland	1		1	2		
Wales	1					
N Ireland/Eire		4	1	2	2	1
S Africa		1				
Norway			1			1
USA			2		1	
France			1			
Switzerland			1			
Nigeria				1		
Sweden				1		
Australia				1		
Canada						1
Singapore						1
India						1
TOTAL	22	27	29	29	18	19

The number of original papers remains low. A decision on submitted papers is generally communicated to authors within five weeks (average 21 days in 2010) and all accepted papers appear in the issue of the journal following their final acceptance (the average time between a decision and publication being 66 days in 2010 – this will include author revisions).

The number of AREC conference presentations received also continues to remain low (all speakers are invited to publish) but these have been augmented by the publication of AREC conference reports. Reports and reviews from other sources, conferences and books, have also been received and published and these are welcomed.

The objectives for next year will be set by the new editors together with AREC.

I will finish this annual report as I finished my final editorial – “... I now pass over the baton to Sarah Edwards and David Hunter who will, I’m sure, take the journal to ‘new heights’ and ‘new places’. I wish them, and their editorial team, every success. I hope the foundation I have set will enable *Research Ethics Review* to grow in stature and become a valuable source of information for all those involved in research ethics review.”

Roger Rawbone, Editor.

March, 2011.

Research Ethics Annual Report

David Hunter & Sarah Edwards, Editors.

2010/2011 marked a year of transition for *Research Ethics Review* with the appointment of new editors (Sarah Edwards & David Hunter) and a new editorial team (Sean Jennings, Georgia Testa & Zuzana Deans), a redesign of the look of the journal and most centrally the renaming of the journal to *Research Ethics* to broaden its appeal, and the consideration of a new publishing partnership for 2012.

These changes were largely in response to the perceived problems of the journal having a narrow REC focused readership and subsequent difficulties in sourcing material of sufficient quality for publication as were outlined in previous annual reports. As in any transitional process these challenges are not yet fully overcome but some strides towards resolving them have been made, developing on the excellent work of the previous editor and board.

New features:

Several changes were made to the journal to encourage more submissions and to improve the academic standing of the journal, in particular: We introduced a longer article length to allow authors to develop their arguments in full. We are also inviting the submission of reports which document the practice of research ethics in different contexts. This category of papers will be called Reports from the Field. Under the category Topics, we will also publish papers which aims to provide a survey or an overview of a subject area or issue, outlining the main arguments and moves as well as regulatory practices and policies. When papers of special interest are published, we will post the paper online as a 'hot topic' and invite a number of short yet insightful rapid responses (of up to 1500 words in length) to accompany it in the next published issue.

Each year we will publish a special issue devoted to a particular topic, policy change, or engaging and exercising debate, for which we will send a call asking for contributions.

To recognize Roger's considerable contributions to the journal as founding editor and his work in growing the Research Ethics community, we have established an annual prize for the best paper submitted to the journal by a student.

We also took the opportunity to slightly update the aims and scopes of the journal:

Research Ethics Aims and Scope:

Research Ethics is the official journal of The Association of Research Ethics Committees. The journal is aimed at all readers and authors interested in ethical issues in research, the regulation of research and the procedures and process of ethical review. We aim to promote, provoke, host and engage in open and public debate about research ethics but also to contribute to the education of researchers and reviewers of research.

Research Ethics has now completed its seventh year of publication as a quarterly journal supported by The Association of Research Ethics Committees (AREC) published by Smith-Gordon Co. The four issues of *Research Ethics* were slightly delayed, due to the changes to format and cover but have been published to the revised schedule during the year.

As noted in previous annual reports it has been an ongoing concern that the journal has failed to attract a wider readership; and, in parallel with this, a sufficiency of quality material for consideration of publication (see statistics presented below). Whilst the journal has reached the membership of ethics committees it has failed to reach the wider research and academic audience to which it aspires.

While in the beginning of 2010 an electronic version of *Research Ethics* was made available by the present publishers, being available only in full length pdf versions and not accessible via the major academic search engines limited the utility of this admittedly much needed move.

The assistance and support throughout the year of the editorial team and AREC are gratefully acknowledged and we are grateful to all those who have positively contributed to the journal both as peer reviewers, and as authors of submitted papers.

The Journal continues to subscribe to the Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE).

Dr David Hunter
Dr Sarah Edwards

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 004400948 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1091329

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements For The Year Ended 31 March 2011
for

THE ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEES

A Company Limited by Guarantee

The Association of Research
Ethics Committees
A Company Limited by Guarantee

Contents of the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2011

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THE ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEES
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2011

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2011. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in March 2005.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number
004400948 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number
1091329

Registered office
Telegraph House
59 Wolverhampton Road
Stafford
ST17 4AW

Trustees

Dr M F Bone	- resigned 13.11.10
Dr D Mandal (Honorary Treasurer)	
Dr M J Turtle (Chairman)	
Dr R Atkinson	
Mr M J Hudson (Vice Chairman)	Vice chairman NHS and Independent Sector
Reverend K S Lackenby	
Mr D Anderson-Ford (Imm Past Chair)	
Mr R Evans	
Professor A Tinker	
Professor N Webster	- resigned 13.11.10
Mr D Hunter	- resigned 13.11.10
Mr L Goldberg	
Mr L Gelling	- resigned 14.6.10
Dr T Stibbs (Chair Elect)	
Dr G Richards	- appointed 14.6.10
Mr R Norgate	- appointed 14.6.10
Mrs L J Carter	- appointed 13.11.10
Dr N Bannister	- appointed 13.11.10
Dr M Rees	- appointed 13.11.10

Company Secretary
Reverend K S Lackenby

Independent Examiner
CHEADLES
Chartered Accountants
Telegraph House
59 Wolverhampton Road
Stafford
Staffordshire
ST17 4AW

THE ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEES
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2011

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Principal Activity

The principal activity of the company in the year under review was that of a national, independent, self governing body for all Research Ethics Committees in the NHS, Universities, Independent Sector and Research establishments, which review the ethics of human subjects research.

Research Ethics Review

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:

.....
Dr M J Turtle (Chairman) - Trustee

Date:

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2011 set out on pages four to nine.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees (who are also the directors for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under Section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act)) and that an independent examination is required.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under Section 43 of the 1993 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statements below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of Sections 394 and 395 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities

have not been met; or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

CHEADLES
Chartered Accountants
Telegraph House
59 Wolverhampton Road
Stafford
Staffordshire
ST17 4AW

Date:

THE ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEES
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 March 2011

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.11 Total funds £	31.3.10 Total funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary income		67,918	51,019	118,937	121,812
Investment income	2	<u>26</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>26</u>
Total incoming resources		67,944	51,019	118,963	121,838
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Costs of generating funds					
Fundraising trading: cost of goods sold and other costs	3	976	18,484	19,460	34,561
Governance costs		<u>93,095</u>	<u>5,955</u>	<u>99,050</u>	<u>79,823</u>
Total resources expended		94,071	24,439	118,510	114,384
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES					
		(26,127)	26,580	453	7,454
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		124,282	34,406	158,688	151,234
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>98,155</u>	<u>60,986</u>	<u>159,141</u>	<u>158,688</u>

THE ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEES
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Balance Sheet
At 31 March 2011

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.11 Total funds £	31.3.10 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	7	1,096	-	1,096	1,461
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	8	17,410	-	17,410	49,226
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>82,950</u>	<u>60,986</u>	<u>143,936</u>	<u>111,152</u>
		100,360	60,986	161,346	160,378
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	9	(3,301)	-	(3,301)	(3,151)
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
		<u>97,059</u>	<u>60,986</u>	<u>158,045</u>	<u>157,227</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES					
		<u>98,155</u>	<u>60,986</u>	<u>159,141</u>	<u>158,688</u>
NET ASSETS					
		<u><u>98,155</u></u>	<u><u>60,986</u></u>	<u><u>159,141</u></u>	<u><u>158,688</u></u>
FUNDS					
Unrestricted funds	10			98,155	124,282
Restricted funds:					
Meeting Funds				<u>60,986</u>	<u>34,406</u>
TOTAL FUNDS					
				<u><u>159,141</u></u>	<u><u>158,688</u></u>

THE ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEES
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Balance Sheet - continued
At 31 March 2011

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2011.

The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2011 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- (a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small charitable companies and with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
Dr M J Turtle (Chairman)-Trustee

THE ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEES
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Notes to the Financial Statements – continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2011

5. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

The Editor of the AREC Journal was paid the sum of £4000 for his work.

Trustees' Expenses

Travel and accommodation expenses totalling £1164.50 were paid to trustees for the year ended 31st March 2011.

6. STAFF COSTS

	31.3.11	31.3.10
	£	£
Wages and salaries	<u>56,941</u>	<u>51,628</u>

7. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

		Plant and machinery £
COST		
At 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011		<u>5,762</u>
DEPRECIATION		
At 1 April 2010		4,301
Charge for year		<u>365</u>
At 31 March 2011		<u>4,666</u>
NET BOOK VALUE		
At 31 March 2011		<u>1,096</u>
At 31 March 2010		<u>1,461</u>

8. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.3.11	31.3.10
	£	£
Trade debtors	<u>17,410</u>	<u>49,226</u>

9. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.3.11	31.3.10
	£	£
Trade creditors	<u>3,301</u>	<u>3,151</u>

THE ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEES
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2011

10. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.10 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.11 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	124,282	(26,127)	98,155
Restricted funds			
Meeting Funds	34,406	26,580	60,986
	<u>158,688</u>	<u>453</u>	<u>159,141</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	67,944	(94,071)	(26,127)
Restricted funds			
Meeting Funds	51,019	(24,439)	26,580
	<u>118,963</u>	<u>(118,510)</u>	<u>453</u>

THE ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEES
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 March 2011

	31.3.11	31.3.10
	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Voluntary income		
Gifts	-	2
Subscriptions	67,917	74,120
AREC meetings	<u>51,020</u>	<u>47,690</u>
	118,937	121,812
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	<u>26</u>	<u>26</u>
Total incoming resources	118,963	121,838
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Governance costs		
Accountancy	3,300	3,150
Support costs		
Management		
Wages	56,941	51,628
Rent and rates	1,100	-
Insurance	471	752
Telephone	1,210	1,944
Postage and stationery	2,570	1,687
Sundries	583	-
Travelling	9,323	17,496
AREC meetings	18,484	17,639
Room hire	-	182
Journals & subscriptions	19,560	13,871
Computer accessories	52	800
Editors fee	4,000	4,000
Legal costs	551	748
Plant and machinery	<u>365</u>	<u>487</u>
	<u>115,210</u>	<u>111,234</u>
Total resources expended	118,510	114,384
Net income	<u>453</u>	<u>7,454</u>

AREC Risk Register

RISK	IMPACT ¹	CONTROL MEASURES
Failure to achieve key organisational aims and objectives.	H	This would affect charitable status and Association credibility. A strategic sub-group within Council has been established to oversee and maintain the Association's key activities.
<u>Inadequate/inappropriate provision of training for members.</u>	M	A survey of members needs has been conducted. Regular training conferences are organised with acquisition of feedback from attendees.
Inability to provide a representational role for individual members (ie RECs and REC members).	M	AREC does not advance a 'union type' role for its membership but clarification and communication of its position is under consideration by Council/Strategic sub-group.
Failure to provide a National lead/voice.	H	This would affect the Association's credibility and could impact on membership and public image. A working group has been established to look at all aspects of publicity and marketing.
Failure to engage with membership	H	Members are regularly canvassed for their views on both national consultation issues and on AREC training initiatives. The Association maintains a website and supports the official journal <i>Research Ethics Review</i> .
Poor relationship with Regulatory Authority (DH/NPSA/COREC)	M	There is an open invitation for appropriate representation on Council meetings and these are supplemented with ad hoc informal meetings. A policy has been defined for Council member's involvement with COREC/DH working groups.
Failures of partnership working	L	Networking and interaction with other representative bodies (eg ABPI, Clin Res Network) is maintained with joint conference sponsorship.
Failure to retain adequate membership numbers	H	Reduced income (NHS RECs reduce to 120 by end 2006) would affect ARECs viability. This links to membership engagement and the provision of perceived benefits. Current activity focuses on developing AREC to better serve the university and the phase I committee sectors. Discussion on membership categories and subscription rates under continuing review.
Failure to make <i>Research Ethics Review</i> a 'going' concern	M	This would result in a continuing financial drain on AREC and provide a 'poor' image through a reduced quality publication. Working group established to 'negotiate' with publisher.
Failure to develop suitable arrangements to incorporate a developing university group	H	This would impact on financial income and hence, with reducing NHS REC numbers, AREC viability. It would also result in a university sector 'competitor'.
Risks associated with becoming an Appointing Authority for Phase I committees.	M	These need to be kept under control through a defined organisational structure and sound business case. A working group with independent advice has been established and clear financial arrangements set up with DH.

RISK	IMPACT ¹	CONTROL MEASURES
Poor control of resources and financial loss	L	Sound investment of monies through use of high interest accounts. 2 years running costs in reserve Investment plans to be reviewed.
Failure to plan and target resource use for delivery.	L	Staff job descriptions clearly stated.
<u>Loss of accommodation and staff funding</u>	M	Under continuing review by Treasurer and Strategy Working Group.
<u>Potential withdrawal of DH Finance</u>	H	Under continuing review by Treasurer and Strategy Working Group
<u>Failure to comply with charitable status.</u>	L	Timely submission and publication of annual reports. Constitutional changes documented and agreed with Charity Commission.
<u>Failure to comply with legislation.</u>	M	Ensure knowledge of employment law. Health and safety issues reviewed. Written permission to use presentations in Journal to ensure no Infringement of copyright Ensuring access at meetings against Disability Discrimination Act. Ensure compliance with data Protection Act