

ROYAL COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS
Minutes of a Meeting of Council held at the RCOG and virtually on
4 July 2025

PRESENT

President	Miss Raneer Thakar (Chair)
Senior Vice President, Global Health	Professor Hassan Shehata
Vice President, Clinical Quality	Mrs Geeta Kumar
Vice President, Membership & Workforce	Dr Laura Hipple
Vice President, Academia and Strategy	Professor Asma Khalil
Vice President, Education	Mr Ian Scudamore

ELECTED FELLOWS

Mr Sherif Abdel-Fattah
Dr Jyotsna Acharya
Professor Dilly Anumba
Professor Alastair Campbell
Professor Justin Clark
Miss Mausumi Das
Professor Stergios Doumouchtsis
Professor Colin Duncan
Mr Sujeewa Fernando
Miss Fatima Husain
Mr Joseph Iskaros
Professor Swati Jha
Mr Andrew Leather
Dr Hans Nagar
Mr Andrew Pickersgill
Mr Philip Rolland
Mr Dudley Robinson
Miss Melanie Tipples

ELECTED MEMBERS

Dr Jenny Barber
Dr Helen Goodall
Mr Peter Harris
Dr Chimwemwe Kalumbi
Dr Aditi Miskin
Dr Hannah Mistry
Mr Javaid Muglu
Dr Hanan Mustafa
Dr Ganga Verma
Professor William Parry-Smith
Dr Alison Wiggans

MEMBERS

Dr Janet Barter FRCOG, FSRH President
Ms Emma Crookes, Women's Network Vice Chair
Dr Abigail Hyland MRCOG, Trainees' Committee Vice Chair for Strategy
Ms Jane Plumb FRCOG, Women's Voices Lead
Dr Eman Toeima FRCOG, Specialty and Associate Specialist and Locally Employed Doctors Lead

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive	Ms Kate Lancaster
Executive Director, Education and Quality	Ms Carly Edwards
Executive Director, Global, Membership & Governance	Ms Kristen Morgan
Executive Director, Finance & Commercial	Ms Ashley Wang
Executive Director, External Affairs	Mr Ben Butler
Head of Corporate Governance and Risk	Mr Christopher Smith
Business Administrator	Ms Natasha Sullivan

1	Welcome The President welcomed all to the meeting. The President offered their congratulation to the President elect, Dr Alison Wright, and commended all of the candidates for their role in the 2025 President election. The President informed Council that a summary of the 10 Year NHS Plan would be circulated to Council members following the meeting. Action: Circulate RCOG summary of 10-Year Plan
2	Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from: Katherine Barton MRCOG Peter von Dadelszen FRCOG William Dudill MRCOG Diane Nzelu MRCOG Suzanne O’Sullivan FRCOG
3	RCOG Confidentiality Agreement and Declaration of Interest and Good Standing The RCOG Confidentiality Agreement and Declaration of Interest and Good Standing had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Council was asked to complete and return the form if they had not done so within the last year.
4	Minutes and Matters Arising
4.1	Minutes from the last meeting The minutes from the meetings held on 2 May and 13 June 2025 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
4.2	Actions record The actions from the 2 May 2025 meeting of Council were noted.
5.1	Obituaries Resolved: Mr John Frampton – Fellow of England Mr Luca Fusi – Fellow of England Dr James Henry Kennedy – Fellow of Scotland Dr Brian Bethell – Fellow of England Mr Mark Alexander Dunderdale – Member of England Dr Andrew William Laughland – Fellow of Scotland Dr Robert Smith – Fellow of Scotland
6	Regional Presentation
6.1	West Midlands

	<p>The Fellows and Members’ representatives for the West Midlands presented an update from their region. Topics of focus included the economic and social context of the region, the structure and performance of hospitals within the region, and the academic and teaching landscape.</p> <p>Council thanked the Fellows and Members’ representatives from the West Midlands for their presentation.</p>
7	<p>President</p>
7.1	<p>President’s Report</p> <p>The President updated Council on progress towards the delivery of the Presidential Priorities.</p> <p>The President referenced Dr Deborah Harrington’s presentation at the World Congress on the breakdown of the healthcare system and humanitarian crises in Gaza noting that the College has agreed that the presentation will be made available to all RCOG members free of charge regardless of whether they attended World Congress or not.</p> <p>Council was informed that the Officers had met with Dr Deborah Harrington to discuss this matter further including the proposal to send an open letter to the Prime Minister drawing attention to the impact of the ongoing conflict in Gaza on women and girls.</p> <p>Council was informed that the College had previously produced a statement on this matter, which was published in October 2023, and that several medical Royal Colleges as well as the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine had recently published updated statements regarding this matter.</p> <p>The President sought Council’s views on whether the College should publish an open letter to the Prime Minister on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and Israel.</p> <p>Council enquired whether the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) had a view on this matter. The President confirmed that the AoMRC was taking a more cautious approach but several other medical Royal Colleges had made statement recently.</p> <p>Council debated the matter but was unable to reach a decision on whether to support the publication of an open letter. Points raised included that the issuing of an open letter would not supersede the previously published statement, and whether the College should comment more generically on humanitarian crises globally that are impact on women and girls rather than specifically highlighting the challenges in Gaza and Israel. It was agreed that the College’s Policy team would draft a letter for consideration by Council. Council will then vote via email on whether to publish the letter or not.</p> <p>Action: Letter to Prime Minister regarding the College’s position on Gaza to be drafted and then circulated to RCOG Council members for decision/approval.</p> <p>The President also sought views on the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care’s presentation at the World Congress, highlighting that the College is being increasingly bold and speaking out more on maternity safety in the UK.</p> <p>Council commended the President for their performance with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. The need for the College to continue to highlight the systemic challenges which cause maternity safety issues was highlighted.</p> <p>Council asked what support will be given to the ten units named by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care for investigation. The President confirmed that individuals can approach the College through the peer-to-peer support programme.</p> <p>The President confirmed that the Officers are currently working to update the RCOG’s Maternity Safety Standards Framework, and are currently aiming to publish a final document by the end of November 2025.</p>

	Council noted the President's Report.
8	Global Health
8.1	<p>Report on Global Health and Events Activities</p> <p>The Senior Vice President for Global Health presented the Report on Global Health and Events Activities.</p> <p>Council was informed that the 2025 World Congress had been the largest scientific programme to date with 2,573 abstract submissions, seven parallel streams and more than 3,000 delegates.</p> <p>The Senior Vice President for Global Health informed Council that the current Congress cycle, whereby it is held annually in either the UK or abroad, is unsustainable from a scientific, financial and logistical perspective. The College is mindful that the workload for those involved in the organising of Congress is substantial and typically takes place alongside regular clinical work, whilst anecdotally, the College is aware that many Members and Fellows are more inclined to attend the annual conference of their specialist society rather than the World Congress. To ensure the sustainability of Congress moving forward, Council was asked to support the proposal to move to delivering Congress biennially, alternating between the UK and overseas. In planning future World Congress', FIGO and other activities such as exams, AICC and bank and religious holidays would be avoided.</p> <p>Council discussed the proposal. It was commented that holding Congress in the UK only once every four years might be viewed as excluding those who cannot afford to travel internationally. The Vice President for Global Health confirmed that this had been taken into consideration. At present, the World Congress is held in the UK once every three years and so the impact was not felt to be significant. It was commented that moving to the biennial model would improve the scientific quality of the World Congress arguably increasing the value for College members based in the UK.</p> <p>Council noted that moving to a biennial model would reduce the environmental footprint of the World Congress.</p> <p>Council approved the proposal to move to a biennial Congress cycle.</p> <p>Council was informed that a delegation from the RCOG participated in the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva from the 19 to 22 May. The College continues to explore ways in which its ECOSOC status can be leveraged to strengthen clinical perspectives, foster new collaborations with civil society organisations and donors, and engage in critical discussions on women's health and rights.</p> <p>Council noted that the winners of the Sims Black Travelling Professorship had been announced. In 2025, these will be Professor Amaranth Bhide and Professor Austin Ungwamadu.</p> <p>The Senior Vice President for Global Health presented a proposal to allow variation of the standard eligibility criteria for IRC Chair appointments in instances when no eligible candidates apply.</p> <p>This request had arisen as a result of a recent call for applicants for an IRC Chair position receiving no eligible candidates after two rounds of applications.</p> <p>Council approved the proposal to allow variation of the standard eligibility criteria, by exception, for IRC Chair appointments in instances when no eligible candidates apply.</p> <p>Council noted the Report on Global Health and Events Activities.</p>
9	Clinical Quality
9.1	Report on Clinical Quality Activities

	<p>The Vice President for Clinical Quality presented the Report on Clinical Quality Activities.</p> <p>Council was informed that, since the previous meeting, the College had published two Scientific Impact Papers (SIP) on PPRM before 24 weeks of pregnancy and The effect of surgery for endometriomas on fertility. Upcoming publications include a Green-Top Guideline on Pregnancy and breast cancer, and three further SIPs covering Impacted fetal head at Caesarean section, Progress in cervical screening and Artificial intelligence in gynaecology oncology.</p> <p>Council noted that the Officers will be leading on a piece of work to update the College’s Maternity Services Standards, which were last updated in 2016. An updated version is expected to be ready in November 2025.</p> <p>Council was updated on the Avoiding Brain Injuries in Childbirth (ABC) programme, which concluded on 30 April 2025. The Department of Health and Social Care has announced a planned national roll out of the ABC programme from September 2025.</p> <p>With regards to the National Maternity and Perinatal Audit, Council was informed that due to delays in receiving final sign-off from NHS England, the projected publication date is now August 2025.</p> <p>Council noted that the transition project to identify a new owner for the Tommy’s Pathway (app) is underway and that further updates will be brought to Council in due course.</p> <p>Council noted the Report on Clinical Quality Activities.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Membership and Workforce</p>
<p>10.1</p>	<p>Report on Membership and Workforce Activities</p> <p>The Vice President for Membership and Workforce presented the Report on Membership and Workforce Activities.</p> <p>Council was updated on the RCOG’s 2025 Workforce Census, which closed for responses on 2 May 2025. The Workforce team are currently reviewing the data and an update will be brought to Council in due course.</p> <p>The Vice President for Membership and Workforce thanked Council for their ongoing support of the RCOG Fellow and Members Admission Ceremonies. Council members were reminded of the remaining ceremonies taking place in 2025 (11 September, 19 September, and 12 December) and of the need to make the College aware if they were unable to attend.</p> <p>Council noted that the RCOG Careers Day for Medical Students and Foundation Doctors took place on 17 May 2025. Almost 500 delegates registered for the event, which was organised in collaboration with the British Undergraduate Society of O&G, with approximately 170 attending live on the day. Content has been made available on-demand for a further six months to ensure as broad an audience as possible.</p> <p>Action: Consider whether it would be possible to extend the period of time in which the recording of the Careers Day can be hosted on the website.</p> <p>Council noted that, since the previous meeting, 17 job plans have been approved. There are currently ten active cases, four of which are with trusts and six are with reviewers. Feedback forms have also been developed for the College’s AAC representatives so that they can share their experiences of the interview panels they have attended as College representatives.</p> <p>Council was informed that an in-person development meeting for the regional Workplace Behaviour Champions had taken place and that feedback had been positive.</p>

	Council noted the Report on Membership and Workforce Activities.
10.2	<p>Elevation of Members to Fellowship</p> <p>The Vice President for Membership and Workforce asked Council to approve the applications for elevation to Fellowship. Invitations to eligible Members were sent in March 2025 and 190 applications had been received.</p> <p>Council approved the applications for elevation to Fellowship.</p>
11	Academia and Strategy
11.1	<p>Report on Academia and Strategy Activities</p> <p>The Vice President for Academia and Strategy presented the Report on Academic and Strategy Activities.</p> <p>Council was updated on the Women’s Health Research Prioritisation Project, which aims to gather input from the public on priorities for women’s health research in the UK. The initial phase of the work saw members of the public being asked to provide their top five research priorities for women’s health via an online survey. The College had 1,441 responses to the survey, with over 4,000 research topics identified for analysis before final research questions are selected. Phase 2 of the project, which is focused on narrowing these research topics via a second survey, is now underway. The project is due to conclude at the end of 2025.</p> <p>The Vice President for Academia and Strategy informed Council that there had been excellent engagement with the Genomics stream at the World Congress. Work is now underway to update the RCOG’s Genomics Hub, ensuring that this e-learning resource is current and relevant to members.</p> <p>Council noted that the Genomics Committee is currently recruiting a Gynae-Oncology Representative and that the Academic Board both an Undergraduate Lead and a Devolved Nations Representative for Wales. A Women’s Network representative has been appointed and will join the next Academic Board committee meeting subject to Council ratification.</p> <p>The Vice President for Academia and Strategy reiterated that RCOG Awards 2025 are currently open for applications. Council members were encourage to apply and also to promote the awards across their networks.</p> <p>Council noted the Report on Academia and Strategy Activities.</p>
12	Education
12.1	<p>Report on Education and Exams Activities</p> <p>The Vice President for Education presented the Report on Education and Exams Activities.</p> <p>Council was informed that the 2026 ST1 had a 100% fill rate and that ST3 applications were up significantly.</p> <p>Council enquired whether there was a breakdown of UK and international medical graduate ST1 recruitment. Ms Edwards confirmed that this data will be shared with Council at the next meeting.</p> <p>The May MRCOG Part 3 examination was the College’s largest ever exam diet with over 1,000 candidates sitting the exam globally. Council noted that the pass rates were consistent with previous years. As a consequence of the conflict with India, the Part 3 exam in Lahore was postponed. An online contingency exam has been scheduled for 15 and 16 August to support the 103 candidates affected.</p>

The College is finalising preparations for the Part 3 pilot exam taking place on 26 July 2025. The Pilot will consist of three parallel circuits of 10 tasks. 59 Trainees and SAS/LED doctors have registered with a maximum capacity of 60 for the exam.

Planning for the November 2025 Part 3 diet is underway. The exams will take place across 6 countries including the first delivery in the new centre in Jeddah.

Council was made aware of allegations of coordinated sharing of question topics during the May Part 3 exams in the Asia Pacific region. The Exam Board has reviewed candidate data and found no evidence of any advantage or improved performance across sessions. However, if any malpractice is substantiated, the Vice President for Education confirmed that the College will take action in line with the Code of Conduct. In future, the College will quarantine candidates immediately after the exam finishes to remove any risk of malpractice.

Council enquired about the process to appoint RCOG examiners. The Vice President for Education confirmed that there are robust processes in place to recruit examiners and that over 100 examiners have applied for roles. It was commented that it will be important that any appointments are staggered to ensure that exams continue to be appropriately resourced.

Council was informed that 211 candidates sat the DRCOG in March 2025, with 106 candidate passing. Traditionally, the DRCOG Prize Medal is awarded to the first-time candidate who achieves the overall highest mark in the DRCOG. In 2025, three candidates each achieved the joint highest score. As such, the College is proposing that each of the candidates receive a significant in acknowledgement of their outstanding performance.

Council approved the awarding of Certificate of Special Recognition to the highest-scoring candidates.

Council noted the Report on Education and Exams Activities.

13

CEO

13.1

CEO Report

The Chief Executive presented the report on the latest activity across the College.

The Chief Executive highlighted the significant amount of work underway across the College.

Abortion Reform

On 17 June MPs voted to decriminalise abortion in England and Wales. Council noted that the Bill will now make its way through the House of Lords, however, the College does not expect significant opposition.

Strategy

Council was informed that the new five-year strategy for the RCOG was approved by the Board of Trustees in May. The Chief Executive placed on record their thanks to Council for their support in developing this important document for the College.

Customer Relationship Management Project (CRM)

Council noted that work continues on the CRM migration project. The project team is exploring options for launching the new CRM taking into consideration core College activities such as the elections, Congress and exams. A full proposal will be shared with Officers and then the Finance and General Purposes Committee in due course.

Council noted the CEO's report.

<p>14</p>	<p>Board of Trustees May 2025 Report Dr Alastair Campbell presented the report on the May 2025 Board of Trustees meeting.</p> <p>Council noted that this will be Dr Alastair Campbell’s last report as their term on Council comes to an end. Dr Alastair Campbell offered to speak to any Council member interested in standing for the elected Council Trustee position on the Board of Trustees, for which an election will take place on 12 December.</p> <p>Council noted the report on the May 2025 Board of Trustees meeting.</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>Report from SAS/LED Lead The SAS/LED Lead presented their report, which highlighted the breadth of work that the SAS/LED Committee had undertaken since the last meeting.</p> <p>The SAS/LED Lead highlighted that SAS/LED doctors are considering balloting for industrial action. A BMA indicative ballot will open in July 2025.</p> <p>Council noted that four medical Royal Colleges had endorsed the SASsix initiative. The SAS/LED Lead enquired whether the College would reconsider its position on this matter. The Vice President for Membership and Workforce confirmed that the movement is low risk for the College and primarily about disseminating information and good practice within NHS Trusts.</p> <p>Council noted the Report from the SAS/LED Lead.</p>
<p>16</p>	<p>Report from FSRH President The FSRH President presented their report on the activities of the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare.</p> <p>The FSRH President informed Council that the 12 September Council meeting will be their last. On 25 September, the new FSRH President, Dr Zara Haider, will take up post, with the 12 December meeting of Council being their first.</p> <p>Council noted that a reception event to be held at Parliament on 11 September, will take place to recognise the FSRH becoming the College of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare. Both the President and the Chief Executive of the RCOG will be in attendance.</p> <p>Council was informed that the Clinical Effectiveness Unit are currently developing an update to the UKMEC, with this likely to launch in early September.</p> <p>Council noted the FSRH report.</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>Report from Women’s Voices Lead The Women’s Voices Lead noted the written update on recent activities of the Women’s Network and Voices Panel.</p> <p>Council noted that the Women’s Network is currently planning its next Instagram Live after the success of the first event which took place in March on the topic of Hyperemesis Gravidarum and pregnancy sickness.</p> <p>The Women’s Network continue to be involved in research across the College and more widely. This includes work with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and the Bristol Urological Institute amongst others.</p> <p>The Women’s Voices Lead also highlighted the Women’s Network’s contribution to the new RCOG strategy as well as the work of the wider PPI team in responding to the variety of concerns submitted.</p>

	<p>Council noted the Report from the Women’s Voices Lead.</p>
18	<p>Report from Trainees’ Committee Chair The National Trainees’ Committee (NTC) Vice-Chair presented their report, which provided an update on the NTC’s recent activities.</p> <p>Council noted that NTC’s involvement in the World Congress including the delivery of a presentation by the NTC Chair.</p> <p>The NTC Vice-Chair informed Council that the recruitment for all 10 Regional Representatives on the NTC has concluded, and the new representatives have been appointed.</p> <p>Work continues on the Trainees’ section of the RCOG website. The NTC will be producing an e-newsletter to be circulated every quarter, which will update trainees on key information relevant to them, share regional information and highlight opportunities for trainees.</p> <p>Council noted the Report from Trainees’ Committee Chair.</p>
19	<p>Disciplinary, Removals and Reinstatement Committee Report The DRRC Chair presented the Disciplinary, Removals and Reinstatement Committee Report, which provided an update on the removals, reinstatements and sanctions conferred by the Committee.</p> <p>Council noted the Disciplinary, Removals and Reinstatement Committee Report.</p>
20	<p>Council Membership</p>
20.1	<p>Vice President Elections 2025 The Chief Executive presented the paper on the Vice President Elections 2025, which included the proposed 2025 Vice President election nomination pack.</p> <p>It was agreed that the role of the Women’s Network would be clarified further within the role description.</p> <p>Action: Ensure that the Vice President role description references the work of the Women’s Network.</p> <p>Council approved the Vice President Election nomination pack.</p>
20.2	<p>Council Elections 2025 results Council’s congratulations were noted for the successful candidates in the following constituencies:</p> <p>Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Midlands – Archana Hatti • East Midlands – Frances Hills <p>Fellows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London: North, Central, East and North West – Joseph Iskaros • East of England – Alastair McKelvey • South West – Rachna Bahl • North West – Andrew Pickersgill • Kent, Surrey and Sussex – Melanie Tipples • Thames Valley and Wessex – Aparna Reddy • East Midlands – Mausumi Das

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scotland – Evelyn Ferguson • Scotland – Paul Mills • Wales – Sujeewa Fernando • Ireland - Republic of Ireland – Suzanne O’Sullivan • Ireland - Northern Ireland – Hans Nagar • Middle East and North Africa – Sherif Abdel Fattah • America/Australasia/Pacific Rim – Peter von Dadelszen • Sub-Saharan Africa – Samson Agwu • South Asia – Santanu Acharya <p>New Council members will be inducted on 21 August prior to their first Council meeting on 12 September.</p> <p>Council noted the Council Elections 2025 results.</p>
20.3	<p>Terms of reference: Review of external bodies on Council Council approved the terms of reference for the review of external bodies on Council.</p>
20.4	<p>Committee and Honorary Appointments and Extensions Seven new appointments and four extensions were ratified.</p> <p>Council noted that extensions are proposed by exception and Officers have reviewed the rationale for each extension proposed.</p>
20.5	<p>Council representatives on Board/Committees: Expressions of interest for the following vacant positions coming were requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee: FRCOG - Audit & Risk Committee: FRCOG and MRCOG - Education Board: FRCOG and MRCOG <p>Council members were advised to contact Natasha Sullivan to confirm their interest in any of the roles.</p>
20.6	<p>2026 Council and Board meeting dates Council noted the 2026 Council and Board meeting dates.</p>
21	<p>Reports/minutes 21.1 Clinical Quality Board minutes 13 March 2025 21.2 Workforce Board minutes 27 March 2025 21.3 Global Health Board minutes 12 June 2025 21.4 Membership Board minutes 23 May 2025</p>
22	<p>Any other business There was no other business and so the meeting was closed.</p>