



ROYAL COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS
Minutes of a Meeting of Council held at the RCOG and virtually on
Friday, 24 February 2023

PRESENT

President	Miss Raneer Thakar (Chair)
Senior Vice President, Global Health	Professor Hassan Shehata
Vice President, Clinical Quality	Mrs Geeta Kumar
Vice President, Membership and 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 Adam Balen
Dr Alastair Campbell
Dr Mausumi Das
Professor Stergios Doumouchtsis
Professor Colin Duncan
Mr Sujeewa Fernando
Miss Fatima Husain
Mr Joseph Iskaros
Mr Andrew Leather
Dr Hans Nagar
Mr Andrew Pickersgill
Mr Andrew Sizer
Dr Suzanne O’Sullivan
Miss Melanie Tipples
Professor Peter von Dadelszen
Mr Philip Rolland

ELECTED MEMBERS

Dr George Attilakos
Dr Jenny Barber
Dr Hlupekile Chipeta
Dr William Dudill
Dr Jonathan Frost
Ms Angharad Jones
Dr Chimwemwe Kalumbi
Dr Vanitha Kumar
Mr Alastair McKelvey
Dr Javaid Muglu
Dr Hanan Mustafa
Dr Claire Thompson
Dr William Parry-Smith

MEMBERS

Professor Emma Crosbie, Academic Board Chair
Dr Julie Anne Forbes, RCOG Specialty and Associate Specialist and Locally Employed Doctors representative
Ms Jane Plumb, Women’s Voices Lead

IN ATTENDANCE

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

1 Welcome

The President welcomed all to the meeting, and extended a particular welcome to the four new Council members, the SAS/LED representative, Dr Julie Anne Forbes, and the FSRH Vice-President, Dr Charlotte Porter, attending in place of the FSRH President.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:
Heidi Stelling MRCOG, Trainees Committee Chair
Basky Thilaganathan FRCOG
Janet Barter, FSRH President

3 Procedure for Business

3.1 RCOG Confidentiality Agreement and Declaration of Interest and Good Standing had been circulated. Council were asked to complete and return the form if they had not done so within the last year.

4 Minutes and Matters Arising

4.1 Resolved:

THAT the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 December (A1086), 9 December 2022 (A1087) and 16 December (A1088) were approved.

5 Obituaries

5.1 Resolved:

THAT the sympathy of Council be extended to the relatives of the following:

Mr Victor Alan Walker Blunt – Fellow of Australia
Dr Francis Unokiwe Edozien – Fellow of Nigeria
Professor Denys Vivian Ivor Fairweather – Fellow of England
Mr Pharic Nelson Gillibrand – Fellow of England
Dr Pamela Marjorie Laurence – Fellow of England
Mr Sumant Rai Patel – Fellow of Kenya

6 President

6.1 President report

The President gave an update on the first three months of her term, which had been very busy attending meetings and working closely with stakeholders including NHS England.

It was noted that the Genomics Taskforce has arranged a virtual genomics study day for 27th February 2023 run by the Subspecialty Committee. A grant application to the global biopharma company, GSK, to fund Genomic Podcasts was successful to film five podcasts on Genomics, and a grant of 100K from HEE to undertake specific deliverables for Genomic medicine in O&G (with RCM).

On 2nd February, the College launched a campaign calling for action to tackle the impact of pelvic floor dysfunction on UK women's lives. A comprehensive policy statement outlines the key opportunities to reduce the impact of pelvic floor dysfunction for women through improved education, more accessible information and better access to specialist healthcare professionals. The campaign highlights the importance of all healthcare professionals having the knowledge and confidence to talk to women about pelvic floor health in routine healthcare appointments, to better support women to maintain good pelvic floor health throughout their lives.

The President, the Vice President for Academia and Strategy, and the International Council representative for South Asia attended and spoke at the All India College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (AICOG) 65th Conference in Kolkata India between 4th and 8th January 2023. The annual meeting was hosted by FOGSI with approximately 10,000 delegates in attendance. The President additionally attended the Ulster O&G Society Winter meeting, Portrush on 3rd February 2023.

The President updated on the work of the RCOG/RCM Independent Maternity Working Group (IMWG). The IMWG is acting as a critical friend to those who have responsibility to fund and implement the recommendations from the Ockenden and Kirkup reports. The IMWG is funded by the DHSC and NHSE to ensure the voice of those working in maternity services is considered within any guidance on the implementation of the recommendations and ensuring they are sustainable, workable and relevant to current maternity services. The group has been established with commitment from the Royal Colleges - RCM, RCOG, RCPCH (BAPM), RCOA and others who work in maternity services acting with one voice. Some of the members of the IMWG may not have had a voice previously in this work, such as Sonographers and Obstetric Anaesthetists.

6.2 Results of Council survey

The President thanked Council members for responding to a recent survey on the timing and format of Council meetings, membership ceremonies and dinners, and presented the results.

The following points were agreed:

- Need to ensure Council meetings are the right length to cover key business and ensure there is sufficient time for discussion
- Vice Presidents should bring one topic for discussion/input from their portfolio to each meeting
- It would be valuable to include an update from the Trainees Committee and the SAS/LED representative, and time to discuss queries raised by members
- That the regional presentations require 20-30minutes for presentation and discussion
- That the hybrid arrangement for meetings should continue
- That there should be a workshop each time Council meet on relevant topics
- That Council members should not wear gowns for meetings.
- That the current arrangements for Council dinners, with two formal dinners each year and regular informal Council suppers will continue.

The commitment for Council members to attend ceremonies was discussed and if there is anything the College can do to facilitate attendance. The following points were agreed:

- That the Chief Executive would write to Councillors Trusts to ask they be released from clinical work for their Council role and commitments
- To create a poll and rota to allocate Council members to attend the ceremonies
- To explore trialling holding a ceremony on a Saturday

6.3 Women's Voices Lead appointment

Council approved the appointment of Ms Jane Plumb MBE as Women's Voices Lead for a three-year term of office from March 2023.

Council congratulated Ms Plumb on her appointment.

7 Introduction from new Council members

The following new Council members introduced themselves:

Mausumi Das, Fellows rep East Midlands

Sujeewa Fernando, Fellows rep Wales

Hanan Mustafa, Members rep Scotland

8 Presentations from regional representatives

8.1 Presentation – Northern, Yorkshire and Humber

The Fellows' and Members' representatives, Professor Adam Balen and Dr Hlupekile Chipeta, for the Northern, Yorkshire and Humber region presented an update from the region. The two regions functions separately for training: North East, and Yorkshire/Humber.

The number of member, fellows and trainees in the region was shared. A Council member asked if the number of SAS/LED members and associate members could also be included. The FSRH Vice-President gave updated figures for the CSRH trainee numbers.

The regional representatives raised concerns in the region that the region could lose training posts following HEE's reallocation of posts; it was responded that there has been an expansion of posts in England so no posts will be lost.

The region tends to receive positive results on the annual TEF survey; it was noted that Yorkshire and Humber have a Rewarding Excellence Scheme which is very well received. The President queried how the scheme works and it was responded that the regional representatives will find this out and feed-back to Council.

9 Education

9.1 Report on Education and Exam activities

The Vice President for Education reported that the contract was signed in January 2023 to deliver the first Aster MedCity Accreditation programme in India. The Vice President and team undertook an official RCOG site visit in February where they toured the hospital facilities, met with faculty and trainees, and made a formal assessment against the College's accreditation standards as part of the quality assurance process that will lead to the award of provisional accreditation for 12 months subject to Education Board approval.

The Corniche Hospital training programme has proved extremely popular with local Emirati doctors; ten applications were received and two doctors have been appointed to commence ST5 training in May 2023.

The results of the MRCOG Part 1 and 2 examinations in January 2023 were presented. The MRCOG Part 3 had a successful virtual diet in February 2023; this was the last additional diet of the exam as the backlog has now cleared and the next diet is planned for May 2023.

The Vice President for Education provided an update on the Training Programme Uncoupling proposal and noted that a discussion would be undertaken at the April Council meeting, once Education Board have had the opportunity to discuss the proposal in detail. A significant amount of work has been undertaken so far to develop the proposal to uncouple core and higher training, however, feedback received has indicated that further supporting data and preparatory work would be necessary to strengthen the rationale for change. This means that the proposal for Uncoupling will be separated from the Advanced Training Review, which needs to move ahead as planned if the project timeline of implementation is to be achieved.

The Advanced Training Review is an important piece of work to ensure the curriculum reflects current practice. The consultation period for the review will open shortly and will provide a full opportunity for the system to feedback on the proposed new curricula for both advanced and sub-specialty training. The consultation outcomes will shape the College's formal submission to the GMC this Spring and, following approval, roll out of the new curricula will commence in Winter 2023.

Some concerns have been raised on the implementation and timetable for the review. A Council member emphasised that the review has involved a lot of work and there is pressure on Heads of Schools so it is important that the implementation is done well. A Council member cautioned of the need to be mindful of the timescale of introducing new changes, and queried whether it is realistic to implement the proposed changes this year.

It was responded that feedback to the consultation will be listened to, and whilst the aim is to implement as soon as is feasible, there would be discussions with individual Heads of Schools to tailor the implementation to the particular region.

10 Clinical Quality

10.1 Report on Clinical Quality Activities

The Vice President for Clinical Quality reported that the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced in December 2022 that the Tommy's National Centre for Maternity Improvement has received funding from NIHR to trial scale up implementation of the tool in the NHS. Following a successful bid to the NHSx Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare Award the Centre has been awarded NIHR funding to run a 36-month randomised control trial across 26 NHS maternity units, commencing later in 2023.

The new NMPA contract was signed with HQIP in December 2022, enabling its work to continue until December 2025. There is potential for an additional extension.

In January, the NMPA published a report on trust level results which is available publicly on the NMPA website.

Version 16.0 of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection in Pregnancy guideline was published in December and for the first time is available in a mobile accessible format via the MAGIC app.

The Outpatient Hysteroscopy good practice paper has been published in February 2023. Enhanced content including animated summaries and audio versions for a number of guidance publications are in the process of being developed and uploaded, including for Scientific Impact Papers, and Patient Information.

In order to increase transparency with the guidelines development process and timelines, it was proposed to Council that the College publishes a regular status report on the College's website. This will provide a dashboard view detailing the guidance currently under development or review.

Phase 2 of the ABC Programme (Avoiding Brain Injury at Childbirth) closed at the end of January 2023. DHSC have expressed their commitment to the programme and the College is now waiting for timelines of the invitation to tender for the Phase 3 pilot.

Planning and drafting is underway for three evaluation papers to submit for publication for the OASi2 project. A study results launch event will take place in Union Street in May 2023.

11 Global Health

11.1 Report on Global Health Activities

The Senior Vice President for Global Health reported that a no cost extension has been agreed that will enable the Making Abortion Safe programme to continue until the end of 2023. Progress continues to be made on this programme; 900 healthcare professionals accessed online Learning resources and Best Practice Papers on the subject and a global survey of 1,675 providers of abortion and post abortion care on experiences of stigma has been conducted.

Progress was noted on the Gynaecology Health Matters project in Bangladesh. Training is due to be rolled out by expert trainers in Kushtia and Rajbari districts in March and April 2023. The Government of Bangladesh have endorsed the programmes' Essential Gynaecological Skills Training package.

The SRHR UK Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) Advocacy Project, funded by the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), continues to utilise the clinical voice of the RCOG to build and mobilise a network of Parliamentary allies to advocate for the prioritisation of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and increase spending in its ODA budget. The team has worked with MPs to submit over 20 written questions to the FCDO, highlighting the need for greater investment in SRHR, as well as key SRHR challenges and effective interventions being undertaken in some of our programme countries.

It is planned to undertake work to review the courses and events that the RCOG offers to make sure they are relevant and strengthen the links with Education. Council members were encouraged to share suggestions on new courses and faculty, and feedback on the current courses for future discussion.

It was noted that Council members had received an email recently with a discounted registration fee for the World Congress 2023 being hosted at Union Street. The Vice President for Global Health encouraged members to register and that session chairs will be allocated in line with areas of interest.

11.2 Congress 2025

The Vice President presented two date options for the 2025 Congress, which will be hosted at ExCel in London; one of the date options clashes with the school half-term and the other option is outside of the school holidays but is at a more expensive rate.

Council members felt it would be difficult for members to attend a Congress which was at the same time as half-term as it would be difficult for Trusts to cover leave and recommended that alternative dates be chosen. The Chief Executive thanked Council for their views and that this feedback will be given to Board of Trustees who will take the final decision.

12 Membership and Workforce

12.1 Report on Membership and Workforce activities

The Vice President for Membership and Workforce reported that the first meeting of the new Workforce Board took place in January 2023.

The College has seen 6% growth in total global membership during 2022, reaching a record figure of 16,666 members in January 2023. Approximately half of members are UK based and half are international.

A number of Membership Transformation Projects are being initiated, including proposition for retired members, elevation to Fellowship, associate member process and proposition, and potential introduction of affiliate status.

The Vice President noted that the College continues to receive a high number of job plans for review, with 29 new requests received since the start of December 2022, and thanked all Council members who respond efficiently to these requests.

A review has been undertaken of the current process including timelines for review and communication with Trusts. A number of service improvement changes aimed at speeding up the process have been implemented including more regular follow-up with reviewers and with Trusts when they are asked to make amendments based on assessor feedback and resubmit their job plans for approval. Additional job plan assessors are also being recruited.

It was requested for Council members to encourage their Trusts to share the job plans with them for an initial review first, that all are encouraged to review the plans within two weeks, and to encourage colleagues to put themselves forward as assessors.

A Council member suggested recruiting past Councillors as assessors as they will be familiar with the process and what is required.

A Council member suggested that assessors have a link with their regional Council representative; the Vice President thanked the member for this suggestion and that it will be implemented.

A Council member raised that the calculation of PAs is the main issue effecting assessors and requested if the College can check this first before sending the job plan to the assessor review; the Vice President responded that a template is being developed which will require the number of PAs to add up correctly.

A Council member raised that there is a different contract in Wales and queried whether there is a template for Welsh job plans. The Vice President responded that they have been made aware of the differences and the team are working through the implications, including advising assessors who are commenting on a Welsh plan so that they are aware.

A Council member requested that College also input to Foundation Trust job plans; it was responded that these Trusts can choose to use the College but it cannot be mandated. Council representatives can help encourage their Trusts to use the College service. The President will discuss with the policy team whether there is potential to lobby for this to be changed.

The President thanked Council members for their time to contribute as assessors and that the College will try to make the process as straightforward as possible.

A Council member raised the new Certificate of Eligibility for Short-Term Locums and that it was felt there was not enough communication from the College ahead of the launch. The Vice President responded that the mandate for the certificate is from NHS England, and that there was communication with all locum agencies. The certificate is only needed in certain conditions. It is important to have in place and members are requested to support colleagues to gain sign-off on the competencies required.

13 Strategy and Academia

13.1 Report on Strategy and Academia activities

The Vice President for Strategy and Academia reported that the College has published its ambition for maternity safety going forwards, recognising the need to articulate its strategic role in relation to this

important area. The aim is to develop a longer-term strategy that will also enable us to proactively respond to any issued maternity safety reports. A working group will be responsible for the development of the three-five year strategy that will deliver outputs, within the remit and influence of the RCOG, to support improvements in maternity safety. The Patient Safety Committee reporting into Clinical Quality Board will oversee this work.

A Council member queried whether the maternity safety strategy would focus on the labour ward or whether it will also include antenatal care where there have been concerning degradations in service; the Vice President thanked the member for highlighting these issues and that the recommendations in the strategy will be data driven, and need to balance between being ambitious and realistic. The Senior Vice President for Global Health noted that a multi-disciplinary NHS England group has been set-up to develop postnatal guidance, focusing on the mother.

A Council member raised that the Government has withdrawn its plan for a long-term cancer strategy on cancer and asked the College's position on this issue; it was responded that this will be taken for discussion by the policy team, in consideration with the cervical screening rate.

The development of the Workforce Safe Staffing Tool has been delayed due to multiple delays receiving, and subsequent issues with, the HES data required for the workforce tool from NHS Digital. The ongoing delay with the data has put the proposed March launch date at risk.

A video demonstration of the tool was shared with Council, which has been recorded to be made available on the website to aid with the launch. Further updates on the future development of the tool will be shared with Council.

Council noted their thanks to Dr Jo Mountfield, past Vice President and current Workforce Tool Clinical Lead, and the Workforce Clinical Fellows for their excellent work on the development of the tool.

A Council member felt that the data shared through the tool was very interesting and queried how it will be used. The President responded that the data will be vital to understand the current maternity workforce and for future workforce planning, and that it will be able to support clinical leaders in maternity in their requests for additional staffing.

A Council member queried how the tool defines an obstetrician, when comparing number of births per obstetrician in a Trust. It was responded that complex calculations have been carried out using the number of PAs.

The Vice President gave an update on the important work of Supporting Our Doctors; a new Workplace Behaviour Lead is being recruited, a RCOG Good Practice Paper is in production on the Prevention and Treatment of Work-related Post-traumatic Stress Symptoms in the O&G Workforce, and Surviving in Scrubs are confirmed to speak at RCOG congress on the topic of sexual harassment in the workforce.

It was noted that applications for the 2023 awards round would open from Monday 13 March and close on Thursday 11 May. Applications will be reviewed and scored by representatives of the Academic Board. The list of new award recipients will be shared with Council for ratification at the September meeting.

14 Academic

14.1 Report on Academic activities

The Academic Board Chair reported on the recent successful Blair Bell Annual Academic Meeting held at the College on 9th and 10th February 2023. The event was well attended with 95 delegates and excellent speakers.

15 Women's Network

The Women's Voices Lead noted the circulated written update on recent activities of the Network and Women's Voices Panel.

16 FSRH

The Vice President of FSRH reported that the Faculty has recently launched its "30th Anniversary campaign", designed to highlight and celebrate 30 years of clinical excellence from FSRH members and celebrate the

FSRH's role in supporting them to change patients' lives for the better. This campaign will run throughout 2023, culminating at a live celebratory event.

The comprehensive governance review that commenced in 2022 is progressing positively. At present work is underway to review the FSRH Articles of Association and Byelaws, with recommended updates to be presented to Trustees in July. In parallel, the FSRH Council membership model and the structures underneath Council are being considered, with proposals being made to Council in February.

17 CEO

17.1 CEO Update

The Chief Executive's report on the work of the College across a range of activity, constructed around the four goals of the RCOG strategy, was noted.

Following discussion at the previous Council meeting, income and expenditure data has been included in the report. There is a full breakdown of the figures in the RCOG Annual Report 2021-2022, which will be presented to Board of Trustees for approval in March ahead of submission to the Charity Commission and the Office of the Scottish Registrar.

The annual report on membership numbers indicates the College membership has increased 6% from this time last year. This reflects the impact of increased MRCOG Part 3 exam diets in the year.

18 Disciplinary, Removal and Reinstatement Committee

18.1 Removals from Regulatory Registers

Council noted that the DRRC has ratified the removal of an individual from the RCOG Member Register following their erasure from the GMC Register.

19 Council Membership

19.1 Committee and Honorary Appointments

The eight new appointments to RCOG Committee posts were ratified.

19.2 Councillor Role Description

The revised role description was approved with the following amendments:

- That Council members need to attend minimum of two ceremonies per year (rather than three)
- To remove that Council members are required to attend ticketed College dinners and that should be optional
- To change the requirement of Council to attend meetings to 60% rather than two thirds

It was agreed that yearly appraisals for Council members undertaken by the Officers would be valuable.

It was confirmed that those standing for election to Council need to be in active practice, as per the definition in the RCOG regulations, but are not required to hold a consultant position.

19.3 Council Elections 2023

The timetable for the elections was noted, with seven positions coming for election. Council approved the circulated nomination form.

20 Reports/minutes

The following minutes were circulated to note:

20.1 Workforce Board January 2023 minutes

20.2 Global Health Board November 2022 minutes

21 Any other business

The Fellows' representative for Scotland noted that Professor Anna Glasier has been appointed the lead for the Women's' Health Strategy in Scotland and it will be important for the College to build a relationship with her.

A Council member raised that they had received College emails from the President recently in the name of the most recent Past-President; they were requested to forward this correspondence on so this can be investigated.

The President gave thanks to Dr Sarah Quinn, Trainees Committee Vice-Chair, who would soon be demitting office on behalf of Council for her excellent contributions to Council on behalf of the Trainees Committee.