



ROYAL COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS
Minutes of a Meeting of Council held at the RCOG and virtually on
Friday, 10 June 2022

PRESENT

President	Mr Edward Morris (Chair)
Senior Vice President, Global Health	Miss Raneer Thakar
Vice President, Clinical Quality	Professor Tim Draycott
Vice President, Membership	Dr Pat O'Brien
Vice President, Workforce and Professionalism	Dr Jo Mountfield
Vice President, Education	Miss Sue Ward

ELECTED FELLOWS

Dr Jyotsna Acharya
Professor Dilly Anumba
Dr Carolyn Bailie
Professor Adam Balen
Mr Ian Currie
Professor Stergios Doumouchtsis
Dr Kirsty Dundas
Mr Hany Habeeb
Mrs Geeta Kumar
Mr John Latimer
Mr Andrew Leather
Mr Tim Overton
Mr Nick Panay
Mr Hassan Shehata
Mr Andrew Sizer
Professor Basky Thilaganathan
Dr Sarah Vause

ELECTED MEMBERS

Professor Vasanth Andrews
Dr George Attilakos
Dr Hlupekile Chipeta
Dr William Dudill
Dr Jonathan Frost
Ms Angharad Jones
Dr Vanitha Kumar
Mr Alastair McKelvey
Dr William Parry-Smith
Dr Claire Thompson

MEMBERS

Professor Emma Crosbie, Academic Board Chair
Dr Laura Hipple, RCOG Specialty and Associate Specialist and Locally Employed Doctors Lead
Dr Asha Kasliwal, FSRH President
Ms Jane Plumb, Vice Chair, Women's Network
Dr Sarah Quinn, Vice Chair of Trainees Committee
Dr Heidi Stelling, Chair of Trainees Committee

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive	Ms Kate Lancaster
Executive Director, Finance	Mr Ian Hill
Interim Executive Director, External Affairs	Mr Ben Butler
Executive Director, Education, Quality and Projects	Ms Carly Edwards
Executive Director, Global and Membership	Ms Kristen Morgan
Business Administrator	Ms Natasha Sullivan

1 Welcome

The President welcomed all to the meeting. The President congratulated the new President-elect, Miss Rane Thakar, following the announcement of the election result.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Michael Geary FRCOG
 Baroness Shaista Gohir, Women's Voices Lead
 Alastair Campbell FRCOG
 Martin Maher MRCOG
 Ian Scudamore FRCOG
 Abhijeet Shah MRCOG

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 22 April 2022 (A1083) were received, with one correction to the location of the meeting of the RCOG Officers with members from Shrewsbury and Telford Trust.

5 Obituaries

5.1 Resolved:

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

Mr Robert David Atlay – Fellow of England
 Mr Samuel Valla Bhima – Fellow of England
 Mr Joseph Masters Holmes – Fellow of England
 Mr Sanat Kumar Panja – Fellow of England
 Mr Kenneth Roger Peel – Fellow of England
 Mrs Hazel Mary Stibbe – Fellow of Wales
 Mr Richard Trevor Turner-Warwick – Fellow of England

5.2 The Fellows' representative for the North West gave the tribute to Mr Robert Atlay, past Council member and Honorary Secretary.

6 President

6.1 President's Report

The President was delighted to speak at a Parliamentary reception in May celebrating the permanent implementation of telemedicine for Early Medical Abortion in England, providing organisations involved in the campaign the chance to come together to celebrate the achievement. A challenge remains with delivering appropriate safeguarding for under 18s, and discussions are being undertaken with the RCPCH.

The RCOG is providing light-touch coordination on the response to the Ukraine crisis through the establishment of a health emergency working group. The RCOG held a meeting with obstetricians and gynaecologists in Ukraine in early May and heard updates on the current humanitarian situation and extent of the challenges faced.

To support continuing professional development for colleagues in Ukraine, the RCOG has offered free virtual places to the RCOG World Congress for Ukrainian obstetricians and gynaecologists, and over 600 people have signed up to attend.

The RCOG is following up with those who have been in contact to establish what equipment is needed and to work with Baby Lifeline and other partners to enable more specialist medical equipment to reach facilities across Ukraine.

Council asked if there is more that the RCOG could do to ask the government to send funds for equipment to Ukraine. The President updated that following his recent meetings, Ukraine colleagues have not requested money but practical support where it is most needed.

Hong Kong Congress

The President updated Council on plans for the 2023 RCOG World Congress which was due to be held in Hong Kong as a hybrid event with some participants attending in person, but the majority attending virtually. The Officers have reconsidered this plan following recent experiences of in-person meetings as a valuable opportunity for people to come together.

The President presented a proposal to instead hold an in-person Congress in London in spring 2023. The scheduled Hong Kong Anniversary meeting would go ahead in 2023 with support from the Officers in attendance, and the 2025 RCOG Congress would be held in-person in Hong Kong.

Council strongly supported the proposal to hold the 2023 Congress in London as an opportunity for members to meet.

It was felt it will be important to honour the commitment to the Hong Kong College to support their 2023 meeting, with strong attendance from the RCOG, and hold an RCOG World Congress in Hong Kong in the near future.

It was raised whether a location in the UK outside of London could host the meeting in 2023; it was responded that due to the exceptionally tight timeline that London was most preferable for this occasion, however holding a Congress in the UK outside of London will be important to consider for the future. It was suggested that the RCOG Annual Professional Development conference could be hosted outside of London.

The Trainees Committee Chair raised the timing of the 2023 National Trainees Conference, which would also be hosted at Union Street and could be overshadowed by the Congress. This needs some further consideration.

Pensions

The President updated that he has commissioned some external advice on pensions for Fellows and Members. A number of case studies are being added, as the advice is very technical. It will be published on the RCOG website shortly.

7 Presentation from regional representative – America, Australasia, Pacific Rim

The International representative for America, Australasia and Pacific Rim, Dr John Latimer, presented an update from the region, focused on Malaysia and Singapore.

Council raised that the declining birth rate and increase in social egg freezing due to societal changes, show that fertility education is important around the world.

Council discussed the rates of members sitting the MRCOG exam and the retention of members after completing the exam. The Vice President for Clinical Quality raised how the College can engage with members from the UK who have moved to America or Australasia and how the membership offer can be tailored to them.

The President noted that RANZCOG are keen to explore links with RCOG programmes, and the potential for an exchange between UK and Australian trainees.

8 Clinical Quality

8.1 Report on Clinical Quality Activities

The Vice President for Clinical Quality reported that the Avoiding Brain Injury in Childbirth (ABC) programme is now in its optimisation phase until 30 June 2022 with resources, including training manuals and handbooks, being finalised. The collaboration are working with DHSC on a plan for a pilot phase over the next nine months,

including costings which will be submitted to DHSC to approve a grant going forward. It is planned to broaden the programme to the other nations of the UK.

The Tommy's and ABC Programme presented to their Royal Highnesses the Princess Royal and the Duchess of Cambridge during their recent visit to Union Street. Both programmes, jointly led by the RCM and the RCOG were invited to display collaborative work for the improvement of maternity care.

Work on the OASi2 project continues with round one of the clinicians' survey re-opened in May. Sustainability site visits are continuing with a virtual 'share & learn' session also held for sustainability leads also in May.

A number of publications and guidelines have been published since the last meeting of Council, in addition seven suites of enhanced content, including audio versions, animated summaries and infographics, based on RCOG guidance have been completed on time for launch on the eLearning platform, with two further suites in development.

9 Global Health

9.1 Report on Global Health Activities

The Senior Vice President for Global Health noted the circulated report with an update on global health activities. Work across the three major Global Health projects; Making Abortion Safe, Essential Gynaecological Skills and SRHR UK Overseas Development Assistance Advocacy, is progressing well. Funding for further global health work is being considered and sought.

The Honorary Co-Director of Conference, Mr Andrew Sizer, provided an update on the upcoming RCOG World Congress, which will be hosted at Union Street. Mr Sizer thanked Council members for their contributions to the meeting, especially Mr Hassan Shehata, who has been the Council representative member on the Congress organising committee. There were a number of gaps on the programme for session chairs and Council members attending were asked to volunteer.

9.2 Discussion on MTI Programme

The Senior Vice President introduced the Medical Trainee Initiative (MTI) Officer, Mr Sanjay Rao, to Council to present an update on the MTI scheme. Mr Rao gave a presentation to Council on the process, benefits and training responsibilities associated with the scheme.

Council thanked Mr Rao for his presentation and his transformation of the scheme, which now gives a much-improved experience to trainees, and is excellently run and inclusive.

It was raised that there is an issue with a number of trainees who have completed the scheme remaining in UK after the conclusion of the programme rather than returning to their home country. The Vice President for Workforce and Professionalism noted that there is a workforce shortage globally, and therefore there is not an easy answer, as doctors are needed around the World. The Senior Vice President noted that this issue has previously been discussed at the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, as any action taken would need to be at the Academy level. Some members felt that this was not an issue of concern as it is up for individuals to decide where they would like to work.

A Council member raised that a member in Pakistan has said that the structure is lacking which does not motivate them to apply. The MTI Officer noted this feedback and will discuss raising the profile of the scheme with the Pakistan IRC Chair.

Council felt that it would be important to collect and analyse data from participants on the outcome of the scheme, particularly for those who leave the scheme early. The MTI Officer responded that data is collected, and that they would discuss with the ATSM Officer gaining additional statistics that can be discussed at the MTI Committee. The regional MTI champions also have good knowledge of the issues relevant to their region. In addition, it was raised that it is important to analyse the experience and background of those who are joining the scheme, and whether their aims match what is on offer with the scheme. There is a need to consider how the programme can be tailored to fit individuals.

The SAS/Led Lead noted that a paper would soon be released on the supervision of IMG trainees across all specialities, to share good practice. The link will be circulated to Council once it is released.

10 Membership

10.1 Report on Membership Activities

The Vice President for Membership reported that the College hosted two successful face-to-face membership ceremonies at Union Street on 9th June, the first ceremonies with full capacity since the pandemic, and thanked the Vice President for Education who led the ceremony in the absence of the President. Up to five further ceremonies are planned for the rest of this year, including one as part of the AICC conference in Mumbai in November.

It was noted that eighty percent of annual college subscriptions have been received. To date, for the 2022 subscription round, there have been 53 reinstatements (22 Fellows and 31 Members). Benefits will be stopped for non-payments from June and removals will begin in September, in line with the subscriptions timetable.

The second round of applications for Elevation to Fellowship in 2022 is underway, and will be submitted to the September Council meeting for approval.

The 2022 Awards cycle, including Honoris Causa and Ad Eundem Fellowships, has opened for applications. The list of successful award winners and Honorary Fellows will be presented for Council ratification in September.

The SAS/LED Lead reported that they are working to expand SAS/LED representation across RCOG Boards, committees and projects. SAS/ LED representatives have been taking part in the consultations on workforce planning and have been invited to take part in focus groups to review the new CPD Framework and new CPD ePortfolio to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

Only one application for Job Plan approval for Specialist SAS posts has been received so far. A Council member suggested raising awareness of the Specialist posts with Clinical Directors and having this as an item at a future Clinical Directors Forum meeting.

A Council member raised that College committee and honorary role descriptions include in their criteria that members must work in the NHS. This excludes members undertaking only private practice who would like to be involved in the College's work. The Officers agreed that this should be made flexible where possible, and that there are some roles where it is beneficial to be working in the NHS but many where it is not necessary.

11 Workforce and Professionalism

11.1 Report on Workforce and Professionalism activities

The Vice President for Workforce and Professionalism reported that the certificate of locum eligibility would soon be launched across the UK. The purpose of this certificate is to improve safety for woman and their babies, promote a supportive culture for locum doctors to develop and practice safely and assure colleagues and employers of an up-to-date level of competence.

A certificate will be required for those working in locum positions for less than two weeks duration at a middle grade level from February 2023. This will give a period of six months to gain the certificate.

The Training ePortfolio is being developed to support this work. Those completing the certificate will require support from colleagues to collect the evidence needed for the certificate sign-off via the ePortfolio.

There will be further communication with members ahead of the launch.

The Trainees Committee Chair queried how the evidence could be gained, and it was confirmed that it can be collected at any NHS hospital and it can be used for ARCP.

Good progress is being made on the workforce tool for England. HEE are building the prototype tool and populating it with data from the RCOG census and publicly available data sources. The HES data will be added once received; NHSX have been requested to provide this data. The tool is being demonstrated at the Maternity Transformation Programme Board shortly.

It was flagged that a number of Trusts have not submitted their data for the census and Council were urged to assist with this data collection; the list of Trusts who have not submitted data will be shared with Council representatives for their region.

11.2 Workforce Board proposal

The Vice President presented a proposal for the establishment of a Workforce Board. Workforce is a key issue for the College and it is important that this be reflected in the governance structure. The proposed Terms of Reference were shared which will be chaired by the Vice President for Workforce and Professionalism, and report to Council.

Council queried if the Board would be focused on workforce within the UK, or globally. It was confirmed that the Board would focus on the UK with ambition to work more widely. It was also confirmed, following a query of how the Board will feed into external events, that the Board will oversee the College's internal work and will liaise outwards as needed.

Council noted there are a large number of maternity representatives on the Board and requested if the number of gynaecological representatives could be increased. The Vice President responded that this will be considered, and requested Council to share any suggestions of potential representatives.

Council supported the establishment of the Board and approved the proposal.

12 Education

12.1 Report on Education and Exam activities

The Vice President for Education reported that the implementation project for the new Learning Management System would commence in June, following the conclusion of the procurement phase. Contracts were signed in late May with D2L (Desire to Learn), who also work with a number of other Medical Royal Colleges. Work has commenced on the migration of content from the old to the new platform, which is being managed by the supplier. A steering group is being formed to oversee the project.

The Trainees Committee Chair requested that trainee representatives for groups, such as the LMS steering group, be recruited through the National Trainees Committee. There is a regular newsletter to the committee where these requests can be included.

The Training Evaluation Form (TEF) thematic reports will be available on the website shortly along with a 'good practice' recommendations document.

The Mesh Task and Finish Group met in May to sign off the responses to the recent consultation and the updated Mesh Complications Management Training Pathway, and has therefore now concluded their work. This work was a successful partnership with surgeons and urologists from the Royal College of Surgeons of England. The training pathway will be launched in July 2022 overseen by highly specialised established practitioners working in commissioned regional specialised Mesh Centres, who can now register their interest by filling in a form on the RCOG website. There is potential to take the training pathway forward through the GMC's early adopter process for credentials in the future, but the training is starting in advance of that process.

A Council member asked where training could take place, and it was clarified that training would need to take place at one of the several mesh removal centres around the country.

A Council member asked if the training pathway could be made available overseas, such as in Europe. It was responded that Australia and New Zealand are developing their own pathway, using our model.

It was noted that 303 candidates sat the DRCOG in April. The prize medal was won jointly by Dr Emily Moran and Dr Holly Howell.

The next diets for the MRCOG Part 1 & 2 exams will take place at the start of July, with bookings open directly with Pearson Vue. There are a higher numbers of places at Pearson Vue centres available, because of pandemic restrictions being lifted globally so that there is no longer a capacity problem in the written exams. 768 candidates sat the MRCOG Part 3 exam over six days in May; with 239 candidates sitting a face-to-face exam at Union Street and 529 sitting the exam remotely. The Vice President thanked the examiners who took part in the May diet for all the time they volunteered. The May diet has significantly reduced the backlog of candidates waiting for a place. The future balance between face-to-face and remote diets for the Part 3 is under discussion.

A member of Council raised that they felt the face-to-face exam is more robust and asked that the Part 3 exam return to face-to-face as much as possible in future. The Vice President responded that the remote exam has been made as robust as possible, and all candidates have a chaperone with them throughout. The pass rates have not shown a significant variance. The College is aware that the examiners prefer to participate in the face-to-face version of the Part 3.

13 Academic

13.1 Report on Academic activities

The Academic Board Chair reported that planning has begun for the 2023 Blair Bell Annual Academic Meeting, which will take place in person at Union Street, as feedback from the 2022 virtual meeting reflected that a face-to-face meeting offers more value for trainees, and opportunities for networking.

Three appointments have been made to RCOG Research, which are due to be ratified by Council. The RCOG Research pages on the new website are in the process of being updated.

It is also hoped that the new website will enable the building of a new online appointment booking system to allow members and fellows to book short 1:1 sessions for research mentorship.

14 Women's Network

The Women's Network Vice-Chair noted the circulated written update on recent activities of the Network and Women's Voices Panel. The RCOG Women's Voices Lead, Shaista Gohir OBE has been appointed as a non-party political Crossbench Peer to the House of Lords. She will continue in the Women's Voices Lead role until a replacement is recruited. Council noted their warm congratulations to Ms Gohir on her appointment.

15 FSRH

The President of FSRH reported that Dr Janet Barter has been elected as the next president of FSRH and will begin her term on 23 September 2022. There will be a period of shadowing, through which the current incumbent retains decision-making responsibility.

The FSRH President thanked the Vice President for Workforce and Professionalism for her support to the Faculty's work to start developing a SRH Workforce Strategy. This will start with a SRH workforce (multi-professional) survey, which will inform a workforce report and workforce strategy.

A FSRH governance review commenced in March. Council, as well as the Board of Trustees and the Senior Management Team, have had the opportunity to take part in both a survey and interview.

16 Board of Trustees

The Council member Trustee discussed, as he comes to the end of his term on Council, the value of the Council member Trustee role going forward. The position was set-up in response to concerns when the Board of Trustees was formed that the Council and Board could fall out of alignment however, this has not been an issue. The President and two Vice Presidents sit on the Board of Trustees, and other Board committees such as Audit and Risk, and Finance and General Purposes, also have Council representatives.

The President thanked Mr Currie for his work, and requested Council to share their thoughts with him.

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.

At the Board of Trustees meeting in May, the RCOG budget for the next financial year was approved alongside the College's new investment strategy, which places an emphasis on responsible investing. There is much volatility in the financial markets causing uncertainty for investors, and the College is closely monitoring this.

17.2 Lindsay Stewart Trustees report

Council noted the circulated report summarising the status of all the Clinical Quality projects to date that fall under the legacy that was bequeathed by Dr Lindsay Stewart.

18 Elections

18.1 Presidential Election 2022

The Chief Executive formally noted, following the announcement on 9th June, that Miss Ranee Thakar has been elected as the next President of the RCOG. Miss Thakar will take up office in December 2022.

The election process was robust and a significantly higher voter turnout was achieved in this election compared to 2019.

A Council member raised that some colleagues had said they had not received or could not find the ballot email. The Chief Executive responded that the email was sent from Civica Election Services rather than the College, and all members had been emailed to notify them to look for an email from Civica and this was also included in the President's blog. There were in addition some members who had not paid their annual subscription fee and therefore were not eligible to receive a ballot, and some members who had not updated the College with their contact details.

A Council member's constituent had requested for the breakdown of the result. The Chief Executive responded that the College did not share the detailed results for the Presidential election.

A Council member raised there was an unfortunate technical issue that affected the live candidate Q&A for some people watching the live stream. A Council member also raised that the event did not allow candidates to show themselves in the best light due to the tight time limits and asked whether questions could be taken live from the audience in future.

The Chief Executive responded that the technical support for this event was run by an external supplier and that it had been recorded to enable members to watch it at a later time. The feedback on the event will be noted for consideration for the next election.

18.2 Vice President Election 2022

The proposed timeline and nomination pack documents were approved by Council. The nominations will open on 29th June and the ballot will take place at the September meeting of Council.

18.3 Council Election 2022 results

The Chief Executive acting as the Returning Officer announced the results of the Council elections 2022. The new members terms commence immediately and they will attend the September meeting of Council. Two positions, Members representative for Scotland and Fellows' representative for Republic of Ireland, remain vacant as no eligible nominations were received.

Fellow (FRCOG) representatives

London: North, Central, East and North West: Joseph Iskaros

East of England: Andrew Leather

South West: Philip Rolland

North West: Andrew Pickersgill

Kent, Surrey and Sussex: Melanie Tipples

Thames Valley and Wessex: Fatima Husain

East Midlands: Ian Scudamore

Scotland (two positions): Alastair Campbell and William Colin Duncan

Northern Ireland: Hans Nagar

International representatives

Middle East and North Africa: Sherif Abdel-Fattah

America/Australasia/Pacific Rim: Peter von Dadelszen

Sub-Saharan Africa: Dilichukwu OC Anumba

South Asia: Jyotsna Acharya

Member (MRCOG) representatives

London South: Javaid Muglu

North West: Jenny Barber

Kent, Surrey and Sussex: Chimwemwe Kalumbi

19 Disciplinary, Removal and Reinstatement Committee

19.1 Removals from Regulatory Registers

Council noted the removal of one member from the RCOG Member Register.

20 Council Membership

20.1 Committee and Honorary Appointments

The four new appointments and one extension to RCOG Committee posts were ratified.

20.2 Council representatives on Boards/Committees

The following appointments were approved:

- William Dudill as Council Members' representative on Education Board
- William Parry-Smith as Council representative on Audit and Risk Committee

21 Reports/minutes

The following minutes were circulated to note:

21.1 Membership Board minutes 17 March 2022

21.2 Education Board minutes 11 March 2022

22 Any other business

The SAS/LED lead requested approval for the SAS/LED Committee Vice Chairs to attend Council as deputy in her place as required. Council gave their approval.

23 Thank you to retiring Council members

The President thanked the following retiring members of Council for their valued contributions to Council and the wider work of the College.

Nick Panay
Tim Overton
Sarah Vause
Hany Habeeb
Ian Currie
Kirsty Dundas
Michael Geary
Carolyn Bailie
Hassan Shehata
John Latimer
Vasanth Andrews
Martin Maher
Abhijeet Shah