



ROYAL COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS
Minutes of a Meeting of Council held at the RCOG and virtually on
Friday, 9 December 2022

PRESENT

President	Miss Raneë 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
Professor Stergios Doumouchtsis
Professor Colin Duncan
Miss Fatima Husain
Mr Joseph Iskaros
Mr Andrew Leather
Dr Hans Nagar
Mr Andrew Pickersgill
Mr Andrew Sizer
Professor Basky Thilaganathan
Miss Melanie Tipples
Professor Peter von Dadelszen

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 Claire Thompson

MEMBERS

Professor Emma Crosbie, Academic Board Chair
Dr Eman Toeima, RCOG Specialty and Associate Specialist and Locally Employed Doctors representative
Dr Janet Barter, FSRH President
Ms Jane Plumb, Vice Chair, Women's Network
Dr Sarah Quinn, Vice Chair of Trainees Committee

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 new Vice Presidents, the FSRH President, and the Executive Director for Finance and Commercial attending their first meeting of Council. The President paid tribute to the past Officers, recognising their effort, commitment and achievements across their terms. The President expressed that she was looking forward to working with the College staff, Vice Presidents, and Council members in her new role.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:
 Baroness Shaista Gohir, Women's Voices Lead
 William Parry-Smith MRCOG
 Philip Rolland FRCOG
 Heidi Stelling 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 16 September 2022 (A1085) were approved.

5 Obituaries

5.1 Resolved:

THAT the sympathy of Council be extended to the relatives of the following:
 Professor Dame Valerie Beral – Fellow of England
 Dr Donal Patrick O'Brien – Fellow of Ireland

6 President

6.1 President report

The President reported that an early priority of her term would be to consider ways to increase engagement with the membership. Council will be invited to a workshop following the next Council meeting to look at how the President, Officers and Council members can work together to achieve this aim.

The President noted that she would like to ask Councillors for their feedback on the scheduling of future Council meetings to ensure there is sufficient time on the agenda for discussion, and consideration as to how Council meetings can best work alongside membership ceremonies. A survey will follow shortly to ask Council members their views.

7 Vice Presidents

7.1 Vice President Portfolios

Council noted the following agreed Vice President portfolios, which have been carefully considered to align with the strengths of the individuals, the priorities of the College and its membership, and are in line with the RCOG regulations:

- Vice President for Clinical Quality - Geeta Kumar
- Vice President for Academia and Strategy - Asma Khalil
- Vice President for Global Health - Hassan Shehata
- Vice President for Membership and Workforce - Laura Hipple
- Vice President for Education - Ian Scudamore

7.2 Senior Vice President

The President recommended to Council that Professor Hassan Shehata be designated as Senior Vice President. The appointment reflects Professor Shehata's long-term involvement in College life, which is important for the Senior Vice President who deputises for the President as required.

8 Introduction from Vice Presidents

The new Vice Presidents introduced themselves to Council.

9 Education

9.1 Report on Education and Exam activities

The Executive Director for Education and Quality reported that RCOG Learning, the College's new learning management system successfully launched at the end of September. Over 4,300 users have accessed the new platform in the first two months. A user reference group is being established in the first quarter of 2023 to enable direct feedback from key stakeholders for future developments to diversify content and make it as relevant as possible.

A developmental meeting with the GMC's curriculum oversight group and the senior Education team took place in December and will inform the next steps for both the Advanced Training Review and uncoupling of the curriculum to reach approval and implementation stages. The meeting was very positive and the team is now mapping work in order to move to a consultation phase in spring 2023. The team will be meeting COPMED in February 2023.

Corniche hospital in Abu Dhabi will be provisionally accredited to deliver the RCOG curriculum from ST5-ST7, following a positive site visit and assessment undertaken by the President and Vice President for Education. The College will support the Corniche faculty to deliver advanced training equivalent to that of the UK, commencing with a pilot for a small group of trainees in 2023. This is an important step in securing the status of MRCOG in the UAE and the MENA region.

A Council member raised the importance of supporting the professional development of members who do not undertake specialist training, such as GPs.

The results of the MRCOG Part 1 and 2 examinations held in September 2022 were noted. Candidates are currently booking their place for the January diet and there is significant demand, with 1500 candidates booked for Part 1 and over 1800 for Part 2. The backlog of candidates caused by the pandemic has now been cleared.

A Council member queried how the College ensures that candidates have the same experience of the exam across different diets. It was responded that the Examinations and Assessment Committee undertake standards setting to take into consideration the variability of candidates between diets, and examinations questions are set using experienced methods.

The November 2022 diet of the Part 3 examinations was the largest Part 3 exam to date with 894 candidates sitting across six global centres and a remote exam, over six days. The results are being released to candidates in December and will be presented to Council at the next meeting. The Executive Director thanked all examiners, who contributed many hours to the successful running of the exam.

10 Clinical Quality

10.1 Report on Clinical Quality Activities

The Executive Director for Education and Quality reported on the positive progression on a number of Clinical Quality projects. HQIP have agreed a contract extension to the NMPA to December 2027, the OASI2 project has been given a no cost contract extension to the end of June 2023, and the Secretary of State for Health has announced funding for the Tommy's app, with trials in 26 hospitals expected to start in June 2023.

The Scottish Council representatives queried if the Tommy's app would be piloted in Scotland; it was responded that initial discussions have been held and that we are awaiting the outcome of these. It was agreed that the Scottish representatives would discuss with the Tommy's Centre lead how they could help facilitate further progress.

An announcement is awaited from the DHSC on funding for the pilot phase of the Avoiding Brain Injury in Childbirth (ABC) programme.

The COVID Maternity Equality Project completed in October 2022; a dissemination event was held at the College with the project funders, and an animation video of the findings has been released on the website. Version 16 of the COVID guidance will be published imminently.

A Council member queried whether the Clinical Quality guidance committees could meet in person when they wish, as virtual meetings are proving less effective. The President would consider this issue.

11 Global Health

11.1 Report on Global Health Activities

The Executive Director for Membership, Global and Governance reported that an eight month no-cost extension has been agreed with the donor for the Making Abortion Safe programme, which is running with an underspend due to the impact of pandemic on the original proposals. This will allow the programme to roll out planned activities and consolidate gains, and disseminate key programme resources until December 2023. The team is also developing concept notes for future programme work in this area.

Twelve champions have been engaged as part of the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights UK Overseas Development Assistance Advocacy Project, funded by the Children's Investment Fund Foundation. The champions are being supplied with advocacy toolkits and training to support them to draw out stories on the impact of the withdrawal of overseas development aid on women's health.

Teaching and learning materials for the Essential Gynaecological Skills programme in Bangladesh have been prepared with contributions from the Obstetric and Gynaecology Society of Bangladesh and RCOG members. The training has been shared with the Ministry of Health in Bangladesh. The training of expert trainers with local clinicians will commence in 2023.

In November, Officers and staff attended the AICC conference in Mumbai, delivering scientific lectures and workshops, a roundtable discussion on role of the RCOG in promoting women's health and a membership ceremony welcoming 60 new members and fellows.

The South African Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Congress in Cape Town in November presented another opportunity for RCOG representatives to give presentations and meet the South African International Representative Committee.

An International representative Council member raised whether retired members could access teaching resources at a reduced rate, for those who volunteer their time in different capacities. The Chief Executive would find out the current situation and explore what would be possible.

12 Membership

12.1 Report on Membership Activities

The Executive Director for Membership, Global and Governance reported that an annual membership report is being produced in January 2023, highlighting subscription trends across countries, regions and categories.

To date, 96% of payments have been received, showing strong retention rates. Following a series of reminders, non-paying members and fellows will now be removed from the register for non-payment of subscriptions. It is planned to survey members who chose to leave their College membership, to understand the reasons why.

The International Payments project is progressing, with representatives from across College teams working to address challenges experienced by some international members in making payments to the College, and it is hoped that this issue will be resolved soon.

A full schedule of membership ceremonies took place across 2022 in the UK and India, with 613 members and fellows and 24 Honorary Fellows being accepted into the College. A full programme of ceremonies is planned for 2023; the ceremonies are aligned with Council meetings, and Council members are encouraged to attend and take part in the procession.

The Committee hosted an RCOG staff lunch and learn session in November to help inform College staff about the different roles carried out by SAS and LED members, appropriate terminology to use and terms to avoid, and our drive to ensure that the SAS and LED membership are represented across College work and communications.

The Retired Fellows and Members Society hosted a successful hybrid event for retired Fellows and Members on 2nd December with approximately 100 members joining virtually and 60 in person at Union Street. Professor Jim Drife, Chair of the Society, hosted the event. A project to review the RCOG proposition for retired Fellows and Members has commenced.

13 Workforce and Professionalism

13.1 Report on Workforce and Professionalism activities

The Executive Director for Education and Quality reported that the RCOG has secured an agreement from DHSC to fund further development of the workforce tool through to 2025.

HEE is currently building the prototype tool and populating it with data from the RCOG census and publicly available data (for example MSDS). Patient level data from hospital episode statistics (HES) via NHS Digital will be added once available. Following acquisition of this data, statistical analyses are to be performed to calculate safe numbers of staffing adjusted for the complexity of the local population. Dr Jo Mountfield, past Vice President, has been appointed to provide clinical oversight of the tool for one year.

The workforce census has been circulated in Scotland and the data is being added to the prototype tool. The RCOG met with colleagues from NHS Scotland to agree ongoing funding to support the tool and to identify data sources for the staffing data required.

A Council member suggested that Council members are used to test the tool before it goes live. It was responded this could be beneficial and the potential to pilot the tool with Council will be considered.

The Certificate of Eligibility for Short Term Locums will become a pre-requisite for employment of short-term locums in England from February 2023; the framework is currently live and the Training ePortfolio has been developed to support the process, including a facility for employers to check the status of a locum prior to employment. A pilot of the certificate was launched in October and fifteen locum doctors have registered successfully. The College is now discussing funding and rollout of the certificate in the devolved nations.

A Council member raised ongoing issues with the CPD ePortfolio and some feedback from members that it too complex; the Executive Director responded that a survey has been undertaken of members and a task group is considering the feedback and will be making a recommendation in the New Year to the Education Board.

14 Academic

14.1 Report on Academic activities

The Academic Board Chair reported that the Blair Bell Research Society Academic 2023 meeting would be held in person at Union Street in February 2023. Ninety-five abstracts have been received and work is underway to choose top scoring abstracts for oral presentations and poster pitches. The Academic Board Chair encouraged Council members to attend the meeting and volunteer to chair a session.

It was noted that RCOG Research has launched with three domains, Research Priority, Research Engagement and Research Delivery. Research Priority is connecting with specialist societies and Clinical Study Groups (CSGs) to identify research questions for prioritisation. Research Engagement is looking at updating the RCOG website, creating regular newsletters and engaging healthcare professionals and the public via social media platforms.

The Clinical Quality team have met with the Digital team to explore building a new online appointment booking system to allow members and fellows to book virtual research mentorship sessions with senior academics. Further updates will follow in the New Year.

A Council member raised the past set-up of CSGs and that whilst they were variably effective, it meant that the RCOG had a key role and strong link with these groups. The Academic Board Chair responded that some of the CSGs did chose to continue running independently under the new format, which had been carefully considered

following considerable work by the RCOG Research Chair. The President noted that the new Vice President for Academia and Strategy would have a key role in helping to shape the new RCOG Research with the relevant chairs.

A Council member raised whether RCOG Research has a role in facilitating patient and public involvement for research studies. The Academic Board Chair responded that it is an aim of RCOG Research to work with women to make sure research priorities align with their views, and that in the future academics could come to the College for assistance with this input. The Women's Network Vice Chair would welcome discussions on how the Network could contribute.

15 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. It was noted that Baroness Shaista Gohir would shortly be demitting office as Women's Voices Lead. The advert for her successor is currently live on the RCOG website, and recruitment is also underway for new Network members.

16 FSRH

The President of FSRH noted the circulated report on the Faculty's recent activities. The FSRH Officers are looking to organise a joint meeting with the new RCOG Officers shortly to facilitate introductions.

The Faculty is undergoing a transformation programme, including significant work taking place on the website and infrastructure. They have also made it possible for members to pay their subscriptions by monthly direct debit.

The FSRH is continuing its programme of advocacy work, often alongside the RCOG. This is currently focused on the influencing Parliamentarians to support the implementation of the Hatfield Vision.

The FSRH is revitalising its education and events, holding more regular online sessions, with a focus on menopause as well as contraception.

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.

The College is developing a refreshed approach to maternity safety, in the light of recent maternity investigations. The Clinical Quality team together with engagement from the Patient Safety Committee will lead the College work in this area under a new framework. This will build on the work of the College in terms of Each Baby Counts, the Tommy's Centre for Maternity Improvement project and the Avoiding Brain Injuries in Childbirth (ABC) project.

Following the Council discussion on the subject late last year, the Officers have approved the decision to permanently close the Invited Review Service (IRS). The service has been paused since November 2019 in recognition of the evolving framework of NHS system-wide regulation, escalating running costs and a desire to ensure that any RCOG service was both appropriate and fitted within that framework and that of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges.

A Council member remarked that at the mentioned discussion at Council, he had raised reservations of closing the service and felt that it provided an important function to set standards of the profession. The Chief Executive responded that the role previously covered by the Invited Review Service is now undertaken by NHS England who greater resource and ability to closely monitor units.

The President noted that consideration is being given to how the College can support units experiencing difficulties, and that whilst the views of those Council members are noted, supporting members is where the College has a role.

The National COVID-19 inquiry set-up to examine the UK's response to and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, is now collecting evidence and the College has recently been approached to contribute to a number of

modules. Given the College's prominence in championing the needs of pregnant women throughout the pandemic and vaccination roll out, it is essential that this work is prioritised, recognising it is likely to be a substantial undertaking. After consideration, the decision has been taken not to apply for core participant status.

The RCOG World Congress scheduled to take place in London in May 2023 clashes with the King's coronation. Due to the significant resulting impacts on accommodation in London, and in addition changes to the external environment including issues with visas and the financial climate, the Board of Trustees have approved reverting to a hybrid event held in Union Street in June 2023.

The Chief Executive updated Council on the College's financial performance, in light of the ongoing recovery of income streams following the pandemic and the impact of high levels of inflation. The Board of Trustees are overseeing the related management plan being undertaken by the Executive and Senior Leadership team.

A Council member queried how they could support the College's financial position. It was responded that encouraging potential members to take up membership, and promoting associate membership, is beneficial. Further information of the high-level overview of the College's income streams will be shared with Council members.

The Vice President for Academia and Strategy queried how the hybrid model of conferences and events affects income and sponsorship. It was responded that hybrid events tend to offer a successful balance; holding Congresses overseas have increased costs with a similar level of income.

The College will welcome two additional charities, Group B Strep Supports and Bliss, to the Women's Health Hub at Union Street in the coming months. The College hosted a Union Street tenant social event at the end of October where the Chair of the Board of Trustees welcomed all nine tenant organisations, paving the way for further collaboration in the Union Street women's health hub.

A Council member queried what proportion of income is rental income from tenants; the Chief Executive responded that the income is not particularly large but there are other related benefits such as the increase in trading income.

18 Board of Trustees

18.1 Report from 2 December 2022 meeting

The President updated on the main topics discussed at the 2nd December meeting of the Board of Trustees.

18.2 To note the Vice President Trustees

It was noted that Professor Hassan Shehata and Mrs Geeta Kumar are the appointed Vice President Trustees.

19 Disciplinary, Removal and Reinstatement Committee

19.1 Removals from Regulatory Registers

There were no removals from regulatory registers to report.

20 Council Membership

20.1 Committee and Honorary Appointments

The four new appointments to RCOG Committee posts were ratified.

20.2 Council representatives on Boards/Committees

Council approved the following Council representatives on Boards and Committees:

Finance & General Purposes Committee Member – Vanitha Kumar

Clinical Quality Board Fellow – Jyotsna Acharya

Education Board Fellow – Andrew Sizer

Workforce Board Fellow – Philip Rolland and Andrew Pickersgill

Workforce Board Member – Jenny Barber

20.3 Council Elected Trustee

Council considered the submitted nomination and statement of intent and approved the election unopposed of Dr Alastair Campbell as Elected Trustee.

21 Reports/minutes

The following minutes were circulated to note:

21.1 Clinical Quality Board minutes 13 October 2022

21.2 Academic Board minutes 3 November 2022

22 Any other business

A Council member raised whether new Fellows and Members attending their admission ceremony could be allowed to bring extra guests if space allows, avoiding unnecessary empty seats. It was responded that members' additional guests are accommodated where possible and a waiting list system is used. There are currently difficulties with visas for some travellers which have been affecting overseas guests attending recent ceremonies and causing some empty seats.

A Council member raised how they should best respond and raise questions from their constituents; it was responded that Councillors can respond to local issues directly, and that the College can support with issues or questions on College positions.

A Council member raised that a constituent has asked a question on the College's position on commercial partnerships; the President responded that the new Officers will be considering this in due course.