

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS**  
**Minutes of a Meeting of Council held at the RCOG and virtually on**  
**Friday, 24 November 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 Alastair Campbell  
Professor Justin Clark  
Professor Peter von Dadelszen  
Professor Stergios Doumouchtsis  
Professor Colin Duncan  
Mr Sujeewa Fernando  
Miss Fatima Husain  
Mr Joseph Iskaros  
Professor Swati Jha  
Mr Andrew Leather  
Dr Hans Nagar  
Dr Suzanne O’Sullivan  
Mr Andrew Pickersgill  
Mr Dudley Robinson  
Mr Philip Rolland  
Miss Melanie Tipples

**ELECTED MEMBERS**

Dr Jenny Barber  
Dr William Dudill  
Dr Peter Harris  
Dr Angharad Jones  
Dr Chimwemwe Kalumbi  
Dr Javaid Muglu  
Dr William Parry-Smith  
Dr Claire Thompson  
Dr Alison Wiggans

**MEMBERS**

Dr Janet Barter FRCOG, FSRH President  
Ms Jane Plumb FRCOG, Women’s Voices Lead  
Ms Freya El Baz, Women’s Network Vice Chair  
Dr Heidi Stelling MRCOG, Trainees’ Committee Chair  
Dr Eman Toeima FRCOG, RCOG Specialty and Associate Specialist and Locally Employed Doctors Lead

**IN ATTENDANCE**

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

<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome</b> The President welcomed all to the meeting.
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies for absence were received from: Dilly Anumba FRCOG Kat Barton MRCOG Hlupekile Chipeta MRCOG Emma Crosbie FRCOG Mausumi Das FRCOG Vanitha Kumar MRCOG Hanan Mustafa MRCOG
<b>3</b>	<b>RCOG Confidentiality Agreement and Declaration of Interest and Good Standing</b> RCOG Confidentiality Agreement and Declaration of Interest and Good Standing had been circulated. Council was asked to complete and return the form if they had not done so within the last year.
<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes and Matters Arising</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Minutes from the last meeting</b> The minutes from the meeting held on 8 September 2023 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting pending an amendment to the year of the July MRCOG Part 1 and 2 examinations results that was written incorrectly.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Actions record</b> The actions from the September meeting of Council were noted.
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Obituaries Resolved:</b> That the sympathy of Council be extended to the relatives of the following: Professor Linda Dolores Cardozo – Fellow of England Dr Maurice John Hynes – Fellow of Australia Mohamed Rabeih Mohamed El Ghorori - Fellow of England
<b>5.2</b>	The Fellows’ Representative for London South gave the tribute to Professor Linda Cardozo FRCOG.
<b>5.3</b>	The Senior and Global Vice President gave the tribute to Professor Mahmoud Fahmy Fathallah, RCOG Honorary Fellow.
<b>6</b>	<b>President</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>President Report</b> The President shared a report of her recent activities.

	<p>The President reflected on a recent visit to Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust. It was noted that the investigations taking place across the country are having a significant impact on the medical workforce with many doctors reporting that they feel isolated. As a consequence, the Officers have decided to make work in this area a major priority for all Officers, led by the President. In addition, the CEO and the President will be meeting with the CQC to discuss their methodology.</p> <p>Council members thanked the Officers for their ongoing work in this area. The need for the College to engage constructively and proactively with the media was also emphasised.</p> <p>The President presented the College’s updated statement on the Gaza and Israel conflict. It was noted that this had been developed with input from the College’s legal advisors.</p> <p>Council members expressed their support for the updated statement.</p> <p>The President discussed the confusion caused by her recent signing of a letter by British and Irish Association of Robotic Gynaecological Surgeons, which was sent to Medical Directors across the UK. Council members thanked the President for raising this matter. It was commented that the confusion arose from the suggestion that accreditation would be mandatory. It was suggested that a revised letter or statement clarifying this point might be beneficial; the President will discuss this with BIARGS.</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Academia and Strategy</b></p>
<p><b>7.1</b></p>	<p><b>Report on Academia and Strategy Activities</b></p> <p>The Vice President for Strategy and Academia presented the Report on Academia and Strategy Activities, including reflection on the key achievements made in these areas during 2023.</p> <p>The Vice President for Strategy and Academia commented that the College has made progress on the development of a new Point of Care Ultrasound training module. The training has been submitted to the College’s Education Quality Assurance Committee for approval. An industry partner has been identified to fund development of the digital resource, enabling it to be hosted on RCOG Learning as open access to all healthcare professionals.</p> <p>The Vice President for Strategy and Academia highlighted the work that the College is undertaking on a proposal to develop a set of research priorities in partnership with the James Lind Alliance. It is hoped that this will enable large research funders to support the RCOG research priorities. The proposal has been discussed by, and has the support of, the Academic Board and the RCOG Research Committee.</p> <p>The Vice President for Strategy and Academia also commented that the College is exploring a potential partnership with the University of Birmingham to establish an RCOG Maternity Safety Research Centre. The Clinical Quality team is currently discussing with the University the next steps to bring this collaboration to life, with a planned launch event for Q1 2024 to highlight the work of this partnership and the College’s wider maternity safety ambition.</p>
<p><b>7.2</b></p>	<p><b>Maternity Safety and Resource Hub</b></p> <p>Ms Pradhan, Head of Safety and Governance, and Mr Wolstenholme, Director of Clinical Quality, joined the meeting to provide an update on the Maternity Safety and Resource Hub.</p> <p>It was commented that to develop the virtual hub, the College consulted experts in the field of maternity safety, including those with lived experience, at three stakeholder workshops, and also conducted a thematic analysis from recent national report and College materials.</p> <p>Moving forward Ms Pradhan explained that there was still a considerable amount of work to do including a collaboration with the University of Birmingham to establish a research centre, the launching</p>

	<p>of several courses in the new year on fetal monitoring and human factors, and contributions to various governance groups.</p> <p>Council commended Ms Pradhan, Mr Wolstenholme and their teams for the excellent work conducted to date in this area.</p> <p>Council enquired as to whether the resource hub linked to metrics such as MBRRACE, and with the College's Learning Management System (LMS). It was noted that MBRRACE have developed a tool to highlight units that might be helpful or which might be outliers. Council members were informed that this is likely to be updated within the next 12 months.</p>
7.3	<p><b>Genomics Standing Committee</b></p> <p>Council approved the creation of the Genomics Standing Committee. The Committee will report to the Clinical Quality Board.</p>
8	<p><b>Education</b></p>
8.1	<p><b>Report on Education and Exam activities</b></p> <p>The Vice President for Education presented the Report on Education and Exam Activities, including reflection on the key achievements made in these areas during 2023. The Education and Exams Teams were thanked for their hard work during the previous year.</p> <p>Council was informed that the College had recently completed a successful MRCOG Part 3 Diet. A total of 677 candidates sat the exams which were supported by 82 clinical and 23 lay examiners. 64% of examinations were conducted overseas in nine international centres, two of which had opened this year.</p> <p>The Vice President for Education highlighted the ongoing work on the Advanced Training Review. The 2024 Curriculum was submitted to the GMC on 22 September 2023. The College is anticipating approval in December and, subject to this, the new curricula are expected to launch in August 2024.</p> <p>The College's Accreditation Training Programmes were also discussed. This included with Aster MedCity in Kerala, Max Healthcare Institute in Delhi, and Corniche Hospital in Abu Dhabi. Work is ongoing to secure more partners in 2024.</p> <p>The Vice President for Education commended the Learning Management System (LMS) Project, which will complete on 22 December 2023. This was a significant piece of work, which was delivered to plan and budget. The College has established a partnership with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to provide their 6,000 members with access to the RCOG Learning resources, and there is also interest from organisations in a range of other countries including Australia, Canada and Saudi Arabia.</p> <p>Council were also informed that GMC have approved the RCOG Speciality Specific CESR Guidance, 2023. The new simplified Portfolio Pathway will be launched on the 30 November 2023.</p> <p>Council discussed the mechanism through which other organisations can access the LMS. It was noted that the College is able to provide institutional access for a fee and is also promoting the RCOG Associate package. In terms of the intellectual property, this all belongs to the College.</p> <p>Council also discussed the College's accreditation training programme. It was noted that the programme is not necessarily intended as a pathway for international candidates to come to the UK to work but rather are about supporting improvement in patient care and quality.</p> <p>It was also acknowledged that, given the increased number of overseas candidates for the MRCOG, there is a need for the College to ensure that the examinations questions and tasks to be relatable and approachable internationally.</p>

8.2	<p><b>Co-opting the RCOG International Council Representatives to the RCOG MTI Committee</b> Council approved co-opting the RCOG International Council Representatives to the RCOG MTI Committee.</p>
9	<p><b>Global Health</b></p>
9.1	<p><b>Report on Global Health Activities</b> The Senior Vice President for Global Health presented the Report on Global Health Activities, including reflection on the key achievements made in these areas during 2023. The Global Health Team was thanked for their hard work during the previous year.</p> <p>The Vice President for Global Health highlighted that The International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology (IJGO) has accepted the RCOG’s paper “The Global Burden of Disease from Benign Gynaecological Conditions: A call to action” authored by Dr Del Wijeratne, Dr Joanna Gibson, Professor Alison Fiander, Lizzie Rafei-Tabar and Dr Raneer Thakar. It was commented that this was an important step to raising profile in this area.</p> <p>With regards to fundraising, the Committee noted the College’s work on a number of priority funding bids for new programmes. Council were informed that the College is part of a consortium bidding for funding from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office for implementation of the WISH 2 programme. The programme will focus on support for targeted countries on comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) including support for service delivery and technical assistance for Burundi, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Zambia.</p> <p>The College is also submitting a proposal to the Global Health Workforce Programme, funded by the UK Department of Health and Social Care and managed by the Tropical Health and Education Trust, for a programme of work, which aims to develop the health workforce in Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria. The proposal will focus on training for health workers on SRHR for a year.</p> <p>Additionally, the Centre is working on a proposal for funding from EKFS, who have provided funding for the last two years to implement the Gynaecological Health Programme in Bangladesh. The existing programme comes to a close in March 2024 and EKFS have expressed interest in extending this.</p>
9.2	<p><b>World Congress locations 2026 &amp; 2027</b> Council was informed that the College follows an agreed process with the Council to select the future World Congress location. The process stipulates that the Council should take a view of the suggested six locations before the College performs an initial assessment and shortlist to four countries before the next Council meeting. The six countries the College proposes for the Council to consider are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Malaysia</li> <li>2. India</li> <li>3. Japan</li> <li>4. Pakistan</li> <li>5. Australia</li> <li>6. Canada</li> </ol> <p>The College will conduct the initial assessment of these six countries in December and January, and will then report back to the Council with the shortlisted four countries in February 2024.</p> <p>Council enquired as to the selection process for the proposed six countries. It was noted that these were countries that had expressed an interest in hosting Congress.</p>

9.3	<p><b>RCOG Conferences &amp; Events update</b></p> <p>Council were provided an update on the World Congress 2024 in Oman, which will run between 15-17 October. The main programme will be shared January with registrations starting in February.</p> <p>Council were encouraged to attend and support the Congress. It was enquired as to the rationale for the difference in the amount of the Council bursary for attendance at the Congress between Members and Fellows. It was agreed that this would be looked at internally at the College and an update provided to Council at the next meeting.</p>
10.	<p><b>Clinical Quality</b></p>
10.1	<p><b>Report on Clinical Quality Activities</b></p> <p>The Vice President for Clinical Quality presented the Report on Clinical Quality Activities, including reflection on the key achievements made in these areas during 2023. The Clinical Quality Team was thanked for their hard work during the previous year.</p> <p>The Vice President highlighted the development of high-quality guidance documents and noted that there are a significant number of papers scheduled for publication in Q1 2024 including four green top guidelines. The College's work to ensure that all our published materials are more accessible was also referenced. This includes the translation of Patient Information leaflets into 11 languages, and the development of enhanced online resources.</p> <p>It was noted that recruitment is ongoing for new shadow co-chairs of the Guidelines Committee.</p> <p>A Council workshop looking at the College's guidance development process took place on 15 September. This helped improve Council members' awareness around the development process and ways forward to help improve the process. Following this session, terms of reference are being developed to support the Guidance development improvement plan.</p> <p>A concern was raised by Council member regarding the safety of the Tommy's app. The President requested sharing written feedback for the matter to be looked into by the College team.</p>
11.	<p><b>Membership and Workforce</b></p>
11.1	<p><b>Report on Membership and Workforce Activities</b></p> <p>The Vice President for Membership and Workforce presented the Report on Membership and Workforce Activities, including reflection on the key achievements made in this areas during 2023. The Membership and Workforce Teams were thanked for their hard work during the previous year.</p> <p>The Vice President for Membership and Workforce highlighted the successful delivery of membership ceremonies in London (on 14 September 2023), which attracted more than 150 Fellows and Members and their Guests, and New Delhi, India (1 October 2023) which attracted six Fellows and 85 Members. Planning for 2024 ceremonies is underway with eight ceremonies planned for London (April, July, September and November) and an international ceremony in Muscat, Oman to coincide with RCOG World Congress 2024. Council members were reminded that they are required to attend at least two ceremonies a year and it was requested that members respond to the email correspondence shared by the College to confirm their preferred two by 11 December 2023.</p> <p>Council noted that Fellow and Membership subscriptions had seen below inflationary rate rises. Band A countries have seen 5% uplift to their subscription fees in order to bring these up to at least half the UK rate.</p> <p>Council noted the ongoing work with regards to the Membership Transformation Programme. A Task and Finish Group has been established to guide the development and review of the elevation to Fellowship application and assessment process. The College is now reaching out to IRCs in order to gather the views of international retired communities.</p>

	<p>With regards to job planning, Council noted that 24 job plans have been approved, and a further two have been closed. There are currently 21 active cases. The next Council workshop will focus on job planning and members were reminded to ensure that their assessments were completed on time.</p>
<b>12</b>	<b>CEO</b>
<b>12.1</b>	<p><b>CEO Report</b> Ms Lancaster presented the report on the latest activity across the College.</p> <p><b>International Representative Committee (IRC) Elections</b> Council was advised of the progress that the College has made with regards to IRC elections, which had been paused over the pandemic.</p> <p><b>COVID-19 Public Inquiry</b> The College submitted its draft response to Module 3 of the public inquiry into the UK's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in September 2023. Following requests for further information, the College submitted a final response in November 2023, which has now been accepted. The College expects to be called to give oral evidence in 2024.</p> <p><b>Clinical Quality projects</b> It was noted that the College continues to face contractual challenges with DHSC with regards to the ABC-3 and Workforce Staffing Tool programmes.</p> <p><b>8 Union Street</b> Solicitors from both sides are working on finalising the purchase and the College anticipates the transaction will be complete by the end of the year.</p> <p><b>Pension buyout</b> Work has been undertaken to review the College's pension rules, which has revealed the need to simplify these rules in order to secure a buyer for the scheme. The Executive Director of Finance is exploring whether it is more cost effective to simplify the rules or to sell the scheme as it currently is.</p> <p><b>2024 budget</b> The Board of Trustees approved the 2024 budget for the College.</p> <p>Council enquired as to whether the College was expecting any criticism from the COVID-19 enquiry. Ms Lancaster commented that it is very difficult to predict what questions or comments the College will receive during its oral evidence.</p>
<b>13.</b>	<b>FSRH</b>
<b>13.1</b>	<p><b>Report from FSRH President</b> The FSRH President presented their report on the activities of the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare.</p> <p>It was noted that, in January, the Clinical Effectiveness Unit would move from its current location in Lothian to London. This decision was taken for a number of reasons including maximising the flexibility and cost-effectiveness of the unit.</p> <p>Council noted that the FSRH Annual Conference and a number of 30th birthday celebrations are taking place on 8<sup>th</sup> December at the Union Street building. Council members were requested to check the website for further details on these.</p>

<b>14</b>	<b>Board of Trustees</b>
<b>14.1</b>	<p><b>Report from 24 November 2023 meeting</b> Mr Alastair Campbell highlighted key points from the Board of Trustees meeting held earlier that day.</p> <p>The Board discussed the President’s report particularly exploring the impact that recent CQC activity is having on the obstetrics and gynaecology workforce and how the College and Presidential team can best respond to this.</p> <p>The Board discussed and approved the 2024 budget. This represented a de-risked position and is being supported by a cost improvement programme which is aiming to reduce costs by 4.5%.</p> <p>The Board discussed and approved the staff pay award, Executive Directors pay award, and the CEOs pay award.</p>
<b>15</b>	<b>Trainees</b>
<b>15.1</b>	<p><b>Report from Trainees’ Committee Chair</b> The National Trainees’ Committee Chair presented their report detailing the recent activity of the Committee.</p> <p>The National Trainees’ Committee Chair highlighted the appointment of the new committee chair, Dr Kat Barton, and the appointed of two new Vice-Chairs (pending Council ratification) Dr Hannah Pierce (Vice Chair, Education) and Dr Katherine Lattey (Vice Chair, Quality).</p> <p>Council noted that nominations for both the RCOG National Trainer and Trainee of the Year Awards for 2024 are now live.</p> <p>The National Trainees’ Committee Chair provided updates on several areas of Committee work. It was noted that the loss of the TOG app had caused a significant amount of pushback amongst trainees. With regards to the Advanced Training Review, the National Trainees’ Committee Chair fed back that there was less anxiety about this update than there was for the 2019 curriculum. Good progress has been made on the creativity with CIPs programme, the say no to wasting N20 programme, and the postnatal contraception programme which will see a pilot launch in 2024 to look at complex scenarios.</p> <p>The Committee were reminded that the 2023 Great Maternity Bake Off would take place in the week commencing 4 December. Posters and a top tips guide have been developed to support this and can be found online.</p> <p>Council placed on record its thanks to Dr Heidi Stelling for her outstanding work as National Trainees’ Committee Chair.</p>
<b>16</b>	<b>SAS/LED</b>
<b>16.1</b>	<p><b>Report from SAS/LED Lead</b> The SAS/LED Lead presented their report.</p> <p>Council were informed that 9-13 October had been SAS awareness week. This had been hugely successful. The College had advertised on RCOG social media platforms to highlight the work SAS doctors are doing around the country.</p> <p>The College has developed a new SAS/LED website, which contains lots of information about the role and work of SAS/LEDs.</p>

	Several members have been recruited to the Committee, particularly from areas, which were previously underrepresented. These were ratified later in the Council meeting.
<b>17</b>	<b>Women's Network</b>
<b>17.1</b>	<p><b>Report from Women's Voices Lead</b> The Women's Voices Lead noted the written update on recent activities of the Network and Women's Voices Panel.</p> <p>Council members were informed that recruitment for two clinical representatives of the Women's Network is ongoing.</p> <p>It was noted that Ms Emma Crookes and Ms Freya El-Baz have been appointed as co-Vice Chairs of the Women's Network and will be alternating attending future Council meetings.</p> <p>The President, Vice President for Clinical Quality, and Vice President for Membership and Workforce will be attending the next Women's Network Meeting. It was noted that each member is very active and playing a great part in Women's health and spreading the message about the network.</p> <p>Council members were informed that the first Women's Network webinar will take place in Q1 of 2024 and will focus on fertility. The link to this will be circulated to Council once a date has been finalised.</p>
<b>18</b>	<b>Academic Board</b>
<b>18.1</b>	<p><b>Report on Academic Activities</b> The circulated report on Academic Board activities was noted.</p> <p>It was noted that the term of the current Chair of the Academic Board is due to conclude in April 2024. Council approved that the Vice President for Academia and Strategy will take up the position following this.</p>
<b>19</b>	<b>Disciplinary, Removals and Reinstatement committee</b>
<b>19.1</b>	<p><b>Removals from Regulatory Registers</b> Council was informed that there was nothing from the DRRC to report at this meeting.</p>
<b>20</b>	<b>Council Membership</b>
<b>20.1</b>	<p><b>Committee and Honorary Appointments and Extensions</b> The eleven new appointments and two extensions were ratified.</p>
<b>20.2</b>	<p><b>Council representatives on Boards and Committees</b> The following Council representatives on Boards and Committees were approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Board Fellows: Colin Duncan and Philip Rolland</li> </ul>
<b>21</b>	<p><b>Reports/minutes</b> Council noted the following minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Board 13 October 2023 minutes</li> <li>• Membership Board 6 October 2023 minutes</li> <li>• Academy Board 19 October 2023 minutes</li> </ul>
<b>22</b>	<p><b>Any other business</b> The President asked for a volunteer from Council to contribute to a GIRFT project on improving the capture of procedure codes in theatre systems, to support the GIRFT theatres programme.</p>

	It was raised what the College's position is on Physician Associates. There is a Workforce clinical fellow who is looking at this and the Vice President for Membership and Workforce requested that any members with examples of Physician Associates within O&G to share information with her.
<b>23</b>	<b>Thank you to retiring Council members</b>