

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL OPTICAL COMMITTEE AGM

Monday 21st March 2022

Zoom Meeting

MINUTES

Jane Bunker (Chair) (JB)

Steve Roberts ((Vice Chair) & IT) (SR)

Eileen Gay (Treasurer) (EG)

Anita Jones (AJ)

Dawn Doe (DD) (Note Taker)

Deepali Modha (DM)

Karan Sai Malik (KSM)

Katie Patel (KP)

Kavita Kathuria (KK)

Mary Bramley (MB)

Peter Chapman (PC)

Wendy d'E Vallancy (WdV)

Max Halford (LOCSU)

Observers and Nominees

Ammad Haider, Ash Patel, Bineeta Patel, Ketan Patel and Nisha Shah

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Hansil Shah (HS), Amisha Pau (AP), Sumila Kasaven (SK), Sally Tucker (ST)

1. Meeting Etiquette, Introductions and Election of the Chair

The elected Chair – Jane Bunker welcomed everyone and introduced herself and Max Halford from LOCSU. The Committee Members gave a short introduction of themselves for the benefit of the nominees and observers. JB gave similar short introduction of members who were not in attendance.

JB explained to the observers that we are a big Committee but hopefully the observers will see that we are all from slight diverse roles, so we all have something to bring to the Committee.

Normally we would have a Chair to move us along, normally this would be MB, but she has been given the night off and Hansil was going to cover but has not joined yet so we will chivvy ourselves as we go along.

2. Minutes from 2021 AGM

No-one did not approve the minutes, therefore the Minutes from the meeting on 22nd March 2021 were accepted as a true representation of the meeting and approved.

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report

JB thought it would be interesting for all the new people in attendance to know all the different groups she gets involved with.

Hertfordshire have joined with West Essex, and they have what is called an Integrated Care Board now, so we are all linked to all the services. Hopefully in the future we will be spread.

West Herts Hospital Trust. JB is meeting with West Herts Hospital, Herts Valleys CCG and CHEC on Friday.

For the observers CHEC, if you are in the Herts Valleys area, is a way of doing referrals, you may already use it, but if you are not in the Herts Valleys area you may use GPs to refer. CHEC have been in place for about 3 years, and they have a portal that we can use.

LOCSU. Max is our Representative from there, but there is also an East of England Group, which get together, during COVID it was at least once a month and that was really useful sharing ideas on how to get hold of PPE, if you remember back when you could not get PPE or masks, now we just meet once a quarter. We try to share ideas on how things are progressing in different areas and trying to pick each other's brains and make it happen a bit more quickly in our area.

Local Eye Health Network. We do not have a local Eye Health Network in this area, so we join with East Anglia, they also have volunteer societies come in such as RNIB, it links in with all the different charities and is another way of us trying to form links to help progress eye care.

PPAG. Which is the *Professional* Performance Advisory Group. If a practitioner may have done something that is not necessarily going to the GOC but maybe needs some advice, then an Optom from the LOCs is invited along to give advice as to whether that is the normal practice for a practitioner or if it is outside of what is the norm, because often the people on these boards have no optom knowledge so it is nice to have someone there as a support for the Optom.

Electronic Eye Referral System. In other areas this has gone live. We have spent since September preparing the specification, how we want all these referrals. The plan is that you sit in your practice using a portal, you can upload your referral and it will go straight to the hospitals and be triaged. You will be able to map that referral as well, so you will know where it has gone to, when it has been looked at, when the patient has got an appointment. There will be the facility to upload the full volume, OCTs, your fields. Hopefully this should be going live within the next month. This was a huge amount of work between Christmas and New Year, I think I spent four whole days looking at the people who had bid to do the work. JB wanted to say in summary that she really enjoyed her role as Chair, it has been a constant learning curve there is always something that surprises her, she is always having to pick somebody else's brains because they have been there, seen it and done it before.

Hopefully the thing for us all to look forward to will be some CPD events, that will be live and face to face rather than on Zoom, because she thinks it has been very good at improving our relationships with each other when we see each other face to face.

JB said to please contact her/the Committee if you have any queries.

5. Treasurer's Report 2021 Accounts, 2022 Budget & Statutory Levy

JB thanked EG for the report and said it was very comprehensive.

EG asked if anyone had any questions with regards to the report. Due to COVID there had been no training courses and very minimal travel claimed through expenses from members. Nothing terribly surprising. The Statutory Levy has been reduced because the bank account balance has crept up again for various reasons. EG asked if anyone had any questions. There were no questions.

JB explained what the Statutory Levy is for the observers. Every GOS sight test you do a small percentage is used to fund the LOC and then the LOC pay a fee to LOCSU, (the support unit), for their help throughout the year. EG said that LOCSU have 0.5% and Herts LOC get 0.5%, which in comparison with other LOCs is very low. Most LOCs are at around the 2% mark, Max confirmed that yes between 1.5, 1.75 and 2%. The accounts were approved.

JB asked if a projected budget had been done, EG explained that no budget had been done because as far as performances go, we are pretty well back to normal. Budgets had been done before due to COVID as EG was really concerned that with no activity we would end up with no money, but that obviously was not the case. EG has not honestly worried this year as everything looks healthy and she has no reason to suppose that activity levels would reduce again.

JB enquired that we have sufficient funds to organise the CPD events. EG replied yes more than enough.

6. Election of the Auditors

JB said we have used the current Auditors for 5 years or more. EG said that we have probably used them since she took over as Treasurer because she wanted an auditor that was nothing to do with her practice and out of the area. The company have changed their names in between and been amalgamated with other companies a few times. They have a system where she can upload and approve all the documents electronically. As far as EG is concerned they do a good job, if she has any queries, she can always ring them and talk to somebody. She personally is very happy with them, but if anyone else wants to suggest anyone else. JB added that we do not have to have the accounts audited, JB preferred to have them audited and it is a relatively small cost. JB asked EG if this was correct and EG said that yes if you had a relatively small turn over auditing was not necessary but agreed with JB as she is always conscious that it is other people's money. Those present were happy for auditing to be continued. It was also agreed to continue to use the same company as we have for some years.

7. LOCSU Presentation

MH gave an introduction of himself and a presentation about the support LOCSU gives to LOCs.

This covered the following topics:-

- Support is at local (LOCs) – almost one to one

- Facilitate Regional Chair Forums

- National Treasurer Forums

- Meet nationally with bodies such as NHSE, NHSX, NHS Digital, CCGs, ICSs.

- Lobby for the Optical Sector

- Fund WOPEC Training courses

- Fund and run Quality & Optometry

 - NHS Change – change is heading our way

 - Optometry First

 - National Eyecare Recovery Transformation Programme (NECRTP)

 - Electronic Eyecare Referral Systems (EeRS)

 - Planning Guidance 2022-2023

MH thanked JB for inviting him to present at the AGM. JB thanked MH for great presentation and tour of where LOCSU are, how they can help us and what is happening around the rest of the England. JB added that for the observers it was a whirlwind of acronyms and that at some point, on our website, we need to have what all these things mean, because we could say a whole sentences with no actual real words just acronyms.

8. Elections

SR asked if everyone received the questionnaires from the nominees as he had received a WhatsApp message from someone who had not, which would make voting difficult for them. Everyone said they received the mini CVs sent out.

For auditing purposes SR stated that he notes there are 18 people in the meeting including Max and Dawn who do not have voting rights, so there will be 16 people voting and he can confirm that the list he has is for 16 people.

SR shared his screen and said he had sent out the voting process recently but was going to go over it again briefly. Once he clicks go those legible to vote will receive a voting link via e-mail. It is very straightforward. It will say you are invited to vote at the LOC AGM election. Once you click on the link you will go to a browser window, (whichever browser you normally use), then you will see the process as sent out previously with regards to what happens in the event of a tie and what happens if there is any query. Will have a runoff if there is a tie and if there is any query or dispute then JB as the LOC Chair will have the final say and casting vote if necessary. Half an hour has been allowed for the vote although it is not expected to take anything like that long. The only reason it has been allowed for that long is if anyone were to have technical issues, if they can let SR know and then he has some time to try to help, but we do reserve the right to end the voting early, either if everyone has voted or if we just get to the point where we can't vote. We do have the back-up option if anyone can't do it through election buddy you are more than welcome to WhatsApp or e-mail SR privately with your vote, although then it is not a secret ballot so that would be a last resort, but we have tried to think of all eventualities if you are comfortable to do that. The voting process is easy it will go through the process again and then give a list of the 6 nominees and you tick the box beside the nominees you want to vote for. You are required to vote for between 1 and 4 nominees because we have 4 vacancies on the Committee. You can choose to abstain, if you abstain you will not be voting for anybody, so it is 0 or 1-4. When you have done this, it will then show you the list that you have chosen and ask you to submit. When you have submitted your vote will be final. You can't go back to edit it or change your mind, that will be your final vote. Nobody gets to see who you vote for it will only give SR the total and he will have no way of knowing who has voted for whom. Does anyone have any questions about the process that they want to ask before the vote is opened?

SR asked if there were any questions either from or for the nominees. We have Ash Patel, Nisha Shah, Peter Chapman and Ketan Patel. WE have not unfortunately got with us Leah Shah or Hansil Shah.

Ash Patel said that he thinks he knows MB. They studied together ages ago so hello Mary, nice to see you. MB said yes, she was going to save saying anything until later. WdV also studied with them.

JB wanted to thank all the nominees for applying because it is lovely to have so much interest and she appreciates it.

Nisha Shah said hello. She works for Optical Express, if you have read the CVs, you will already know this. It is nice to be a part of this it's her first kind of foray into it and it has been very informative. Thank you. Ketan Patel is a Spec Savers Director at Waltham Cross, this is new ground for him to break into, so why not let's try now that he has more free time to do these things.

JB thanked all the observers and nominees for joining the meeting.

Voting started at this point.

KP and Ket Patel raised that they had not received the e-mail and SR looked into this. SR advised them to check junk and spam folders because it does look like it has been sent. JB said it all looks very hi-tech. SR said it would be if it worked. Both KP and Ket Patel said they had checked and still not received anything. SR asked Ket if the problem could be that it was sent to the Spec Saver email address, Ket said he was logged into this account, and nothing was there. KP to send her vote in an e-mail to SR personal email address. Ket Patel also sent his vote via e-mail to SR. Ket sent his vote to the HertsLOC Admin mail address as it was rejected from the yahoo address.

JB asked if it could be an issue the e-mail address as there were problems with the MailChimps as well. KP said we were sending everything to her yahoo account, but she had not received a MailChimp for some time. KP has checked her spam folder and there is nothing there, it could be her Mac, she will look into that. JB checked that others present were receiving the MailChimps, about 70 were sent over the past year with at least one per week.

JB filled the time whilst SR checked everything after having the 2 manual votes to add:-

Electronic Eye Referral - there is going to be advice and guidance attached to it so you will be able to upload your OCT scan, your field of plot, your disc photo and ask for advice and guidance. A time limit can be put on this so that the advice and guidance have to come back within say 72hrs, so this is going to be something exciting to look forward to

Running a MECs Accreditation event – JB has had a few enquiries about running MECs accreditation for this area. We did run a few in the past with MB, WdV and Daniel of Spec Savers in Hemel loaned the premises as well and also Bib. It is something we might need to look into. We've had a few practitioners contact just to ask if we are going to be running any.

A meeting in April – For the first time the Local Dentistry Committee (LDC), the Local Medical Committee (LMC), the Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) and us, the LOC are going to have their first meeting for Herts & West Essex ICS. JB would like someone to volunteer to step up to this, preferably somebody who has got a bit more pharmacy knowledge than herself, as this is not really her forte. She would struggle to go to all these meetings, and it would be nice to share the load, if you think this would be something for you. This meeting is planned for the first week in April. If anyone is interested let JB know. JB would like to go to first one as well but would be really happy for someone to join her and take that on board, she is not sure what direction it will be going, it has just been muted that it would be a good way of us all getting together to see if we can share ideas, looking to this future of the ICS.

Results of the Vote:

The four candidates joining or staying on the LOC are, in the order that they were on the ballot paper, not in the order of votes:- Peter Chapman, Ash Patel, Hansil Shah and Nisha Shah. Congratulations to them. Unfortunately, Ket Patel and Leah were not successful in the vote on this occasion.

Welcome to the successful nominees and sorry to Ket and Leah.

JB said that although Kat and Ammad had not been successful they could still attend meetings as observers and try again next year.

JB thanked SR for arranging and setting up the voting process on Election Buddy. SR requested feedback on this process and apologised for the technical issues we had.

9. Any Other Business

Ash Patel wanted to say thank you very much. Something close to heart is this MECs thing. He leads a lot of events for WOPEC and would be happy to try to organise something for the LOC, because he knows that there are not many events put on for independent or Locum optometrists, so he is happy to try to arrange something to get other people involved with it, which he thinks is critical for all of us optometrists to do. Thank you for inviting him. JB thanked him for the offer, she thinks with the Electronic Eyecare the next thing leading on from that will be the MECs, so hopefully yes, we will need to discuss this at the next Committee Meeting.

KP asked if any of the Committee Members were Independent Prescriber trained as they would probably be in the best position to attend the meeting with JB in April. KSM is a trained Independent Prescriber. KSM asked exactly when the meeting would be as he was due to be a parent in 6 weeks' time. JB looked and the meeting is to be held 06/04/2022 12:30-13:30 on Teams. KSM said he thought he could attend this meeting, but he added if anyone else wanted to attend instead. JB said for them to attend the first one and see how it goes and decide after that.

PC mentioned that in the earlier days of East & North Herts CCG, the LMC always had a rep who attended the Board Meetings that he attends. They have not been there for a while, but there was never a LOC, LDC or LPC rep. He thinks it is something worth lobbying for, with the new ICS they ought to be represented, perhaps not as full board members but regular invitees. JB said she could discuss this at the meeting in April. EG added that years ago they had joint meetings with doctors, pharmacist etc in WGC and she used to attend these meetings. They were actually very useful because you can look at things from another point of view. JB thanked them both and said that she and KSM would touch base at the meeting and see how they get on.

SR thanked all the observers for joining the meeting and asked if they had any questions, they would like to ask the LOC.

JB also thanked the observers and candidates and added thanks to Max Halford for his presentation and attendance.

Meeting Closed at 21:02