



Monday 26th June 2023

COMMITTEE MEETING USING ZOOM

DRAFT MINUTES

Present:

Jane Bunker (Chair) (JB)	Amisha Pau (AP)	Ash Patel (AP)
Steve Roberts (Joint Vice Chair) (SR)	Deepali Modha (DM)	Gavin Sirett (GS)
Eileen Gay (Treasurer & Minutes) (EG)	Karan Sai Malik (KSM)	Seema Raunier (SR)
Katie Patel (KT)	Nisha Shah (NS)	Fionnuala Kidd (LOCSU) (FK)

1. Apologies for Absence

Peter Chapman (PC), Anita Jones (AJ), Sally Tucker (ST), Kavita Kathuria (KK), Wendy d'E Vallancey (observer) (WdV)

JB reminded Members to complete the Conflict of Interest form which had been circulated. Very few have been returned and SR agreed to resend in a few days in case it has been missed.

JB asked if Members wished to raise any potential issues and there were none.

JB informed Members that NS had already advised her of her new part-time job with the CHEC clinic in Stevenage; as she still performs GOS work this was not considered to be a conflict of interest.

2. Approve Minutes from March 28th 2023

The minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting, and approved.

3. Matters Arising

Data Protection Insurance

SR is still working on this. He has been unable to get any company to quote as they insist that (expensive) business insurance is also required, even though the LOC is not considered an employer by HMRC. The cheapest quote so far is £650, but the terms have not been agreed and this may not give the cover we require.

The use of Mailchimp is also an issue as data is held in the USA and therefore is not covered by UK Data Protection legislation.

A discussion followed, as LOCSU and other LOCs consider that insurance is not required due to the extremely small risk of LOC liability in the event of a data breach.

FK stated that the risk associated with using Mailchimp is very low. One way of reducing this would be to upload each data set as necessary, use it and then delete again so that the data is not held by Mailchimp. SR was concerned that regular manipulation of data in this way might lead to human error. FK suggested that SR consult Lisa Stonham at LOCSU to see if these issues can be resolved. SR said that he would not proceed with insurance unless he and the Committee were completely happy.

4. Approve Minutes from the AGM also 28th March 2023

The minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting, and approved.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6. Election of Officers

As no other volunteers had made themselves known to the Committee the officers were elected unopposed by a show of hands.

7. Treasurer's Update

EG

Draft accounts for the period 22nd March to 22nd June were circulated before the meeting.

(14. NOC: 13th-14th November 2023)

As funds are healthy JB suggested funding one more place at the NOC this year at the daily rate (without overnight accommodation). As the Conference is being held fairly locally this year (Wyboston in Cambridgeshire) it was felt that delegates did not need to stay overnight and therefore 3 daily rate places could be on offer instead of the usual 2. LOCSU pays for one place every year and therefore the LOC itself would be funding two places if this was agreed. It was established that the daily rate includes the evening dinner, which is useful for networking.

Interested Members were invited to contact JB.

FK added that the Conference is aimed at both new and experienced LOC members and that topics will be covered on two levels depending on experience and interest.

8. Expenses Refresher

EG

EG reminded Members of the new claim system now in place which requires payment of PAYE, and in some cases employees National Insurance, on time-based claims and honoraria. The system appears to be working well with good backup from our accountant. EG agreed to resend details of the scheme so that all Members were clear about what they can claim for and how to do this in a timely manner. SR asked FK how the LOCSU PAYE system was operating. She replied that all was working well. SR offered to backup the LOC finance data on a Google cloud, and EG will contact him to organise this.

9. New S&W Herts Emergency A&E/UTC pathway

Stacey Strong, the Clinical Lead at Watford General Hospital has set up a new out-of-hours ophthalmology service linked to Western Eye Hospital, London. This service has been in place for 3-4 weeks and there is no feedback so far on how it is operating. Referrals into the scheme are being monitored by the hospital team and it is expected that patients might be sent from other areas as there is no comparable service in East and North Herts. Hopefully, this will reduce potential conflict with Moorfields in London who routinely reject out of area referrals.

JB has referred one patient into the service who found the communication between the two hospitals wasn't very good, there were numerous delays when he arrived but eventually the treatment he received went well. She requested Members to advise her if they have any difficulty with the service.

10. CHEC Stevenage update

The new CHEC clinic in Stevenage appears to claim that they have been given a contract for a full ophthalmological service, but the ICB insist they have only been engaged to provide a cataract service.

NS said that at present CHEC are running a cataract service and a visual fields clinic only.

It would appear at the moment they are providing triage for cataract patients only.

KP has been given a list of services and waiting times provided by CHEC at Stevenage by their North & East Herts Representative. She will send this on to JB.

KP said that if they are providing a full triage service this will greatly benefit patients as GPs in her area routinely delay onward referrals to secondary care for 3-6 weeks, and they would therefore be seen more quickly through CHEC.

JB advised caution on referring non-cataract patients to CHEC until we receive further clarification, as these may be sent back to the GP causing further delays.

CHEC will accept referrals from out of the area (GS and JB) but JB was unsure about regional budgets now the whole area is covered by one ICB (previously patients from outside the area were seen and a cross-border charge made). Patients can generally elect to be seen by CHEC in another area if there is a shorter waiting time.

11. CPD Event including Peer Review Facilitators.

The next CPD event has been planned for Tuesday 19th September. This will be Peer Review lead by Fariha Shafi, Clinical Lead at the Lister Hospital, North and East Herts.

There will be 4 cases to review, including red eye. It is possible the hospital could be used as a venue, and parking has yet to be arranged. Facilitators will be needed and it is hoped Members will volunteer. It was pointed out that Facilitators can claim self-directed CET points but not Peer Review points at this type of event.

A discussion then followed as to the date chosen for this event as the Specsavers PAC conference is arranged for the weekend prior to this, and Regional Specsavers Conferences (5 day meetings for partners) are also held at about this time.

DM offered to find out whether there are any clashes and advise JB so that a more convenient date can be arranged.

12. BIB Event 17th October 2023

This is a CPD event on Myopia Management which will be held at Knebworth Barns. There will be an exhibition of equipment and the LOC have been offered a table so that we can have a presence and practitioners can meet us. There is a £25 sign-up fee for all practitioners which will be credited back to you after the event provided you attend. Refreshments will be available.

JB suggested having a banner made, and SR said he may have one in his loft!

GS volunteered to man the stand.

13. LOCSU Update

FK

The latest LOCSU bulletin has previously been circulated to all Members.

FK advised the Members of staff changes at LOCSU as Jacque Fooks has now left. She explained that emails to the 'info@..' address may take longer to answer at the moment because of this.

LOCSU has been awarded Provider status for CPD so this will help LOCs who have difficulty obtaining approval.

Four new Board members have been appointed to represent all LOCs and the aim is to improve communication between the Board and individual LOCs.

15. Any Other Business

WOPEC courses/events

AP

AP is a WOPEC Lead Assessor for MECS and glaucoma and asked the Members if there is demand for further WOPEC courses in our area.

A discussion followed. There appears to be a need for MECS Stage 2 amongst the Committee, and therefore this probably reflects potential demand in the wider workforce. Assessors would be needed for such a course, and we would need 20 participants. JB and WdV are qualified as assessors, as is

Barbie Wheatcroft (ex LOC member). JB said that as it is some time since we ran any MECS courses the assessors might need a refresher as well.

DM said we should have no difficulty filling 20 places if we set a date in the diary and advertised. Many WOPEC courses are exclusively for Specsavers optometrists and so courses for independents are limited.

SR will send an Expression of Interest Form round on Mailchimp to assess demand. Payment for these events has been discussed at previous meetings. It has been agreed that we would charge a deposit which would be refunded on attendance.

AP will contact Sacha Macken (WOPEC Co-ordinator) to get this started.

FK suggested that we aim for an even spread of MECS-qualified practitioners across the area rather than allocating places on a “first come first served” basis.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

16. The next meeting will be Tuesday 19th September, and will be virtual

The Hertfordshire LOC represents all NHS Optometrists