



**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Held at the Crooked Chimney, Lemsford, Herts and via ZOOM**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Present:**

Jane Bunker (Chair) (JB)

Amisha Pau (AMP)

Anita Jones (AJ)

Steve Roberts (Joint Vice Chair) (SJR)

Sally Tucker (ST)

Gavin Sirett (GS)

Eileen Gay (Treasurer & Minutes) (EG)

Ash Patel (AP)

Kavita Kathuria (KK)

Peter Chapman (PC)

Seema Raunier (SR)

Sai Karan Malik(SKM)

Daniel Goh (observer) (DG)

**1. Welcome**

SJR welcomed all Committee members to the first “face-to-face” meeting for 4 years (before COVID)

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Hansil Shah (SH), Nisha Shah (NS),Katie Patel (KT), Deepali Modha (DM)

Wendy d'E Vallancey (observer) (WdV)

**3. Approve Minutes from September 19th 2023**

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

**4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising which do not appear elsewhere on the agenda.

**5. Conflict of Interest Declarations**

As this was a face-to-face meeting SJR had prepared paper forms to be signed by any Committee members present who had not previously returned theirs electronically.

**6. CPD Events**

OCL and BIB events have taken place.

**Peer Review**

**SJR**

The next event is Urgent Eye Peer Review which will be held on Monday March 4th, led by Sam Mahmood, Ophthalmic Consultant at the Lister Hospital. The venue has yet to be arranged. SJR has obtained quotes from Knebworth Park, where the BIB event was held, and Tewinbury Farm. It was felt that although Christchurch, Welwyn Garden City, which was used for a meeting 4 years ago, was significantly cheaper at the time, there were issues with parking, and we would have to organise the catering ourselves. Communications with the venue were also problematic. SJR pointed out that we

do expect costs to have increased over this period of time, but still need to keep the budget under control. Knebworth Park quoted £3500 including catering, and Tewinbury £2000 including catering and tea, coffee etc.

Regarding Tewinbury, SJR has found them easy to deal with so far, responding swiftly to any queries, and offering to cater for special dietary requirements. They can provide a room which will accommodate 6 tables seating 8 delegates each. Access to the venue is easy, and the Committee will provide posters to assist participants. SJR suggested that we book 60 attendees, thus allowing for some “no-shows”, and if a few more than 48 turn up they can be accommodated.

There will be a one-hour lecture followed by peer review sessions. Volunteers from the Committee will be required to facilitate each group. It was pointed out that Facilitators can now claim self-directed CPD points under the new GOC system.

Following a request from JB, SJR will ask Mr Mahmood to summarise the conclusions to the peer review cases which will be presented at the session.

## **7. Social Media: Induction Course and Potential Charity Event**

**SR**

### **(a) Induction Course**

SR has attended the LOCSU Induction Course covering the use of social media.

LOCSU are keen for LOCs to use social media platforms as a way of engaging with a wider circle of practitioners, possibly from a younger age group, and hopefully encouraging them to become more involved with the LOC. The activities of the LOC, such as CPD events, can be publicised more widely, and timely reminders may help to reduce the number of “no-shows” which is an on-going problem. A number of LOCs are already present on LinkedIn, and therefore use of this site would enable us to communicate easily with other LOCs. SM is investigating this platform in more detail.

SJR stated that if we are going to take this forward, we will need a Committee member who is keen and is prepared to spend time on a regular basis posting and updating information on the platform. He estimated that at least one hour a week would be required, with the initial set-up requiring more time; taking into account the time costs involved, we would therefore need to make sure the project was worth it. The LinkedIn site does provide information on how well postings are received, and if people do contact the LOC, we can also ask them how they heard about us, to give additional information on efficacy.

The Committee agreed to use LinkedIn for a trial period. SJR and SR will meet up to take this forward, and other volunteers would be welcome.

### **(b) Charity Event**

Some LOCs organise events for vision-linked charities, and post details of these on social media. JB suggested we should consider Herts Vision Loss or Vision Care, as these are local Hertfordshire charities. SJR suggested that we ask the Committee for ideas on suitable charities to support, pick 5 out of these, and send the suggestions out in the newsletter to be voted on by all practitioners. KK agreed to approach Herts Vision Loss, who have recently moved to a new centre at 2, Brownfields, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 1AN.

## **8. Treasurer’s Report**

**EG**

This was circulated before the meeting.

Issues with HMRC over PAYE due are still ongoing, and a formal complaint has been raised by our accountant. It is hoped that this will be resolved soon.

## **9. S&W, E&N, CHEC, ICB updates**

**JB**

Due to difficulties with independent actions taken by CHEC, and corresponding complaints from SpaMedica, the ICB have announced that all eye referrals to secondary care must now be sent via the GP so that a choice of 5 providers can be given. JB has pointed out to the ICB that there are existing direct cataract referral agreements with Moorfields @ Potters Bar and other providers, and

exceptions have been granted in these cases. It was pointed out that only GPs have access to the information required to be able to give meaningful choice of provider to patients, and they are also paid to do this (although in practice this may not always be happening).

SpaMedica cataract waiting times are now 2-3 weeks for initial assessment, with surgery 2 weeks later. They can also provide transport, even for wheelchair users in some cases, and can provide YAG laser treatment if required.

An Eye Care Liaison Officer (ECLO) for low vision patients is now provided by SpaMedica for their own patients. They have also offered an advice and guidance service for all optometrists in the whole of Hertfordshire, for all eye conditions. JB expressed surprise at the extent of this offer and will keep the Committee updated as to whether the service materialises.

### **MECS and Urgent Eyecare schemes**

These are now a priority for the ICB, but they have not commissioned any services yet. They are apparently under pressure to do so as 88% of all other areas in England now have a MECS or CUES service in place.

## **10. NOC Update and MECS event**

**DM**

DM was unable to give her report in person due to illness. It was presented by JB.

DM expressed how much she enjoyed the NOC, and how useful she found it.

She said the Specsavers might help setting up future MECS events. AP, who is a Lead Assessor for Specsavers offered to set this up for the LOC, using Specsavers practices. The consensus amongst the Committee was to try to provide a pool of trained practitioners ready for when the service is finally commissioned.

JB, DM and AP will take this forward.

A discussion followed on how much we should charge for the event. It was suggested that a nonrefundable deposit of £50 would be appropriate, with the LOC funding the remainder of the costs, which would be approximately £100 per head. We would need to provide refreshments for the assessors, but not for candidates as they would only be present for about half an hour, visiting 5 stations during that time.

## **11. Elections at the AGM and Insurance**

**SJR**

### **Elections**

One third of the Committee need to stand for re-election every year. It was agreed that this year the following members would stand: SJR, AMP, KK, DM and AJ.

SJR stated that he felt that the Chair and Vice-Chair should not stand for re-election at the same time as this could lead to problems with continuity if new members were elected to both positions. He suggested that JB should stand for re-election next year, and this was agreed by the Committee.

We have 2 new people who have expressed an interest in joining the LOC.

SJR felt that we needed more contractors working full-time in High Street practice on the Committee to maintain the balance of contractors/providers/independents/multiples etc., and that we should favour new members with this type of background.

### **Insurance**

SJR was pleased to announce that we have a cyber-insurance policy in place now with Zurich, at the cost of £96. The policy does not cover an attack on our database as this is held by Mailchimp, who are based in the USA. Human error in using the database is covered, however. It has been made clear to the insurers that the LOC does not itself give healthcare advice, but merely directs practitioners to sources of appropriate information.

## **12. AOB**

There was no other business.

### **13. Next Meeting Date**

The next Committee meeting will be on Monday January 29<sup>th</sup> on Zoom

The AGM will be on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March, also on Zoom

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

The Hertfordshire LOC represents all NHS Optometrists