

MINUTES of the Rotherham and Barnsley Local Optometric Committee

Annual General Meeting

Meeting Date and Start Time: Tuesday 23 June 2020, 7pm

Meeting Location: Via Zoom

Present: Sukhy Bains (SuB), Bhavesh-Dayasharan Patel (BDP), Peter Dand (PD), Terry English (TE), Tan Hussain (TH), Robert King (RK), Aftab Rahim (AR), Nizz Sabir (NS), Steve Shaw (SS), Liz Sooklall (LS) and Tony Wing (TW).

Attendees: Iftab Akram, Caroline Auckland Shone, Emma James, Hassan Javed, Rachel Ogden, Aiysha Rahim, Adrian Rigg, Faheem Sarfaz, Rosemarie Siwek, Richard Puttrell (RP), Clare Sheppard and Sarah Faulkner (SF) (Minute Taker)

Apologies: Dave Brumpton (DB), and Sean O'Brien (SoB).

Matters Arising:

1. Welcome and Apologies

SS welcomed everyone to the first RBLOC virtual AGM and thanked everyone for their attendance. SS conducted introductions and apologies and noted that SoB was not in attendance of the meeting due to the terrible circumstances of his home being struck by lightning. SS and all LOC members and attendees sent their thoughts and best wishes to SoB.

2. Chair's Report

SS then proceeded to give the Chair's report for 2019/20. SS acknowledged that 2020 had been a challenging year so far but noted that the RBLOC remained dedicated to continuing support for optometrists and offering timely care. SS noted that in 2019 a number of CET events took place and MECS was rolled out in Barnsley and then Rotherham and that there is now an extended scheme for both areas. SS noted that the RBLOC had supported OSCE events in Rotherham to enable the delivery of the MECS scheme in that locality. SS noted that PEC continues to provide support to the roll out and ongoing MECS service. SS then advised the attendees that RBLOC had advised commissioners about eye care delivery and was helping the system move towards uniformity of offer across Barnsley and Rotherham. SS noted that primary eye care services are a rich resource of talented professionals that are underused, by working with secondary care and the CCG primary eye care services can be expanded. SS then went on to note that the RBLOC has forged links with local eye care groups and has continued engagement with PSCE, which will need to continue as e-GOS develops and also engaged around PPV visits. The RBLOC website has been developed to show clinical pathways for Barnsley and Rotherham, which will aid people coming in to the area to practice. The RBLOC has responded to lots of queries in and out of region, has supported members with education and improved relationships with secondary care, as well as hosting 4 well attended CET events. SS noted that working with the CCGs, members of the LOC and Public Health there have been positive contributions to planning good eye care and in the coming year there will be the

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opportunity to enhance the MECS scheme and transition into a COOS pathway and the RBLOC will work with PEC on this. SS noted that communications remains a key priority and presence and usage of social media has been improved throughout 2019/20. The RBLOC will continue to support optometrists to help people with persistent problems via MECS, will assist with the roll out of e-GOS and continue to be engaged with secondary care colleagues raising concerns and helping develop clinical pathways. SS noted that the LOC have been meeting bi-monthly throughout 2019/20 to discuss and reaffirm the work programme. SS noted that 2019 has been a year of extended expertise, the RBLOC has done lots of work to develop community-based eye care, educating stakeholders and responding to providers and contractors. The RBLOC will continue to promote that contractors and performers are good primary care clinicians, who can ease the burden on secondary care and not compromise safety. SS noted that Optomanager is good for providing secure and equal care. SS noted that 2020 will require more time and perseverance by the LOC and welcomed continuous communications and feedback from anyone based in the Rotherham and Barnsley LOC area.

3. Treasurer Report

TE advised the attendees that the RBLOC currently had £11,316. 69p in the bank. TE noted that there had been little income in the last few months, due to the ongoing issues with COVID-19. TE noted that the LOC are still running on a levy of 0.25%, that income was circa £6000 and expenditure of the year being CET at £4620, MECS at circa £600 and funding to assist with OSCE's was £1064. The biggest expenditure was for meeting attendance and a payment of circa £2000 for additional work undertaken by the previous Chair to develop the LOC. The opening balance at April 2019 was £24,183. 54p and at March 2020 was £13,602. 35p. Overall spend for the year was circa £19,000 when considering the income from the levy.

SS noted that the biggest expense was meetings, but also noted that the costs were coming down now the RBLOC are using Zoom. SS also noted that CET had been expensive, but measures were now in place to ensure CET can be delivered very cost effectively.

NS noted that the RBLOC had done a really good job on the CET last year with great uptake and noted the great work done by previous Chair Omar Hassan. NS noted that costs for 2020/21 will be lower as the RBLOC is in a good position and has learned a lot in 2019/20.

It was agreed that SuB and TE would work together to produce a written Treasurer report, which would then be circulated for virtual adoption.

ACTION: SuB and TE to provide a written report of the finances and circulate for virtual adoption.

NS enquired who would be conducting the audit on the 2019/20 finances. TH volunteered to audit the accounts this year and SS agreed to support.

ACTION: TH to audit the RBLOC accounts for 2019/20 with support from SS.

4. Adoption of Reports

SS enquired if everyone was happy to adopt the reports. All attendees were happy to adopt the Chair's report and would virtually adopt the treasurer report once circulated.

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5. Committee Election

SS advised the attendees that there was 1 nomination received for Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

SS advised that the nominee for the Chair role was Tony Wing. SS provided the opportunity for other attendees to challenge the nomination. There were no challenges to the nomination and attendees agreed with SS to appoint TW as Chair, which was seconded by SuB.

SS advised that the nominee for the Secretary role was Suhky Bains. SS provided the opportunity for other attendees to challenge the nomination. There were no challenges to the nomination and attendees agreed with SS to appoint SuB as Secretary, which was seconded by NS who also noted that SuB will do a great job.

SS advised that the nominee for Treasurer was Aftab Rahim. SS provided the opportunity for other attendees to challenge the nomination. There were no challenges to the nomination and attendees agreed with SS to appoint AR, which was seconded by TH. All of the attendees took a moment to express heartfelt thanks to TE who has been the RBLOC Treasurer since 1975 and who has done an excellent job throughout the years and brought a lot of experience and wisdom into the LOC. SS and NS especially thanked TE for his fantastic contributions.

SS noted that there had been no nominations for CET Lead and invited attendees to nominate. Iftab Akram expressed an interest in taking on the CET Lead role. Iftab advised the attendees that he works part time as an optometrist at Mid Yorkshire Hospitals Trust and part time across South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire as a locum optometrist. Iftab Akram advised that he has a really good understanding of optics and has taught medical students and pre-reg. SS provided the opportunity for other attendees to challenge the nomination. SuB enquired if Iftab Akram worked in the area and what commitment he could display to the RBLOC and NS enquired if Iftab Akram was a performer in the Rotherham and Barnsley area. Iftab Akram advised that he would be active in the role and ensure dedicated time to the RBLOC and advised that he was a performer in Rotherham. There were no further challenges to the nomination and attendees agreed with SS to appoint Iftab Akram as CET Lead, which was seconded by TH and AR. SS welcomed Iftab Akram to the RBLOC.

NS noted that there needed to be an election of committee members. SuB advised that the constitution requested the re-election of 4 roles and that had been undertaken. NS enquired if anyone wanted to stand on the committee. TW advised that Hassan Javad would like to join the committee, but no places had been offered this year as part of the election. NS stated that next year there needs to be a better, more democratic process for election of all the roles. SuB agreed and stated that at the next meeting there should be a discussion on reviewing election processes. TW noted the requirement for a better procedure.

ACTION: TW/SuB to add discussion on reviewing election processes to the agenda for the next meeting.

The attendees discussed previous elections and whether there was an upper limit on numbers of committee members. SS noted that there are currently 14 places and SuB clarified that the constitution does not have any upper limit of members. PD noted that the LOC is currently not taking any payment for attendance at meetings so more members would not be a financial issue. AR and SS noted that the stopping of payments was only temporary. TH suggested that Hassan Javed

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should be voted on to the committee and next year there should be an election for roles and committee member places. SuB highlighted that Hassan Javed had not previously attended the RBLOC meetings and enquired of what his commitment to the RBLOC as a member would be. Hassan Javed advised that he had been qualified for 3 years and worked in various places in Yorkshire. Hassan Javed advised that he had previously been a member of the LOC in Huddersfield and has an understanding of how the LOC operates. Hassan Javed works in Rotherham as a resident and also work at Spa Medica. Hassan Javed noted that he was passionate about bringing clinically enhanced services to the community and was very pleased to see the development of the MECS scheme. TW thanked Hassan Javed for the information and noted that on this occasion it is a fair thing to do to bring Hassan Javed onto the committee and his experience of working in a slightly different field to the rest of the committee would be a helpful addition. TW noted that it is important that we have a better succession planning process and when we return to normal meeting structure we will need to review. TW proposed Hassan Javed as a committee member and TH seconded.

SS then handed over the meeting to the new Chair TW to provide an update.

TW stated that firstly he wanted to express his thanks to SS in his role as interim chair and, despite being a reluctant chair following Omar's departure, he has done an excellent job and has been excellent during COVID-19 also. TW noted that the CET events and social media channels had made excellent progress and the RBLOC needs to continue to grow and attract more diverse members. TW stated that in 2020/21 the issues around the elections would be addressed and succession planning would be at the heart of the LOC growing natural successors for each role. TW also noted that it is vital that the LOC is independent and furthers the interest of the local optometry community. Strong links will be forged with LOCSU and TW will talk in more depth with NS about conducting the LOCSU needs analysis. NS said this would be a great idea and would fully support on this. TW also noted that it was important that the RBLOC continued to feedback our views and experiences to PECS. TW stated that on a personal note the LOCSU and PECS roles conducted by NS, as well as being a committee member, are not given the structure that they deserve and extended his thanks to NS for all the hard work he conducts on behalf of the different organisations. TW also noted that the space between meetings is too large and would like to use Zoom to have more frequent, but cost effective, meetings. TW wants to have an open committee where everyone is welcome who is working in the delivery of eye care – work collaboratively for the greater good is important and the current pandemic has highlighted how important our services are.

NS thanked TW for outlining his vision for 2020/21 and welcomed the new officers to their roles. NS advised AR that LOCSU is holding a treasurer meeting, which would be important to join and is also offering treasurer training. TW enquired of TE how he felt about passing the reins over to AR. TE noted that the treasurer role is getting more complicated and having done the role since 1975 will be a big change to finally step down. NS expressed a huge thank you for everything TE had done as treasurer and noted the importance of retaining TE as a member because of all his organisational memory and experience. NS noted that the committee needed a better gender balance, and this is something to consider going forwards. TW noted that the RBLOC has progressed, changed and developed and will continue to do so and thanked everyone for attending and participating.

6. Levy

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TW advised that there will be no levy taken in this period and advised that LOCSU are also not taking a levy. NS noted that it is part of constitution to vote on the levy at the meeting, despite the current circumstances. AR proposed that the levy should remain the same and RK noted that the levy could be increased by 1% at an EGM if required, as the year progresses. TW enquired of NS what other LOCs charged as their levy. NS advised that the highest is 2.0% and 0.5% is the lowest. NS reiterated that the LOCSU levy is frozen for 4 months but will be reinstated and this might affect future finances. TW agreed with AR proposal to keep the levy the same and then raise in 6 months if required. TH seconded this.

RK enquired what LOCSU will take from July onwards. NS advised 0.5% is the levy, which is a percentage of the GOS payments. NS stated that all attendees should vote on accepting the LOCSU levy also. All attendees agreed to the levy.

7. Any Other Business (AOB) (All)

Reflections on the AGM: NS enquired how new attendees found the AGM. Iftab Akram advised that he had found it smooth. Clare Shepperd advised that it had been interesting. Caroline Auckland Shone liked doing the meeting virtually. Hassan Javed found it interesting and noted there was lots to learn, but was very excited to be part of the committee and getting involved in the local community. TW acknowledged, from personal experience, that first coming to an LOC meeting can seem really daunting, but it is a good thing to get involved in and TW would recommend that more people come forward to contribute to improving care. Emma James noted that this had been a great way to connect and touch base with other optometrists. TW noted that as an LOC there is a strong desire to bring as many people onboard as possible and keep people connected.

Glaucoma Referrals: Faheem Sarfaz highlighted that he had recently had 3 patients referred direct from the hospital for glaucoma treatments that are not covered by MECS. Faheem Sarfaz enquired if there was anything that had been issued from Rotherham Hospital with regards to this. TH enquired if the patient had a letter of discharge. Faheem advised no, that the patient had been verbally advised to go straight to the practice for glaucoma checks. NS stated that if they are referring MECs that are appropriate this is correct, but if inappropriate this needs highlighting to NS who can escalate. The attendees discussed this further and noted concerns around administration staff potentially referring people inappropriately. LS noted that education in ophthalmology was really important, especially around post-cataract referrals and also noted an issue with patients not being properly educated around steroid drops. Clare Sheppard advised that her practice had also had issues. Iftab Akram suggested helping the hospital to have a simple process and give them a list of contact details.

ACTION: Faheem Sarfaz and Clare Sheppard to email NS with regards to the inappropriate referrals received and NS to raise with Rotherham Hospital.

ACTION: LS to email NS regarding the issue around steroid drops.

Faheem Sarfaz enquired if there had been any official updates from Rotherham Hospital during the COVID-19 period. TW advised that Caroline Pollard has emailed that morning and would share the email with members.

ACTION: TW to send email from Rotherham Hospital to attendees.

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Spa Medica: Hassan Javed enquired if anyone had post-cataract patient issues from Spa Medica. There were none reported by the attendees.

Personal and Protective Equipment (PPE): Emma James enquired about PPE requirements particularly should optometrists be wearing gloves. SS noted that the AOP guidance said not to wear gloves. LS noted that in her practice they have had to change gloves and apron for every patient, but mask is sessional. SuB noted that the hospital has advised not to wear gloves but just ensure there is stringent hand washing in place. SS advised that this was what he had heard from the hospital also, as there were concerns over higher rates of transference from gloves, as opposed to hand washing between patients. TH advised that he had been given the same information. TW noted that Vision Express have said to wear gloves, but visible hand washing is also okay. There is no agreed guidance. Iftab Akram noted that in Mid Yorkshire Hospitals staff are encouraged to wear gloves but change per patient. NS stated that the professional guidance from the College of Optometrists says apron and gloves are single use and mask and visor are sessional use, but if you have reasons that you cannot wear the gloves then hand washing is acceptable instead. NS also reminded attendees to be mindful that some patients, such as those with autistic spectrum disorders or breathing problems, may not want/be able to wear a mask when being examined and if this is the case then this should be clearly noted on the patients record. NS acknowledged that PPE will be a learning curve for all of us.

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Communities: NS also noted that the COVID-19 risk is particularly high in BAME populations and that everyone should be mindful of this and if practices have BAME staff then they should ensure a self-assessment/assessment with employer around risk and reasonable adjustments is conducted.

TW thanked all the attendees for the contributions and advised that a new meeting date would be circulated and the first piece of work that the RBLOC would start on was undertaking the LOCSU needs analysis.

Meeting Closed: 20:30

Date, Time and Location of Next Meeting: Tuesday ??? 2020, via Zoom.