



Chair's Report 2024-2025

Join Us for Our AGM: CPD, Networking, and the Future of Wiltshire LOC!

Our AGM is your chance to engage with our committee's progress, explore new opportunities in optometry, and gain valuable CPD points—all in one evening. Whether you're a long-standing member or new to Wiltshire LOC, we invite you to join us for an insightful and engaging event. Read on for this year's key updates.

Following our 2024 AGM, I was re-elected as Chair for a sixth consecutive year. Rob Hopwood continues as Vice Chair, bringing valuable experience to the role. Martin Bull remains our Treasurer but plans to step down after next year. This means we are actively looking for new committee members to help shape the future of Wiltshire LOC, share the workload, and develop their leadership skills.

A special mention must go to Carolyn Hudd, our Secretary, who keeps everything running smoothly—whether it's handling emails, coordinating meetings, or ensuring all committee business stays on track. We simply couldn't do this without her!

Key Developments This Year

CUES and NHS Structural Changes

Over the past year, we have been liaising with our colleagues in Avon LOC, Wessex LMC, and BSW ICB regarding the potential extension of the CUES service. Unfortunately, BSW ICB has been going through significant structural changes, including redundancies, making progress more challenging.

Adding to this uncertainty, NHS England is being disbanded, meaning the future of local commissioning may soon change again. Despite these disruptions, we remain committed to advocating for a consistent and equitable commissioning of pathway services across all counties, with ongoing support from LOCSU at a national level.

Post-Operative Cataract Services: Advocacy Continues

We have continued to push for a properly commissioned post-operative cataract service across BSW. The Opera platform, managed by Primary Eyecare Services, remains a key component in facilitating streamlined post-op assessments and fair remuneration for optometrists.

If you receive hospital forms requesting post-cataract refraction data, please remember that this falls outside the scope of a GOS sight test—these forms should not be completed without a commissioned pathway in place.

Expanding and Strengthening the Committee

To ensure the continued success and sustainability of Wiltshire LOC, we are focusing on committee growth, leadership succession, and mentorship.

After many years of dedicated service, Martin Bull has announced that he will be stepping down as Treasurer after next year. Martin is our longest-serving committee member and has been an integral part of Wiltshire LOC for many years. Martin has managed our finances with unwavering commitment and expertise. He is also a successful local business owner, bringing invaluable real-world experience to the committee. His hard

work behind the scenes has helped keep Wiltshire LOC running smoothly, and we are truly grateful for his contributions over the years.

This year, we also said goodbye to Victoria Barrett and Maddie Hocking, who both stepped down from the committee. We thank them for their time, dedication, and contributions over the past few years.

As we prepare for these transitions, we are looking for new members to step forward and help shape the future of the committee. This is a great opportunity to gain experience, share the workload, and develop leadership skills while ensuring the long-term success of the LOC.

Our approach includes:

- Creating more committee roles to distribute tasks effectively.
- Encouraging local practitioners to take on small roles to develop their skills.
- Establishing a leadership pipeline through regular recruitment and mentorship.
- Rotating leadership roles to prevent burnout and keep the LOC dynamic.
- Utilising LOCSU's resources to support the management of LOC business.

If you've ever thought about getting involved but weren't sure where to start, now is the perfect time! We offer mentorship and gradual involvement, allowing you to contribute at your own pace while learning how the LOC operates.

Modernising Wiltshire LOC

This year, we have been working on further strategic planning, including:

- Updating our logo with a motto: Our new motto reflects our commitment to both professional excellence and community collaboration:

“Elevating optometry, connecting care, community united.”

- Defining our mission and vision to help guide us in making better decisions for the future:

Our Mission:

We embody excellence in Wiltshire's primary care optometry, striving to uplift standards and collaborate seamlessly with the wider optometry community.

Our Vision:

To foster strong ties with secondary and primary care colleagues, ICB/NHS teams, and advance optometry for optimal patient care in our local community.

Improving Communication and Digital Engagement

A huge thanks to Jamie Bowden, our Communications Lead, who continues to work hard behind the scenes to manage and update our Microsoft 365 accounts as new members join and others step down. Jamie has also been instrumental in:

- Updating our website to serve as a better resource for practitioners.
- Launching our LinkedIn page, adding to our existing presence on X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram to engage with more optometrists both locally and nationally.

- We encourage you to follow Wiltshire LOC on these platforms to stay up to date with important updates, events, and referral information. You can also find email addresses and key contacts on our website if you ever need guidance or support.

CPD and Professional Development

Our commitment to high-quality CPD continues.

In February, we held a highly successful online CPD event, supported by LOCSU. Special thanks go to Rob Hopwood, who helped organise the event, and to Simone and Sid from LOCSU, whose support helped us achieve an excellent turnout of 60 practitioners.

The session featured three thought-provoking case studies, with practitioners split into smaller discussion groups over Zoom to encourage engagement and peer learning. The format worked brilliantly, and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. We aim to run a similar event next year.

Why Attend the AGM?

This year's AGM CPD session promises to be one of our best yet! Thanks to the efforts of Neelam Mittal and new committee member Emma Woodhouse, we have secured an excellent lineup of guest speakers.

We are particularly excited to welcome Maggie Woodhouse, who is well known in the optometry world, especially to the many optometrists she taught and mentored at Cardiff University. Maggie's contribution to the profession has been immense, and we are certain her insights will be both inspiring and thought-provoking.

Mohamed El-Ashry, a Swindon-based consultant ophthalmologist, is our second guest speaker, who will share his insights on collaborative care between optometry and ophthalmology, offering practical advice for enhancing patient care in our local community.

Other reasons to attend:

- **Shape the Future:** Take part in the voting of new committee members and help guide the direction of Wiltshire LOC.
- **Collaborate and Connect:** Meet fellow optometrists, CLOs, and DOs to discuss local and national issues.
- **Earn CPD Points:** Our AGM includes two valuable CPD sessions designed to enhance your knowledge and clinical practice.
- **Enjoy a Buffet & Social Atmosphere:** Relax and catch up with colleagues over food and drinks in a friendly, informal setting.
- **Get Involved:** Consider joining our committee and playing an active role in shaping optometry in our region.

We look forward to seeing you at our AGM in May. Come along, engage with your LOC, and be part of the conversation about the future of our profession.

See you there!



Colin Gault

Chair, Wiltshire LOC