



THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF OPHTHALMOLOGISTS MINUTES OF THE 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 36th AGM of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists was held on Tuesday 21 May 2024 at the International Convention Centre in Belfast.

The meeting required 40 members present to be quorate, there were 56 members in the auditorium at the start of the meeting and more joined as the meeting progressed.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The President, Professor Ben Burton, welcomed members to the meeting.

The minutes from the 2023 Annual General Meeting were approved.

2. To receive the 2023 Annual Report and Financial Statement

Professor Burton read the 2023 President's report (see Appendix 1).

The Honorary Treasurer, Professor Christopher Liu, thanked the new Head of People and Resources, Caroline Wilson, as well as the new Finance Controller, Larin Esan, for their hard work and expertise in providing the report.

Professor Liu highlighted the overall net outgoing resources before gains and losses and transfers amounted to £469k (2022: £90k). This was a combination of net losses on unrestricted funds of £335k and net losses on endowment and restricted funds of £134k. The College's total income for 2023 was £6.21m, an increase of £681k (12.3%) on 2022.

The Trustee Board scrutinised the financial statements and confirmed that the College had adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

3. To appoint auditors to the College for the coming year

Professor Liu thanked Sayer Vincent LLP for completing the audit. He noted the College was content with the service offered by Sayer Vincent and recommend that they continue as the College auditors. As a best practice, he noted the College would hold a tender exercise for 2025. Professor Liu called for a vote.

The proposed reappointment of Sayer Vincent as the 2024 auditors was approved by 31 votes in favour, 0 votes against.

4. To approve the proposed increases in annual subscription for 2025.

Professor Liu asked members to support the Trustees recommendation to increase the subscription fees by 5%, in line with inflation, with the exception of Trainee Affiliates and Trainee Fellows membership fees which would not be subject to an increase (see Appendix 2).

He noted the proposed increases were in-line with other Royal Colleges and subscriptions remained a tax-deductible expense. Professor Liu called for a vote.

The proposed increase to 2025 subscription fees was approved by 33 votes in favour, 3 votes against.

5. To receive the results of the appointment of College Officers and Trustees

The Honorary Secretary, Professor Andrew Lotery, reported the following individuals as the newly appointed regional representatives:

- Oxford – Shreya Halder
- North - Vina Manjunath
- Scotland East – Aravind Reddy (renewed term)
- South West Thames - Andrena McElvanney
- Yorkshire – Ahmed Bardan

Professor Lotery congratulated all successful representatives and thanked all outgoing representatives for their time and dedication. He also welcomed all the new members of various committees within the College.

6. Any other business

Professor Burton invited members to raise any questions about the work of the College. The following items were raised:

- **Benefits to retired members** – A member inquired about benefits for retired members, particularly regarding discounted subscription fees. Professor Lotery noted the College strove to offer reasonable subscription rates for all members as reflected in the annual subscription proposal. He also noted the College would take the suggestion of a discounted subscription rate under advisement.

The Education Committee Chair Rebecca Ford also noted the College values the input of retired members regarding various committee work and invited any interested individuals to reach out to the College about joining a committee.

- **Limited Journal Access** – A member noted they were experiencing limited journal access. Professor Burton advised the member contact the College directly.
- **Virtual Voting** – A member suggested the next AGM include virtual voting to help increase participation. Professor Liu noted the Trustees would take the suggestion under advisement.

No further questions were asked. Members with any subsequent questions were invited to email president@rcophth.ac.uk.

Professor Burton thanked members for their attendance and declared the 2024 AGM adjourned.

APPENDIX 1 - ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

Over the past 12 months we have achieved a number of notable highlights. And I have been struck by the scale and scope of what the College does to support our members and the wider specialty.

Firstly, our policy and public affairs work has seen us continue to influence policymakers and push our priorities in Westminster. From co-hosting a Westminster event calling for a national eyecare plan, to publishing our oft-cited workforce census, and securing training commitments from independent sector providers, we've made sure the voice of ophthalmology is being loudly heard.

We're now taking a strategic and data-driven approach to our communications. This is already helping to increase our reach, with X (formerly Twitter) followers growing by 4% and LinkedIn followers by 20%. And we've seen the open rate for our member newsletter (EyeMail) increase to 63% from 53% in 2022.

In the past year we successfully ran high-quality, robust examinations in the UK, Egypt, India, Malaysia, Greece, Singapore and Trinidad and Tobago. The number of candidates sitting the written elements of FRCOphth Part 1 and Part 2 continues to increase now that the papers can be taken remotely and candidates are based in all parts of the globe. With the new curriculum due to launch at the end of the summer, we've worked hard to help the training community prepare. This has included creating a dedicated space on our website and providing a steady stream of videos and newsletters. Implementation plans have continued apace, and extensive user acceptance testing has taken place to adapt an established ePortfolio to our programme of assessment. A new Regional Curriculum Network has also been created.

Our flagship event, the 2023 Annual Congress was our most successful to date, with 1,589 delegates attending and 97% of them rating Congress as Excellent and Good. And we've also provided a huge number of educational courses and events, supporting hundreds of colleagues working in the specialty. This has included online learning through INSPIRE and new specialty-specific guidance that helps candidates to develop their Portfolio Pathway applications.

Our research work continues to demonstrate impact and value. We published the sixth annual report of the National Ophthalmology Database Audit for Cataract surgery and the first full National AMD audit report. In March 2023 we launched the new online BOSU system, replacing the monthly yellow cards and postal questionnaires. We're seeing the continued growth of our journal, Eye, which is now ranked in the top 25 in the field. Our other publications have included four Clinical Practice Points, and two guidelines: an updated Abusive Head Trauma in Infants, and the new guideline Management of Angle Closure Glaucoma.

Following the conclusion of our Culture Review we now have a renewed focus on staff health and wellbeing, strengthening communication and collaboration.

And last, but by no means least, we consulted you, our members, to inform an ambitious new three-year strategy that we implemented in January.

In conclusion, there is plenty of exciting activities underway that will drive excellence and best

practice in the specialty, realise change, support learning and development, and build a thriving and sustainable community in and around the College.

Thank-you.

APPENDIX 2 - MEMBERSHIP SUBS 2025 – RECOMMENDED BY THE TRUSTEE BOARD

Membership subscriptions 2025 – recommended by the Trustee Board

	2024	2025		
RCOphth Membership Category	Fees	Fees	Variable Increase	% increase
UK Consultants	£620	£651	£31	5
UK Fellows, Members, Diplomates, Affiliates (inc. SAS doctors)	£475	£499	£24	5
UK members with gross annual earnings up to £46,000 from medical sources	£385	£404	£19	5
Trainee Affiliates and Trainee Fellows	£385	£385	£-	0
UK Seniors (those retired from all medical practice)	£210	221	£11	5
Overseas Fellows, Members, Diplomates, Affiliates - Band A countries*	£350	£368	£18	5
Overseas Fellows, Members, Diplomates, Affiliates - Band B, C and D countries*	£275	£289	£14	5
Overseas Seniors (those retired from all medical practice)	£185	£194	£9	5
Associate Member: UK and International Medical Students	£25	£26	£1	5
Associate Member: UK and International Foundation Doctors	£25	£26	£1	5
Associate Member: UK and International Allied Health Care Professionals	£80	£84	£4	5

*The banding of countries is based on a World Bank classification. Band A countries include those such as Australia, Canada and the USA and are deemed richer than Band B countries as specified by the World Bank.