

Approved minutes of Annual General Meeting of the British Association of Occupational Therapists

Held on 27 June 2024, 5.30pm

Please see appendix 1 for the attendance list.

Item	Main point
1.	<p>Welcome, introductions and apologies</p> <p>Odeth Richardson (Chair) welcomed members and observers to the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the British Association and Royal College of Occupational Therapists and confirmed there was a quorum.</p> <p>The Chair introduced Council members in attendance and the Senior Leadership Team. The Chair also introduced Andy Chapman (AC) and Robert Workman (RW), two members who were representing members by hosting part of the agenda.</p>
2.	<p>Election results and retirements</p> <p>Paul Dunning, Council member for Wales announced the election results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Odeth Richardson, Chair (uncontested nomination) • Cathryn Holding, Industrial Relations (uncontested nomination) • Neil Carnegie, Scotland (uncontested nomination) • Dr Sureshkumar Kamalakannan, International Affairs (uncontested nomination) • Janine Hackett, Learning and Development (elected) • Aisling Durkin, Northern Ireland (elected) • Jacqueline Gordon, England (elected) <p>The Chair thanked departing Council members Dr Kee Hean Lim, Kalimah Ibrahiim, Samantha Flower and Andrea Lothian for their commitment to the OT profession and their insight as Council members.</p>
3.	<p>Chair's report of the year</p> <p>Our impact in 2022-23</p> <p>The meeting received the annual report and accounts for BAOT. The Chair shared the key achievements delivered in the previous year.</p> <p>Key achievements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDB Strategy was launched in November 2023, after extensive consultation, to embed equity, diversity, and belonging in all activities. • Over 2600 occupational therapists responded to a Workplace Survey, highlighting workplace issues and their impact on services.

- The Workforce Strategy was published in March 2023, following extensive engagement with health leaders and policymakers.
- The Allied Health Profession Workforce Reform Project delivered in partnership with NHS England, focused on increasing the number of occupational therapists.
- 26 Service Innovation projects in the database aimed at service improvement and system transformation.
- Practice-based learning principles developed with nine other allied health professional bodies for quality learning opportunities.
- Every Day Campaign was launched during OT Week 2022, reaching millions through social media and media coverage.
- Awareness and recognition received industry commendations for raising public awareness.
- Innovation and Collaboration:
 - Worked with 50 higher education institutions, increasing learner places and managing programme accreditations.
 - Careers website campaigns to attract diverse individuals to the profession, seen over 8 million times on social media.
- Various events, workshops, and surveys for members to share views and contribute.
- Insight Council blogs, Senior Leadership Team get-togethers, and a rich portfolio of virtual and in-person events with almost 15,000 participants.
- Focused on aligning values with everyday behaviours and developing feedback and appraisal processes.
- Exploring flexible working options to utilise the London HQ more effectively by leasing underused space.

The Chair acknowledged the appreciation for the contributions of volunteers in various capacities, including hosting groups, reviewing submissions, and participating in consultations.

Receipt of the annual report and accounts

The Chair handed to CJ Odeleye, Head of Finance, to deliver the financial report.

The audited annual accounts for the period from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023 have been reviewed, confirming a successful audit by Moore Kingston Smith.

Despite a deficit of £1.98 million in operating activities due to a 16% increase in charity spending and a one-off pension liability settlement, income grew by 5%, reaching a total of £11 million.

Income growth of £0.56m was due to:

- Member subscriptions increasing by 2% (£302k)
- Investment income (£84k)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in income from other sources (e.g. royalties, publications, conference and events) (£172k) <p>Overall reserves increased by £1.2m to £15.7m.</p> <p>Investments maintained their value at £4.3 million following a market recovery, and the building value was adjusted, resulting in an unrealized gain of £3.2 million. Total reserves rose to £15.7 million, with free reserves at £5.6 million, fixed assets at £1.6 million, and investment property valued at £5 million.</p> <p>Looking ahead, slower membership growth and slower progress with the rental income means our deficit is larger than planned, but measures are in place to mitigate this, along with a revised long-term strategy. There will be no increase in membership fees for 2024-2025. The RCOT remains financially stable and focused on sustainable growth.</p> <p>The Head of Finance handed back to the Chair.</p> <p>The Chair opened voting on the resolution to appoint the auditors:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The members resolve to appoint Moore Kingston Smith as the auditors for BAOT and authorise the Council to agree the auditors' remuneration for the coming year and for every year in which the auditors are deemed to be reappointed until this authority is revoked by further members' ordinary resolution.</p> <p>Voting would remain open until after the member Q&A.</p>
4.	<p>Strengthening our governance</p> <p>The Chair shared plans for BAOT and RCOT's governance. Change was required because the governance had evolved over many years, and in that time, the organisations had grown and changed. Council were strengthening the governance, to ensure the organisations' were fit for purpose both today and in the future.</p> <p>The review was looking at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal structure • compliance with charity, trade union and company law, regulation and good practice • the expertise required to govern all the key aspects of the organisation • transparency and accountability • improving the understanding of the differences between BAOT and RCOT • how governance can support a stronger unified message on the things that are important to the profession.

The three priority areas that had been focussed on during the year were:

- Creating clearer distinction between BAOT and RCOT, and their roles and responsibilities, including re-naming the RCOT Council as the Board of Trustees.
- Having the right expertise to ensure that resources are managed responsibly by supplementing the valuable skills and experience of the elected OTs by recruiting up to 4 'lay' trustees to the RCOT Board who can fill specific skills gaps on Council, for example in areas such as marketing and finance. The Council would also create a People and Nominations Committee to support Council in overseeing people strategy and the process of elections and appointment to Council, the Board of Trustees and Committees.
- Making some administrative changes to the rules (Articles). Our rules are written in a very outdated way, they include items that aren't legally necessary, aren't always compliant with current law, are unnecessarily restrictive, contradictory in places and missing some required items.

The Chair stated that the specific changes to the BAOT Articles to be voted on were:

- Clarifying the clauses on voting rights to ensure Articles are clear on members' voting rights as enshrined in company law.
- Amending reference to the length of time records must be kept to ensure we are compliant with company law
- Amendments so that members' decisions can be made by written resolution - this is unlikely to be used in practice but will bring the Articles in line with what is allowed under company law.
- Removing a clause on co-options because co-options are not allowed under trade union law.
- Amending an out-of-date clause relating to removal of Council members for reasons of mental disorder – this now states that someone may be removed if Council reasonably believes that they are unable to manage their professional affairs. The proposed clause aligns with good practice by allowing Council to fulfil their duties to the organisation and providing duty of care to fellow Council members.
- Amending clauses so Council can make decisions outside of meetings if the majority agree, and putting stronger controls around the process for doing so.

The Chair opened the vote on the special resolution:

	<p>The members resolve by way of special resolution that the Articles of Association of British Association of Occupational Therapists Limited be amended as set out in first column of the table titled “Proposed changes to be adopted by SR1”¹.</p> <p>The vote would be closed later in the meeting.</p>
5.	<p>Member Q&A, facilitated by Robert Workman and Andy Chapman</p> <p><i>Question put to Odeth Richardson, Chair:</i> What is RCOT doing to bring more member focus and leadership into decision making in the organisation; and how can members be confident that decisions made represent the views of the 36,000 members?</p> <p><i>Answer:</i> As you can see at RCOT, we are committed to giving members a voice and to strengthen ways in which we do this to promote the representation of our members. Before our AGM, we held a number of sessions around the governance changes that we were proposing. Members had the opportunity to drop in to ask questions, to read the information on our website. Prior to voting at the AGM, we wanted to be sure that we were including members in any decisions that we were making. We know that our membership is really more than voting at an AGM, so we offer members a range of ways to feedback to us and to input. So, for example, you can ask our Senior Leadership Team questions. As Council members, we're open to receiving any questions or any suggestions in terms of how we can move the profession forward. We are also open to be more transparent with what's discussed at Council by introducing the after Council video blogs, so we can share what was discussed. And so we're always thinking about ways that we can strengthen and support our members voice and representation.</p> <p><i>Question put to Clare Cochrane, Director of Brand and Marketing:</i> To what extent are members using their benefits from their membership? Is the uptake low?</p> <p><i>Answer:</i> Members are actively using their membership benefits, and the uptake is quite strong across various support and engagement tools. While some benefits, such as insurance, professional advisory services, and the hardship fund, are intended more for reassurance and ideally see lower usage, other resources are seeing significant engagement. For example, the CPD recording and portfolio tools introduced earlier this year already have 8,000 active users, and digital resources like eBooks and e-journals have been accessed thousands of times. Additionally, many members are taking advantage of OpenAthens for seamless library access. We also host webinars like "Maximise Your Membership" to ensure members fully understand and utilise their benefits. So while we're always aiming to improve engagement, the current uptake of benefits is quite healthy.</p> <p><i>Question put to Steve Ford, CEO:</i> Can you tell us how much the refurbishment of the building cost and how this will balance our financial picture and how do these changes to the office space benefit members? And the second question from</p>

¹ See Appendix 2

member Professor Elizabeth Mackay is what has been the uptake of the rental space at HQ?

Answer: The building refurbishment cost £2 million, and the investment is expected to balance the financial picture by generating around £1 million per year in income, with £700,000 of that being profit. This will help recoup the investment in about three years and avoid raising membership fees by 7%. The renovation was aimed at making better use of the building, which was underutilised post-Covid. Currently, three of the four floors are rented, with hopes that the fourth will be occupied soon. Although progress was slower last year due to economic uncertainty, the market has improved, leading to 75% occupancy. The changes will benefit members by providing additional funding for services without relying on increased membership fees.

Question from member Rachel Booth-Gardner for Karin Orman, Director of Practice and Innovation: RCOT recently released their workforce strategy for the years 2024 to 2035; this represents a radical change to current ways of working. Can you provide insight into how RCOT is collaborating with individual NHS trusts and local authorities to ensure successful implementation of this strategy?

Answer: RCOT is collaborating with Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and trusts across the UK to implement their workforce strategy. For example, they recently met with Greater Manchester and NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria to discuss workforce reform workshops. These workshops aim to shift more occupational therapists from hospital to community settings and redefine their roles in acute hospital care, where they often feel under-recognised. RCOT is holding UK-wide workforce reform workshops to support local implementation of the strategy and is engaging with NHS employers to reach key decision-makers, including finance directors, to support these changes.

Question from member Alison Bullock for Steve Ford, CEO: Does RCOT offer space for members to meet and if not, then can we recommend any free or cheap venues in central London?

Answer: Yes, RCOT does have meeting rooms available in their new facilities, although they are smaller and shared with tenants, so availability is limited. RCOT can also assist by directing members to other event spaces in London, which may offer a better experience for larger meetings or conferences. Members are encouraged to reach out for further help with this.

Question from Mary McCarron for Karin Orman: What opportunities and challenges do RCOT see for increasing practice based learning opportunities in independent practice? What can we do to overcome some of the challenges in this area?

Answer: RCOT is conducting research to identify the enablers and barriers to increasing quality and capacity in practice-based learning. This includes a survey and focus groups for involvement. The findings will guide resource allocation to support student placements. They are also continuing to support the implementation

of the AHP Principles of Practice-Based Learning. Monthly placement cafés are available for members to share innovations and discuss challenges, with recordings and resources provided afterward. The Head of Education, Carolyn Hay, and her team are open to conversations about further support.

Question from member Elizabeth Ann McKay to Clare Cochrane: Given the consistently poor turnout at the AGM, when will this return to the central part of the conference?

Answer: RCOT is actively discussing how to maximise member engagement at the AGM and other events. While digital events offer accessibility benefits, past in-person AGMs held during the annual conference attracted more attendees, though their engagement level is uncertain. We are now reviewing our event schedule for the upcoming year, considering the role of in-person events alongside digital ones. No decisions have been made yet, but discussions with Council are ongoing and RCOT plans to update members with a more defined plan by autumn after further consideration.

Question from member Veronica Audrey Downing: Can we through RCOT, ever fully convey the value of occupational therapy as a necessary resource within health and social care, in rehabilitation and preventative medicine, and in supporting care carers who keep those needing care at home, enabling quality of living in the community?

Answer: RCOT acknowledges the importance of conveying the value of occupational therapy within health and social care, and this is a key focus of our strategy. The "lift up" theme and the workforce strategy are specifically aimed at raising the profession's profile, voice, and confidence to address challenges like rehabilitation, preventative medicine, and support for carers. It is a top priority for RCOT to work together on these goals.

Question from member Mary McCarron for Dr Nikki Daniels, Head of Communities and Connections: When can we expect to hear more about the pots of money generated by specialist sections and how this will be utilised? Will you consult with specialist sections on this particular matter?

Answer: The project aims to enhance networking opportunities for RCOT members by leveraging digital technology and addressing the limitations of the existing specialist sections. It focuses on creating more inclusive, diverse, and accessible networks that are relevant to members' professional lives, without additional fees. Currently, RCOT is working with specialist sections, regions, and other members to design these new networks and determine their activities. Funds have been set aside for this new community model, and details will be presented to Council for approval. An update on the design and activities of these communities is expected by summer.

7.

Results of voting on the resolutions

The Chair closed voting on the resolutions and announced the voting results.

Resolution 1: To consider and if thought fit, to pass the following ordinary resolution (R 1): The members resolve to appoint Moore Kingston Smith as the auditors for BAOT and authorise the Council to agree the auditors' remuneration for the coming year and for every year in which the auditors are deemed to be reappointed until this authority is revoked by further members' ordinary resolution.

	For	Against	Abstain
Votes received by proxy	381	17	27
Proxy votes cast at the Chair's discretion	32	-	-
Votes in person	20	1	1
TOTAL	433	18	28

Resolution 2: To consider and if thought fit, to pass the following resolution with or without modification(s) as a Special Resolution (SR 1): The members resolve by way of special resolution that the Articles of Association of the British Association of Occupational Therapists Limited be amended as set out in the first column of the table titled "Proposed changes to be adopted by SR"

	For	Against	Abstain
Votes received by proxy	382	13	29
Proxy votes cast at the Chair's discretion	33	-	-
Votes in person	20	1	1
TOTAL	435	14	30

8.

The Chair closed the 2024 BAOT AGM (and thereby the formal part of the meeting).

Appendix 1 – attendance list

Members:	Council members:	Staff:
<p>Miss Rachel Elizabeth Ohman Miss Mary Catherine McCarron Ms Paula Jane Twiggs Mr Julian Jeyasingh-Jacob Mrs Josephine Poulton Miss Jane Marie Moseley Mrs Ellen Kate Bolton Mrs Julia Anne Skelton Mrs Tracy Michele Harper El Deeb Ms Samantha Louise Shann Mrs Susan Gail Cleasby Dr Sureshkumar Kamalakannan Ms Rachel Booth-Gardiner Miss Alison Bullock Mrs Helena Margaret Culshaw Ms Kerry Lovell Mrs Sarah Joanne Fletcher-Shaw Miss Tejal Patel Ms Gabrielle Richards Ms Jacqueline Anne C Gordon Miss Rebecca Crouch Ms Nabachwa Luyimbo-Lule Ms Penelope West Mrs Veronica Audrie M Downing Miss Tsipporah Lax Mr Mike Griffin Dr Irene Ilott Ms Aisling Nicola Marie Durkin Dr Thomas Williams Mrs Valery Wilson Burnett Ms Janine Hackett Mr Neil Carnegie Professor Elizabeth Anne McKay Dr Jennifer Anne Preston MBE Mrs Nicola Joanne Lindsay Mrs Tara-Anthea McMillan Miss Mirjam Schaefer</p>	<p>Odeth Richardson Paul Dunning Kalimah Ibrahiim Samantha Flower Cathryn Holding Anita Atwal</p>	<p>Steve Ford Clare Cochrane Rob Smyth Satvinder Reyatt Karin Orman Nikki Daniels Caz Dunn Sheetal Girhari Gillian Ward Nik Screen Carolyn Hay Dani Wing Amisha Koria Lorinda Sharkey Anne Keen Kate Monro Angela Daniel</p>

Appendix 2: Proposed changes to be adopted by SR1

Proposed changes to be adopted by SR1

Delete the following from existing Article 2:

“, and every member of the Association shall either sign a written consent to become a Member in a form approved by the Council or sign the Register of Members on becoming a Member”.

Delete the heading between existing Articles 45 and 46 and replace it with:

“VOTING AT GENERAL MEETINGS AND BY WRITTEN RESOLUTION
VOTING”

Delete existing Article 46 and replace it with the following new Article 46:

“46. Save as expressly provided in these Articles, no member unless duly registered as a Member and who shall have paid every subscription and other sum (if any) which shall be due and payable to the Association in respect of their membership, shall be entitled to be present or to vote on any matter at any General Meeting (either personally or by proxy), or on a written resolution.”

Insert the following new Article 47 beneath existing Article 46:

“47. On a vote on a resolution on a show of hands at a meeting, each member present has one vote.”

Insert the following new heading beneath existing Article 68:

“WRITTEN RESOLUTIONS”

Insert the following new Article 70 beneath existing Article 68:

“70. Subject to Article 46, the Association may deal with business by written resolution in accordance with the Companies Acts and the Articles.”

Delete existing Article 71.

Delete existing Article 83.2 and replace it with the following new Article 83.2: “83.2 has, in the Council’s reasonable belief, become incapable of managing their own professional affairs and the Council resolves to remove the member of Council from office;”

Replace existing Article 92 with the following new Article 93:

“93. The Council or any committee of Council may take decisions without a meeting if a simple majority of them indicate by any means that they share a common view on a matter. A decision taken in accordance with this Article 93 shall be as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Council or of such committee duly convened and constituted, provided:

93.1. the Chair of Council or the company secretary (if any) or any other person authorised by Council to put the proposed decision to the members of Council (the “Facilitator”) has taken reasonable steps to notify all members of Council of the proposed decision;

93.2. a majority of members of Council have indicated to the Facilitator (by any means) that they approve the proposed decision; and

following receipt of responses from a majority of members of Council, the Facilitator has communicated to all members of Council (by any means) that the decision has been formally approved by Council in accordance with this Article 93.”

Replace existing Article 116 with the following new Article 117:

“117. The members of Council must ensure that the Association keeps a record, in writing, of every unanimous or majority decision taken by the members of Council, for such period as is required by the Act.”

Update cross-references throughout the Articles of Association to reflect the above amendments.

Appendix 3: Questions answered via the online Q&A function

Question	Asker name	Answer
What opportunities and challenges do RCOT see for increasing practice based learning opportunities in independent practice? What can we do to overcome some of the challenges in this area?	Miss Mary Catherine McCarron	<i>Answered verbally during the Q&A.</i>
When can we expect to hear more about the pots of money generated by specialist sections, and how this will be utilised? Will you consult with the specialist sections on this particular matter?	Miss Mary Catherine McCarron	<i>Answered verbally during the Q&A.</i>
I don't think it is right that members cannot vote on RCOT Articles of Association - is there any way that Members could continue to vote on any changes? I also agree with two comments already made in the chat - could students automatically be registered as members as it was in the past? and could BAOT/RCOT offer increased more comprehensive insurance?	Mrs Susan Gail Cleasby	<p>Hello Susan, Kate here, Head of Governance and Compliance. I realise this is a change to what members are used to but this is about following the proper legal and constitutional process. The constitutional process is that BAOT Council will vote on changes to the RCOT rules (Articles of Association), because BAOT is the sole member of RCOT. This is about BAOT Council fulfilling their duties as the elected governing body.</p> <p>But in making these changes Council has been very mindful to reach out and listen to members about the proposed changes. We've have a member sounding board feed into our communications planning and held governance drop ins with members to hear their views.</p> <p>Its really important to us to support students and OT's at every stage of their careers. We are working with HEI's to raise awareness of the benefits of student membership from the beginning of their training. We</p>

Question	Asker name	Answer
		<p>are also running a series of webinars to support students prepare for practice and transition to from training to the workforce. From term 1 2024 we are planning to recruit a student champion network across HEI's so that we can better understand and meet their needs going forward.</p> <p>Hi Susan to the second part of your question about offering more a comprehensive insurance package for members. We review our indemnity cover annually based on feedback from members. If you have ideas on how we can improve this offering please feel free to contact me directly at ruth.mullan@rcot.co.uk thanks</p>
Thank you Kate for your replies. My suggestion is to use more of our fees to purchase increased insurance - up to £10 million indemnity insurance such as Balens offers. Is that possible? It seems that only one tenth of our fees are used for insurance and I feel that more could be used for this member benefit?	Mrs Susan Gail Cleasby	Hi Susan, Ruth Head of Member Experience here, thank you for this feedback. Our current insurance including malpractice and professional liability and public produces liability up to a new limit of 10 million per member. We will be reviewing and developing our insurance cover for members over the next 12 months in line with what other parties such as Balens are offering. Thank you for raising this, many thanks
Can we, through RCOT, ever fully convey the value of occupational therapy as a NECESSARY resource within Health and Social Care, in rehabilitation and preventative medicine, and in supporting carers who keep those needing care at home enabling quality of living in the community.	Mrs Veronica Audrie M Downing	<i>Answered verbally during the Q&A.</i>

Question	Asker name	Answer
RCOT recently released their Workforce Strategy for the years 2024–2035. This represents a radical change to current ways of working. Can you provide insight into how RCOT is collaborating with individual NHS trusts and local authorities to ensure successful implementation of this strategy?	Ms Rachel Booth-Gardiner	<i>Answered verbally during the Q&A.</i>
On behalf for Alison Bullock we used to use RCOT to meet, coming from all over the country (free). We have asked if there is space to use to meet that we can hire/pay for at RCOT but have had no response. A response would be helpful, and if there isn't any such space, do RCOT have any links/info to free or cheap conference space where we can come together in central London?	Ms Rachel Booth-Gardiner	<i>Answered verbally during the Q&A.</i>
I would like to request that the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) and the Council give high priority to ensuring accessibility in all areas of their work. Considering the access needs of Members with protected characteristics under the Equality Act will help in breaking down inequalities.	Ms Rachel Booth-Gardiner	Thank you for raising that point. We are committed to meeting our EDB principles, and accessibility is critical. In all our activities, including procurement and partnerships, we have been emphasising accessibility. We work closely with the ABLE OT expert advisory group, and we welcome member suggestions on how we can improve accessibility.
Given the consistently poor turnout at the AGM when will this return to be central part of the conference	Professor Elizabeth Anne McKay	<i>Answered verbally during the Q&A.</i>
What has been uptake of renting space at HQ	Professor Elizabeth Anne McKay	Hello. We've rented out three floors since May and we've had interest in the fourth one. RCOT <i>Also answered verbally during the Q&A</i>
Thanks how far off is this from original £ to be achieved	Professor Elizabeth Anne McKay	Hello. The flexible office market is extremely competitive with supply often being more than demand. Whilst we experienced some delays in

Question	Asker name	Answer
		achieving rental income, presently 3 of our 4 available floors have been let and there is interest in the last floor, which is being explored. By the end of September 2024, we would have secured £231k in rental income, and this will rise to approx. £1.1m in the period to 30 September 2025. RCOT

Appendix 4: Questions submitted in advance of the AGM by Dr Irene Ilott

Question	Answer
<p>1. Democratic member leadership: How will the governance review embed member leadership and democratic decision making at all levels of the organisational structures and processes?</p> <p>Currently only nine Professional Members are elected to lead and govern BAOT/RCOT. Circa 36,000 members can only vote for strategic leaders at one level of the organisation and not about any other matter. Many cuts and changes to member benefits are announced in way that is reminiscent of top-down, rather than democratically mandated change. Recent examples are the loss of member space at headquarters and replacing Specialist Sections with a digital platform.</p>	<p><i>Answered verbally during the Q&A.</i></p>
<p>2. Low uptake of benefits: <i>Are most members getting little benefit from their subscriptions?</i></p> <p>The Year in Numbers (p18-19 BAOT & RCOT 2022-3 Annual Reports) indicate that only a small percentage of c.36,000 members access services and resources. The uptake ranges from 0.04% (14 recipients of Covid grants), through 1.34% (500 members supported for HCPC CPD Audit) to 5% (1,803 members using the Professional Advisory Service).</p>	<p><i>Answered verbally during the Q&A.</i></p>

<p>3. Access rights to the digital library: <i>How many members have enacted their rights to use the digital only library?</i></p> <p>At the 2022 AGM, it was reported that less than half (17,300 members) had created the necessary account on the website (portal). No updates have been given since. <i>What is the current figure and percentage?</i></p>	<p>In the last year, 33,000 users logged into the member portal which is required in order to book events or access other systems associated with their RCOT membership including the digital library. By moving the library online, the resources are now more easily available to all our members irrespective of where they live and work. In May 2024, E-books from the digital library were used 3,361 times and E-journals were used 5,482 times.</p>
<p>4. Missing Specialist Sections: <i>Why are the activities and achievements of the 10 Specialist Sections (plus regional and national groups) omitted from the annual reports?</i></p> <p>The only mention is the £160,000 surplus for College Branches (specialist sections and regional groups) on RCOT 2022-23 p69. <i>Please provide information about the number of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>members who pay an additional subscription to join each community of practice</i> • <i>on-line, in-person and hybrid events organised in 2022-2023 and the number of participants</i> • <i>responses to policy consultations underpinned by evidence and contributions from members of the Specialist Sections</i> 	<p>The Specialist Sections are not separate organisations and an example of one way we engage members. The Annual Report therefore reflects RCOT activity such as events, conferences, responses to policy and practice consultations in its broadest sense.</p> <p>In 2022/23 we had circa 8000 members who had one or more Specialist Section membership. Of the 201 community-led events in the year, 156 were Specialist Section events. In an average month around 2% of all members registered to attend a community-led event.</p>

<p>5. Disbanding Specialist Sections: <i>Did Council authorise replacing the Specialist Sections with a digital platform in 2022-23? What choices were the membership of each of the 10 Specialist Sections given about the future of their communities? When will members get to vote on these 'offers' /options?</i></p>	<p>Since the summer of 2023 we've worked closely with volunteers, Specialist Sections, regions and members to help us review and develop a new approach to community engagement. We've done this through a series of workshops, stakeholder discussions and meetings, as well as through extensive communications. All Specialist Section and region volunteers have been invited to test the new community engagement platform, RCOT Communities. Members are also helping us to define and develop the networks and the new volunteer roles needed to support them. We're grateful to everyone who's participated in our review and is helping us define and shape a new communities model that will serve us for years to come.</p> <p>Council are aware of our plans, have regularly been informed of progress and are supportive of our direction and vision to make communities more accessible and inclusive to all members.</p> <p>This ongoing work to improve member benefits does not fall under the members' voting rights as set out in the Articles of Association.</p>
<p>6. Commercialisation: costs and gains <i>How many offices at headquarters have been let and what income has been generated since March 2023?</i></p> <p>Well used member space and facilities including the library, study centre, conference venue and meetings rooms were lost due to the refurbishment. <i>What were the costs of hiring replacement facilities, such as meeting rooms and</i></p>	<p>The flexible office market is extremely competitive with supply often outstripping demand. Whilst there was a delay in securing tenants, currently three out of four floors have been let and there is interest in the remaining floor. By the end of September 2024, we would have secured £231k in rental income, and this will rise to approx. £1.1m in the period to 30 September 2025.</p>

<p><i>conference venues including The Shard? Is Council considering restoring facilities that provide benefits for the public and profession? This has been advocated by some members on social media because it would enhance public benefit for RCOT charitable status.</i></p>	<p>Whilst some members previously used the facilities in Phoenix House, occasion, it was primarily used by those in or around London and therefore wasn't an equitable member benefit</p> <p>The majority of our events are held virtually to enable equitable access to all members across all four countries. We do occasionally have in-person meetings and events and will hire external facilities in the same way as we did before the building was refurbished. Our Workforce Strategy roundtable event held at the Shard cost approximately £4k. We always seek competitive options and consider associated travel costs.</p>
<p>7. Charitable and support activities: Why has the number of staff working on charitable activities gone down by nearly 20%?</p> <p>There were from 68 /79% in 2022 and 56/60% in 2023 (RCOT 2022-23 p89)</p>	<p>The numbers referred to are the average numbers of colleagues employed monthly, which is adjusted for staff turnover over the course of the year.</p> <p>Our full-time equivalent (FTE) total employed colleagues is 95. Of this number, the split of those working on charitable activity is 80% (76 FTE): 20% (19 FTE) who work on support activities.</p> <p>Colleagues employed to provide support play an essential role in running our organisation and leaving the majority of colleagues to prioritise and focus their efforts on delivering for our membership.</p>
<p>8. Contracted out: What BAOT/RCOT work is i) contracted out and ii) done by temporary staff?</p>	<p>We always balance the delivery of our work considering our internal expertise and the capacity of our colleagues. In some cases, we do have to resource some of our projects and in some cases to backfill operational delivery with</p>

<p>The staff costs report a total of £628,000 for temporary staff and recruitment (RCOT 2022-23 p89).</p>	<p>external providers who can help us to deliver for our members.</p> <p>During the 2023 period, we brought in new skills and expertise we did not previously have to help us deliver our strategic priorities. The cost of recruiting is represented in the accounts, it is worth noting this figure is half in the current year, as we have embedded these roles.</p>
<p>9. Publication standards: <i>Are the RCOT Publication Group standards applied to all outputs?</i></p> <p>The standards ‘maintain a style and quality that supports the professional and public standing of RCOT’ (Day & Roberts 2023). The Life Hacks (October 2022) and many reports produced in 2022-2023 are opinion rather than evidence based.</p>	<p>RCOT publications and materials vary from evidence-based resources, such as guidelines, to more opinion based content, for example blogs, to marketing content, such as the Lift up your everyday campaign. For evidence-based resources, we work in accordance with the Evidence-based guideline development manual (fifth edition, 2024).</p> <p>We work to our publications process and standards, which reflect the range of content we produce.</p>
<p>10. British Journal: <i>a member or public benefit? Are there plans to ballot members about making the British Journal an open access journal?</i></p> <p>All issues of the Associations’ Journals from 1938 to 2024 are behind a paywall. Other highly regarded occupational therapy journals make research free to read as a service to society. A vote would provide a democratic mandate for change, or not.</p>	<p>We have no plans to ballot members about making BJOT open access. It is costly to run member ballots and currently we only do so for those items fall under members’ voting rights as set out in the Articles of Association.</p>

