British Association of Occupational Therapists

Approved minutes of Annual General Meeting of the British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT)

Held on 17 June 2025, 4pm, Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC)
50 Morrison St, Edinburgh EH3 8EE

Please see appendix 1 for the attendance list.

Item	Main point
1.	**Welcome, introductions and apologies** Odeth Richardson (Chair) welcomed members and observers to the 2025 Annual General Meeting of the British Association of Occupational Therapists and confirmed there was a quorum. The Chair introduced Council members in attendance, the Senior Leadership Team and Samantha Flower and Dr Fiona Maclean, members who would be facilitating the Q&A session.
2.	**Council member election results** Jackie Gordon, Council member for England announced the election results: • Odeth Richardson, Chair (uncontested nomination) • Paul Dunning, Council member for Wales (uncontested nomination) It was announced that three Council roles would be open for election in 2026 (Wales, Industrial Relations, Research and Development) and that the People and Nominations Committee would work with Council on succession planning and elections for these roles.
3.	**Chair's report of the year** Members received the Annual Report and Accounts for BAOT. The Chair presented the Annual Report, covering from October 2023 to September 2024. She highlighted the organisation's strategic priorities: Rise Up, Open Up, Lift Up, and Build Up. Rise up The UK-wide Workforce Strategy was developed in response to survey findings, with tailored action plans for each nation's local needs, challenges and opportunities. The newly established advisory groups supported the development of action plans for each nation. In May 2024, RCOT held a roundtable with key decision-makers across government, NHS England and other stakeholders, creating meaningful dialogue about how to support and grow our workforce.

	The Equity, Diversity and Belonging (EDB) Strategy was launched, outlining six priorities and supported by advisory groups and reflection sessions. And our Lift Up Your Everyday campaign brough bitesize guidance from OTs to the public. Open Up With demand for OT rising, we need more people from all backgrounds consider a career in occupational therapy so the workforce represents the people and communities BAOT and RCOT serve. The ChooseOT campaign shared personal stories of members journey into OT with over 68million social media impressions and over half a million visits to our website. RCOT also partnered with NHS England to deliver education reform and advanced practice projects and, as part of the Allied Health Professions Research community, RCOT supported initiatives to build research leadership and capacity. Lift Up As a member of BAOT and RCOT, OTs are part of a thriving community of 36,000 peers, with membership designed to support them through all stages of their career. During 20223-2024 membership benefits and support were expanded to include new CPD tools, more digital resources and increased support for members experiencing financial hardship or undergoing HCPC investigation. Build Up RCOT has begun its digital transformation starting with a new website and the launch of RCOT Communities to help members personalise their experience, improve accessibility, and provide better data and insight to inform future improvements. Part of this transformation built on the legacy of Specialist Sections and regional groups. Following extensive engagement with members and volunteers, a more inclusive structure was introduced, comprising volunteer-led professional, practice, and regional networks aligned with members' professional needs.
4.	**Financial report** The Chair opened the financial report, noting the accounts were independently audited by Moore Kingston Smith. CJ Odeleye, RCOT Interim Associate Director of Finance presented the financial report, noting a £2 million reduction in reserves, bringing them to £13.7 million, with free reserves at £4 million. Income remained steady at approximately £11 million, while expenditure was around £13 million. Membership subscriptions contributed £9.4 million, with a decline in commercial income and a new income stream from property rental. Expenditure included £1.9 million for trade union activities, increased spending on member services, and reduced costs for charitable activities due to fewer events and targeted reductions in operational costs to bring spending in line with income. The financial strategy involved a planned short-term deficit to support investment in member services and infrastructure. However, membership growth had been slower than forecast, anticipated rental income was not fully realised in the financial year and commercial income has been reduced. This, combined with inflation continuing to increase the cost of delivering services, had increased the size of the deficit.

	The deficit was being actively managed by the RCOT Board of Trustees and Audit, Investment and Risk Committee and the focus remained on firmly on growing the profession, supporting members, and ensuring the organisation was financially secure and sustainable for the long-term future
4.	**Member subscriptions** Neil Carnegie, Council member for Scotland, introduced the first resolution members were asked to vote on regarding changes to member fees. The proposal included modest increases for some member categories and significant reductions for newly qualified members. The rationale for changes to member fees were to balance fairness with financial sustainability. Fees had only increased once in seven years, despite inflation far outweighing this increase. If fee increases had kept pace with inflation, the full professional fee for previous year would have been £375 (rather the £297.19). This would have represented a further £1.8m in income during the current financial year. The proposed new fee for professional members was £310, below the inflation-adjusted figure of £375 and would enable RCOT to be the best champion and advocate for members and fit for purpose and secure to continue supporting members and the profession. The proposed changes were: • Full professional – increase by £1.11 a month (4.5% increase) • Newly registered – decrease by £6.50 a month (35% discount for first two years of registration) • Associate – increase by £0.66 a month (4.5% increase) • Self-employed and Overseas – increase by £0.83 a month (4.5% increase) • Career break – increase by £0.76 a month (4.5% increase) • Associate Apprentice – increase by £0.23 a month (4.5% increase) • Student – increase by £0.15 a month (3% increase) • Retired – increase by £0.19 a month (3% increase)
5.	**Strengthening our governance** Kate Monro, RCOT Head of Governance and Compliance,presented the proposed amendments to the BAOT Articles of Association, which members would vote on at the end of the meeting. She outlined progress to date, noting that these changes would complete the current legal updates. The newly established People and Nominations Committee was commended for its support in the recent CEO recruitment. A review of Council Rules was planned following implementation of any new Articles. The key change for members was the revision of Council member terms of office. The current system was described as inconsistent and disruptive, particularly the annual election of the Chair. The proposed model introduces three-year terms for all roles (except the WFOT role, which remains unchanged), with the option for one re-election, allowing a maximum of six consecutive years. In exceptional cases, Council may extend terms, for example, if no Chair candidates come forward or a member is elected Chair near the end of their term.

	A 12-month “cooling off” period would apply before re-election eligibility. Additional legal and structural changes to the BAOT Articles were also summarised. These were necessary for legal robustness but will have minimal impact on members.
6.	**Member facilitated Q&A**[1] The Chair introduced the Member Q&A session, which was facilitated by Fiona Maclean and Samantha Flower. Members were invited to ask questions about the resolutions and the annual report. Questions submitted in advance were addressed first, followed by live questions from the floor. *Question to Council:* What are the key successes and challenges you have faced since the last AGM? What has gone well and what has been more difficult? *Answered by Neil Carnegie, Council Member, Scotland:* As a new member, there has been a learning curve in understanding the organisation, engaging with the OT community and representing members in Scotland. A key achievement has been the significant improvement in governance, which is a positive step forward and strengthens RCOT’s future. While the launch of the digital transformation could have happened sooner, the decision to prioritise thorough testing means it is now well-positioned for long-term success. *Answered by Anita Atwal, Council Member, Research and Development:* One of the key positives has been our ability to address some of the more challenging topics within the occupational therapy profession, supported by the excellent work around the EDB Strategy and the impactful events that have taken place. I’m genuinely proud of what we’ve achieved as a profession and the meaningful conversations members are having. Looking ahead, we do need to carefully consider our financial position, which is part of today’s vote. I encourage you to reflect on the proposed strategies and make your own informed decision regarding membership fees. As a profession, we’re significantly enhancing our offer, but these are important and sometimes difficult discussions. *Question from Irene Ilott:* How is Council protecting financial viability of the organisation and acting to reverse the RCOT deficit, which has been reported in the last four years? *Answered by Steve Ford, Chief Executive:* Our Interim Associate Director of Finance outlined the financial strategy earlier, but I’d like to highlight that when I joined, RCOT had around £11 million in reserves that weren’t being actively used. Four years ago, Council made the decision to invest £5 million of those reserves into enhancing member benefits and services, as well as refurbishing the building to create a sustainable income stream. That investment has paid off in part - the building is now generating revenue, which helps offset other income pressures. However, we haven’t seen the membership growth we had hoped for. While nearly two-thirds of occupational therapists are members, increasing that number remains a challenge. As a result, we’ve faced financial pressures in recent years. We’ve absorbed the impact of cost-of-living increases without raising membership fees, which, had they kept pace with inflation, would have generated an additional £1.8 million. Despite these challenges, I’m confident in the Senior Leadership Team and Council’s plans to address these issues as we move into the new financial year. *Answered by Odeth Richardson:* I want to reassure members that Council is committed to delivering on our financial challenges and we’re working closely with our Senior Leadership Team and the Audit, Investment and Risk Committee to ensure that in the next few years we can come out of this deficit position.

[1] Not all members provided names, where these were provided/audible these have been noted in the minutes.

Question from member: As RCOT/BAOT covers a broad range of roles that occupational therapists can contribute to, and from my own reflections from today, what is the organisation doing to bring focus of child/paediatrics/neonatal services to the forefront, in terms of what are you doing to support this group?

Answered by Karin Orman, RCOT Director of Practice and Innovation: We've made valuable investments in our Communities platform, including the launch of the Children and Young People's Practice Network, which is helping to facilitate important conversations. Our new website is live, though there are still areas that need further development and content. This week, Dr Sally Payne will be giving evidence to the Parliamentary Committee, and we're preparing for the upcoming SEN review focused on Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for children and young people. A significant part of our work is centred on influencing policy, particularly around making schools more inclusive. We're actively engaging with government officials to advocate for the integration of occupational therapists into mainstream schools and exploring ways to support teachers, learning support staff, and parents through training and resources. We're making strong progress in our influencing efforts, though we acknowledge that this should have been included in today's agenda.

Question from member: What is the rental portfolio and can we have reassurance that we're not contributing to the housing crisis?

Answered by Steve Ford, Chief Executive: We were referring to the RCOT offices, where four of the floors are now leased out. The refurbishment was carried out with the aim of creating modern, flexible, fully serviced workspaces that appeal to organisations seeking high-quality office environments.

Question from Charlie Chung: Given the current challenging financial landscape of higher education across the UK, what actions are RCOT taking to support their colleagues and members in higher education at present?

Answered by Karin Orman, RCOT Director of Practice and Innovation: In terms of industrial relations, we obviously have UNISON and we also have an agreement with UCU so we don't support in terms of industrial relations.

Answered by Carolyn Hay, RCOT Head of Education: One of our key initiatives has been the development of the Education Enhancement Service, which supports accreditation and programme quality. We've transitioned to a new model for working with universities - moving beyond simply reviewing programmes to fostering a more engaged, consistent, and responsive relationship. Additionally, we're strengthening our collaboration with professional communities and networks, as discussed today, to identify emerging issues and facilitate meaningful dialogue.

Question from member: I'm here as a network lead and really excited about the communities work and the new platform. When can we get going and how much money is there allocated?

Answered by CJ Odeleye, RCOT Head of Finance: From the finance report, we have £1.1 million allocated for RCOT branches which is spread across multiple specialist groups which are now our communities. So rest assured, there will be funding for this.

Answered by Karin Orman, RCOT Director of Practice and Innovation: As we prepare to launch, our focus is on encouraging as many people as possible to register and join the platform before we fully get underway. It's important that introductions and conversations begin early, as this will help us observe how the platform evolves and ensure it meets the needs of its users.

	Question from member: The cost of living crisis is impacting everyone, HCPC fees are again increasing and it's really great to see a clear strategy, and articulated well on why things need to change and member fees need to increase. What is your strategy for retaining those individuals over the two-year period in which we've offered them this opportunity? How will you ensure they see RCOT as the organisation they want to remain part of, so that they choose to continue their membership and we begin to see growth in our numbers again? *Answered by Steve Ford, Chief Executive:* In the past, we didn't place as much emphasis on the early stages of an occupational therapist's career. However, we now have a clear strategy focused on connecting with and building lasting relationships with individuals at that point in their professional journey. This includes initiatives like the *Maximise Your Membership* webinars and other targeted activities. A major part of this effort is supported by our digital transformation programme, particularly the new CRM system behind our website. This database allows us to better understand our members, their interests, preferences, and needs so we can deliver more personalised and relevant content and support. *Question from member:* I would like assurance regarding the specialist sections. Will the money mentioned earlier be assigned to this too? Will there be a reasonable budget for the networks and activities that members want to take forward? *Answered by Steve Ford, Chief Executive:* The Communities platform truly reflects what RCOT stands for, harnessing the enthusiasm and expertise of our members to collaboratively develop valuable resources. It embodies our commitment to member-led innovation and is something we aim to continue investing in and supporting. *Question from member:* Is there a different rate for part time professionals? And if not, could this be considered? *Answered by CJ and Neil*: Although this has not been included in the current budget, RCOT is committed to continuing discussions on this topic. We recognise the importance of establishing a robust and fair process, but tracking the number of hours worked by members presents significant challenges. RCOT is actively considering how best to address this and is committed to finding a viable solution in the future. However, it is not something we are currently in a position to implement. *Question from member:* Are you planning on adding an app feature in addition to the new website? The website is difficult to navigate from a phone so an app would be helpful. It currently takes two logins to get in to access the forums so it creates a barrier. *Answered by Rob Smyth, RCOT Director of Strategy, Technology and Transformation:* During the development of our new digital platform, we explored a range of options including the possibility of creating an app. However, building and maintaining an app to the standard we expect is not only extremely costly, but also quite limited in terms of functionality. One of our main goals with the digital experience, particularly the new website and member portal was to integrate multiple systems, such as OpenAthens, CPDme, and the Communities platform, into a single, seamless experience. Since each of these systems operates independently, a single app wouldn't be able to manage them all effectively. Instead, we focused on creating a mobile-first website and portal that adapts to different devices, presenting key features in a clear, user-friendly format. We believe this approach offers the best balance of accessibility and functionality, though we're always looking for ways to improve.
7.	**Results of voting**

Voting on the resolutions was conducted in person, with members raising voting cards. The ordinary resolution on member fees required a simple majority (over 50%) to pass, while the special resolution on the Articles of Association required a 75% majority. Members were encouraged to provide feedback, especially if they voted against either resolution.

Resolution 1: The members hereby resolve by way of special resolution that the draft Articles of Association of British Association of Occupational Therapists Limited ("BAOT") presented to the meeting and also available at **www.rcot.co.uk/agm2025** be and are hereby approved and adopted as the Articles of Association of BAOT in substitution for and to the exclusion of all existing Articles of Association of BAOT and for the purpose of current Article 73, this resolution shall extend the office of the Chair elected at this meeting in line with draft Article 78 and any rules adopted under that Article.

	For	**Against**	**Abstain**[2]
Votes received by proxy	509	40	160
Votes in person	63	-	3
TOTAL	572	40	163
% TOTAL	93.5%	6.5%	-

Resolution 2: The members resolve by way of ordinary resolution to authorise Council to implement the following changes to subscription fees for membership categories in 2025–26 (1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026):

- Full professional – increase by £1.11 per month (4.5% increase)
- Newly registered – **decrease** by £1.77 per month (35% discount for first two years of registration)
- Associate – increase by £0.66 per month (4.5% increase)
- Self-employed and Overseas – increase by £0.83 per month (4.5% increase)
- Career break – increase by £0.76 per month (4.5% increase)
- Apprentice – increase by £0.23 per month (3% increase)
- Student – increase by £0.15 per month (3% increase)
- Retired – increase by £0.19 per month (3% increase)

	For	**Against**	**Abstain**
Votes received by proxy	289	409	11
Votes in person	62	2	-
TOTAL	572	40	163
% TOTAL	46.1%	53.9%	-

8. Closing remarks

The Chair thanked attendees for their participation, feedback, and support. She emphasised the importance of continued engagement and invited members to join the networking session

[2] Note to members: under Company Law, for the purposes of calculating a majority of votes for a resolution abstentions are not counted in the total, therefore a percentage is not provided for abstentions.

	following the meeting. The AGM concluded with a message of appreciation and a reminder that feedback is always welcome.

These minutes are agreed by the British Association of Occupational Therapists Council as a true record of the meeting.

Signature: Richardson

Role: Chair of BAOT Council

Date: 1 August 2025

British Association of Occupational Therapists

Appendix

Members:	Council members:	Staff:
Amanda White	Odeth Richardson	Steve Ford
Amelia Potts	Jackie Gordon	Clare Cochrane
Amy Howard	Neil Carnegie	Rob Smyth
Annabelle Warwick	Janine Hackett	Satvinder Reyatt
Ben Harris-Scanlon	Aisling Durkin	Karin Orman
Beryl Barrington	Anita Atwal	CJ Odeleye
Camilla Leslie-Sherwood	Suresh Kamalakannan	Nikki Daniels
Carole Mitchell		Caz Dunn
Carrie MacLeod		Sheetal Girdhari
Cecily Borgstein		Gillian Ward
Charlie Chung		Carolyn Hay
Claire Stevens		Lorinda Sharkey
Connor Harpur		Kate Monro
Debbie Hogarth		Angela Daniel
Diane Cox		Pinky Sidhpura
Ed Sum		Emma Grover
Edward Duncan		Jo Baker
Elizabeth Hall		Stacey Abraham
Fiona Balance		Lauren Walker
Gaby Stewart		Anna Clampin
Heather Lamb		Chanelle Shockness
Heather Edwards		Dagmara Drozdowska
Isla Green		Katie MacGregor
Jade Nixon		Christina Fuentes Tibbitt
Jane Penrice		Amisha Koria
Jemma Steven		
Jenny Preston		
Jessica Dunn		
Joanne Cook		
Joni, Mitchell		
Karen, Brown		
Kathrin Crawshaw-Zein		
Katie Lyons		
Kirsty Dewar		
Kirsty Thomas		
Linda Renton		
Lisa Westhorpe		
Lisa Greer		
Louise Davies		
Magdalena Menzies		
Martina Tierney		
Mary Booth		
Michelle Perryman-Fox		
Minoti Rao		
Miriam Crowe		
Naomi Brown		
Orla Irwin		
Pasna Sallis		
Pauline Hannah		
Rachel Booth-Gardiner		
Rebecca Martin		

Members:	Council members:	Staff:
Rena Fletcher Ruth Preater-Gillard Samantha Flower Scott Gethings Sheila McLellan Su Twissell Susan Brown Susan Prior Thahmina Akhtar Thérèse Lebedis Victoria Locke Wendy Foo Elain Stewart Clephane Hume		

British Association of Occupational Therapists

Appendix 2: questions asked in advance but not answered at the event

Note:

- Names have not been published unless specifically requested.
- Where we received the same question multiple times, it has only been listed once.
- Where the same answer applied to more than one question, these have been grouped together.
- We have not commented on individual personal complaints/issues, these are addressed directly with the individual affected following our approved processes.

Question	Answer
AGM arrangements	
(Irene Ilott) Will RCOT commit to answering every question, asked by every member, at every AGM and publish minutes within week?	Members can submit questions in advance by email or post or ask these live during the AGM if you are attending in person. We have 35 minutes for members questions during the AGM and we'll respond to as many questions as we can during this time. We won't be responding to AGM questions on social media. We'll publish questions and answers on this page. Some questions may take longer to answer and where questions cover similar topics we may group these together. AGM and Council meeting minutes are approved by Council at their next meeting and published after. The AGM minutes will be approved by the end of July and published after.
I would like to know why the AGM is not a hybrid event that the wider membership can attend. There has been a push from the communities project to improve the digital offer and seek wider engagement with members, so having at the AGM as an in person event seems to go against widening participation for all members.	The costs of livestreaming an in-person event, particularly an AGM are high as we have to meet additional legal requirements, and we feel would not represent the best use of member's money, given the low attendance at online AGMs in recent years. With the introduction of RCOT Communities, an in-person Members' Day and AGM complements the online engagement this platform provides and means we are offering a mix of online and in-person opportunities for members. We know the in-person AGM won't suit all our members and for that reason we're holding three governance drop-ins in advance of the AGM for members to come and meet with

Question	Answer
	Council members and SLT and discuss any issues relating to the resolutions – or other matters. And members can vote by proxy.
Member fees and finances	
During the time when cost of living prices and travel and bills mortgages and care prices have increased significantly and RCOT members are working more than one job just to afford the roof over their heads and pay to do their jobs, how can RCOT in good conscience and ethical practice consider raising their membership fees yet not meet members needs? **e.g. deliver a substandard website that doesn't function or meet needs of members.**	We understand that any changes to fees are a sensitive topic, especially during an ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Like all individuals and organisations, we have seen all our costs rise too. Many organisations have raised their fees every year. We've shielded members from these increased costs and inflationary pressures and have only raised fees once by 1.5% in the last seven years. During this same time we've invested in your membership. Our new website, database and RCOT Communities will offer you an improved digital experience, making it easier to find what's important to you and which will enable us to personalise and tailor your content and experiences with us in the future. As with any major roll out of new technologies we've experienced a few bumps along the way but we're working through these. We're also responding to new ideas and improvements to keep making the experience better and we're pleased that in the weeks since we went live we've now got over 20% of members who are using the portal and this is increasing every day (this is more than double the online members in the years before this new launch). If you need support get in touch with us at hello@rcot.co.uk. Many organisations have raised their fees every year. We work hard to balance financial sustainability with affordability, but we can't continue to shield members in this way without it impacting the services we provide members. We want to continue providing value and support through your membership, advocating on your behalf and raising the profile of OT and our modest proposal to change fees will enable us to continue doing so.
Specialist sections	
Since the specialist sections were closed in September last year, the number of events that members can access has significantly reduced and of the events advertised in OT news these carry a significant cost. We are now more than 6 months on	Together with members and our volunteers, we've been reimagining our communities and creating a model which builds on the strength of the Specialist Sections to offer more inclusive, diverse and equitable communities for our members to benefit from as part of their membership. New volunteers have been recruited and we have been working together to

Question	Answer
since the specialist sections have closed and there seems to have been little progress in developing and implementing the communities of practice, and in fact I am finding that RCOT is offering a poor level of support and opportunities to engage will fellow members with similar interests.	shape the design of the new networks and RCOT Communities to ensure it works for our occupational therapy profession prior to launching to the wider membership. RCOT Communities is now live and available for members and you can now join a range of practice, professional and regional networks. Look out for your activation email that will support you to create your account on the new website and access and explore the networks. If you would like support to help identify suitable networks to join based on your interests and specialisms please let us know. One of the first priorities within our new networks is to understand who network members are and what their needs are to help inform the planning of CPD activities and events both in person and virtually both within networks and across networks, identifying common themes and ways to meet these needs impactfully.
Please provide a detailed breakdown of monies in each account for each specialist section prior to dissolution.	At the end of the reporting period to 30 September 2024, RCOT held £1.16m in reserves in relation to Specialist Sections and regional groups. This is broken down into £1.06 for Specialist sections and £0.1m regional groups. Specialist Sections did not own their own bank accounts. This money was held by RCOT and ringfenced for our communities.
Please provide a detailed breakdown of the previous year's income from membership fees for each specialist section prior to dissolution.	The additional fees required to join a Specialist Section represented an annual income of ~£290k per annum for RCOT. Under the new communities' model, members can join as many practice, professional and regional networks as they would like to, all included in their membership.
Please provide a detailed breakdown of membership numbers for each specialist section prior to dissolution.	7,477 members chose to pay an additional fee to be part of one or more Specialist Sections in 2023/2024 and there were 9,709 Specialist Section memberships in total. This was made up of: Children, Young People and Families - 2,185 Housing - 456 Independent Practice - 1,453 Major Health Conditions - 575 Mental Health - 1,180 Neurological Practice - 1,648 Older People - 685 People with Learning Disabilities - 543

Question	Answer
	Trauma and Musculoskeletal Health - 557 Work - 427
Please provide a detailed breakdown of volunteer roles and numbers of volunteers for each specialist section prior to dissolution.	There were 106 members registered as RCOT volunteers in Specialist Section roles during 2023/2024. Each Specialist Section had a mix of volunteer roles including core National Executive Committee (NEC) volunteers, additional NEC roles, co-opted roles and regional leads. We're aware that some Specialist Sections may have engaged other members who took on active roles who are not included in these numbers. In addition, across the 10 Specialist Sections, six core roles were shared by two volunteers. Total volunteers are: Children, Young People and Families - 12 Housing - 8 Independent Practice - 11 Major Health Conditions - 5 Mental Health - 10 Neurological Practice - 12 Older People - 5 People with Learning Disabilities - 12 Trauma and Musculoskeletal Health - 8 Work - 17
Please provide a detailed breakdown of the proposed spending plan relating to the monies centralised and ring fenced as taken from each specialist section.	All the funding allocated to communities remains ringfenced for our new communities. Since October 2024 we've: • Developed a online community engagement platform RCOT Communities, with members and volunteers to ensure it works for the occupational therapy community and launched it for all members to join • Created a more inclusive and connected communities model consisting of practice, professional and regional networks for members to join • Built a growing volunteer community to lead our networks • We continued to fund pre-agreed Specialist Section activity in this financial year as part of our transition to support volunteers to represent their profession and deliver planned activities for their members, including three conferences. We continue to support communities and are using member insights and shared professional priorities to take a system-wide approach which includes:

Question	Answer
	• Support learning and development opportunities across networks • Fund member-led events and resources • Support our network leads and volunteers • Respond to the needs of our diverse profession • All our spending plans will be reviewed and approved by Council and scrutinised by our Audit, Investment and Risk Committee to ensure alignment with professional priorities.
The building	
Please provide a detailed breakdown of the cost of refurbishment of Phoenix house as a rentable office space.	The cost of refurbishing Phoenix House into a commercial office space including planning, design and development totalled £2.5m. Following this investment, the property valuation increased by £3.2m, to £7m giving us an appreciating asset, that is maintaining value.
Please provide a detailed breakdown of the proposed revenue projected prior to the project (including any projections as part of a business case) and the actual revenue taken:	We have had a slower than expected start to seeing returns from the building strategy. The flexible office market has been very competitive, with demand outweighing supply. In the first two years, income was £0.3m. With the current occupancy, we now have an income of £1.01m. Despite a challenging start, this approach has been worthwhile and allowed us to diversify our income sources.
Sustainability and climate change Note: we received numerous questions on this topic, a number of which currently have the same answer.	
Will the RCOT join with other health-related organisations and declare that there is a climate emergency?	In our July Council meeting and over the coming months, we'll be working with our Council and with members and other key stakeholders to further develop and publicise our long-term commitment to climate change including carbon net zero. We'll also draw up our strategy and action plan to achieve our commitments. As part of this, we will be considering how we can support members to take positive steps to mitigate their carbon footprint.
Could the Council consider stating that they will support the NHS and the UK in achieving Net Zero emissions in as short a time as possible? / The NHS has set out clear net zero ambitions and targets in the UK. How are RCOT considering sustainability in their strategic priorities to ensure these are being met?	

Question	Answer
Will the Council discuss and inform the members how they are going to prioritise responding to the climate emergency and the impact on health that this is already having?	We've also previously undertaken survey work with members on climate change and in March 2025, we published a blog from Jacqueline Gordon, a BAOT Council Member, on ways that OTs can make an impact on climate change and sustainability.
Can the Council set a clear strategy and give direction to members as to how they can, in their daily practice, make significant changes to mitigate carbon?	
Will the RCOT join the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change?	
Please can this be a significant agenda item for all future Council meetings, members meetings and conferences?	
Will the RCOT change its bank to one that doesn't invest in fossil fuel expansion, and publicise the bank change that it has made, and the reasons?	The Audit Investment and Risk Committee has commissioned a review into RCOT's banking arrangements. The review will establish whether the current banking arrangements are cost effective, sufficient for RCOT's operational business needs and aligns with RCOT's responsibility towards the Occupational Therapy profession and commitment to being an ethical and sustainable business. The findings from this review and its recommendations will be reported back to Council who will decide on whether a new banking solution is required.
The Royal College of Occupational Therapist's sustainability survey identified that 95% of respondents felt that occupational therapists had a role to play in driving change in sustainable practices (RCOT, 2023). What is RCOT doing to help support both students and practitioners to drive change in this area?	Focussing services and interventions on prevention is one of the key actions occupational therapists can take to contribute to climate sustainability. Moving towards prevention is integral to realising our vision for the future of the profession as out lined in our workforce strategy. We will be working with members in our annual campaign that will be launched in OT Week this year capturing service and innovation examples of occupational therapists' leading in prevention.

Question	Answer
As I am unable to attend the AGM members day in Edinburgh I wanted to ask if sustainability would be high on the agenda? I have one day a month away from my clinical OT role, supporting therapy staff in their net zero goals. It would be great if RCOT could declare a climate emergency, as the BMA did in 2019, and encourage all OTs to bring environmental goals into their supervision and IPR sessions. I work in the NHS and all of us are stretched, with budget cuts and vacancy freezes. We need to integrate sustainability into everything we do without it feeling like extra work. I would like more OTs to join the OT Sustainability Network so that we can share the brilliant ideas and work that is already happening!	
Integration of sustainable health care practice to pre-registration curricula is vital (Huss et., 2020) and is identified by the World Federation of Occupational Therapy (2012) as a key strategy in creating a culture of best practice within the profession. What steps are RCOT taking to ensure sustainability is embedded into OT curriculum?	We do not set the curriculum for occupational therapy pre-registration education. All pre-registration education programmes and apprenticeships are accredited against HCPC and our standards. These in turn are aligned to WFOT Education standards. We are currently out for consultation on our new revised Learning and development standards. We would welcome comments on how the standards can reflect the need to ensure sustainability is embedded within learning and practice.
In light of the above, will the RCOT consider setting up an RCOT community focusing on sustainability, to improve networking and sharing of best practice between practitioners?	We established our Practice and Professional networks in consultation with members and these networks will evolve overtime. We may host a sustainability network or develop sustainability lead volunteer roles in the future. In this first phase of the platform, we see sustainability as everybody's business. We, therefore, hope members that wish to advocate and discuss sustainability to join different networks to highlight issues and share examples of practice and innovation. This way we ensure all members on the platform are thinking about sustainability whatever their interests or area of practice.
Finally, have RCOT considered or are there plans for creating practice guidelines on: **a) Occupational therapy in mental health**	Within 2025- 2026 we will be producing the following publications: Professional standard and code of ethics, Learning and Development Standards, Dementia guidelines and updating our Career Development Framework. We have recently launched our communities' platform that hosts our practice networks. Our hope is that the networks will support members to share resources and access learning and development opportunities. Each

Question	Answer
b) Sustainable practice in occupational therapy	network is supported by volunteers to help members use their expertise to curate and create activities, opportunities and resources which support the development of the occupational therapy workforce and service provision. You can join RCOT Communities here. The Practice network for mental health would be a good place to explore what evidence members currently draw on.
(Irene Ilott) What is the rationale for continuing to endorse NHSE workforce policies that encourage occupational therapists to accept new roles as doctor substitutes, as first contact practitioners in primary care, and doctor equivalents, as advanced clinical practitioners, in primary and secondary care? Context: In July and August 2024, I submitted a formal complaint about RCOT's involvement in the development and implementation of First Contact Practitioners and Advanced Practitioners in Primary Care: Occupational Therapy. A Roadmap to Practice (NHSE, October 2021). This compromises patient safety, undermines team work and the growth of occupational therapy in Primary Care. The complaint did not progress to the end stage because I was not informed about escalation to Council, despite twice requesting a copy of the policy. The full policy is not yet on the website, https://www.rcot.co.uk/rcot-comments-compliments-complaints accessed 14.06.2025)	ACP roles are within scope of practice if occupational therapists successfully complete Advanced clinical practice programmes. We are keen to develop advanced occupational therapy practice roles and have worked with Salford and Coventry Universities to develop this. We will be promoting this new model next month. Please look out for information on a webinar. Equally we worked with NHSE on FCP roles as one route into primary care. This is not the role we see as enabling the greater role out of occupational therapy in primary care. We advocate for workforce models with occupational therapist working at different levels, as already developed in Scotland and Wales. Regarding our complaints policy, complaints are only escalated to the RCOT Board of Trustees or BAOT Council in specific circumstances, e.g. where it is serious complaint relating to a member of SLT or a member of Council/the Board. It is not possible or appropriate for Council or the Board to be the final appeal stage for every complaint received. The full complaints policy is now available on the website.
(Irene Ilott) How has Council evaluated the ethics and cost effectiveness of RCOT's marketing strategy of mass and targeted surveillance of social media posts? Since 2022, member subscriptions have funded a contractor, a social media community management company and officers to monitor, discuss, collate and	We strongly refute the description of our social media activity as being 'surveillance'. We regularly review and respond to public conversations on social media where the conversations mention RCOT or occupational therapy. On rare occasions we have checked for specific posts where we anticipate public activity/conversations that will require RCOT response. Again, this is all publicly posted comments. This approach is a normal part of any organisation having a public social media presence. Amongst other things, it enables us to promptly address any questions, issues or concerns that have been shared.

Question	Answer
report data obtained from posts by BAOT members and the public. Three Subject Access Requests, obtained under General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) produced hundreds of pages of documents containing erroneous information, derogatory remarks and instructions to ‘monitor Irene’. Surveillance is not mentioned in the Privacy Notice at https://www.rcot.co.uk/rcotprivacy-notice	We put out a clarificatory statement about this activity on 23 April 2025 and have updated our privacy notice to make this clearer to members. The RCOT Board of Trustees has discussed the social media approach with SLT. Our procurement processes include cost effectiveness considerations. At the time of procuring the social media agency, this was not required to have Board approval. We have implemented a new procurement policy and process since contracting the agency, with new thresholds for approvals. Any future procurement for this service will go to the Board if it meets these financial thresholds.