

Confirmed minutes of Annual General Meeting of the British Association of Occupational Therapists and Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Held on 28 June 2023, 5.30pm, via Zoom.

Please see appendix 1 for the attendance list.

| Item | Main point |
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| 1. | <p>Welcome, introductions and apologies</p> <p>Odeth Richardson (Chair) welcomed members and observers to the 2023 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 Elaine Hunter (EH) and Mary McCarron (MM), two members who were representing members by hosting part of the agenda.</p> <p>The Chair explained that for the purposes of the meeting, BAOT/RCOT business would be taken together where possible.</p> |
| | <p>Election results and retirements</p> <p>Dr Kee Hean Lim (Vice Chair) announced the election results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Odeth Richardson, Chair (uncontested nomination) • Dr Anita Atwal, Research and Development (elected) • Andrea Lothian, Learning and Development (uncontested nomination) <p>The Chair thanked departing Council members Professor Priscilla Harries, Carmel Harney and Lisa Ledger for their commitment to the OT profession and their insight as Council members.</p> <p>There were no nominations for the role of Council member, Northern Ireland. The Chair and members of SLT were working with a number of members in Northern Ireland to strengthen the organisation's presence in Northern Ireland and identify suitable candidates for this vacancy.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Report of the year</p> <p>The meeting received the annual report and accounts for BAOT and RCOT. The Chair shared the key achievements delivered in the previous year.</p> <p>The five-year strategy, launched in January 2022, was developed by collaborating with members, colleagues and senior allied health profession leaders. New organisational values had been introduced to help shape how behaviour and decision-making to achieve the shared purpose and vision.</p> |

The new brand was launched in January 2022, developed using insight gained from members, colleagues and other key groups.

Other developments included:

- Improved transparency via Council vlogs after Council meetings.
- Engagement with members on workforce, rehab, children’s and neonatal services, primary care and uniforms, across seven member surveys and a sustainability pulse survey.
- Workforce summits and leadership forum events.
- Updated member portal and customer relationship management systems.
- Changes to senior leadership structures and team structures to make sure the right roles were in the right place to drive the organisation forward and deliver the greatest impact for members and the wider community.
- Fully digital Library Service, giving 24/7 access, 365 days a year to support the professional practice, education, research and CPD activities of members.
- Monthly R&D bulletin and pilot of the innovation hub, collecting member examples of service improvement projects.
- Research Café pilot with 120 members connected over six cafes, to discuss research related topics.
- Occupational Therapy Week campaign - #OTsForEquity - achieved an 8.9m reach on social media.
- Choose OT social media careers campaign had been seen over three million times and resulted in over 9,000 click throughs to the dedicated careers website, ChooseOT.co.uk.
- Work in policy and campaigning led to the UK government announcing that occupational therapists were able to approve fit notes.
- Over 1,000 people joined the Annual Conference 2022 online with 91% of delegates rating it as excellent, great or good overall.
- Two virtual Elizabeth Casson Memorial lectures delivered by Dr Anita Atwal and Dr Sidney Chu – watched by over 3,700 people live and on demand.

There had been a focus on EDB with the organisation’s EDB Manager building relationships with key stakeholder groups and setting up expert advisory groups to collaborate on the EDB agenda. EDB Insights sessions looked at equity, diversity and belonging with hundreds of members attending events to challenge the status quo.

Diversity monitoring had been improved so that the data can be used to identify and remove barriers to inclusion.

A consultation on the draft EDB strategy had been launched and would run until 18 August. The draft was developed with the support of the EDB reference group made up of members, colleagues and public contributors and an independent organisation, Enventure Research.

The Chair highlighted the critical role of volunteers in delivering the organisation’s ambitions. There were approximately 350 volunteers supporting the organisation at any one time, delivering hundreds of events and local and specialist services throughout the year. The Chair thanked them for their outstanding contribution to the profession.

3. Financial report and appointment of the auditors

The Chair handed to Jenni Pearce (JP), Interim Head of Finance, to deliver the financial report.

JP presented the combined accounts that covered the period from 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022 which had been audited by BDO LLP. BDO had issued a favourable audit report on both companies.

In the year ended 30 September 2022, total consolidated income was £10.4 million compared with £10.1 million the previous year, a 3.1% increase. Of the total income, the majority at 88%, came from membership subscriptions. The remaining income comes from a range of activities including advertising in journals, accreditation fees and investment income.

The membership numbers at the year-end were up 0.11% over the previous year at 35,118 and qualified occupational therapist members represented over 70% of HCPC registrants. Since the year end on 30 September 2022, membership had increased by a further 2.4% and, as of the date of the AGM it stood at 36,237 with professional members accounting for 72% of HCPC registrants.

Expenditure in the year ending September 2022 was £11.1 million compared with £10.3 million in the previous year, split as follows:

- Industrial relations (amount paid to UNISON): £1.93 million
- Staffing costs: £5.39 million (representing an average number of 86 employees during the year).
- Professional activities: £3.8 million.

Investments generated valuation losses of £0.61 million compared to valuation gains of £1.85 million in 2021. It had been an exceptionally difficult year for conditions outside of the organisations control with unprecedented levels of inflation and challenging investment market conditions.

There was a deficit for the year of £1.32 compared with a surplus of £1.66m in 2021.

The Consolidated Balance Sheet showed the financial position of the organisation at 30 September 2022. There continued to be a strong level of overall reserves of £14.5 million. Of this net worth at 30 September 2022, £10.3 million was held in cash and short-term money market holdings, with a further £4.3 million held in longer term investment funds under professional management.

Some funds held were restricted reserves or designated to use for specific future activities including strategic initiative projects to benefit members. The level of 'free' reserves continues to represent a healthy balance sheet position for the organisation and was within the target set by Council of having 26 weeks of annual budgeted expenditure (circa £6 million) covered by these reserves.

JP handed back to the Chair for the resolution on the appointment of the auditor.

The Chair thanked BDO and, in particular, the audit partner Phil Clifflands and audit senior Danai Redi and their teams for their work over the past 10 plus years. Appointing a new auditor was very much about following best practice with regards to re-tendering at regular intervals.

The tender process was thorough and the panel recommended Moore Kingston Smith, which was supported by the Council. The Chair opened the vote on the resolution "the

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| | <p>members resolve to appoint Moore Kingston Smith as the auditors for BAOT and RCOT and authorise the Council to agree the auditors' remuneration".</p> <p>The results of the vote would be announced before the break.</p> |
| 4. | <p>Member interview with Chair & CEO</p> <p><i>EH asked SF what the one thing he was most proud of in his role as CEO over the past 12 months and what one thing would have made this accomplishment even better.</i></p> <p>There was now a real sense of clarity around what the organisation needed to do to meet members' needs. New teams had been created around that focus, with new people and existing staff. Momentum was now gathering in terms of new services and new ways of working to deliver the strategy. However there was more that could be done to ensure that occupational therapy had a really strong voice – that journey had started but SF wanted to be moving more quickly</p> <p><i>MM asked OR what had been her most inspiring moment during her past 12 months on Council and what one thing would have made her role as Chair to date even better.</i></p> <p>The annual conference had been inspiring in terms of the breadth and depth of OT profession on show. The reach had been significant, and it had been a true collaborative effort. It could be challenging trying to do the role alongside a fulltime day job and OR wished she had more time to get out and meet members face-to-face.</p> |
| 5. | <p>Member hosted panel discussion with the Senior Leadership Team</p> <p>MM stated that in the closing plenary of the Annual Conference SF had described 3 phases to the journey that RCOT had undertaken – listening, positioning, and delivering – and that each member of the senior leadership team worked to very clear quarterly objectives. EH and MM would ask each member of the team a question in relation to what they hope to have achieved in a year's time.</p> <p><i>Question put to Karin Bishop (KB), Director of Movement Building and Membership: In relation to understanding members' needs and creating a valuable membership offer where everybody felt valued and supported, what would success look like in 12 months' time?</i></p> <p><i>Answer:</i> Listening to members would be critical to understanding their needs so a research review project was planned to look at the membership offer and engage with members to understand what they need, what their pain points are and how the offer could be tailored to be valuable and meaningful. In a year's time KB would want RCOT to be able to articulate what members need across the board so that the membership proposition can be tailored to members.</p> <p><i>Question put to Clare Cochrane (CC), Director of Brand and Marketing: What are the aspirations for campaigns and partnerships in the coming 12 months, and how will these help to deliver the strategic vision?</i></p> <p><i>Answer:</i> Reaching new audiences would be key for the Brand and Marketing Directorate, with a particular focus on external audiences to help the organisation achieve its ambitions. The directorate would be continuing the Choose OT campaign to inspire students to think about an OT career, as well as continuing the Lift Up Your Everyday campaign, looking to improve on the level of awareness achieved last year.</p> |

The directorate would also be looking to create high profile companies to help amplify RCOT's messages.

Question put to Satvinder Reyatt (SR), Director of People Finance and Governance: What are some of the systems or processes being developed in relation to staff well-being, talent development and job satisfaction?

Answer: There had been significant work to put the right structures in place to support the organisation's future success and enable it to focus on delivery. As part of that it was important to provide an environment in which individuals could bring their true authentic selves to work and make sure that the right policies and processes were in place to support staff.

Over the next year the directorate would be bringing in a new people and payroll system, reviewing and streamlining policies and processes looking at the colleague and manager experience, developing a learning management system and a new appraisal process.

90 day rocks had helped give clarity to individuals and teams around their goals, but also enabled discussions around well-being. Well-being and development would be important going forward and it was important that colleagues were given the right processes and support so that they can thrive.

Question put to Rob Smyth (RS), Director of Strategy Technology and Transformation: What would members' experience be like in the coming 12 months with regards to technology?

There were two aspects to the work. One was making sure that colleagues had the systems they need to deliver on behalf of members, along with the technology support and skills to work in the most productive, effective way. This included thinking about new technologies and insights, like intelligent automation and smart technology to deliver a smarter, more responsive service.

The other aspect was ensuring that technology was being used to deliver a great member experience – planned projects included website design, the member portal and platforms for engagement with members. Technology could transform the way in which services are delivered to provide the best possible experience.

Question put to Karin Orman (KO), Director of Practice and Innovation: What were the outcomes she hoped to see in the next 12 months that would show the RCOT was heading in the right direction in terms of having a strong voice within each UK nation and across the world?

Answer: The practice and innovation team had spent the last year trying to understand the data around workforce – talking to occupational therapists as well as leaders within the profession, AHP workforce leads, civil servants and government leads.

There were high vacancy rates and the environment was tough but occupational therapists are very proud of their vocation and still recommend being an occupational therapist. The next priority would be putting together a workforce strategy.

KO wanted to see better data and understanding about occupational therapy in the next year, and to be both influencing work at a national level as well as creating tools to empower OTs to influence at a regional and local level.

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| | <p><i>Question put to Jenni Pearce (JP), Interim Head of Finance: What was the biggest priority for her team over the next year to ensure that members money has the maximum impact?</i></p> <p><i>Answer:</i> The organisation had a large number of members, but the income at £10m was actually quite small, with 66% committed to staff costs and the UNISON relationship, making value for money absolutely critical when spending the remaining funds. The organisation had begun challenging some suppliers looking at better value options to make money go further. The re-budgeting process for next year had begun and the finance team would be challenging colleagues about their planned spending to ensure there were robust decisions around how money was prioritised and committed.</p> <p>On the other side, there was work to look at growth strategy around income so to reduce the pressure on the income from existing members. The building development was part of that strategy, but there was further work on the commercial strategy and partnerships that would take place over the next year.</p> |
| <p>6.</p> | <p>Results of voting on the resolution to appoint the auditors</p> <p>The Chair announced the results of the voting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64 members voted for the resolution (via proxy and live) • No members opposed the resolution but there were 3 invalid votes. <p>Members approved the resolution to appoint Moore Kingston Smith as auditors and authorised Council to determine their remuneration.</p> |
| <p>7.</p> | <p>Member facilitated Q&A</p> <p>MM and EH facilitated the Q&A session with members.</p> <p><i>Question submitted by Julia Skelton: What had been the financial impact of the building renovation?</i></p> <p><i>Answered by SF:</i> The building was a prime asset in London which, due to changed ways of working, was not being fully used. So some of the organisation's spare reserves were used to invest in an income generation scheme to convert the building into space that could be leased out.</p> <p>The net income anticipated once the building was full would be circa £700,000 pounds per year. The cost of the scheme was near to £2.5 million but once full occupancy was achieved that would start paying itself back. In future the £700,000 per year could be invested in achieving the strategic priorities.</p> <p><i>Question submitted by Irene Ilott: When questions were submitted via twitter, Facebook and email, often these weren't answered. What was the best way for members to put questions forward to get an answer?</i></p> <p><i>Answered by CC:</i> It could depend on what question is being asked. There were lots of ways people could get in touch and many questions were answered on social media, however social media tended to lend itself best to questions that can be answered easily. If there was a conversation on social media that needed a fuller answer or discussion, the member would usually be contacted and invited to correspond via email or invited for a face-to-face conversation.</p> |

There were also other opportunities to ask questions, such as the quarterly sessions held by SLT or channels such as specialist sections.

Question submitted by Mandy Graham: OTs for Equity was a successful OT Week. How is the OT theme decided and why aren't members consulted about the theme?

Answered by CC: There were a number of things considered when deciding the OT Week theme, one of which is creating a campaign that's going to be engaging for members, easy and straightforward to get involved with, and will achieve the impact required. Consideration was also given to taking the message beyond existing members to raise the profile of the profession.

For example, the OT for Equity campaign was very closely aligned with the messages being heard from members through the Practice and Innovation Directorate. It was also topical and therefore increased the potential for press coverage, as well as linking into a major wider agenda.

It was about serving members as best as possible and gathering views through existing channels – members do inform the theme selection, but not through a direct process.

Question submitted by Emma Lairds: How would RCOT help support and strengthen the work of the specialist sections?

Answered by Nikki Daniels (ND): The professional development team had been brought together with the team supporting specialist sections to further develop and support the confidence and capabilities of volunteers leading in the specialist sections. There were plans in place to look at the specialist sections model, because a number of members didn't have a specialist section that related to their area of practice. This would start with a visioning exercise with the current specialist section committees, thinking about what the model would need to look like in the future.

Question submitted by Sue Godfrey: What was RCOT doing regarding promoting occupational therapists in the areas of work and health, and particularly in terms of occupational therapists being able to sign fit notes. This was an opportunity for RCOT to promote OTs and their unique skill set to deliver vocational rehabilitation and guidance on return to work.

Answered by KO: This was a real priority area for RCOT. The specialist section for work does fantastic work and are really looped into key government bodies around vocational rehab. RCOT was working on raising the profile through primary care and community rehab. After 6 weeks of being signed off work the chances of returning was dramatically reduced so RCOT was offering clinics via the primary care network and offering support and training for OTs to be more confident using the fit note. RCOT was aiming for anybody of working age who had contact with an OT to be asked the work question. RCOT would be building on work with health and work champions to make this the automatic ask.

RCOT had also started a review and update of learning and development standards to reflect changes in legislation.

Question submitted by Julia Skelton: At the last AGM there was a commitment about reviewing the membership categories – what had happened to the review for the retired members category?

Answered by KB: The importance of the right membership categories is key to having a meaningful membership offer for all OTs. Working within its Articles of Association, the organisation had been able to create an apprenticeship category. The membership review project would look at other membership categories, speaking to members to find out what they want from membership.

Since the summer of 2022 colleagues had been working with a group of retired OTs to design a dedicated retired members' web page. The new membership insights and engagement team would also be working to build a better engagement strategy for retired members.

Question submitted by Kirsty Stanley: Are RCOT addressing the concerns disabled members have about being able to positively disclose to the HCPC without fearing punitive fitness to practice proceedings?

Answered by KO and KB: Members might have seen an article in OT News recently highlighting the issues around disclosure with HCPC and this was an ongoing discussion and concern that RCOT was raising with HCPC. The HCPC had become more open about talking to professional bodies such as RCOT about these issues.

RCOT had regular meetings with a dedicated officer in HCPC and had raised this. It was a communication issue as there was no intention that anyone with any form of disability would need to disclose that. HCPC would be changing their communication lines so that it was clear that it was about fitness to practice, rather than disclosing disability.

Question submitted by Dee Christie: A governance review had been mentioned recently. It would be good to hear more about this – what form would it take and who would be involved?

Answered by SF: The starting point was about understanding the difference between the two organisations, BAOT and RCOT, and the different frameworks within which they operate as a trade union and a charity. But it was also about RCOT's voice, as members often gave feedback that RCOT did not challenge enough on behalf of OTs. However, RCOT's charitable status limited it from engaging freely in industrial relations issues.

A fundamental review had started, working with Council (and with advice from lawyers) to think about what the best organisational structure would be to support the work the organisation wanted to do for the OT profession and community.

All members would have the opportunity to be involved, because if changes were made these were likely to be the kinds of changes that could only proceed with the support of members through a general meeting.

Question submitted by Annette Willett: Why was there not an occupational therapy input to the working party that had designed the new NHS guidelines for assessing autism in children? OT expertise was an integral part of that pathway and the results meant its now more marginalised than nurses.

Answered by KO: OTs should have had input. RCOT escalated the matter to NHS England's Chief Allied Health Profession Office, Suzanne... and they would be investigating the selection process for representation on the documents steering and working group. RCOT was also working with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists to achieve a long-term solution to address the lack of recognition. Occupational therapy is fundamental to working with children and adults with autism and

to prevent this issue happening again RCOT have asked to receive any invitations for expressions of interest to pass on.

Question submitted by Mandy Graham: With around 35,000 RCOT members, why is engagement so low? For example, only 7% completed the recent workforce survey and only 1,000 attended conference.

Answered by SF and KB: This was a fundamental question. Some of the things already discussed during the meeting created real opportunities to engage members differently, for example, harnessing technology to reimagine platforms for engagement and using digital tools to connect people. It would be able maximising all the collective experience and expertise across the 35,000 members.

Not every member wants to engage with RCOT all the time, so its about members having the opportunity to engage on a level that is appropriate for them personally, and for them to feel listened to when they do. Different channels for communication are required. For example, in the past RCOT has conducted a very long member survey, but recently has conducted quick pulse surveys which are a quick way for members to engage.

The main message is the RCOT really wants to hear from members – the good, the bad, the ugly.

Question submitted by Jocelyn Brice – What would RCOT be doing for occupational xx carers, many of whom face barriers to work in discrimination by association.

Answered by KO: RCOT was very aware of the impact of caring responsibilities, and this would be addressed within the workforce strategy. Regular conversations were also being held with UNISON to think about how the organisations could work more closely on this. Increasingly people were juggling caring responsibilities as well as work.

EH and MM handed back to the Chair.

The Chair thanked the members who had attended the AGM and the membership in general for their support over the past year. The Chair encouraged members to keep challenging Council and RCOT.

The Chair thanked fellow Council members for their personal support, members of the RCOT team who had worked to plan and deliver the AGM and SF and his SLT.

The Chair closed the meeting.

| Members: | Council members: | Staff: |
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| <p>Elaine Hunter Mary McCarron Maria Quinn Rachel Johnson Joy McLaggan Yoko Ashizawa Laura Armitage Dee Christie Mandy Graham Trish W. {she/her} Rachael Daniels June Wylie Emma Laird Catherine McDerment Helen Lycett Emma Murray (Emma) Jocelyn Brice Michelle Moran Jon Fisher Rachel Booth-Gardiner Carolyn Connage Georgia Fair Meagan Wijnberg Anne Keen Kirsty Stanley (She/Her) Julia Skelton Clair Le Boutillier Jill Massey Wendy Ferguson Pamela Bennett Eleanor Curnow Heather Baglee Sarah Bodell Anita Atwal Georgina Davies Sarah Lawson Jane Moseley Vicky Ellen Rebecca Keating Elizabeth Anne McKay Haley Whelpton</p> | <p>Odeth Richardson Paul Dunning Dr Kee Hean Lim Kalimah Ibrahiim Samantha Flower Carmel Harney Cathryn Holding</p> | <p>Steve Ford Clare Cochrane Rob Smyth Satvinder Reyatt Karin Orman Karin Bishop Jenni Pearce Nikki Daniels Suhailah Mohomed Caz Dunn Sheetal Girhari Gillian Ward Nik Screen Alice Ford-Smith Carolyn Hay Lorinda Sharkey Kate Monro Clare Leggatt</p> |

Appendix 2: Transcript of Q&A chat

| Question | Asker Name | Answer | Answer Name |
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| Further to the SLT and council travelling to the regions for some meetings/events - how will you continue to be a presence across the UK meeting members in their place? | Haley Whelpton - Northern & Yorkshire | Hi, we take invitations to come out to meet and speak to members through external.requests@rcot.co.uk . We have been visiting universities and services in person and a combination of virtual and in person events depending on availability. | Karin Orman |
| | | We've set up an events calendar to ensure SLT and extended leadership team are aware of the various virtual and in person events are regions host. Members of SLT and our Heads team have enjoyed attending various events over recent months and we'll continue to do so to support our volunteers and meet members across the UK | Nikki Daniels |
| | | The practice and workforce team are also planning a series of member facing engagement events to help deliver on our team's objectives e.g. RCOT's first ever UK-wide workforce strategy | Suhailah Mohamed |
| How do you plan to support volunteers during the transformation in ways of working for the regional committees? | Haley Whelpton - Northern & Yorkshire | <p>Volunteers are really important to us as part of our organisational restructure, we've very purposefully brought together our Professional Development Team and the team at RCOT who support our regions and specialist sections, to create our Communities & Connections team.</p> <p>We absolutely recognise the value to our members of learning with and from each other within their region.</p> <p>And we also recognise the important role that our volunteers play in supporting members across their</p> | Karin Bishop |

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| | | <p>region.</p> <p>So we now have the expertise of the professional development team so we can optimise learning opportunities for members within their regions; we can identify the development needs of our volunteers, and we can provide tools and resources to support volunteers to deliver quality CPD opportunities which address the needs of members within regions.</p> <p>Our professional development lead has been working closely with regional committees to help them to deliver quality workshops over the past few months.</p> | |
| How can OTs and AHP Leads in Integrated Care Systems support and link with RCOT to progress our vision and vice versa? | MARIA Quinn | <p>Thank you for this question. We welcome opportunities to work closer with our partners and stakeholders across systems in the UK.</p> <p>Please continue to attend the range of engagement events we host and share with us insights and intelligence that will help shape the way in which we deliver on our commitments.</p> <p>Please help us reach our non-members and our support and affiliated workforce via your networks.</p> <p>Please help take our key messages to our multiprofessional colleagues working in multiagency settings. We are keen to reach people and culture / HR directors and finance leaders who influence decisions about the positioning of the OT workforce.</p> | Suhailah Mohamed |
| #OTs for equity was a very successful OTweek. How / who decides the OTweek theme and why aren't members consulted | Mandy Graham | answered | Comms Marketing RCOT |

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| <p>about the theme? Especially given that we are the ones enacting it.</p> | | | |
| <p>I didn't realise that members' money was held in investments. What is meant by this? And how do you ensure investments align with RCOT values?</p> | <p>Mandy Graham</p> | <p>The organisation has built up a level of reserves over the years and these are held in specific investment portfolios, some short term and some longer term to align with the cashflow needs of the organisation. This helps make a return on funds rather than them being held in low return bank accounts. These are managed by specialist fund managers, who attend the AIR committee meetings, and present information of the investment performance.</p> | <p>Jenni Pearce</p> |
| <p>Having previously served on an RCOT regional committee that had high activity & engagement levels with members - how do you ensure consistency across regions so that members get value for money?</p> | <p>Mandy Graham</p> | <p>Mandy thank you for asking this question. As part of our organisational restructure, we've very purposefully brought together our Professional Development Team and the team at RCOT who support our regions to create our Communities & Connections team. We're currently engaging with our regional committee members to vision a community model which supports members at a regional level. We'll gain further insight from our wider membership in due course.</p> <p>A key aim will be to ensure equity across the regions, but which is also supporting local and contextual needs.</p> | <p>Nikki Daniels</p> |
| <p>Interested to know how RCOT is going to help support and strengthen the work of our specialist services?</p> | <p>Emma Laird</p> | <p>The practice and workforce team at RCOT will be addressing the generalist vs specialist needs of the OT workforce.</p> <p>Our overarching priority areas are: primary care, community rehabilitation and children, young people and families. Those are not priority specialist areas; rather broad and nimble areas for a deep dive across 4</p> | <p>Suhailah Mohamed</p> |

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| | | <p>pillars of practice; health, social care, voluntary, private, independent, charity and social enterprise sectors.</p> <p>Thank you for your question.</p> | |
| | | <p>As part of our organisational restructure, we've very purposefully brought together our Professional Development Team and the team at RCOT who support our specialist sections, to create our Communities & Connections team. We absolutely recognise the value to our members of learning with and from each other within these communities. And we also recognise the important role that our volunteers play in supporting members. So we now have the expertise of the professional development team so we can optimise learning opportunities for members within specialist sections; we can identify the development needs of our volunteers, and we can provide tools and resources to support volunteers to deliver quality CPD opportunities which address the needs of members; supporting our volunteers to have the confidence and capability to fulfil their roles effectively is front and centre of our new Communities and Connections team's work.</p> | Nikki Daniels |
| What percentage of the RCOT staff (paid not volunteers) are Occupational Therapists? | Mandy Graham | Approximately 25% [not answered on the day] | Comms Marketing RCOT |
| Are RCOT addressing the concerns disabled members have about being able to positively disclose to the HCPC without fearing punitive fitness to practice proceedings? | Kirsty Stanley (She/Her) | live answered | Comms Marketing RCOT |

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| <p>I understand we have around 35,000 RCOT members. Why do you feel member engagement is so low - e.g only 7% completed the recent work force survey, a few hundred engage on social media and only 1000 at conference. What can RCOT do to reach and listen to more member voices?</p> | <p>Mandy Graham</p> | <p>A great question and one that we reflect on often.</p> <p>The review of our structure and functions are all happening with our members in mind and how we can engage with them in a more meaningful and relevant way.</p> <p>Member feedback to our events is greatly valued and we thank those who take the time to tell us what we can do differently to meet member needs.</p> <p>Although 7% seems low, it was found to be above the typical response rate for our industry (health and social care).</p> | <p>Suhailah Mohamed</p> |
| | | <p>We are exploring different channels for engagement, virtual drop ins, linkedin closed groups Research Cafes, Placement Cafes, Research Connect for example</p> | <p>Gillian Ward</p> |
| <p>A review of governance at RCOT has been mentioned recently. Can you please say more about this. What is in scope, what form will the review take and who will be involved. Thank you</p> | <p>Dee Christie</p> | <p>live answered</p> | <p>Suhailah Mohamed</p> |
| <p>Can RtP OTs have a more appropriate membership than career break please!</p> | <p>Jocelyn Brice</p> | <p>A very helpful suggestion, thank you!</p> <p>What would be a more fitting name for that membership category, please? Your suggestions will be helpful</p> | <p>Suhailah Mohamed</p> |
| <p>The Professional Advisory Service can help any of our members with issues regarding their HCPC registration and health issues</p> | <p>Anne Keen</p> | | |

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| professional.enquiries@rcot.co.uk | Anne Keen | | |
| Following on from Steve Ford's comment - is the suggestion that RCOT may in the future no longer have charity status? | Mandy Graham | No - not at all. It's about looking again at what activities happen under the charity banner and what happens under the TU banner. We have lots of advantages as a charity and we would want to maintain these | Steve Ford |
| Thank you - it is good to know that we will continue to be supported to support or local members with CPD and connecting activities. The support has always been excellent. Specifically I am asking how the SLT will be supporting volunteers during the transformation of the ways of working for the regional committees. We appreciate that the transformation is needed and support it and is creating a level of discomfort for volunteers | Haley Whelpton - Northern & Yorkshire | Our regional committees are currently working on a visioning exercise to help them to think about what changes they feel we need to make - and we'll be working with you to discuss what that support needs to be. We look forward to these discussions and hearing your thoughts during this exercise | Nikki Daniels |
| what will you be doing for OT Carers ? many face barriers to work and discrimination by association. | Jocelyn Brice | live answered | Comms Marketing RCOT |
| Thanks for your feedback regarding member categories Jocelyn. I believe Karin may have already responded to this point, but we are reviewing the services and support available to each category as part of the review. Your feedback is very helpful and much appreciated | Ruth Mullan | Thanks for your feedback regarding member categories Jocelyn. I believe Karin may have already responded to this point, but we are reviewing the services and support available to each category as part of the review. Your feedback is very helpful and much appreciated | Ruth Mullan |

APPENDIX 3: Questions submitted in advance of the AGM

Note that the answers prepared in advance of the AGM have been provided in writing below for those questions we were not able to answer live.

| NAME | QUESTION | RESPONSE |
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| Julia Skelton | When will the next RCOT Membership Survey be undertaken? | <p>We are looking at new, innovative and more effective ways of gaining feedback and insight from our members, such as more immediate pulse surveys. You may have seen the membership satisfaction survey or the sustainability surveys.</p> <p>It's really important that we hear members' voices, and we will be offering many ways for members to feed into RCOT with their views and ideas. We have just recruited our final member to complete our new team focused on member engagement and insight.</p> <p>As part of our ongoing membership review project, we will be undertaking a programme of insight and research to understand the views of current and future members. This will begin in July and will run for three months.</p> |
| Julia Skelton | What has been the financial impact of the building renovations? | Answered live. |
| Julia Skelton | At the last AGM there was a commitment from the follow up questions about reviewing the membership categories and would like to know what has happened about the review for the retired members category? | Answered live. |
| Irene Ilott | The 2021-2022 RCOT and BAOT Annual Reports contain scant detail about the expenditure by each organisation on the core business (i.e. related to the Objects in the Articles of RCOT and BAOT 2021). Why is this? The £8-9 million expenditure on charitable activities is reported under four broad headings: membership administration, journals, conferences and events and professional activities (BAOT p34). What plans are there for improving the transparency of the Annual Reports? | <p>We are looking at how we present an annual report in a more effective and engaging way - both in terms of presentation and content. Transparency is a key part of this.</p> <p>This is not just about our annual report though, it's about transparency across the board and engaging members on an ongoing basis, and this will be a marketing services project for next business year.</p> <p>The accounts are prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting by Charities ('FRS 102'). The expenditure is defined by the main categories of income with some further analysis in the accounts. As we are bringing in new auditors it would be a good time to review the categories and their relevance to the changing organisation.</p> |

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| Irene Ilott | <p>The 2021-2022 RCOT and BAOT Annual Reports barely mentions deliverables for education, practice and research; Scotland and Wales; the Specialist Sections and Regional branches; and international activities. Why is this? Previous annual reports present metrics and examples of events (including WFOT Congresses), publications, standard setting, monitoring, lobbying, advisory services, consultations, grant awards, the Research Foundation, national and international collaborative projects. How and when will the achievements be reported?</p> | <p>We are keen that the annual report is a meaningful and engaging document that really demonstrates how we're delivering our promises to members. We also want it to be something that members can use to help them promote the value and significance of occupational therapy. We also know the way in which talk about and demonstrate impact to our members needs improvement.</p> <p>We've recently introduced a new strategic planning process which helps us to demonstrate the work that we need to do to deliver our vision, values, and priorities. This work is captured in our new strategic delivery plans, and we will be presenting details of these to members shortly. Linked to this, we are also reviewing our approach to data and insight, and this will make it much easier for us to understand and demonstrate the progress and impact we are having for members.</p> |
| Irene Ilott | <p>What work plan did Council set for public benefit - to maintain RCOT charitable status - and what was delivered? For example, what was done in relation to the conflict in Ukraine, the impact of Long Covid on the workforce and the economic crisis?</p> | <p>RCOT's charitable purposes as set out in our Articles of Association are for the public benefit. Our organisational strategy (rise up, open up, lift up, build up) is what helps us achieve our purpose and we report back on this in our annual report each year – but also in other ways, like the SLT open sessions we hold, Council minutes and the Chair's blog. Other examples are -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Raising awareness - boosted the team working on media and social media to help improve outreach, expect to have more impact over the coming year. ○ Our lift up your everyday campaign was a pilot to help increase engagement with broader audiences - this was just a starting point and learnings will be built upon this year. ○ We also are exploring how we work with high profile companies and individuals to help improve brand awareness. ○ Increasingly working with public contributors, e.g. EDB draft strategy ○ This work will continue over the coming year. As another example, we know that the website needs more public facing focus. This is a key part of our plans for website redevelopment. <p>The Council have now approved detailed strategic delivery plans and you can expect to see clear reporting against each of the strategic themes on an annual basis.</p> |

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| | | <p>Our purpose is to: promote the science of occupational therapy and the training and education of practitioners through a variety of ways, such as establishing scholarships and grants, provide information and advice on the profession to occupational therapists and the public generally, provide leadership in research and promote an understanding of the profession among the public.</p> |
| Irene Ilott | <p>BAOT – Unison The BAOT Report does not mention re-negotiating the 29 year old partnership with Unison nor the preparations for industrial action over the NHS pay award for staff. When will members receive a report about outcomes achieved in 2021-2022 from the £1.929 million transferred to Unison?</p> | <p>Great question. We are absolutely focused on getting great return on our investment for members. We now pay on a per capita basis, and like professional indemnity insurance, union cover is an insurance, so each employed member will get individual employment support should they need it, whether this is for fitness to Practice support, grievances against them etc.</p> <p>Unison also provide input for collective bargaining on our behalf. As part of the renewed relationship, we have set up a new project to review how we work with Unison, our processes and how we can measure and report on return on investment. Once we have agreed and completed this work, we will provide regular KPI updates to Council.</p> |
| Irene Ilott | <p>Recruitment and retention of members: The annual reports give different membership figures: membership increased by 40 (RCOT p34; BAOT p22) or 731 (BAOT p33). What are the reasons for these differences? How do these numbers (and percentages) compare with previous years? Do the figures indicate an emerging crisis in the recruitment and retention of members? There are 43,495 occupational therapists registered with the Health and Care Professions Council at 1st March 2023. In 2020, 1,555 graduates completed their studies (RCOT Annual Monitoring Report 2022).</p> | <p>In the BAOT accounts the table includes the correct number of 35078 for 2021 and 35118 for 2022, as does the going concern note to the accounts for RCOT. The BAOT going concern note includes an incorrect number of 35,118. This is an anomaly that has not been picked up in the final edit cross checks. The movement is 40 members as a net movement as there will be new members joining and members leaving throughout the year.</p> <p>Although the figures do not indicate any concern regarding recruitment and retention, any member resignation is a loss and we are now in a better position, given our new structure, to invest time into understanding and responding to member trends.</p> |
| Irene Ilott | <p>At the June 2022 AGM members asked 62 questions about what they wanted RCOT and BAOT to deliver for the profession and public</p> | <p>Receiving feedback is always welcomed and helpful and helps us to improve. So, hearing about what really matters to members can help shape our activity, such as</p> |

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| | <p>good. In what ways did the questions influence the priorities and action plans set by Council, the Boards and Committees of the Branches for 2022-2023 and beyond? For example, what progress has been made on the complaints procedure at https://www.rcot.co.uk/complimentsand-complaints.</p> | <p>the new, simplified complaints and compliments procedure is now in place on the website.</p> <p>We take time to respond to each of the questions and now that we have a new member engagement team in place can really make sure we capitalise on the learning and feed this back into the organisation.</p> <p>Other examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing OTnews articles more widely via social media • Increasing accessibility of materials, although more to come on this as part of EDB • Process for reviewing new initiatives – project governance framework piloted and now being rolled out (July) |
| Irene Ilott | <p>Written communication: Many written questions do not receive a written reply. For example, in May, I asked on Twitter about RCOT's compliance with national guidance for charities about returning donations (i.e. the National Thesis Loan Collection); in September on Facebook I asked about the proportion of the organisation's reserves being used to re-purpose our HQ building; in November I requested written replies to five questions sent by email about HQ staff redundancies. What are the reasons for failing to give written answers to specific questions? What should members do to get a written reply?</p> | <p>Answered live.</p> |
| Irene Ilott | <p>Many questions were asked in 2021-2022 about the closure of the physical library and study centre with the disposal of circa 9,000 books, theses and journals. These questions were collated and asked again in January 2023. They were about the number of members registered and able to access the new digital library; the deaccession policy; 'reasonable adjustments' for members unable to</p> | <p>Any questions we receive about the library are used to inform our FAQs on our library pages https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/about-library. There will also be an editorial in September in the British Journal of Occupational Therapy outlining our process and progress to becoming a digital library. The library team are on hand to assist members, requiring support to access materials and databases and we are completing an authentication project which will offer all members "a key" to open a wide range of sources.</p> |

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| | <p>access digital resources; the current location of historically significant theses and print material and digitisation of these resources. The April Library update did not address any of the points, see https://twitter.com/HistoryOt/status/1655840959958069250?s=20 What are the reasons for failing to answer questions, asked by multiple people, over the last year?</p> | <p>Our librarians continue to place physical materials in publicly accessible collections, such as the Welcome library, and relocations and removal of items are recoded in our library catalogue. The library team can be contacted with queries about any individual items and where and how to locate these.</p> |
| Irene Ilott | <p>Governance review In January 2023 Council announced a governance review linked to the conflation of RCOT (charity) and BAOT (trade union). How will Council draw on lessons from the last AGM and recent reviews of comparable professional bodies? For example, the Royal College of Nursing reviews were independent, wide ranging and informed by evidence from many sources. The RCN reviews and the 2022 AGM covered similar topics, namely culture, decision making, performance and accountabilities. How will Council ensure the involvement of members and the 350 volunteer leaders in all decision making to achieve an agile, member-led organisation fit for the future?</p> | <p>The governance review at this stage is primarily focussed on looking at our legal and governance structures and frameworks to ensure these are best designed to support the success of the strategy. We have started scoping work for the governance review, part of this will involve talking to comparable professional bodies about their governance model, to understand what works and what doesn't. We will also be looking at how we can engage members with the work.</p> <p>Transparency is important and you will have seen Odeth's video blogs this year, reporting back on the work of Council. We're always open to ideas on how we can improve on this.</p> <p>In terms of being a member-led organisation, this is something we take seriously and, as we're developing new strategies, we are really thinking about how members can be at the heart of creating these. You will be able to see this in action through the EDB strategy and the membership review, for example.</p> |
| Annette Willett | <p>I'm wondering why there was not an occupational therapy input to the working party that has designed the new nhs guidelines for assessing autism in children (April 2023). OT is an Integral part of this pathway, and the results have meant it's are now more marginalised than a nurse within this now , all the other professions were represented .</p> | <p>Answered live.</p> |
| Sue Godby | <p>Please could I ask to be raised the matter of what the RCOT is doing regarding promotion of OTs in the area of Work and Health and particularly in</p> | <p>We are currently working on raising the profile of occupational therapy in supporting people with health conditions to remain or return to work. Occupational health is the specialist offer but we see the wider roll out of occupational therapists in primary</p> |

| NAME | QUESTION | RESPONSE |
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| | <p>terms of OTs being able to sign fit notes. This is a massive opportunity for the RCOT to be promoting OTs and their unique and ideal skill set to deliver Voc Rehab and guidance on return to work.</p> <p>I am a member of and in regular touch with my colleagues on the WorkSS and I know they are talking to DWP and doing what they can, but I believe the RCOT should be taking much more of a lead on this as it is a vitally important aspect of OT. At the VRA we have a resource page for AHPs on Work and Health and the fit note and we have joined with the SS to promote this at our webinar next week.</p> <p>So this also means that the the syllabus and training of OTs need to have work and health (vocational rehabilitation) as a core and integral aspect of course. The VRA work closely with the WorkSS and we have tried to do our bit by running joint sessions on VR at some of the university OT courses, but this is a drop in the ocean and feels like an add on rather than what should be included as core to the course.</p> <p>With the rising number of people out of work this should be a priority area for OTs - latest figures from ONS show a record high of people unable to work due to long term ill health (2.55 million) - more than any other professional group OTs are perfectly equipped to address this and so I would expect the RCOT to see it as the highest of priorities.</p> | <p>care as key to developing the targeted offer to reach as many people as possible before they fall out of employment.</p> <p>We are keen to see the adoption of the fit note as part of everyday practice in primary and secondary care and we have been running events and support for members through our conference and Primary Care network. . .</p> <p>Our second priority area is community rehabilitation, and we see advising and supporting people to return or remain in work as integral to occupational therapy.</p> <p>We are working with relevant government teams addressing work and health through these two priority areas.</p> <p>RCOT does not set the curriculum for pre-registration occupational therapy programmes and apprenticeships, but we work with programmes to ensure they meet our Learning and Development standards. These are currently due to be reviewed and updated to reflect the many developments since 2019, such as legislative changes.</p> <p>RCOT's Specialist Section for Work is very active in defining and promoting vocational rehabilitation as a specialism and we concentrate our activity on realising the ambition that all occupational therapists feel confident to ask the "work question" of anyone of working age and if appropriate can advise and support them to return or remain in work.</p> |

| NAME | QUESTION | RESPONSE |
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| Bernadette Moon | What support has RCOT completed in the last financial year to support the development and training of regional committee members in their delivery of support and engaging members within the region? | <p data-bbox="1010 236 2085 344">As part of our organisational restructure, we've very purposefully brought together our Professional Development Team and the team at RCOT who support our regions and specialist sections, to create our Communities & Connections team.</p> <p data-bbox="1010 384 2085 493">We absolutely recognise the value to our members of learning with and from each other within their region. And we also recognise the important role that our volunteers play in supporting members across their region.</p> <p data-bbox="1010 533 2085 705">So we now have the expertise of the professional development team so we can optimise learning opportunities for members within their regions; we can identify the development needs of our volunteers, and we can provide tools and resources to support volunteers to deliver quality CPD opportunities which address the needs of members within regions.</p> <p data-bbox="1010 745 2085 917">Our professional development lead has been working closely with regional committees to help them to deliver quality workshops over the past few months. So supporting our volunteers to have the confidence and capability to fulfil their roles effectively is front and centre of our new Communities and Connections team's work.</p> |