



Gloucestershire Local Optical Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday 12th August 2025

Time 7PM

Location: Teams Hybrid Meeting / Workplace Cheltenham GL50 1JD

• **Attendees:**

- Sid Maher (f2f), Nigel Harris (f2f), Courtney Campbell (f2f), Karen Gennard (f2f), Ian Shapcott (f2f), Andy Partridge (f2f), Amy Clarke (f2f)
- Peter Greedy (hybrid Cornwall), Ankur Trivedi (hybrid Home), Tom Gacek (hybrid Leeds), Emily Emm (hybrid Home)
- **Apologies:** Alvaro Borges (annual leave, abroad) Riz Choonara (work related), Dave Jeavons (work related), Rakhee Price (unwell)

Opening and Welcome

The meeting was formally opened by Amy, who extended a warm welcome to all in attendance. Amy began by noting the apologies received for the meeting. Rakhee, who was not feeling well, and Riz, who had a busy day, were both unable to attend with further apologies from Alvaro and Dave.

Declarations of conflicts of interest

Andy shared that he has been appointed Clinical Lead for the South West for PES.

Review of Previous Minutes and Actions

The minutes from the last committee meeting, held in April before the AGM in June, were brought to the floor for review. Peter formally moved to approve the minutes, a motion that was seconded by Ian.

Minute Taking: It was decided that Sid would use Teams and Co-Pilot for AI minutes and Ian would use these AI minutes alongside manual note-taking to ensure all details were captured to produce a final version for committee approval.

Action Points from 09/04/25 Meeting

i.	Collect Glaucoma referral data and develop action plan	On hold
ii	Investigate possible Red Eye CPD for Community Practitioners	On hold
iii	'Top Tips' item for clinical pathways to be included in the Newsletter	Complete
iv	Website clarification re Worcestershire referrals	Complete
v	Prepare 'New to Glos/ Locum' pack access by QR code	Ongoing
vi	Spring Newsletter	Complete
vii	Set up Karen on MS365	Complete
viii	Circulate budget forecast 2025-26	Complete
ix	Request current GP surgery nhs.net email list from ICB	Ongoing

Officer Appointments

Given that this was the first meeting following the Annual General Meeting (AGM), the committee proceeded with the formal process of appointing officer positions for the upcoming year. Each role was discussed with a focus on leadership continuity and future planning.

- **Chair:** Amy Clarke is happy to continue her term as Chair for one more year. This decision was met with support from the committee, voting unanimously in favour.
- **Vice-Chair:** Alvaro Borges is happy to continue as Vice-Chair, having expressed this decision to Sid before annual leave (to confirm with Alvaro at next meeting)
- **Treasurer:** Nigel Harris expressed his commitment to the role of Treasurer, volunteering to serve for one more year. His continued service was met with unanimous approval.
- **Secretary:** The position of Secretary was then addressed. Sid Maher was formally appointed as Secretary for a three-year term. The committee voted unanimously in favour.
- **Deputy Treasurer:** Courtney Campbell has agreed to become Deputy-Treasurer and was unanimously elected.
- Andy Partridge expressed willingness to become Chair in the future and the possibility of creating a second Vice-Chair/shadow role for this year was mooted.
- Other committee members were requested to express any interest in vice-chair/deputy secretary roles to Sid privately.ⁱⁱⁱ

Chair's Update

Amy shared a document to simplify the pathway for direct referral to the TIA clinic where necessary. Use of this form by optometrists has been approved by the TIA clinic consultants and has already been used effectively by Amy herself. While the new process is more efficient for patient care, there will likely be concerns about the lack of specific funding for this service. The importance of good communication when disseminating the document to the community was emphasised noting that the primary benefit is an improved, timely process for the patient which bypasses the often slow and cumbersome GP referral system. Amy will prepare some introductory comments and send to the Comms team before circulation to practitioners.^{iv}

Amy will be attending the latest COL meeting on August 15th. Work is ongoing on clinical pathways. Practices with low volume usage of COL will be contacted to investigate the reasons for this.

Clinical Update

Andy shared the final version of the new 'Flashes & Floaters' protocol. He has sent it to VR Consultant Ben Clarke for final sign-off from the hospital and then it can be shared with the community.^v

Andy has also asked Ben whether the hospital requires help with hydroxychloroquine retinopathy screening. A rudimentary flowchart has been produced and this work is ongoing.

PES Update

Ankur explained that the ICB have applied indicative activity levels to PES services (excluding CUES). The implications of this are only likely to become apparent early next Spring.

Treasurer's report

Nigel reported that the organization has a solid financial standing with over £50,000 in total accounts, although expenses spiked in May and June due to events like the Strategy Day and NOC conference. Courtney is willing to step into the Treasurer role in the future and will act as Deputy Treasurer/shadow for the coming year. The aim is for her to begin processing expenses next month.

Currently Nigel and Courtney have access to the bank account. Nigel will investigate options for adding a third member as a back-up since Adrian has now left the committee.^{vi}

Nigel confirmed that the 2% levy with LOCSU receiving 0.4% as agreed at the AGM has been actioned by PCSE.

LOCSU has raised concerns about the need for an expenses policy. Sid confirmed that there is one in place but that a review to ensure it meets best practice may be wise. Sid will feedback on this.^{vii}.

LOCSU are also investigating a potential corporation tax liability on the interest raised from the committee's accounts.

Events Update

Peter plans to step down as lead for the Events team by the end of the year and Rakhee has agreed to take over.

The turnout for the 3 Counties CPD day was disappointing with only 23 attendees despite 45 enrolments. The suggestion was made that implementing a small fee could improve attendance rates if the event is repeated. Peter noted that the financial management of the recent event should have been better, as the time spent by organizers was not adequately covered despite sponsorships. Nigel pointed out that future events should ensure costs are shared among all organizing committees to avoid placing the burden solely on one group and development of a MoU is recommended.^{viii}

Peter confirmed five plenary sessions for the GlosLOC CPD day:- posterior eye condition referral pathways; anterior eye conditions; multifocal contact lens fitting; dispensing thick lenses; well-being.

Two workshops:- widefield imaging; fitting pads to plastic frames.

There is also a reserve list of potential speakers and there are ten committed sponsors so far.

The events will be advertised with a standard price of £45 and an early-bird price of £25. A policy to apply to pre-reg attendance was discussed and will be finalised.^{ix}

Events/Comms to liaise to begin the marketing push for the CPD Day ASAP.^x

Communications Update

Ian shared that a newsletter will be due to be distributed within the next month and obtained confirmation that the new Flashes and Floaters protocol and news of the CPD Day should be included. The initial intention to promote usage of the GRR/GERS pathways will be suspended for now as Ankur reports there has been an uptick in Q1 activity for that service.

Ian requested our new members provide a short bio and a photograph for the Committee page of the website.^{xi}

AOB

WhatsApp Group Conduct and Policy

Prolonged discussion took place concerning the conduct of a member in the LOC Community WhatsApp group which had prompted concern among other members. The group agreed that a formal and firm response was necessary to uphold the professional standards of the LOC. It was decided that the communication must come from the LOC as a collective body to demonstrate a unified and formal stance. The group ultimately agreed that the communication should be firm but not overly personal, stating clearly that the member's behaviour was a breach of the group's rules and was therefore unacceptable. Nigel emphasised the importance of documenting the action in Minutes to ensure the LOC have a clear record that they have listened to member feedback and taken appropriate action, thereby protecting the integrity of the committee. After careful consideration, the group opted for a measured initial approach: to inform the member that their tone and conduct were in violation of the rules and to underline the need to maintain a professional and respectful tone in all future communications. The group concluded with a unanimous vote to take official action. Sid Maher volunteered to draft the initial email and share it with the rest of the committee for their input, ensuring that the final message accurately and fairly represents the collective voice of the LOC.^{xii} Nigel reinforced the need for this action to be taken promptly. It was agreed that LOCSU would also be consulted for their advice.

Pre-reg Support

Karen Gennard enquired about how the LOC could better interact with and support pre-reg's in the county. As a first step Karen will contact the College to see if there is a way to obtain contact details for pre-reg practitioners who will be working in the area.^{xiii}

Cataract Wait times

It was decided that at this time the best approach to respond to the ICB's decision to apply indicative activity levels to cataract services would be to ensure that the LOC obtain and distribute the latest waiting times figures from all providers and attempt to keep them updated on a monthly basis.^{xiv}

Avon Collaboration

Sid shared that he had been approached by representatives of Avon LOC eager to collaborate in view of the merger between Gloucestershire and Bristol ICBs. Sid, Nigel and Alvaro attended a positive meeting with them. At this stage the precise nature of the collaboration needs to be defined. Ankur advised that any strategic partnership should be underpinned by a MoU to reduce the risk of confusion in future collaborative projects. Alvaro has expressed an interest in representing Gloucestershire at Avon LOC meetings should the opportunity be presented^{xv}.

Date of Next Meetings

Tuesday 14th October 2025; Tuesday 9th December 2025 (inc. meal); Tuesday 10th February 2026; Tuesday 14th April 2026; Tuesday 9th June 2026 (GLOS AGM).

Actions:

i.	Prepare 'New to Glos/ Locum' pack access by QR code	Comms
ii.	Request current GP surgery nhs.net email list from ICB	Ankur
iii.	Committee to express interest in deputy roles to Sid	All
iv.	Distribute TIA referral form with covering comments	Amy/Comms
v.	Finalise 'F&F' document with Ben Clarke	Andy
vi.	Investigate options for a third member access to bank account (as back-up)	Nigel
vii.	Review current Expenses policy	Sid/Nigel
viii.	Committee to create a MOU for future tri county CPD events (time cost burden)	Officers
ix.	Determine if pre-reg can attend CPD Day with supervisor	Peter & Rakhee
x.	Marketing push for CPD Day	Sid/Comms
xi.	Bio & Photo to Ian by end of August for website	All those not done already
xii.	Develop consensus response to WhatsApp issue	Sid/All
xiii.	Try to obtain Pre-reg contact details via CoO	Karen
xiv.	Obtain cataract waiting times monthly & distribute	Sid & Karen/Comms
xv.	Committee to create MOU for partnership with Avon	Officers

Abbreviations

PES	Primary Eyecare Services
TIA	Transient Ischaemic Attack
COL	Community Ophthalmic Link
VR	Vitreoretinal
ICB	Integrated Care Board
CUES	Community Urgent Eyecare Service
NOC	National Optical Conference
LOCSU	Local Optical Committee Support Unit
PCSE	Primary Care Support England
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
GRR	Glaucoma Repeat Readings
GERS	Glaucoma Enhanced Referral Service
CPD	Continuing Professional Development

