

CHAIRMANS REPORT

Solihull Local Optical Committee

August 2016

Dear Colleagues,

This time last year I was hopeful that, what looked like the beginning of an upturn in the economy of the country as a whole would finally be filtering through into our world of Optometry for 2016.

Back in August 2015, who of us could have predicted the turn of events of of this year to date? With events like the June Brexit vote and the subsequent turn of events in the political direction of the country, the impact upon the UK wider economy & even now we can only second guess the longer term impact there will be upon the future of the Optometric economy.

At this time, whilst our politicians are still on their summer recess, it is not clear how they will shape this Country's future, in the short, medium or even long term. By the time of our AGM however, we may be seeing the beginnings of their collective activity.

Likewise who would have thought it possible that an Optometrist would be tried in a court of law and pronounced guilty of manslaughter? This raises the stakes considerably in our ongoing future, particularly as we venture into the long awaited world of Local Enhanced Services and the additional optometric responsibility that inevitably comes with it.

Countrywide as I'm sure you are all aware, and unfortunately many of you have been detrimentally affected by further "streamlining" of the NHS! In particular PCSE (Primary Care Support England) and in particular Capita (who took over responsibility at around the time of our last AGM) has struggled to cope with the implementation of these changes and many of us have had payments go astray and have also experienced difficulties in registering newly qualified personnel to mention a few of the problems. We have highlighted these to our collective representative bodies and matters are in hand, however are moving forward at too slow a rate for comfort!

This year has been our busiest year ever as a collective. As we are all busy working professionals with lots of other commitments I am ALWAYS eternally grateful for the efforts of all members of the committee for their contributions because they are willing to put themselves out, to contribute to the greater good of Optometry locally.

I would not usually single any one out for special mentions however here is a taster of some of the things we have been up to on your behalf.

- Attendances at the Heart of West Midland LOC (HoWMLLOC) meetings representing collective learnings from our neighbouring LOC's to the West of Solihull again allowing us to be represent ourselves with a larger collective view across the New Patch/Area.
- Dan (Vice Chair) in particular has been involved with with the Regional Company (Primary Eyecare Heart of West Midlands Ltd) that has been established to enable us all to collectively engage with CCG's and bid and procure Enhanced Services in our area. Now there is an ongoing requirement for collective accountability and governance. As a director of this Primary Eyecare Company Dan represents Solihull LOC at company board meetings.
- We have continued to improve and develop the contents on our web site www.solihull-loc.co.uk please make it your first port of call for all information you may need on local matters. It is hoped that in future local protocols and in particular new pathways will be displayed as they go live. If you have any ideas on how we can improve this service to you, please contact us via the usual email address, as we are always keen for your feedback. Thank you Rachel for your efforts here.
- Attendances at Meetings with NHS England Local Area Team officers, commissioners and various Local Healthcare Professionals and GP's, meetings at Practices accompanying Practitioners requesting support during practice visits as well as our usual Committee meetings. As well as communications with all the usual Optical Bodies such as the College of Optometrists, General Optical Council (GOC) and the Association of Optical Practitioners (AOP) and in particular Local Optical Committee Support Unit (LOCSU) and The Optical Confederation.
- In particular I feel a special mention is warranted for two individuals, Rekha Rai & Simone Mason (co-opted to Committee post last AGM) who have attended meetings with the CCG, plus they have chased & coerced all those parties that needed to be reminded to get involved! Thus ensuring that our Minor Eye Conditions Service got off the ground as smoothly as possible and will continue to fly into the future. It has to be said that the whole process has had its trials & tribulations, as one would expect with

such a new and innovative project. However, if it was not for their tenacity, drive and enthusiasm we wouldn't have a scheme in operation at all! Ongoing they will be ensuring that the scheme continues to deliver what it set out to do, as they are responsible guardians of the schemes' clinical governance. We are all totally indebted to them for their commitment and effort.

- You all probably know our Secretary Cathy Pike & Treasurer Cassandra Kendall, they work tirelessly the whole year round. A big thank you goes to them for their dedication to the cause.
- Cathy keeping the Committee on track with our meetings, organising venues circulating minutes & necessary correspondence as well as organising the AGM & keeping all of you up to date throughout the year with any relevant information. Please ensure she has your up to date email address & please, please, please encourage any colleagues you work with in the Solihull area to let her have their contact details to help keep them included in any vital communications.
- Cassandra as ever keeps a watching eye over our finances making sure we spend wisely and can balance our books. She will present her report at the AGM.

I personally thank all of the committee for their individual efforts during the last year.

Finally, and not least, a very big thank you to Denise Tuffin who has managed to decipher our collective conversations, as our scribe throughout the year.

Next year all committee members will be up for re-election, as we are now entering our third year of office. So, as in previous years my Chairmans report will also include a short statement/summary from each of them. This will enable you to understand the full activities and workings of the Committee, as well help you decide who to vote for, should there be more applicants up for election than there are places.

Please come along to the AGM and support and meet us (if you haven't done so already) and join us for an informal buffet. We will be delighted to answer any questions you have... you may even want to pose some specific challenges for the committee for the next year ahead! This is your opportunity to work with us to improve the "Opticians Lot" in and around Solihull.

May I take this opportunity to thank last years Sponsors Optegra & Mark Wevill for their contributions to making the AGM an enjoyable & informative evening.

This year we thank Iris Medical as the meeting will be followed by a CET Lecture to be given by Dr Simon Barnard entitled :-

“Enhancing care in general, paediatric and contact lens practice with a fully automated hand held technology”

The whole Committee look forward to meeting you all (new & old faces alike) on what promises to be an outstanding evening.

Warm Regards

Spencer.