

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS STANDING ORDERS 2021 – 2022

Agreed by Council 20 November 2021

1. The Interpretation Act 1978 applies to these Standing Orders as to an Act of Parliament.
2. Words and phrases used in the Charters, Ordinances and Byelaws mean the same in these Standing Orders.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

3. The Council shall meet not more than five times during each Council year. In these Standing Orders, "Council year" means the period between the end of one annual general meeting of the College and the end of the next annual general meeting.
4. The dates of Council meetings shall be fixed by the Council.
5. Any of the President, Chair of Council and Honorary Secretary of Council, or any ten Council members by written notice to the Chief Operating Officer, may call a Special Council Meeting (Extraordinary Meeting) to deal with such business as they may specify.

OBSERVERS ON COUNCIL

- 6.1. The Council may appoint the following Observers:
 - a) A representative of the Joint Armed Services
 - b) A representative of the Society for Academic Primary Care (SAPC)
 - c) A representative of the Committee of General Practice Education Directors, if not already a Council member (COGPED)
 - d) A GP member representative of the British International Doctors Association (BIDA)
 - e) Two representatives of the General Practitioners Committee (GPC)
 - f) The College representatives on the General Practitioners Committee, if not already Council members.
 - g) The Editor or Editor Designate of the British Journal of General Practice (BJGP) if not already a Council member

- h) The Deputy Editor or Deputy Editor Designate of the British Journal of General Practice, (BJGP) if not already a Council member
- i) The Lay Chair of the College's Patient & Carers Partnership Group (PCPG)
- j) The Chief Examiner
- k) A representative from the Allied Healthcare Professions
- l) The Medical Director for Revalidation & Professional Development, if not already a Council member

6.2. Observers are entitled to receive papers (other than those marked Confidential). Council may permit Observers to be present and to speak on invitation from the Chair at its meetings, but such Observers shall not be entitled to vote, nor be counted as part of the quorum.

6.3. The Chair may also invite and/or accept attendance from College members, who wish to observe a Council meeting (up to 8 per meeting); and be known as Guest Observers.

- a) Such Guest Observers are entitled to receive papers (other than those marked Confidential), but may not speak, except by specific permission or invitation of the Chair. They shall not be entitled to vote, nor be counted as part of the quorum.
- b) Such Guest Observers should normally be the guest of a current Council member, or supported by a specific constituency, such as their local Faculty or employer; or have been invited by the Chair of Council.

6.4. If Council is conducting confidential business, all observers may be asked to leave the meeting, and may or may not be readmitted later.

6.5. All Council Observers are expected to abide by the Observers Code of Conduct.

OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL (AKA "COLLEGE OFFICERS")

7.1. The Officers of the Council are:

- a) The Chair of Council,
- b) The two or three Vice-Chairs of Council,
- c) The Honorary Secretary of Council; and
- d) The Honorary Treasurer.

7.2. The Chair of Council, the Honorary Secretary, and the Honorary Treasurer, shall be

re-elected in office annually by the Council at the November Council meeting. The two or three Vice-Chairs of Council to assist in the discharge of the functions of the Chair's office in liaison with the Chair, shall also be re-elected in office annually by the Council.

- 7.3. The functions of the Chair of Council, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer are delegated in accordance with Article 17 of the Supplemental Charter, except those functions deriving from their *ex officio* membership of the Trustee Board. The functions of the two or three Vice-Chairs of Council are also delegated in accordance with the provisions of Article 17 of the Supplemental Charter.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

- 8.1. There shall be a Joint College Officer /Executive Management Team (EMT) known collectively as "The Leadership Team", with the terms of reference, powers and membership as set out in this Standing Order, to facilitate the handling of matters which cannot be adequately or effectively be handled by Council or the Trustee Board (or one of their existing Committees) due to:
- a) Their significance for whole College working.
 - b) A need for expediting decisions.
 - c) An overlap of Council and Trustee Board interests.
 - d) An obstruction to progress; or
 - e) A need to review a previous decision of Council, the Trustee Board, or the Leadership team itself.
- 8.2. The terms of reference of the Leadership Team shall be -
- a) To undertake regular monitoring and review of progress against the Strategic Plan of the College and provide regular reports to the Trustee Board; to brief Council as needed on strategic issues of relevance to the membership; and to assist Council in the development of College policy which takes forward the RCGP Strategic Plan.
 - b) To consider any other matters which cross Committee and/or Directorate boundaries.
 - c) To deal with correspondence that requires discussion and decision.
 - d) To deal with urgent issues where prompt action is required.
 - e) To discuss and test operational suggestions and ideas referred to it with the approval of the COO by Council, the Trustee Board, a Committee, an Officer, or an Executive Director.

- f) To undertake rapid reviews and evaluation of new opportunities.
- g) To review progress on key strategy/policy areas.
- h) To allow sharing / discussion of operational issues arising from EMT and/or Committee Chairs.
- i) To facilitate and undertake rapid appraisal of emergent risks, both from external and internal sources.
- j) To consider issues that may have cross-College (including cross-Country) implications.
- k) To test ideas against agreed College budgets, priorities, and planning cycles.
- l) To refer items to other Committees/settings if they require additional input and/or could be dealt with more effectively.
- m) To have power to make recommendations on operational matters referred to it to any Committee, Officer, or Executive Director as appropriate.
- n) To have power to delegate decision-making to another Committee, Officer, or Executive Director as appropriate/ desirable.

Provided that any action taken by the members of the group as a result of its discussions shall not be inconsistent with the Charter, Ordinances or Byelaws, or the established policies of the Council or of the Trustee Board.

Other staff and clinical leads may attend where they have been designated to do so in lieu of an absent Committee Chair, or to provide specialist insight into a particular topic as required.

8.3. The membership of the Leadership Team shall be -

- a) The College Officers (as defined in paragraphs 7.1 above),
- b) The President *ex officio*
- c) Chair of the Trustee Board *ex officio*
- d) Chairs of the Devolved Councils *ex officio*
- e) The Executive Management Team (Chief Operating Officer & Executive Directors)

8.4. Operational

- a) Council, the Trustee Board, Committees, Officers and Executive Directors will notify the Chief Operating Officer of matters they wish to refer to the

Leadership team, who will consider whether the matter is better dealt with elsewhere.

- b) Meetings of the Leadership Team will be chaired by the Chief Operating Officer.
- c) The main purpose of the Leadership Team is to allow actions to be progressed efficiently and effectively, outside the timing constraints of normal Committee reporting cycles, and with effectively joined-up cross-College working and monitoring of progress. As all matters will be decided by consensus agreement, formal voting is not required.

8.5. Minutes of the meetings shall be circulated to the Trustee Board.

PROCEDURES AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Quorum

- 9. The quorum for Council meetings is ten, excluding Observers, and no business may be transacted unless a quorum is present. If a Council meeting ceases to be quorate it shall be adjourned. The mace should be present at all physical Council meetings.

Chairing of Council meetings

- 10.1. The President is entitled to chair the first Council meeting of the College year, for the items preceding the re-election of the Chair of Council only. Subject to that, the Chair of Council will take the chair, failing whom the Vice-Chairs of Council in order of seniority may preside. In the absence of all the foregoing members, a member shall be elected by the Council to take the Chair.
- 10.2. In these Standing Orders, unless the context requires otherwise, references to "the Chair" means the member chairing the Council meeting.

Adjournment

- 11.1. The Chair may with the consent of the Council adjourn any Council meeting to a future fixed date and time and must do so if so, directed by the Council.
- 11.2. No business shall be transacted at an adjourned Council meeting other than that left unfinished at the adjournment of the original meeting (or any adjournment of it).
- 11.3. Notice of the adjournment of a Council meeting shall be given to all Council members if the adjournment is for seven days or more but need not be given otherwise.

Order of business of first meeting in Council year (November)

- 12. The first Council meeting in a Council year is held on the day after the Annual General Meeting and the agenda for that meeting shall include the following items of business

as the first items:

- a) The re-election of Officers of the Council, including the Chair;
- b) The re-election of Chairs of Committees & Boards (including Chair of the Trustee Board);
- c) The appointment of additional Council members under Byelaw 41, if appropriate;
- d) Approval of Council Standing Orders;
- e) Such other items of business as may be determined by the Chair.

Order of essential business at meetings generally

13.1. The business of a Council meeting shall include the following:

- a) Constitutional business, which shall consist of:
 - i. Formal Announcements
 - ii. Apologies for Absence
 - iii. Declarations of Interest
 - iv. Information Governance Declarations
 - v. Chair's Announcements
 - vi. Chief Operating Officer's Consolidated Management Report
 - vii. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting
 - viii. Matters arising from the minutes
 - ix. Motions proposed by Faculties or Members
- b) Decision items, including:
 - i. Any internal College policy, governance, and membership matters
 - ii. Any external facing policy and strategy matters
- c) Discussion items
- d) Information / update items not requiring decision shall be noted unless previously "starred" for discussion at the meeting. Including:

- Matters relating to the various College Committees/Boards
 - Reports from the Devolved Council Chairs
- e) The June Council meeting should include on its agenda, the dates of Council meetings for the next two years, for approval.

13.2. Provided that, the Chair of Council shall have absolute discretion to determine and vary the items and order of business on the Council agenda as she/he sees fit.

Motions

14. Motions for a Council meeting must be received by the Honorary Secretary at least 21 clear days before the meeting, subject to the urgent / emergency motion provision below.

If the motion is from a Faculty, it should if possible have been discussed by and be supported by the board of that Faculty. Motions may be submitted by Faculties, Devolved Councils, and Council members, including Faculty representatives on Council.

15. All motions must be proposed and seconded before they can be discussed. Proposers and seconders (or notified substitutes) must be present in person at the meeting when their motion is taken. A recommendation in a report from a Standing Committee will be treated as a motion to adopt the report in the name of the Chair of that Committee (or another member presenting the report) and need not be seconded.

a) When motions are being drafted, it is advisable they be shared first with the Chair of Council and the Hon. Secretary (and/or any other relevant College Officer) to ascertain whether the subject of the motion may be answered to the satisfaction of the proposer before it is put on the formal agenda.

A form has been developed by the Honorary Secretary to support the drafting of motions.

b) The following procedures shall apply to submitted motions:

- Motions will be heard in date order of receipt with a maximum of 4 motions at any one Council meeting, subject to the urgent / emergency motion provision (see below).
- Motions received over the maximum number will be held over to the next meeting of Council.
- Motions shall be limited to one per Council member or Faculty per meeting (in order to avoid monopolisation).
- If motions are submitted at a draft stage, they may be shared with

the Chair of Council and/or Hon. Secretary or other College officer, with a view to seeing if the matter can be resolved by means other than formal Council debate - particularly in those instances where action is already in hand or being proposed for resolution of the issue;

- Poorly worded motions or where the action required by Council is unclear or uncertain, shall be returned to the proposer with suggestions for improvement /clarification.
- Motions requiring additional expenditure/ resources should seek to identify funding/ budget sources (whether internal or external) wherever possible prior to submission.
- Motions whose subject matter properly falls within the remit and/or responsibilities of the Trustee Board (or other College Committee) shall be referred to the Chair of the Trustee Board (or other College Committee Chair) for consideration and determination.
- Motions referred to the Trustee Board (or other College Committee) shall be taken either at the next meeting (if convenient) or be dealt with by written reply from the Chair in a timely manner. The proposer shall have a right to make representations, either in person at the meeting, or in writing.
- Urgent / Emergency motions - The Hon Secretary, in consultation with the Chair of Council, shall have discretion to admit onto the Council agenda any urgent / emergency motions received less than 21 days before the meeting, and to admit more than 4 motions for debate at any one Council meeting in exceptional circumstances.
- Motions falling outside the scope of the College's powers or Charitable Object (i.e. *ultra vires*) shall automatically be deemed invalid.

Amendments

16. Any amendment to a motion shall be within the scope of the motion, and be for one or more of the following purposes:
 - a) To delete words;
 - b) To insert or add words;
 - c) To delete words and substitute others.
17. A proposal to refer a motion to a Committee shall be treated as an amendment.

- 18 If an amendment is carried, the amended motion becomes the substantive question before the meeting and may be further amended. Only one amendment may be discussed at a time unless the Chair agrees.

Speeches

19. a) During physical Council meetings, Council members shall stand, if able to do so, when speaking and addressing the Chair. All speeches must relate to the matter under discussion.
- b) The selection of speakers is a matter for the discretion of the Chair, subject to these Standing Orders.
- c) If the Chair indicates whether by rising or through another method during a debate, the speaker shall cease speaking.
- d) No member may speak for more than five minutes on any one matter without the permission of the Chair, except that the mover of a motion may speak for up to ten minutes.

The Chair may choose to reduce the length of time available for members to speak, in the event that many members have indicated they wish to speak. This decision must be communicated in advance of the first speech of the discussion taking place.

Right to speak again

20. No member may without the permission of the Chair speak more than once on any motion or amendment, except that the mover of a motion has a right of reply to the debate on the motion or to any proposed amendment to it, so long as he or she does not introduce any new matter. Once the mover has replied to the debate, it shall be closed, and the question put to the vote immediately.

Closure of debate

21. A member who has not spoken in the debate may move closure of a debate by moving one of the following motions:
- a) That the question be now put;
 - b) That the meeting proceeds to the next business;
 - c) That the debate be adjourned.
22. A closure motion must be seconded and shall be put to the vote immediately without any debate, except that the mover of the motion which is the subject of the debate has the right to speak before a motion to proceed to the next business or adjourn the

debate is put.

23. If a motion that the question be now put is carried, the motion or amendment which is the subject of the debate shall be put to the vote immediately without any further debate, except that the mover of the motion has the right of reply to the debate.

Voting

24. All questions before the Council shall be decided by a majority of the members present and voting. In the event of a tie, the Chair has a second, or casting, vote which may be used whether or not he or she has previously voted. If the Chair declines to use the casting vote in the event of a tie, the question shall be deemed to be decided in favour of retention of the status quo.
25. In the absence of a faculty representative or any additional representative of that faculty, the designated deputy faculty representative(s) shall be entitled to vote as if he or she was a full Council member.
26. Voting at Council meetings shall be by “show of hands” *, unless any two members request a secret ballot and the Council agrees to that request. [* In practice, voting is carried out electronically, but may be by show of hands.]

Minutes

27. Minutes shall be kept of every Council meeting and submitted for approval at the following meeting. Once approved, a copy of the minutes of any Council meeting may be supplied on request to any member of the College.

STANDING COMMITTEES

28. There shall be the following Standing Committees of the Council:
 - a) The Joint Fellowship & Awards Committee
29. The Standing Committees of the Council may exercise delegated powers on behalf of the Council on the matters within their terms of reference, in accordance with Article 17 of the Supplemental Charter. The Chairs of each Standing Committee may likewise exercise those delegated powers on behalf of the Committee in any matter of urgency, or in any other matters where the Committee has resolved that the Chair should have authority to act. At the discretion of the Committee, a Vice-Chair may be appointed, who can deputise for the Chair, but not at Council meetings.

The Joint Fellowship & Awards Committee

30. The terms of reference of the Joint Fellowship & Awards Committee is:
 - a) To define the criteria for Fellowship and to review these from time to time;

- b) To advise and assist the Council on all matters pertaining to Fellowship;
 - c) To advise and assist the Council on all questions of College Awards, Honours, Insignia and Ceremonies.
31. The membership of the Joint Fellowship & Awards Committee will be:
- a) The President, *ex officio*; and
 - b) The Officers of Council, as defined in Standing Order 7(1), *ex officio*;
 - c) The Lay Chair of the Patients & Carers Partnership Group (or other designated PCPG representative);
 - d) The Chair of the Fellowship Quality Assurance Panel;
 - e) A Faculty Fellowship Committee Chair; and
 - f) Three other College Members who are Fellows who will serve a 3-year term of office, renewable for one further period of three years.
 - g) The Committee may also co-opt up to two additional members with specific skills (including a younger College member if one is not identified by the other routes)
32. The quorum of the Committee shall be the President and three other members.
33. The Committee shall meet twice in each Council year, and at other times consult its members as required.
34. The Nominations Sub-Committee will act as a final Appeals body to consider any appeals against the adjudication process of the Joint Committee.

OTHER COMMITTEES

35. The other Committees established by the Council are the Committee on Medical Ethics, the Patient & Carers Partnership Group, and the Scientific Foundation Board. Persons other than members of the College or registered medical practitioners may be appointed to these Committees. At the discretion of the Committee, a Vice-Chair may be appointed, who can deputise for the Chair, but not at Council meetings.

The Committee on Medical Ethics

36. The terms of reference of the Committee on Medical Ethics are:
- a) To respond to requests for advice from the Council; and
 - b) To consider the medical ethical issues encountered by the College and its

members, and to explore the principles, values and beliefs which inform decisions.

37. The members of the Committee on Medical Ethics are:
- a) A Chair (a member of the Committee, appointed by the Committee, subject to approval by Council)
 - b) Up to 4 College members, two of which shall be Council members elected by the Council, and two drawn from the College membership
 - c) Up to 6 Co-opted members, to include 3 Lay Academic and 3 other members (College members or external appointees) with special expertise in Ethics, Philosophy, Medical Ethics, Medico-Legal or Bio-medical issues.
 - d) Up to 4 Observer members, to include a PCPG representative, an AiT representative, a Devolved Council representative, and a Health Informatics representative or Chair.
38. The quorum for meetings of the Committee on Medical Ethics shall be 5, of whom 3 must be College members, including the Chair. The Committee on Medical Ethics shall meet four times in each Council year.

The Patients & Carers Partnership Group (UK)

- 39.1. The RCGP Patient Group shall be known as the RCGP Patients & Carers Group UK (PCPG UK)

Purpose: To communicate and represent to the College generally, patient perspectives and experience when responding to and/or inputting to consultations and other exercises concerning College strategies and policies.

- 39.2. The Group's aims are:
- a) To support the College strategic objectives and inform its work through the PCPG patient strategy;
 - b) To develop ideas and lead activities that encourage GPs to work in partnership most effectively with patients and public;
 - c) To influence and respond to College activity in the UK that impacts on the quality of patient care;
 - d) To work together as a team, in an environment of mutual respect and understanding, as underpinned in RCGP's policies and frameworks, to ensure that the activities of the College respond to patient needs;
 - e) To foster and support links with Patient Groups in the Devolved Nations.

39.3. Membership

All members should act as individuals, rather than on behalf of other outside organisations. The Group may invite other Groups or individuals to its meetings to discuss specific topics as appropriate.

Each member will be required to complete a Declaration of Interest and Probity form, and where a conflict of interest occurs, the conflict of interest process should be followed.

The PCPG shall comprise the following membership:

- a) The Vice-Chair (External Affairs) of Council, *ex officio*.
- b) A Medical Vice-Chair, elected by Council
- c) Two RCGP members elected by Council
- d) Up to eleven Lay members, one of whom shall be elected as the Lay Chair of the RCGP UK patient group.
- e) At the discretion of the Chair, and following consultation with Group members, the Chair may appoint a lay co-opted member to fill a vacancy in the membership of the Group. The co-option could be for the remainder of the term of a vacancy (from whatever point it arose), or for a specified period (i.e. to cover a project or specific piece of work), provided the total overall maximum number of lay members is not exceeded.
- f) One Observer from the Associates in Training (AiT) Committee
- g) One co-opted Observer each from the Carers Trust and from Carers UK
- h) In addition to the above, the Chairs (or their delegate) of each of the three Devolved Nation patient groups shall also be constituent members of the RCGP UK patient group.
- i) All GP members should be Members or Fellows of the RCGP in good standing and in active general practice. Formal links with RCGP Council are retained through the Chair of the UK Patient Group, the Vice Chair (External Affairs) & the Medical Vice Chair. The Chair of the PCPG UK is an Observer member on Council.
- j) The Executive Director of Policy & Engagement, and the Head of Devolved Councils will be invited to attend all meetings of the PCPG as advisors. The group will maintain close links with the other RCGP Devolved Nation patient groups by the sharing of minutes.

40.1. Terms of Office

RCGP PCPG shall elect a Chair from the Lay membership, whose appointment will be confirmed by RCGP Council.

Additionally, the group shall elect one Lay Vice Chair; and Council will appoint one Medical Vice Chair. The term of office for each of these officer posts shall be a single term of three years.

A Chair-Elect should be elected from among the Lay membership six months before the end of an incumbent Chair's term of office in order to aid succession / hand-over.

RCGP Council shall appoint three GP Council members (including the Medical Vice- Chair) as voting members of the PCPG. Members of the PCPG -UK patient group (but excluding the Lay Chair) normally serve for a three-year term, and subject to satisfactory review, may be re-appointed for a further term of three years.

Under the following circumstances, and at the discretion of the Chair of RCGP Council only, the following terms of office may be extended:

- The Lay Chair, the Medical Vice-Chair, and the Lay Vice-Chair positions for one further year if circumstances (e.g. involvement in a project) warrant it.

40.2. The quorum for the quarterly meetings of the RCGP PCPG UK shall be seven including the Chair, of whom two must be College members, and the remainder Lay and co-opted members.

If a member of the Group does not attend three consecutive meetings, the Chair of the RCGP PCPG UK shall make enquiries as to cause of the absence, and unless due to long-term illness, shall review any continued involvement. The PCPG shall aim to meet at least four times per year.

40.3. All members of the RCGP PCPG UK have voting rights, except observers and advisors. Decisions shall be taken by majority vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.

40.4. Selection of Lay members

Prospective Lay members will be sought by external open advert. Interviews will be by a panel consisting of the Lay Chair, the Medical & Lay Vice Chairs, and one Devolved Chair.

RCGP UK Patient Group will develop and maintain a pool of interested individuals whom may be approached to assist in particular projects of the RCGP PCPG UK and/or for potential future membership of the RCGP PCPG UK.

41. RCGP Staff & Secretariat

- The Executive Director Policy and Engagement and the Head of Devolved Councils shall attend all meetings of the RCGP PCPG UK as

advisors.

- A staff member from the wider Governance team will also attend meetings to provide administrative support and advice as and when required.
- RCGP staff attending meetings will not have any voting rights.

The Scientific Foundation Board

42. The remit and procedures of the Scientific Foundation Board (“the Board”) are:
- a) The Board awards grants for research specific to general medical practice, which is undertaken from a United Kingdom base and normally is based on subjects within the United Kingdom;
 - b) The times and dates of each meeting shall be agreed by the Board but, in exceptional circumstances, the Chair may cancel meetings or call emergency meetings;
 - c) The Chair of the Board, or the Honorary Secretary of the Board in the absence of the Chair, may approve grants not exceeding £2,000, subject to confirmation by the Board at the following meeting.
 - d) Administrative support for the Board shall be provided by the College. The Board may reimburse its officers and members for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in attending meetings and in the business of the Board;
 - e) The College shall determine the appropriate sum required to cover the cost of administrative support for the Board;
 - f) The Board has delegated authority to act on behalf of the Council, in accordance with Article 17 of the Supplemental Charter;
43. The members of the Scientific Foundation Board are:
- a) The Honorary Treasurer, ex officio, who shall be Honorary Treasurer of the Board, and
 - b) Not less than seven other members, of whom at least four shall be members of the College;
44. No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the Scientific Foundation Board unless there are present at least two members of that Board who are members of the College.

GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO COMMITTEES

45. Council members who cease to serve on the Council shall cease at the same time to serve on any Committee / Board.

46. All Officers of the Council, as defined in Standing Order 7(1), are entitled to receive papers for and attend all meetings of Committees, but unless they are *ex officio*, or regularly appointed or co-opted members of the Committee concerned, they shall not be entitled to vote and shall not be counted as part of the quorum.
47. Any Council member may attend any Committee meeting as an Observer providing no expense to the College is involved but shall not be entitled to vote and shall not be counted as part of the quorum.
48. The decision of the Chair on all matters falling within the purview of the Council and/or Committee shall be final and binding.

REGISTRATION & DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

49. All Council members, faculty representatives, deputies and Observers shall register details of all interests which might reasonably be perceived as affecting the discharge of their functions. Registration shall be carried out by completion of a pro-forma circulated annually by the Chief Operating Officer, with the information registered to be amended from time to time as required.
50. Whether or not the interest concerned has been registered under Standing Order 49, Council members and faculty representatives, deputies and Observers shall declare their interests, whether personal or prejudicial (financial), each time it arises on an agenda for a meeting they attend, and they shall not take part in any decision in which they have an interest, unless the interest may reasonably be regarded as insignificant or immaterial.
51. The Chair of a meeting at which a member's declaration of a conflict of interest is made shall consider the nature of the declaration (i.e. whether personal or prejudicial / financial), and may require the member to leave the meeting, and not take part in the discussion or decision on the item, which shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO MEETINGS AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

- 52.1. Any Committee or other meeting within the College may be carried on by telephone or videoconferencing, provided all members of the body concerned have been given the opportunity to participate and have been sent the papers for the meeting. If the meeting is carried on by telephone or video-conferencing the provisions in these Standing Orders relating to the quorum for the meeting shall be interpreted accordingly.
- 52.2. Notice of any meeting and any other relevant documents may be sent to any member by electronic mail, and any other procedure which these Standing Orders state must be carried out in writing, may be carried out electronically at the option of the person carrying out the procedure concerned.

EXPENSES

53. All Officers, Council members, Chairs of Boards (if not Council members) and Task Group Members may be reimbursed their travelling, accommodation, subsistence, and childcare costs in respect of the following meetings:
- a) Council meetings and Trustee Board meetings;
 - b) Committees and/or Sub-committees of the Council and Trustee Board;
 - c) Meetings of Task Groups, if the meeting concerned has been requested by a Board Chair and / or the Task Group Leader;
 - d) Meetings with outside organisations where attendance on behalf of the College has been requested by the Honorary Secretary of Council.
54. Locum payments (backfill) are payable only in respect of the categories of meetings referred to in paragraphs (b) – (d) of Standing Order 53 above, and in respect of the following assessment activities:
- a) Membership by Assessment of Performance assessors' attendance for assessment of portfolios and oral component of interim Membership by Assessment of Performance, at training and development days and committee meetings for Membership by Assessment of Performance.
 - b) Practice visits for the purposes of the Quality Practice Award; and
 - c) Assessors for Primary Care Research Team Assessment activities.
55. Any pilot work agreed in relation to the development of Primary Medical Care Provider Accreditation. Per diem payments shall be payable to College examiners for all current activities associated with the MRCGP examination and MRCGP assessment, namely:
- a) Attending the Clinical Skills Assessments and any related training, case writing and piloting days;
 - b) Attending appropriate committees and working groups;
 - c) Attending the annual examiners' conference.
56. Travelling, accommodation, subsistence, childcare, and locum expenses are not payable in respect of:
- a) Attendance at General Meetings of the College (i.e. the Annual or Spring General Meetings);
 - b) Attendance at meetings and activities arranged at Faculty level;

- c) Meetings attended by a Council or Trustee Board member out of interest, or at his or her own initiative, without specific invitation.

- 57. The rates for reimbursement of travelling, accommodation, subsistence, childcare and locum expenses shall be fixed from time to time by the Trustee Board.

Reimbursement of such expenses or costs shall only be made on production of the appropriate claim form duly completed and submitted within 3 months of the event, supported by the necessary receipts.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA

- 58. No member of the Council, or of any Committee, Board, Working Party or Task Group, whether or not a member of the College, shall disclose or send to the press or any broadcast media a copy of any information or communication from the College received by virtue of that membership without the consent of the Chair or Honorary Secretary. If necessary, the Chair or Honorary Secretary shall consult other Council members. This prohibition does not apply to the tweeting of information / comment by members of Council if undertaken in accordance with the agreed Council Protocol.

AMENDMENT, SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF STANDING ORDERS

- 59. These Standing Orders may be amended, suspended or revoked and re-made by resolution passed by a majority of the members of the Council present and voting, provided that no resolution or part of any resolution for the amendment, suspension or revocation of this Standing Order or Standing Orders 21-23 (or any differently-numbered Standing Orders having similar effect) shall be effective unless it is passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of the Council present and voting.

COMMENCEMENT

- 60. These Standing Orders shall come into effect on the date the Supplemental Charter of the College is granted by Her Majesty The Queen, when the previous Standing Orders, and any amendments to them, are revoked, without affecting the validity of anything done under them.