

**Minutes of the Derby Medical Society, Wednesday 22nd October 2025
Derby Medical School Lecture Theatre**

Politics and Healthcare

Mr Tim Mitchell

MA (Oxon) FRCS (ORL-HNS)

President, Royal College of Surgeons of England

Apologies: None Received

Professor Judd welcomed everyone to this the second meeting. Minutes from the last two meetings (08/10/25 and 19/03/25) were given by Dr John McIntyre.

Professor Judd introduced the speaker Mr Tim Mitchell. He studied medicine at Brasenose College, Oxford before training in otolaryngology in Oxford, London, Cambridge and Sydney. He was appointed as Consultant Otolaryngologist in Southampton in 2000 and has a subspecialty interest in cochlear and other auditory implants with the University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service. He has held a variety of roles in the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) and was Chair of the Court of Examiners from 2014 to 2017. He was appointed Vice President in 2020 and in 2023 was the first ENT Surgeon to become President.

Mr Mitchell gave an overview of the history of the RCS and the recently refurbished headquarters that are in Lincoln's Inn Fields London. The Company of Barber-Surgeons was established in 1540 by King Henry VIII. In 1745, the Barber-Surgeons separated by an Act of Parliament into two bodies. The Surgeons later bought properties in Lincoln's Inn fields and became by Royal Charter 'The Royal College of Surgeons in London'. A key historical figure was the surgeon and scientist John Hunter (1728-1793). He was an avid collector and populated his London House and Country House in Earls Court with a huge collection of specimens estimated to be about 14,000 items in total. He gave custody of it to the Company of Surgeons. The collection is housed at the RCS headquarters in the Hunterian Museum, and Mr Mitchell recommended visiting it (free entry) although only about 4000 specimens remain.

Mr Mitchell explained how politics and healthcare were intertwined. The politics of delivering healthcare is a matter for the devolved governments. Delivering Healthcare is funded by taxes and it is important to recognise the financial basis for the NHS. The spend on Health (20% of the available budget) is second only to the Social Care budget (29%) in terms of expenditure. It is therefore to be expected there will be involvement of politicians. Recent important reviews were highlighted including the 10 Year Health Plan (Hospital to Community; Analogue to Digital; Sickness to Prevention), the Health Service Review by Lord Darzi, The Leng Review and the Medical Training Review (due to be published soon). Mr Mitchell explained some of the intended benefits from such reviews but also some of the potential pitfalls.

Mr Mitchell explained how the important relationship between the Government and the Medical Profession can often be strained. He expanded on how important roles are of the Royal Colleges, particularly that of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AORMC), is in trying to ensure channels of communication remain open between the two. The relationships are crucial in the 'soft power' that influences and shapes the direction of healthcare delivery.

Mr Mitchell concluded his talk by sharing some of the important lessons he has learned about leadership in his various roles. He acknowledged that often doors can open by chance but it is important that when they do we take the opportunity to put ourselves forward. His key take home messages about Leadership were:

- Its all about the people
- Have contacts
- Keep calm and carry on
- Love your enemies
- “you’ll never walk alone”
- Trust your instincts
- Pick up the phone

Mr Mitchell finished with a quote from Mother Theresa:

Speak tenderly; let there be kindness in your face, in your eyes, in your smile, in the warmth of your greeting. Always have a cheerful smile. Don't only give your care, but give your heart as well.

There followed a lively interactive question and answer session

69 guests and member signed the register.