**League of Friends of the Queen Victoria Hospital**

**Chairman’s Report for the Annual General Meeting to be held on**

**Tuesday, 24 September 2024 in the Surgeons’ Mess, Queen Victoria Hospital**

Dear Friend

I hope you have had an enjoyable 2024 so far. I was surprised to read that this summer has been the hottest on record, but this has not happened at all wherever I have been. Hopefully we may have something of an Indian summer, for the next few weeks.

The low point of 2024 has been the death of Dr Andrew Robertson in April, after a short illness. Andrew was a Trustee of the League for fifteen years and Chairman for seven years. Andrew had been a GP at Lingfield Surgery as well as an anaesthetist at the hospital for many years. The Trustees – and I am sure everyone who knew him – will miss Andrew’s wise counsel and sense of humour.

As I reported last year, a new CEO, James Lowell, started at the hospital in September 2023. A new Chief Medical Officer will start in October. Almost the whole leadership team at the hospital has been replaced in the last year. James has been in contact with the Trustees and we have had a meeting with him to discuss our participation. The hospital always gets outstanding feedback from patients and in the recent In-Patient survey was ranked the best hospital in the country for patient care – which is a tremendous testament to James and all the staff. A new CT scanner has been purchased and installed (without financial support from us) to replace the one we funded. The hospital has acknowledged our role in funding the original scanner and our plaque has been moved across. Bob Marchant, our President and I were invited to the official opening.

The League has not been asked for much money this year because that the hospital is still developing its new strategy. We do, however, continue to support the Rosemary Wootton Fund which pays for additional non-mandatory training for staff. We have also funded some development in the hospital gardens to provide a more enjoyable space for patients and staff and paid for the refurbishment of the Spitfire Café.

You will recall that NHS England was trying to push the Queen Vic into a merger with Brighton, something that was opposed by almost all the Governors. At some point last year NHS England withdrew and cancelled the attempted merger. It then charged the hospital with developing a new strategy. This has been delayed by various events (not least the General Election) and, assuming the new Government does not throw a spanner in the works, its publication is now expected in November. The hospital reported a breakeven financial position at the financial year end in March which puts it in a good position for the future. Significant expenditure is needed on its buildings.

When the strategy has been published and the direction of travel of the hospital is clear, I am sure there will be some requests for funding – which we look forward to considering. On every occasion we meet James we emphasise that the League is very willing to fund anything that will help the people of East Grinstead by offering services at the Queen Vic so patients do not have to travel to other hospitals.

The Accounts and the minutes of the AGM last year are available on-line at <https://www.qvh.nhs.uk/support-us> . If you do not have access to a computer and would like to see a copy of the accounts, please contact me - my contact details are at the bottom of this letter.

At December 31st 2023 our investments and cash at hand was £773,070. As at June 30th 2024 this number was £707,649.

As we did last year, the AGM will be part of a regular Trustees’ Meeting, with modest refreshments, so if you are able to join us we would very much like to see you. The Agenda for our AGM is attached. It would help us if you could let us know whether you will join us by Friday, 20 September 2024. Please either email Linda Skinner, our Hon. Secretary, to let her know you will be attending 1inda@cobblecourt.co.uk or telephone on 07720 077999.

With the death of Andrew Robertson we would like to appoint another Trustee. If you might be interested please get in touch either with Linda Skinner or me. Ideally, please come to the AGM and we would be pleased to discuss the role of Trustee and the purposes of the League.

As always, I would like to thank you for your continued support for the League of Friends. I would like to thank, once again, all the Trustees for the work they do, particularly Linda Skinner, the Hon. Secretary and Alexandra Durrant, the Hon. Treasurer.

I look forward to seeing you, if possible, at the AGM. If you are unable to attend and have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me either by email or by phone.

StJohn Brown

Chairman

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