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

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

**Thursday 2nd October 2025 in the Surgeons’ Mess, Queen Victoria Hospital**

Dear Friend

As I sit down to write this review of the last twelve months, I was hopeful last year that the Hospital was on a relatively stable course with the first part of the strategy complete, a new CEO with his feet firmly tucked under the table and a new Government making appropriate noises about the NHS. Alas: the new CEO left, the Government has published a Ten Year Strategy and has turned everything upside down, not least torpedoing key parts of the strategy. It is in the process of abolishing NHS England (which cost an eye watering £175 million a year) and the Integrated Care Networks – ours was known as NHS Sussex which has had its budget cut in half and seems to be fighting for some sort of survival rather than doing what it was set up to do. To use a military expression, the Chain of Command seems somewhat wobbly. Abigail Jago, who was the Director of Strategy, has been appointed Interim CEO, and is making a good fist of a very challenging situation – which includes finding a way to save £7.5million. I wish her and her team the best of luck in doing the many things they are being tasked with.

As happened last year we also had our own low point at the end of 2024 with the death of Bob Marchant in November. Although not in the best of health his death was a tremendous surprise to everyone. A copy of the tribute that appeared in Connect is attached to this mailing. He had started work in the hospital in 1956 and, after retirement in 1999, continued to be actively involved, not least as President of the Guinea Pig Club and also latterly as President of the League of Friends. In many ways he was the living spirit of the Hospital and the custodian of its institutional memory. His funeral and wake were very well attended and it was a fitting tribute to a Great Man, of both the Queen Vic and East Grinstead. We sorely miss him.

The Hospital continues to get outstanding feedback from patients. In the recently-reintroduced League Tables that the Secretary of State thinks is the way to improvement, the Queen Vic was ranked in the top ten hospitals in the country. It is a tremendous achievement by the doctors, staff and management to consistently maintain this and they deserve the thanks of all patients.

You may be aware that a Community Diagnostic Centre has been approved by the NHS and will be built on the front lawn of the hospital. This will provide a greater breadth and number of diagnostic devices which should speed up the process of getting scans and tests from GPs. It is due to open in the second quarter of 2026. I am sure that the League will be asked for some financial support which I hope we will be able to provide.

We continue to support the Rosemary Wootton Fund which pays for additional non-mandatory training for staff. One thing that has always seemed wrong to me in my previous life was that in many companies “management” would have access to free drinks – particularly teas and coffees, whilst “workers” had to pay for their own. This seems to be intrinsically unfair so, as our modest contribution to the increased cost of living, we are providing tea and coffee across the hospital, free of charge to staff. I understand this gesture has been greatly appreciated. We have approved a number of other modest applications over the past year.

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 2024 our investments and cash at hand was £657,084. As at June 30th 2025 this number was £744,621. The increase is primarily due to stock market gains in the past six months.

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 Monday, 29 September 2025. Please either email Linda Skinner, our Hon. Secretary, to let her know you will be attending 1inda@cobblecourt.co.uk or by telephone on 07720 077999.

With the deaths of Andrew Robertson and Bob Marchant in the last two years we would like to appoint two new Trustees. 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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