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

**Minutes of the 74th Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday, 24 September 2024**

**at the Surgeons’ Mess, Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead**

**Present:**

St John Brown, Chairman (SJB)

Linda Skinner, Honorary Secretary and Registrar (LVS)

Judy Busby (JB)

Chris Rae (CR)

James Lowell, CEO Queen Victoria Hospital

Abigail Jago, Chief Strategy Director, Queen Victoria Hospital

Michelle Baillie, Associate Director of Communications, Queen Victoria Hospital

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked James, Abigail and Michelle for attending on behalf of the Hospital. The meeting was declared quorate.

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|  |  | **Action** |
| **1** | **Death of Trustees** |  |
|  | It was with great sadness that SJB reported on the deaths of Andrew Robertson and Bob Marchant. Both had had long standing connections with the hospital, a local GP practice and hospital museum. Bob had recently been appointed President of the League and was honoured to accept. SJB thanked Michelle Baillie for her thoughtful article in Connect. SJB stated that the League would be pleased to support and fund a memorial to Bob at the hospital and made a couple of suitable suggestions. |  |
| **2** | **Apologies for Absence** |  |
|  | Received from Alexandra Durrant, Treasurer and nine members. |  |
| **3** | **Minutes of Previous meeting** |  |
|  | The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2023 were accepted as a true record of the meeting. |  |
| **4** | **Matters Arising** |  |
|  | There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda. |  |
| **5** | **Election of Trustees** |  |
| 5.1 | The following Trustees were due to retire but are eligible for re-election:  Judy Busby  Linda Skinner  Alexandra Durrant  The re-appointment of the retiring Trustees was proposed by SJB and seconded by CR. |  |
| **4** | **Election of Officers** |  |
| 4.1 | The following Officers were required to retire but are eligible for re-election and happy to stand again:  Chairman St John Brown  Treasurer Alexandra Durrant  Honorary Secretary and Registrar Linda Skinner  The re-appointment of the Officers was proposed by JB and seconded by CR. |  |
| **5** | **Chairman’s Report** |  |
|  | The Chairman’s Report had been circulated to all members and a copy is attached to these minutes. The Chairman noted that the hospital was currently working hard on its new strategy and the League had therefore received few applications for support. |  |
|  | He said it was necessary for the League to consider its future following the death of two Trustees and a dwindling membership. The Trustees would meet to discuss this and revert to the hospital. |  |
| **6** | **Honorary Treasurer’s Report** |  |
|  | In the absence of the Treasurer, the Chairman presented a report on the accounts at 31 December 2023. He noted that the League had received a total income of £54k during the period which was principally from investment income and some subscriptions. This did not compare favourably with the year before when the League had received significant donations amounting to £400k. The total expenditure for the period was £85k, but there were some items not invoiced in the year which would be paid for in 2024. The League has just over £700k in cash and investments which is less than at the end of 2022. |  |
|  | The League has £29,489 in restricted funds to be used for specific areas: Corneo Plastics £5,365, Margaret Duncombe Ward £100 and Plastics £24,024 |  |
|  | There were no expenses in running the League, the only expenditure was for the Independent Examiner.  SJB expressed his thanks to AD for her services during the year.  The accounts were approved by JB and LVS. |  |
| **7** | **Appointment of Independent Examiners** |  |
|  | The Chairman reported that Richard Place Dobson had been Independent Examiners to the League for some years and it was proposed that they should be reappointed. This was agreed by all present. |  |
| **8** | **Secretary’s Report** |  |
|  | The Secretary reported that the membership of the League now stood at 450 and had diminished from 590 in 2017 due wholly to the ageing population of the members. LVS explained that the role of the League of Friends was very different at QVH where all volunteering was handled by the hospital and there was also some confusion around the role of the Charity compared to that of the League. The League does not actively fundraise, in competition with the charity and relies on donations and legacies. In 2023 there had been applications totalling £129k approved by the Trustees covering such items as travel costs for apprentices, lockers for staff in theatres, upgrade of the Spitfire Café servery. In 2024 there had only been two applications amounting to £3k although it was noted that the League was still funding teas and coffees for all staff. Michelle Baillie suggested that this should be acknowledged in Connect. LVS reported that the Treasurer had confirmed to the hospital that the League would increase the Rosemary Wootton Fund from £20k to £40k pa which funded non-mandatory training for staff. LVS reported that Michelle had agreed to act as the conduit between the League and the Executive Management Team to ensure that any applications were appropriate to the strategy of the hospital. SJB suggested that the League would be happy to fund the employment of a GP for two years in MIU, which it was agreed would fit with the hospital strategy on improving their community work. AJ suggested that a League funded apprenticeship in Theatres might be an appropriate legacy for Bob Marchant. SJB also proposed an AI pilot which could work with the digital strategy. Research and innovation was part of the hospitals vision for the future. |  |
|  | MB noted that the Charity and the League should work together and that the comms from both should be coordinated so that people understood the relationships. |  |
|  | JL suggested that a “dragons’ den” type approach for some funding from the League might engage staff with a formal pitch to Trustees. This should link with the hospital’s continuous improvement vision. |  |
|  | LVS noted that an application had been received from the Corneo Unit to fund a fish tank and associated maintenance. This application was approved. It was noted that the fish tanks are well received by all visitors to the hospital.  SJB thanked LVS for the work that she did on behalf of the League. |  |
| **9** | **Any Other Business** |  |
| 9.1 | AJ presented the work that had been done on the hospital’s strategy for the future, noting that this was confidential at present. The strategy would be formally launched in November. SJB thanked AJ for her excellent presentation. |  |
| 9.2 | SJB also thanked JL, AJ and MB for attending the meeting and for their valuable input. |  |

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm