

# The League of Friends of the Queen Victoria Hospital

## Minutes of the 71st Annual General Meeting held on Monday, 6 September 2021 at the Surgeons' Mess, Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead

### Present:

St John Brown, Chairman  
Alexandra Durrant, Honorary Treasurer – by Zoom call  
Linda Skinner, Honorary Secretary and Registrar  
Bob Marchant  
Andrew Robertson  
Judy Busby  
Brian Rugg  
Hilary Waddingham  
Dr Brown – by Zoom call  
Mrs P Fisher – by Zoom call  
Steve Jenkin, CEO, Queen Victoria Hospital

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and particularly Steve Jenkin.

### Action

- The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, but stated that under our Constitution, the meeting was not quorate as it required that “twenty members personally present shall be a quorum”. He proposed that the meeting should be conducted as if it was quorate and that an adjourned meeting would be held in accordance with the Constitution and any resolutions proposed today would be ratified at the adjourned meeting. All members present agreed to this course of action.
- 1 Apologies for Absence**  
Received from 28 members.
  - 2 Minutes of Previous meeting**  
The Chairman stated that due to the restrictions of Covid-19 it had not been possible to hold an AGM in 2020 and the Trustees’ decision had been properly documented according to the guidance of the Charity Commission. The minutes of the 70th Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday, 26 June 2019 were approved by the members and signed by the Chairman.
  - 3 Election of Trustees**
    - 3.1 The following Trustees were due to retire but are eligible for re-election:  
Alexandra Durrant  
Linda Skinner  
The re-appointment of the retiring Trustees was proposed by Judy Busby and seconded by Andrew Robertson.
  - 4 Election of Officers**
    - 4.1 The following Officers were required to retire but are eligible for re-election:

Chairman	St John Brown
Treasurer	Alexandra Durrant
Honorary Secretary and Registrar	Linda Skinner

The re-appointment of the Officers was proposed by Brian Rugg and seconded by Bob Marchant.
  - 5 Chairman’s Report**  
The Chairman’s Report had been circulated to the members. He reported that the Trustees proposed that the Constitution of the League be amended to allow for attendance at meetings by electronic means in accordance with more relevant communication methods. It had been necessary to hold Trustee meetings via Zoom during the pandemic. It was also proposed that the number of members constituting a quorum should be reduced from 20 to 12. There were no objections

raised to these proposals.

The Chairman said the major topic for the hospital was the proposed merger and the Trustees had discussed their role. They had agreed that they would continue to support funding requests which would benefit QVH and the staff and patients but would not be prepared to support requests for funding for the wider Trust if it were to proceed. He also stated that GP practices in East Grinstead were under significant pressure and if there was something where the League could provide support for primary care, then the Trustees would be prepared to consider this.

The Chairman expressed his grateful thanks to all the Trustees for the work that they do and for the real perspective from the staff added by Judy Busby. The Chairman also thanked the Treasurer and the Secretary for the vital role that they played.

#### **6 Honorary Treasurer's Report**

The Chairman presented the Treasurer's Report on behalf of the Treasurer who was attending via Zoom. He said that the League had not spent very much during the year ending December 2020 in support of the hospital due to the pandemic as there had been few requests for funding. He reported at the end of the year the League had approximately £360,000 in cash and investments and was pleased to report that as at 31 July 2021 this had increased to approximately £445,000, although approximately £90,000 was owed to the hospital in relation to approved funding applications which had not yet been invoiced to the League. He further reported that the League was expecting two legacies amounting to £500,000 in total and so the financial position of the League was in good shape.

#### **7 Appointment of Independent Examiners**

The re-appointment of independent examiners Richard Place Dobson was proposed by Alexandra Durrant and was approved by those present.

#### **8 Presentation by Steve Jenkin, CEO of QVH**

Steve Jenkin reported that 2020 was a year they had not been expecting. At the beginning of March 2020 consideration was being given to the future of QVH and the decision was taken to stay as a surgical hospital and focus on specialist cancer for skin and head and neck and also became one of two hubs in the south east to support breast cancer. QVH had played a significant role during the year treating significantly more skin, head and neck and breast cancer patients than in a normal year.

The hospital had also had changes in ward layouts during the period and he had been impressed by the "can do" attitude of the hospital staff.

QVH had been a vaccination hub during the pandemic and this had been a mammoth undertaking, but the feedback from the public had been remarkable.

The hospital was now into recovery and at the beginning of the year there had been 904 patients who had waited in excess of one year for an operation and this was now down to 370. CQC had carried out an adult in patient survey and QVH was one of seven trusts graded "better than expected" which puts QVH in one of the eight top trusts in the country.

Talks began in 2017 regarding a potential partnership with Brighton and Sussex Hospitals and a strategic case for change has now been approved by the boards of University Hospitals Sussex and QVH with a view to a potential merger next year. It was believed that a merger would further enhance services across both trusts. The strategic case for change does not include any specific plans for service change but the Board concluded that a potential merger offered the best opportunity to secure the future of the hospital in East Grinstead. A full business case may take a further six to nine months to prepare, which will include engagement with staff and all stakeholders, including the League of Friends.

Steve Jenkin reported that Beryl Hobson was stepping down as Chairman of the Trust with effect from 1 October 2021 having stayed on for further period since March 2021. Dr Peter Carter had been appointed – he was an experienced CE in the NHS of 12 years and also the Royal College of Nursing for nine years.

The Chairman thanked Steve Jenkin for his very informative presentation.

## **9 Any Other Business**

- 9.1 Andrew Robertson asked Steve Jenkin how the Board had considered the three options of do nothing; merger and a collaboration of shared functions. Steve Jenkin responded that there had been a number of tests which had been applied across all three options and the merger had scored highest amongst the options. Interestingly, “do nothing” had scored higher than a collaboration of services. The QVH Board believed that the merger offered the most benefits. QVH does not have sufficient money as a small organisation to do what is needed to improve its services.
- 9.2 Brian Rugg asked why the eye department, which provided excellent care, did not support all care such as macular degeneration. Steve Jenkin replied that ophthalmology present huge challenges nationally and a clinical review was to be carried out.
- 9.3 The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting, personally and via Zoom. The meeting would be minuted as if it had been properly quorate and would be repeated at an adjourned meeting within two weeks.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm