

The DCH Dispatch

News from across our Trust

September 2024

Dedicated orthopaedic unit will reduce waiting times

We have opened a new dedicated unit for patients having elective orthopaedic surgery as part of a drive to reduce waiting times.

The newly refurbished Ridgeway Elective Orthopaedic Unit, formerly known as Ridgeway Ward, opened in August 2024. The existing ward space has been transformed with new equipment and facilities, including an admissions lounge and therapy suite to help support patients with their recovery.

Funded by NHS England, the £1.4million scheme is the second phase of the wider £14million project that included the creation of the Outpatient Assessment Centre at South Walks House, which opened in February 2024 and offers additional outpatient and diagnostic appointments in Dorchester town centre.



Anita Thomas, Chief Operating Officer at Dorset County Hospital (DCH), said: "This funding has allowed us to transform the former Ridgeway Ward and will make such a difference to people waiting for elective orthopaedic surgery. We will be able to reduce waiting times, treat people more quickly and support their recovery, so they spend less time in hospital."

Nick Savva, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at DCH added: "We are very fortunate to have been given the opportunity to develop the Ridgeway Elective Orthopaedic Unit. It has been designed to the highest standards and will facilitate world class levels of care and efficiency."

More information is available on our website at dchft.nhs.uk/about-us/latest-news



In this newsletter you will find:

Latest site developments, charity news, governor updates and more...



Welcome from Lead Governor Kathryn Harrison

Welcome to our new hospital newsletter. When we conducted our membership survey last year you told us that you would like to receive a regular newsletter from DCH and its Governors and this is the result. So, make a cuppa, put your feet up and enjoy a good read.

I thought I would start by telling you a little about the role of a Governor at DCH. One of our core responsibilities is to represent the public, so we are always looking for new ways we can reach you and hear your views to then pass on to the relevant people at the hospital. We need to know what is important to you, what your priorities are and about your experiences at DCH.

Another important part of our role is to hold the Non-Executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board. I also observe the People and Culture Committee, which looks at everything from recruitment and retention to staff survey results, and the Charitable Funds Committee. Last year the DCH Charity launched their Emergency and Critical Care Appeal and in a rash moment, I agreed to take part in the DCH100 fundraiser and was delighted to complete a 25k walk along the Jurassic Coast.

I hope you enjoy reading this first edition and we would really welcome your feedback. Remember, this is your newsletter, so we want to make sure it is what you want to receive.

Meet West Dorset Governor Kevin Perry

“My job is to be your eyes and ears”

I retired from the police many years ago and now work part-time for local councils. This gives me spare time to volunteer where I feel my training and knowledge may be put to some use for the benefit of the community in which you and I live.

I wanted to become a Governor because I am passionate about our hospital. I have been a patient (on more occasions than I care to think of) and my children were born at DCH.

Since I was elected, I have given my time to attending many meetings and listened to many reports relating to the running of this hospital.

My job, along with my fellow Governors, is to be your eyes and ears and ensure that the hospital continues to follow the correct procedures and maintains the high standards that it has.



DCH100 Jurassic Coast Challenge hits £100,000 target



We can't thank you all enough

We were overwhelmed by our supporters as they came together to take part in the DCH Jurassic Coast Challenge earlier this year and raised just over £100,000 for the hospital's Emergency and Critical Care Appeal - an incredible achievement!

More than 50 participants took up the challenge by walking or running sections of the coast between Corfe Castle and Bridport.

The Emergency and Critical Care Appeal is raising funds to enhance the hospital's new Emergency Department and Critical Care Unit, due to open in early 2027.



To find out more about the DCH Charity, or to fundraise for them, visit dchcharity.org.uk or scan the QR code.



Spotlight on... Research

Our Research Department was established in 2001 and the team includes project managers, nurses, midwives, paramedics, clinical trials assistants, pharmacists and doctors. We also have a small team of volunteer patient research ambassadors who help raise awareness of the various research opportunities available to our patients.



Clinical research is vital for discovering and developing new drugs, technologies and practices in healthcare. It is a key focus within our Trust as we aim to translate research findings into enhanced clinical practices for our patients. Our team is experienced in conducting a wide variety of clinical trials.

We host research funded by organisations including the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and the life science industry. We also encourage hospital-led research and can help assist in the design, setup, and delivery of these projects.

Be Part of Research is an online service run by the NIHR which helps people to find current UK research that may be taking place near to where you live. You can register at bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk

Further information about our Research Department can be found on our website at dchft.nhs.uk/about-us/research-at-dorset-county-hospital



Your future hospital

Enabling works underway

Enabling works as part of the construction of our new Emergency Department and Critical Care Unit are underway. Funded by the New Hospital Programme, the scheme will include purpose-built spaces for both major and minor injuries and conditions, a mental health facility, a dedicated emergency paediatrics area, 24 critical care beds, and an ambulance arrivals and fast assessment area. A new rooftop helipad is also being funded by the HELP Appeal charity.



Main construction is due to begin in early 2025 and the new building is due to open in 2027. You can keep up to date with the site developments on our website at dchft.nhs.uk/nhp-scheme

New CT scanner suite in Weymouth

We have opened a new CT scanner suite in Weymouth as part of a national drive to offer tests closer to home and help shorten waiting times. The suite at Weymouth Community Hospital has been introduced as part of NHS England's Community Diagnostics Centre programme and the Targeted Lung Health Check programme. Read more on our website at dchft.nhs.uk/about-us/latest-news

Your Council of Governors

Elected Public Governors

West Dorset

- Judy Crabb
- Kathryn Harrison
- Tim Limbach
- Kevin Perry
- David Taylor

Weymouth and Portland

- Mike Byatt
- Alan Clark
- Jean-Pierre Lambert
- Anne Link
- Tim Nicholls

East Dorset

- Simon Bishop

North Dorset

- Maurice Perks
- Carol Manton

Appointed Governors

- Barbara Purnell (Friends of Dorset County Hospital)
- Cllr Rory Major (Dorset Council)
- Terri Lewis (Age UK)
- Mike Wood (Weymouth College)

Staff Governors

- Robin Armstrong
- Max Deighton
- Midhun Paul
- Jack Welch

DCH AGM/AMM

Please join us on Monday, 23 September for our Annual General Meeting and Annual Members' Meeting. It will be held in our Education Centre (East Wing, Level 0) from 5pm to 7.30pm. Refreshments will be provided in Room 2 before the meeting begins in the Lecture Theatre.

Contact us



If you would prefer to receive this by email, please get in touch.

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