

Annual General Meeting and Annual Members' Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting of Monday 23 September 2024
Lecture Theatre, Dorset County Hospital, and via MS Teams

AGM24/001 Welcome

David Clayton-Smith, the Trust Chair, welcomed attendees to the Annual General and Annual Members Meeting for 2023/24. The meeting would reflect on the Trust's highlights, quality, performance and finance for the last financial year, but would also look forward to ongoing projects, such as the Chronic Pain Case Study and the Joint Strategy.

The Chair reflected on the challenging environment in which the whole NHS was operating and the pressure this placed on staff but was encouraged by the improvements in seen in the trust's staff survey results. He further considered the importance of working with health and social care partners, the clear direction that was being developed across the Dorset Integrated Care System (ICS) and the federation between the trust and Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust (DHC) with a view to improving services for patients.

The Chair thanked the Council of Governors for their commitment and useful insights and challenges, and further thanked the Executive and Non-Executive Directors of the trust for their hard work, flexibility and resilience through change and challenges.

AGM24/002 Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24

Review of the year

Matthew Bryant, Joint Chief Executive Officer, thanked the staff and volunteers of the trust who helped to achieve amazing things every day in spite of the challenges the NHS faced. Matthew shared some highlights of the year, which are detailed in full in the Annual Report and Accounts for 2023/24 available on the trust website. Key success of the last year included the development of the Mary Anning Unit which provided specialist care to frail older people, the opening of the discharge lounge within the Portesham Unit providing purpose-built space for patients to stay whilst waiting to be discharged, the maternity team scored some of the best results in the region in the CQC survey of women's experiences of maternity care in England, receipt of the National Preceptorship Quality Mark and two members of staff receiving national Chief Nursing Officer Awards, and the first DCH Careers Fair. Matthew outlined further site developments including the Outpatient Assessment Centre at South Walks House, installation of a new CT scanner suite in Weymouth Community Hospital, the development of Ridgeway Elective Orthopaedic, and progress on the new emergency department and critical care unit. All of this was achieved against a background of extreme challenge for the NHS.

Quality Account

Jo Howarth, Director of Nursing, Acute, highlighted the importance and priority of quality of care for patients. She outlined the progress made against the trust's quality priorities in 2023/24, which focused on patient safety, patient experience, and clinical effectiveness. Key improvements of note included a reduction in delayed discharges, increased focus on patient safety incidents, the recruitment of a Tissue Viability Nurse, and achieving targets for infection prevention and control. These priorities would be rolled forward to 2024/25 to allow further progress to be made.

Performance 2023/24

Anita Thomas, Chief Operating Officer, outlined the Trust's performance for the year 2023/24, highlighting that performance of the 4-hour standard has been better than the national average since November 2022, and improvements made to the number of patients with no criteria to reside, against a backdrop of increasing patients accessing urgent and emergency care and industrial action. In relation to elective care the total waiting list had increased due to population growth. The trust had not achieved zero 78 week-waits by the end of the financial year, with 26 patients on the waiting list at the end of the year. Anita further updated on cancer and diagnostics performance, noting the increase in demand for both.

Annual Accounts 2023/24

Chris Hearn, Joint Chief Financial Officer, outlined the financial performance of the trust for 2023/24, noting that quality of services was fundamental to everything the trust did. The trust delivered a breakeven position for the year and a breakdown of income, expenditure and investments was provided. Chris provided a summary of the elective recovery fund and outlined the key challenges and opportunities for the trust in the coming year.

AGM24/003 Chronic Pain Case Study

Mrs Meherzin Das, Clinical Lead for the Dorset Pain Management Service, outlined the work of the service to support people living with chronic pain across Dorset, which included a range of therapies, professionals and activities to improve the experience of those patients. Experts by experience also participated in the service to offer support and learning. Mrs Das spoke of the key developments to date and challenges for the service and described the excellent collaboration between Dorset County Hospital (DCH) and DHC in developing shared objectives which would support the service.

AGM24/004 Joint Strategy

Nick Johnson, Deputy Chief Executive and Joint Chief Strategy, Transformation and Partnerships Officer, outlined that one of the key pieces of work for both DCH and DHC over the last year was the development of the joint strategy. This was developed over nine months and included engagement with colleagues, partners, carers, patients and the public. The strategy was approved by both Boards in July and would be formally launched on 30th September. Nick outlined the impetus for developing a joint strategy, the guiding principles behind the strategy and the new vision and mission for the two trusts. The strategic objectives focused on care, communities, colleagues, and sustainability, and Nick provided further detail in to each of these areas. He reflected that writing the joint strategy was just the start of the work, and the focus was now on delivering and driving change throughout both organisations in order to make the changes that needed to be made to improve the services offered to patients.

AGM24/005 Lead Governor's Report

Kathryn Harrison, Lead Governor, reported on activities undertaken by the Council of Governors during the year 2023/24, including the formal work of the Council of Governors meetings where they hear updates on the trusts, hold the Non-Executive Directors to account, receive the annual auditors report and hear updates on bigger pieces of work such as the New Hospital Programme. Kathryn described that the governors were supportive of the trust but asked challenging questions when needed and had developed a positive, constructive relationship with the executive team. Kathryn highlighted the work of the governors in observing Board and Committee meetings, and the recent governor elections which had changed the makeup of the Council to some extent. She further highlighted the work of the governors to develop and engage with the trust's membership, which included a new newsletter. Kathryn

commended the work of the DCH Charity which was raising funds for the Emergency and Critical Care Appeal, thanked the Corporate team for their support to the governors, and thanked all who worked at the Trust for their continued hard work.

AGM24/006 Questions from Members and the Public

A number of questions were submitted ahead of the meeting.

One member of the Trust asked:

1. *What, (if anything) has the change in the government achieved for the hospital, this year?*

Matthew Bryant outlined the importance of working with politicians from all parties at all the local and national levels, to advocate on behalf of the local population on what was needed to achieve as a hospital. The move to work collaboratively with system partners was in line with the approach of the new government to health and social care. Finally, the trust had received ministerial sign-off of the new hospital programme development.

Another member of the Trust asked a number of questions:

2. *regarding the hospital A&E and helicopter landing site construction. When will the current phase of site clearance and preparation be concluded, and when is the whole project scheduled to be completed?*

Chris Hearn outlined that enabling works were due to be completed in early 2025, with the entire build completed in early 2027.

3. *What proportion of Agency nurses are employed within the nursing staff(maximum and minimum percentage over the previous year)?*

Jo Howarth outlined that in April 2023 7% of the pay budget was spent on agency staff. As of September 2024, this was down to 3.8%. This had been accomplished by a reduction in the vacancy rate for registered nurses.

4. *What training in presentational skills is undertaking by hospital managers?*

The meeting heard that some developments for senior managers included presentation skills.

5. *Does the senior management routinely visit wards and other clinical spaces and if so, who does it and how often?*

Jo Howarth confirmed that formal walkarounds were conducted regularly (monthly) with senior leaders, and that informal visits were also undertaken on a more frequent basis (every week).

A third member asked a question around integrating IT systems between trusts. Nick Johnson outlined that good progress was being made with an electronic health record (EHR) which would give clinicians and patients one record across Dorset and Somerset.

A fourth member asked whether the trust had measures in place in case of any further industrial action. Jo Howarth confirmed that should any further industrial action be taken the trust was well rehearsed in the arrangements to manage this.

AGM24/007 Chairman's Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.