

James Paget University Hospitals 
NHS Foundation Trust

Minutes of Governors' Extra-ordinary Meeting

Friday, 30th November 2007

Benacre Room, Burrage Centre

Present

Hugh Sturzaker	Kate Guyon
Russell Allen	Liz Harrison
Chris Smith	Paul Foulger
Neville Sanderson	Brian Callan
Dennis Cave	Sue Meecham
Richard Morling	Wulf Forsythe-Yorke
David Wright	Tim Barrett

1. Hugh Sturzaker welcomed the Governors and thanked them for coming. He explained that the reason for calling the meeting was that many Governors felt they were being used to rubber stamp issues, they felt underused and their knowledge of the functioning of the Health Service was lacking.

2. Apologies for absence were received from:

Christian Mowle, Wendy Mower, Sue Allen, Colin Denny, Gillian Pope, Mary Shillabear, Eirlys McLean, Ian Fox, Katharine Kite, Paul Smith, Frank Ginnell and Peter Harrison.

3. Hugh Sturzaker was ratified as Chairman

4. There was no volunteer for the position of Secretary

5. Past Achievements of Governors: It was agreed that the following had been achieved in just over a year and these are divided into five sections:

Board of Directors

- Appraisal of Chairman. It was felt that it would be more transparent if, in future, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board did not appraise each other and this should be done in the presence of a third person using a questionnaire that is used for appraising the other Non-Executive Directors.
- Approval of appointment of Chief Executive
- Approval of Appointment of new Non-Executive Director
- Approval of re-appointment of two Non-Executive Directors
- Approval of Non-Executive Directors Remuneration – Some queried the need for bonuses
- Approval of whole of Governance Framework
- Approval of appointment of Auditors

Membership Committee

- Reviewed membership data base
- Assessed membership strategy
- Engaged with 6th Form Colleges
- Engaged with Portuguese Community
- Engaging with local Businesses
- Manned stall at Hospital Fete
- Planning future information projects
- Developing PowerPoint presentation

Strategic Planning Committee

- Discussed whole of Strategic Plan and contributed to it
- Added Education to Trust Objectives
- Approved Capital Plan
- Disbanded so that all issues could be discussed by all Governors

Training

- Two induction days
- Training on interviewing for Governors' Appointments Committee although new members have yet to be trained
- Initiated meeting on Clostridium difficile

Miscellaneous

- Achieved all success criteria
- Proposed and organised 25th Anniversary Celebrations
- Helped with Hospital Fete
- Deputy Chairman is now on the Governors' Agenda Committee and has already made several suggestions

6. Governors' concerns were mainly:

- Ignorance of their role. A recent document on this item was read out, was approved and will be distributed with the papers for the next Governors' meeting.
- Lack of knowledge about the Health Service and the Hospital and the need for more training
- Feeling that much of their time was spent just "rubber stamping" various documents and decisions
- They felt that they had a lack of worthwhile activities and tasks to do and wanted more engagement with the Directors

7. Suggestions for future roles of the Governors were compared with a list provided on a questionnaire from the Foundation Trust Network and it was found that the Governors were involved in most of these activities but there were several where they would like to be more involved:

- They wanted to obtain more views from the membership when contributing to the Business Plan
- They wished to discuss in greater detail the reasons for not doing well in certain categories in the Annual Health Check

- They wanted to be more active in matters concerning patient care and their pathways. With the forthcoming demise of the Patient and Public Involvement Forums it was felt that the Governors could take on some of their survey work, particularly as it seemed unlikely that Local Involvement Networks would be doing this. It was suggested that this should be discussed with Nick Coveney.
- There was much discussion about obtaining members views and feeding back information to the membership. Several meetings are in the pipeline for members and it was suggested that Members News should be circulated via email to those who have access to it. This would save money. Brian Callan has done work with Parish Councils to help communication and it was suggested that items from 'Your Trust News' should be sent to the local newspapers and the parish magazines as the majority of the community are not Trust members. Work is being done to liaise with the GP surgeries and it was thought that there should be a notice board or desk in the hospital foyer giving details about the Trust and its activities.
- All present did not like the lay out of chairs and tables in the Breydon Room as it was not conducive to participating in meetings. It was suggested that the Celebration Suite in the Burrage Centre would be a better venue although there was criticism of the seating arrangements at the AGM where the Board of Directors were seated down one side and most could not be seen nor heard.
- The Governors would like to have more contact with the Directors and thought it would be beneficial if one or two could attend a Governors' meeting and speak about their role and answer questions. They would also like to have an informal discussion among themselves and with the members of the Board of Directors at the end of each meeting and this could be helped by some light refreshments.

8. The following topics were suggested for training and information:

- The structure of the NHS and for this to include details about finance and performance
- The function of the Primary Care Trust. Unfortunately neither the Chairman nor the Chief Executive can make the next Governors' meeting. Mike Stonard is coming to the March meeting but it was felt that it would be helpful to have Adrian Pennington's views on the PCT at the next meeting.
- Details about the running of the Social Services
- It was appreciated that there had been problems in producing the Governors' Handbook and it was hoped that it would soon be available.
- It was felt that abbreviations were often not understood and should be avoided but if they were used then there should be a glossary of terms.

9. The Governors were pleased to see the success of Use of Resources in the Annual Health Check but were disappointed to see that Quality of Services were judged as only 'fair. They would like an explanation of the reasons why eight sections were not doing well and what was being done to improve matters.

10. Any other business. The Governors had been asked if they could help in the hospital no smoking policy. Although appreciating the benefits of not smoking they understood the difficulties faced by smokers who faced a stressful situation in hospital either as patients or visitors. They were also aware of the difficulties posed by “people’s rights”.

Hugh Sturzaker explained about the 18 week policy whereby patients needed to be treated within 18 weeks of referral by their GP and the difficulties which would result from patients not attending for their clinic appointments. It was hoped that the Governors would help in publicising this issue.

Concern was expressed about the uncertain future of Lowestoft Hospital although it was mentioned that the PCT was probably not funding any activities there.

Several Governors had noted that many of the public thought that the Governors were paid. It was hoped that measures would be taken to correct this view.

Everyone present was amazed that the Trust felt unable to provide some form of refreshment for the Governors’ meetings. Not only would some sustenance be welcomed but, more importantly, it would give the opportunity for Governors to stay on after the end of a meeting to continue informal discussions with colleagues and Board members. The value of this would far outway any financial cost to the Trust.

Governors would like to have a list of each others email addresses to aid communication.

The meeting ended with informal discussion over a buffet luncheon where many expressed a wish to have a similar meeting in a year’s time.