

F*of***SH** *Friends of Stamford Hospital*

NEWSLETTER **AUTUMN 2020**

Dear Members,

I hope you are all well and managing in these difficult pandemic times. The activities of FoSH have been curtailed and we have not been able to hold public meetings such as the AGM and the Bill Packer lecture. Your committee though has kept in touch and will be holding a “Zoom” meeting later this month, and we have been able to continue to support the Hospital where we can, as described below:

Donations by FoSH

We have provided funds to purchase a “tonometer”, an instrument to measure eye pressure. This is a further example of our support for the ophthalmology department at Stamford Hospital which has included the development of a separate room to perform eye measurements, visual field analyzer and retinal scanner. Eye clinics are now held most days and provide a much valued and high quality service for local people.

In April we donated £729 to the Love of Scrubs campaign. At the time there was a worrying shortage of scrubs [the pyjama like outfits worn by clinical staff] because with the onset of the pandemic staff needed to change scrubs after every patient contact. The staff at all NHS Hospitals were putting themselves in harm's way and we were delighted to play our part in helping protect them and their patients. An army of local volunteers used this material in their homes to create the scrubs. Later we donated a further £300 for the volunteers to make face masks, and particularly for elastic of which there was a sudden world shortage. These masks have been used by clinical staff and have also been made available to patients visiting the Hospital who have not brought a face mask with them. We are very grateful to the reception staff who invite patients who take a mask to make a contribution to FoSH, and so far over £300 has been raised.



Helen Blades, Receptionist, on the left and Trish Mason, Committee Member, holding some of the face masks.

Donations to FoSH



We continue to attract funding from a variety of sources, not least of course through your membership fees which have remained at a minimum of £5 annually for many years, and we are grateful to so many of you for paying substantially more than that. We are of course a charity and can claim Gift Aid.

We are most grateful to the Burghley House Preservation Trust for a further generous donation. We were also delighted that the outgoing Stamford Town Mayor, Breda-Rae Griffin, made FoSH one of her charities and we were pleased to receive her cheque at a suitable socially distanced presentation in May outside the Town Hall.

The Future of Stamford Hospital

Your committee was represented at the Stamford Hospital Development Advisory Committee in September. The main item discussed was the sale of the west end of the Stamford Hospital Site, including the original listed Infirmary. As stated in our Spring newsletter we have been uncertain as to whether this should be sold as we think it might be needed in the future for expansion of services. We have accepted though that the buildings at this end of the site, apart from the original Infirmary, are derelict and need demolition. The Trust, as with all public bodies, is under pressure from Government to sell land for which there is no clear use. The Trust is obliged to get the best price possible for the land, and must start by offering it to other public bodies. There were no expressions of interest and therefore it was put on the open market, with the proviso that it should be used for a health related purpose if possible. Several bids were received and a sale agreed with a developer who plans to build a nursing/care home on the site. We wait with interest to see the planning application.

We were also shown plans for the further development of the site which include a substantial “medical centre”. The future use of this centre is not yet clear but hopefully it will be the site of an Urgent Treatment Centre, and there might also be space for a general practice presence. The listed Fever Blocks will be retained by the Trust and are already being used for non-clinical purposes.

Minor Injuries Unit [MIU]: This was closed at the beginning of the pandemic in April as part of the plan to keep Stamford Hospital a “green” [Covid-free] site, which would allow clinics and procedures to continue. There was a concern that some patients attending MIU might have the virus, and the position of the MIU in the centre of the Out Patient Department does not allow a separate access. Public and staff are naturally fearful that the MIU will not reopen and we were reassured that it will, though this is unlikely to be until well into next year. It is an issue we will keep under review.

Annual General Meeting 2020:

Because of the pandemic we have not been able to hold this year’s AGM. We have however posted the financial accounts for 2020 along with a summary on our website and would welcome any comments members might have by emailing: info@friendsofstamfordhospital.org.uk

It looks that it will be some months at least before we can return to a more normal life, and in the meantime I hope you all stay safe. We are very grateful to you for your continued interest and membership. The NHS is under unprecedented pressure and I know that the staff of Stamford Hospital greatly value our encouragement and support.

Michael Dronfield

[Chairman, FoSH]