



Autumn 2023 Newsletter

Welcome to the Autumn newsletter. We have seen quite a few changes for the Friends over the last 12 months, but we continue to meet regularly to ensure we support Stamford Hospital as best we can.

Mike Dronfield:

As you will know, Mike sadly passed away on 26 June. He had been Chair of the Friends from 1994 to 2022 and was only the 4th Chair in our 60 year history. He was passionate about Stamford Hospital and it being used to its full potential for the benefit of the people of Stamford and surrounding area, and we hope we can continue this. He was well respected by his former consultant colleagues and the staff at Stamford. He will be very much missed by everyone who knew him.



AGM:

Our 58th AGM took place in the new Education Centre at the Hospital on 20 April 2024. I think this meeting was jinxed from the outset! Firstly the water was turned off because there was a leak, we therefore had to cancel the usual refreshments. Then our speaker did not arrive, leaving our newest trustee recruit, Mike Lumb, to step in and take over. He gave an overview of how working practices changed during the pandemic by using computer systems and digital platforms more effectively. This involved staying in touch with patients without them having to travel to hospital settings, ensuring all information about patients was held in one place and negating the need for set “clinic days”. Patients could be contacted via phone or video links at home, in the evenings or weekends which would fit in with their family life and those of clinical staff. It proved to be a very interesting talk which covered the need and solutions for contact with patients to be less formal and more effective.

Items Purchased for the Hospital:

Following the pandemic, requests for funding for items within the hospital dwindled. The main reason for this, as you might expect, was because the use of the hospital, and services provided, changed during and after the lockdowns. This has had a huge knock on effect in all healthcare settings. However, we are now once again looking to the future and improving and enhancing the services provided at Stamford. At our meeting in February 2023 the lead clinicians from the MRI and Ultrasound departments came to request funds for two important pieces of equipment. For MRI a computerised communication system was requested. This enables staff to speak to patients undergoing MRI and can play music of their request. If you have ever had an MRI you will know that the machinery can be very claustrophobic and noisy and tests can be lengthy. The new system allows staff to speak directly to the patient for reassurance and instructions. The original equipment which was part of the scanner could not be repaired. For the Ultrasound department, a Hockey Stick probe was requested. This is a small hockey stick shaped probe which is used for examining small joints and can be especially useful for patients with rheumatoid arthritis or injuries to the hands. Stamford

hospital ultrasound department is not as busy as Peterborough so it is good for training staff, particularly with new equipment. We felt that both of these items would be worth funding – they will enable different examinations at Stamford to save patients travelling to Peterborough, they will improve the patient experience and will enable further training for staff. The cost of approximately £14,000 has made a bit of a dent in our funds but we feel that spending is the best way to repay those who have donated with the hope of improving what happens at Stamford Hospital.

Meetings:

The trustees of the Friends meet four times a year, we have an AGM, usually in April, and the annual Bill Packer lecture. The trustee meetings are well attended and we are joined by the Trust Charity project manager, Philip Fearn. Philip advises all the charities for Peterborough, Stamford and Hinchingsbrooke regarding items which would be worthwhile providing and makes sure that we are aware of one another's interactions in charity provision. This saves duplication, enables joint funding for major projects and provides information about each area of the Trust. However,



attendance at the AGM and the Bill Packer Lecture has dwindled since the pandemic. We have discussed how we can engage our members and encourage you to attend. We have decided that next year, 2024, we will hold our AGM in April as usual but rather than have a separate lecture in the autumn, we will have a Memorial Lecture on the evening of the AGM. The business part of the evening is usually very quick, so to hold a lecture the same evening seemed like a sensible solution. You may disagree! However, we will trial this next year. We already have a willing speaker and full information will be available in the spring newsletter.

Trustees:

We currently have five vacancies on our committee. You may have seen the article in the Mercury regarding the work of the Friends which also included a plea for new trustees. We are aware that we are all aging and perhaps not willing to take on more committee work. However, the job is not onerous – our meetings usually last up to 90 minutes and are held at the hospital. If you feel you have some time and enthusiasm to join us, please let me know!

Hospital News:

And finally, hot of the press, some good news! Three of our committee attended the recent Stamford Hospital Development group meeting. The sale of the land on the Uffington Road has been agreed and is going through due process. This includes the Grade 1 listed Gatehouse, the hospital façade and the plot of land in between. Once the sale is finalised, funds will be available to develop additional facilities on the site. This may include an Urgent Treatment Centre to replace the Minor Injuries Unit. The three Fever Blocks will be developed into a Staff Hub and Training Centre for the Trust. Exciting news, so fingers crossed everything goes according to plan.

I think that is all for now and, as much as I dislike saying it this early, I hope you all have a safe and enjoyable winter season and a very Happy Christmas! Our Spring newsletter will give details of the AGM. Best wishes to you all.

Kay Hircock
Chair