**Minutes**

**Solent NHS Trust Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 24th September 2020**

**Virtual Event**

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| **Chair:** **Catherine Mason**, Chairperson (CM) |
| **Board members**: **Sue Harriman,** Chief Executive Officer (SH)**Andrew Strevens,** Deputy Chief Executive Officer (AS)**Jackie Ardley**, Chief Nurse (JA)**Dan Baylis**, Chief Medical Officer **David Noyes**, Chief Operating Officer- Southampton (DN)**Suzannah Rosenberg**, Chief Operating Officer- Portsmouth (SR) **Helen Ives**, Chief Organisational Effectiveness & People Officer (HI) - *virtual attendance* **Mike Watts**, Non-Executive Director (MW)- *virtual attendance***Thoreya Swage**, Non-Executive Director (TS)- *virtual attendance***Jon Pittam**, Non-Executive Director (JPi)- *virtual attendance***Apologies:****Stephanie Elsy**, Non-Executive Director (SE) **Gaurav Kumar**, Non-Executive Director (GK) | **Attendees**: **Rachel Cheal**, Associate Director Corporate Affairs & Company Secretary (RC)**Emma Palmer**, Corporate Support Administrator**Sam Stirling**, Corporate Affairs Administrator |
| **1** | **Welcome & Formalities**  |
| 1.1 | CM welcomed all attendees to the 2019 Annual General Meeting (AGM). Virtual formalities were explained (including wearing of masks) and it was confirmed that the meeting would be recorded and uploaded with subtitles for those with accessibility requirements.  |
| 1.2 | It was confirmed that the minutes of the previous AGM and the full Annual Report were available on request. CM shared Board member apologies, as noted above. |
| 1.3 | CM provided reflections of the unprecedented year and thanked staff for their ongoing commitment, dedication and flexibility since the start of the pandemic. CM also commended the work across NHS Trusts and systems and thanked all that had supported the NHS.  |
| **2** | **Review of the year 2019/20 – Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer**  |
| 2.1 | Chief Executive Officer Review* SH explained Trust background and provided an overview of activity from 2019/20.
* A video was shared detailing delivery of Trust priorities, continued work in partnership with communities and organisations and the response/management of the Covid-19 pandemic.
* Significant improvements to the ‘Great Place to Work- Staff Survey’ results were reported. It was confirmed that the Trust had scored highest when compared to other community and mental health Trusts nationally.
* SH informed that the Trust has been rated ‘best in class’ for its positive speaking up culture for the second year in a row.
* Continued support to develop Equality and Diversity was highlighted.
* SH reported advanced use of technology and shared ongoing technological support to staff working from home due to Covid-19.
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| 2.2 | Chief Finance Officer Review * AS provided overview of finances from the last year and shared achievement of 100k surplus, despite challenges faced.
* AS also highlighted achievement of control totals and all 4 statutory duties, including unqualified accounts and unqualified value for money opinions from external auditors.
* It was confirmed that a ‘Satisfactory with improvements needed’ result was received from internal auditors and AS explained that this was the best outcome that could be offered to any NHS Trust.
* AS informed of funding provided to allow break even for 2021/21 and guidance being followed over the next 6 months.
* Ongoing work with partners to ensure that resources were deployed across the system was confirmed.
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| **3** | **Reflections and the year ahead** |
| 3.1 | SH reflected on the positivity and challenges from the previous year and shared her pride in all staff and volunteers across Solent. SH commended the response to Covid-19 and provided an overview of challenges being faced for the year ahead, including continued planning for the pandemic and increased demand expected due to winter pressures. SH emphasised the importance of maintaining key values, continuing to consider equality, and ensuring ongoing relationships with partners.  |
| **4** | **Question & Answer Session** |
| 4.1 | A question and answer session was held by the Board: * **Does the Trust have sufficient PPE for the forthcoming period, which could be a busy time again?**

JA assured of appropriate PPE availability and explained ongoing monitoring with services and providers. * **What are the plans the Trust ahs for all of the CCG reorganisations happening in Portsmouth and Hampshire and IOW?**

Close working with partners/commissioners to ensure collective decisions for shared outcomes was shared. * **How important is it for our staff to feel able to speak up without fear of judgement or reprimand?**

Importance from a Board perspective was emphasised, and SH confirmed Freedom to Speak Up review at each Board meeting. SH highlighted the importance of Solent values and culture to ensure people feel safe to speak up and associated learning outcomes reviewed. * **What Community Engagement activities are you doing to ensure Solent engages with the people it serves?**

JA explained introduction of a new strategy and highlighted extensive planning to reach additional communities. Positivity of community engagement work was emphasised. * **What are the plans for returning to offices and how will they be implemented?**

SH commented on the importance of ensuring a safe and secure environment for all staff, including clinical staff working with patients. SH referred to national guidance and highlighted frequent review, with support being provided to staff working from home. * **How has support been developed for veterans?**

DN explained initiatives in place to support veterans and effectively reach out across the community. DN shared work across sectors and localities and confirmed that Solent was the lead provider for the South of England (in relation to Mental Health).* **Do we think we entered conversations/plans regarding restore and reset too early, considering the second wave is upon us?**

DN shared the importance of early considerations and the need to link to challenges currently faced. * **How, in this difficult time, are the Board connecting with those staff working at ground level?**

CM informed of virtual Board to Floor visits being undertaken and emphasised the value of being able to speak to staff and candidly discuss challenges. * **Are further Menopause Sessions being planned?**

SH confirmed that future sessions were being planned and would be shared when available. SH also thanked those that attended the sessions and provided positive feedback.It was confirmed that all additional questions asked would be appended to the minutes. |
| **5** | **Close**  |
| 5.1 | There was no other business to discuss and the meeting was closed.  |

**Appendix A- Additional questions**

1. **How can we maintain the flexibility for staff to work at home if they can? Jackie was very clear on her zoom but this doesn’t always translate in day to day practice with some managers**

We are engaging and supporting  our senior leaders and working with them on this issue.  We have regular management and staff zoom calls to both discuss and support everyone in the decision-making process.

1. **What support are giving to bame staff members in light of the covid pandemic?**

We have a number of ongoing workstreams that support our staff and BAME colleagues as summarised below.

We are offering support from our Health and Wellbeing Team to all  staff which includes

* Offering Clinical assessments from trained Occupational Health, Health and Wellbeing practitioners.
* Outreach services include:
	+ IAPT - Steps2Wellbeing Southampton,
	+ IAPT- Talking Change Portsmouth,
	+ IAPT -iTalk
	+ Hampshire, IAPT - Wiltshire/IOW,
	+ Positive Minds,
	+ Solent Recovery College ( Portsmouth post codes).

We also offer a range of other services:  Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAP) , Mindfulness and workplace stress checks.

The Self Help activities include OWLES Network - Optimising the wellbeing and lived experience of staff and Mental Health First Aiders.

We also provide yoga and other physical activities on-line and via Zoom.

Specifically for our BAME colleagues we;

* Host ZOOM calls to support those shielding / those with Long Term Conditions and those who may be concerned or worried
* Host Zooms call on risk assessments – including both the process itself and impact
* Support staff with the new COVID Age Risk assessment – we have shared this with our BAME resource group to ask for input and have added more information to enable informed choices. 100% of our BAME staff have been offered the opportunity to complete the current risk assessment. We have also been holding supportive conversations with our colleagues and have sent letters directly to staff from our CEO and Chief People Officer. We have also been providing further contact from our People Services Team explaining why the Risk assessment is so important
* continue to offer blood test for Vitamin D levels for all BAME staff

In addition, our BAME Staff Resource Group have been holding weekly meetings with opportunities for 1-1 support if needed, and support via our Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) processes and via our Guardians (as well as targeting FTSU promotion via our BAME Resource Group).

1. **Where are we with plans to use PPE which allows people with hearing impairments or other communication difficulties to engage?**

We continue to follow national guidance and seek help and support from supporting bodies.   Our clinicians work closely with our Infection Prevention and Control team and we risk assess where needed.

1. **Are the Trust thinking about patients & carers who suffer with digital inequality with no iPhones, no WiFi, no tablets and perhaps only have a landline? Lots of focus on Health Services using technology but some people cannot afford it or don't know how to use it.**

Yes we are; while we have seen significant benefit in using technology across many of our services, we recognise that it isn’t always appropriate for everyone.  We are aware some of our patients cannot access our services in this way, and so our future models will always need to understand and accommodate a proportion of the caseload for patients who are unable to/ do not have access to digital technologies.

1. **Could we have a update on the progress of the STP Programme which is I believe to reach operational fruition in early 2021, coupled with an update on the role and input of the Trust in its support of the Programme.**

As with all STPs across England, the Hampshire and IOW STP will be submitting its application to become an Integrated Care System (“ICS”) within this financial year, as it is a requirement to become an ICS as of 1 April 2021.  The submission timetables have been relaxed as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.  Solent is playing an active role in the discussions with our system partners; we all share the ambition to provide the best care for our citizens.  We are currently having good conversations regarding the restoration and recovery of services across HIOW and where to prioritise our collective resources.

1. **As the CQC, PHE and a multitude of other bodies advises the use of electronic cigarettes as a harm reduction and cessation tool. What are the plans for Solent to use these within the Trust?**

We have a no smoking policy across all of our sites and we actively support current smokers with cessation strategies which include the use of electronic cigarettes when appropriate. Electronic cigarettes are used when indicated for patients on our mental health wards as part of a wider strategy to support their treatment from acute mental health crises.

1. **Are there plans to employ more IT support so the delay of issues isn’t as long?**

Yes - wherever we are able to within the confines of our budget and contract.

1. **What are the plans to support ongoing remote working, video consultations, etc? Do you see it as something we will only do until life returns to 'normal',  or will we keep the benefits we have gained?**

We acknowledge that digital solutions have proved highly effective across a range of services, but we recognise  that they are not the only answer – plenty of our population cannot access services in this way.  However, where it makes sense to do so, we do intend to hold on to everything that has and continues to work well and to develop it further for the future. There will undoubtedly be areas where we need to make adjustments to ensure we continually improve the services we provide, and where we have identified things that haven’t worked well, we will no pursue them.

However, broadly, we do want to retain new ways of working and initiatives into the future, and in doing so we will be mindful that technological solutions are not always the answer and we will need to factor in ways for patients who cannot access our services digitally to still receive great care.     Our Chief Nurse and Chief Medical Officer continue to undertake quality impact assessments to ensure that patient safety remains paramount.

1. **Are Solent's Community Services running again as part of the NHS Reset/Recovery - services such as Podiatry specifically at Cosham Health Centre and Physio in the community - such as peoples houses**

Yes our services are starting to operate again into the community, although there are still some limitations. The virus and pandemic are (sadly) still with us, which means our practitioners are still having to operate under stringent infection prevention and control measures, including PPE. This means that, unfortunately, for the time being, we are not able to see as many patients a day as we were previously.  It also means that we are having to carefully review any therapy formerly delivered in group settings.  In addition, whilst we intend to return to delivering our services in the same places we did before, in some buildings where we do not own the site, we are reliant on the site owners circumstances and plans allowing us to re-establish our former clinics.

                Our Podiatry service at Cosham is planned to open in late October/ early November 2020.

1. **What are the other forums people can people speak up ?**

We continue to actively support managers and leaders to help create a positive speak up culture within their workplaces and with their teams.  This includes creating an environment of openness and honesty where colleagues feel able to raise concerns, issues and can raise improvement ideas to help with culture. If any staff feel they need support, outside of their team, they can make contact via Freedomtospeakup@solent.nhs.uk

Our Freedom to Speak Up Guardians are here to support staff at all stages, including having informal conversations with staff members, to providing support through formal processes.

Our lead Guardian Dan.winter-bates@solent.nhs.uk is available to provide support with training and hosting sessions on vulnerability, safe spaces, openness and honesty.