

Minutes of the Annual Members' Meeting
held via Microsoft Teams Live on 21 February 2024, 5:30pm

Presenters

Helen Taylor, Chair
Nick Hulme, Chief Executive
Adrian Marr, Director of Finance
Darren Darby, Chief Nurse

Attendees

Eddie Bloomfield, Non-Executive Director
Mike Gogarty, Non-Executive Director
John Humpston, Non-Executive Director
Hussein Khatib, Non-Executive Director
Mark Millar, Non-Executive Director and Deputy Chair
Richard Spencer, Non-Executive Director, Senior Independent Director
Usha Sundaram, Associate Non-Executive Director
Karen Lough, Director of Elective Care
Mike Meers, Director of Digital and Logistics
Nick Sammons, Director of Estates and Facilities
Angela Tillett, Chief Medical Officer

Governors

Councillor Gina Placey, Stakeholder Governor
Helen Rose, Public Governor, Lead Governor
Sara Smith, Stakeholder Governor
Elizabeth Smith, Public Governor
Alison Weston, Staff Governor

28 further attendees were also present at the meeting.

Welcome

Helen Taylor, Chair, welcomed all attendees to the virtual meeting, the purpose of which is to present the Annual Report and Annual Accounts for 2022/23.

The Chair informed those present that the slides and recording from the meeting would be posted on the Trust's website following the meeting, with the full Annual Report and Accounts already available.

Chair's Address

The Chair provided detail on the progress that is being made on the ambition and the strategy of ESNEFT, with highlights from 2022/23. The delay to this meeting being scheduled was as a result of the external auditors' delay in auditing the accounts. The Trust had received a clean bill of health, and more information on this would be included within the Annual Accounts presented by the Director of Finance.

The Chair reflected on the origins of the Trust in 2018 with both the opportunities presented by the merger of two Trusts, and the ambition of the Trust in providing the best care and experience to patients. The increasing focus on improving equity of outcomes for those that the Trust serves was highlighted, with further detail on the steps taken to address inequalities including a strategy, making every contact count and the Trust in its role as an anchor institution. The Chair provided further detail of the Clacton Community Diagnostics Centre, which has been used as a gateway to employment and skills through the Clacton Diagnostics Training Academy, bringing a positive impact to the local population.

The opening of the Breast Care Centre and the Urgent Treatment Centre in Colchester took place in the 2022/23, as well as the refurbishment of the children's centre which opened in Ipswich. The Chair gave detail of the work underway in Colchester on the Dame Clare Marx Building which will be one of the biggest centres in the UK of its kind.

Annual Report 2022/23

The Chief Executive welcomed attendees to the virtual meeting and provided detail on the previous 12 months. In particular, the Chief Executive noted the impacts of industrial action on patients, with the hope that a solution can be found soon. The impact on staff was also noted, with credit given to administrative staff and the support they provide. The health and wellbeing of staff was highlighted with work underway in that area.

The Chief Executive noted the importance of leadership with a programme launched during the year, alongside its role in delivering care. The impact of the Lucy Letby case was also raised, with the need to ensure that the Trust has the correct culture in place for staff to raise concerns.

The ambition to make time matter as emphasised and the impact that this has on staff and patients with effective use of time. Going forward, investing in technology will assist this further. The future possibilities with technology and artificial intelligence were highlighted, and the pride that ESNEFT has in always looking at different and new ways of delivering healthcare.

Prior to the accounts being presented the Chief Executive highlighted the importance in stability and responsibility in finances to continue to improve services to patients.

Annual Accounts 2022/23

The Director of Finance provided a brief overview of the financial position for 2022/23, noting that the Trust reached the billion-pound turnover landmark during this year. The accounts published by the Trust showed a deficit of £5.6m, however, the Director noted that the performance of the Trust is viewed slightly differently, and following adjustments there was a small surplus of £7k.

Regarding the Auditors' annual report to the Trust, there is an unqualified opinion on the Trust's financial statements from BDO, with a true and fair view of the financial position. There were also no significant weaknesses identified regarding value for money. The Director provided further detail about the requirement to be more efficient, with £19.3m efficiencies during 2022/23, with those identified requiring a quality assessment to ensure no adverse impact on patient care. Detail was also provided on the capital expenditure, with a significant amount spent on new builds, £10m on medical equipment and £6m on IT infrastructure.

Looking ahead, the plan for 2023/24 is a £1.3m surplus, and there is confidence that this will be delivered. However, given the current external economic and political situation, the financial outlook will be challenging. The Trust is regularly monitoring the medium term with the Performance and Finance Committee in relation to the revenue and capital position and where the Trust will be in future financial years.

Quality Account 2022/23

The Chief Nurse provided attendees with a brief update on the Quality Account, including detail around its purpose. The full report is available on the website.

The quality priorities for 2022/23 focused on improving the safe prescription of medicines, improving the assessment of nutrition and hydration needs and continuing to improve care for those at the end of their life and supporting patients who have limited treatment options. Further detail was provided around the work undertaken to improve in these three areas. This included the red tray initiative, improvement of safe and secure storage of medicines alongside the appointment of a medication safety officer and the butterfly service which had been noted as exemplary by NHS East of England.

Questions

The Chair opened questions to those in attendance. In response to a pre-notified question around signage and wayfinding at Ipswich Hospital, the Chair stated that this is regularly reviewed. There will be a fundamental review of this over the next year, with contributions from Governors and other service users welcome to ensure that the signage is as good as it can be.

In response to a query on the role of ESNEFT staff in the community and community hospitals, the Chair stated that ESNEFT is an integrated Trust and one in five of the staff work in the community. The Chief Executive added that as healthcare develops patients may not wish to be in hospital, and steps are taken to prevent admission and minimise the amount of time for patients to be admitted, which is a driving ambition. Over the last five to seven years, there had been significant investment into community services to assist with keeping patients at home for longer and making sure they are not admitted to hospital when this is not required.

A further question was raised regarding cancer statistics, which can be answered outside of the meeting. The Chief Executive stated that there are more patients being seen at a later stage in terms of cancer diagnosis, which impacts prognosis, but the Trust is responding to this.

The Chair highlighted a further comment with regard to the relaunch of the buggy services at Ipswich.

The Chair thanked those for attending the meeting, with both the presentation and the recording of the meeting to be available online.

The meeting closed at 6:08pm

Minutes of meeting to be presented to the Council of Governors on 13 March 2024 for approval.