**UNCONFIRMED NOTES OF THE COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS**

**ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING**

**THURSDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER 2024**

**PANELISTS:**

Stewart Baird, Acting Chair (SB)

Tracey Fletcher, Chief Executive Officer (TF)

Tim Glenn, Interim Chief Finance Officer (TG)

Bernie Mayall, Lead Governor (BM)

Andrea Ashman, Chief People Officer, People and Culture (AS)

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| **CHAIR’S WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 5th SEPTEMBER 2024**Stewart Baird as acting Chair welcomed everybody and thanked them for their time.SB asked BM if in her role as Lead Governor if she was happy to approve the minutes of the last meeting. BM stated she was happy to approve.SB asked BM to formerly receive the annual report and accounts on behalf of the Membership. BM acknowledge receipt.SB appreciated that the Trust had been through some tough times both financially and operationally, but he hoped that the Board and Council of Governors shared a cautious optimism that improvements were being made.SB thanked all the staff who have contributed to improvements made in the Trust and who continue to work towards a better patient experience. Looking ahead this will be another tough year with our cost improvement plans looking to make savings of around £49m.  |
| **Summary of 2023-24**TF introduced herself to the meeting and commented it was a privilege to work for her local Trust. There were still a number of challenges that needed to be addressed but there is enthusiasm and drive in the Trust to help achieve this. TF presented slides highlighting the 23/24 achievements and challenges and the following was noted:* The Trust had performed over 100,000 operations, 6,000 births and 13m pathology tests across all our sites.
* A new interventional radiology centre had been opened at Kent and Canterbury
* The great work of the pastoral team that looks after our overseas nurses and how we support their vital contribution to our teams.
* The use of the investment received to build new ED departments at both William Harvey and QEQM.
* The emphasis on the trust values and improving the culture of the trust.
* A focus on getting the Trust out of NOF4 (special measures).

**Quality and Safety*** The CQC’s report in 2023 highlighted a number of issues that we have been working hard to address.
* Since these inspections, we have been improving work across the hospitals to support our emergency departments and focussing on the safety and experience of our patients. The building programmes at our emergency departments, which have extended and reconfigured both departments to provide better facilities, have been completed.
* We recognise the examples of excellent care in our Trust, some of which were described as outstanding practice by the CQC.
* These include the paediatric resuscitation room and Cambridge K Ward at WHH, and the Specialist Palliative Care Team and End of Life Pilot beds at the QEQM.
* Following the January 2023 inspection into maternity services, we acted at once to respond to the CQC’s concerns and continued to implement positive changes across our maternity service throughout the year which are translating into better outcomes for women, babies and families.
* The trust signed up for ‘Martha’s Rule’ - Call 4 Concern allows inpatients or their loved ones to directly report a decline in their condition that has been reported but not addressed by healthcare staff on the ward.
* Both services enable inpatients and families to call for help and advice when they feel concerned that the healthcare team has not recognised their own or their loved one’s changing condition. However, only 24hr services can accurately be described as 'Martha's Rule’.
* We are moving to ward and clinic accreditation scheme (which is as it implies that we will be starting to visit clinic areas to review them – we are currently designing the template).

**Maternity*** We continue to benefit from the Reading the Signals Oversight Group established to oversee our response to Dr Kirkup’s report *Reading the Signals* and thank the families involved for their time and powerful insight.
* In April this year, maternity teams met the 10 core safety actions which demonstrates their commitment to improving the quality of care for women, families, and babies. All Trusts who provide maternity services are encouraged to meet the safety actions
* Collaborative work with MNVP to co-produce improvements in maternity including (June 2023) – ‘We Hear You’ MNIP Coproduction event and regular live Facebook Q&A sessions, we use our social media platforms to reach and engage with parents.
* During the year we carried out more than 4,000 follow-up calls to discuss people’s experiences six weeks after giving birth (under ‘Your Voice is Heard’ scheme launched in 2022), so that we can act on feedback and make changes.
* At WHH a birthing room on labour ward has been revamped with soft lighting and mural on the wall to provide calming atmosphere for our high-risk women. In addition, Room 2 at WHH has been converted into a 2-bed EMC room.
* Two-year anniversary in May of ‘Your Voice is Heard’. Created by a group including the chair of the Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership, internal and external stakeholders.
* Every family who has a baby in our care is called six weeks post-birth to discuss their antenatal, birth, and postnatal care and overall experience.
* The Trust has begun a process of cultural change, following the publication of Dr Kirkup’s report into the independent investigation into our maternity and neonatal services in October 2022.
* Regular ‘tea and talk’ events with exec team; changes to learning and development opportunities for midwives, nurses, AHPs and admin staff; launched admin forums; Pulse surveys to give feedback; staff celebration event to be held in October.

**Performance*** The last quarter of 2023/24 saw the length of time patients are waiting to be seen at the Trust starting to reduce.
* Significant progress - there are now no patients waiting over 104 weeks (2 years) and the number of patients waiting over 78 weeks has reduced from c2,400 at the beginning of the year to 84 at the end of June
* We missed the national faster diagnosis standard of 75% of patients receiving confirmation of whether or not they have a cancer diagnosis within 28 days, but we are making progress and March 2024 was the best performance we have achieved in 18 months, at 69.6%.
* The last quarter of 2023/24 saw the length of time patients are waiting to be seen at the Trust starting to reduce.
* Endoscopy waiting list has halved since Jan.
* Over 80% attending either our UTCs or Emergency departments were being seen and treated within 4 hours and over 54% of patients who were attending the Emergency Department were being seen and treated within 4 hours in July (in comparison with c75% and c42% at the beginning of the year).
* There is a lot of focus on improving the ‘flow’ of patients through our emergency departments.
* Emergency Department expansions completed.
* Reviewing same-day emergency care at Ashford and Margate
* All partners across the East Kent Health and Care Partnership (HCP) including Community Health, Community Mental Health, Ambulance Services, Primary Care, Acute Care and Social Care, work together to address the winter increases in demand.
* Additional capacity is being put in place, including admission avoidance schemes, with the aim of providing care for patients across our communities in the right place for their needs

**Leadership and Governance*** Revised structure in the Trust
* Clinical Strategy Development
* Embedding good governance to be open and transparent
* Developing effective system relationships
* Engaged in co-production of the NHS Kent and Medway Strategy 2024/25 -2029/30
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| **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY – 2023/24 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS.**TG welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending and wanted to highlight the following points.* 2023/24 was a challenging year for the Trust with a deficit of £117.4m one of the largest within the NHS and has put a considerable strain on the organisation.
* This is an unsustainable and unacceptable position for this Trust to be in and the Trust have looked at what we are doing moving forward.
* The Board in January 2024 agreed a 3-stage process to deal with this.
* In January the board forecast an £117m deficit and TG was happy to report that this was achieved.
* Phase 2 the executive held an event for around 200 leaders of the Trust to plan a way forward. Through this a cost improvement plan was developed for the financial year 2024/25. This was focused on patient and staff experience. Producing a saving of around £49m and a deficit of £85.8m for the fiscal year 2024/25. While this is still a significant number it would be moving in the right direction.
* The Trust in currently on track with the Cost Improvement Plan.
* Phase 3 is the financial sustainability plan and this is currently being finalised and will be delivered to the board and membership.
* Our debtor days has improved to 16 days which has allowed us to improve our cash position.
* Still a concern is our creditor days at 106. This is a real concern as to affects our local communities. However, this is now seeing a significant decrease in the number of creditor days.
* For the first time in 3 years the accounts have been submitted on time. TG thanked the whole finance team for the work completed in order for this to be achieved.
* External audit issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Financial Statements and an unqualified Group Audit Assurance Certificate.
* The External Auditors were not satisfied that the Trust had made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This was because of the £117m deficit and the lack of a medium-term strategy, which meant it was impossible for them to be satisfied. The auditors report does note a number of improvements that had been made in the final quarter of the year and should these improvements be imbedded then this stance will change. So, progress was being made.
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| **REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS BY THE LEAD GOVERNOR**BM thanked the previous speakers for their reports and wanted to highlight the following points from her slides * Council warmly welcomed Staff Governor – Olubunmi Akinnawonu

Public Governors – Russell Wyles, Kieran Leigh, Bernard Groen, Chris D’arcy .They have already got off to a flying start and bring a lovely new dynamic to our Council* Council said a sad farewell to Governors – Paul Verrill, James Casha

Non-execs - Luisa Fulci and Raymond Anakwe. They served us well and skilfully and will be missed. * The Council happily reappointed non-executive director Olu Olasodi for another 3-year term
* Our involvement in the “Reading the Signals” maternity working group continues and the group itself has been impactful
* A Governor news letter to the membership goes out monthly with information and updates
* We have candidly shared the Council of Governors opinion on the Quality Report
* We have increased our regular Governor and Non-Executives joint site visits which are not only great fun but a good way to see and hear things for ourselves.
* We are planning to take governor information and in person visits to our local communities, in supermarkets, surgeries, malls, and hope to see you there! Dates will be in future Newsletters.
* Our Deputy Lead Governor Carl Shorter remains very much involved with the National Lead Governors Association as Vice Chair which keeps us as a Trust and Council embedded in National activity and amplifies our voice.
* BM stated that the Governors have the privilege of representing people, the people using and working in NHS services. One of our purposes – the main one! - is to listen to you and take your views, challenges, questions and compliments back to the people who can deliver what we need.
* Since the last Annual Members Meeting we have met and spoken with some terrific, insightful people and we have contributed positively and robustly to the development and improvement of our local NHS services and we have developed a great network to support that work. We have created, over the past couple of years, a skilled, talented and dedicated team of both Executives and Non-Executives who support the Council and continue to work hard to do what needs to be done to make the right things happen.

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| **QUESTIONS**The Chair invited questions from online and present, these were as follows: * **Given the financial situation the Trust is in, are the services offered by the Royal Victoria Hospital, Folkestone, secure as this hospital offers the community a valuable service?**

TF said that a broader answer would be that we do need to look at all aspects of our services and that we are utilising our services to the best our ability.* **Given that problems that the Trust has had over recent years. Why is it that the Trust is not going into the community to advise of all the good things that are happening within the trust and regaining that trust? It feels that the Trust is not part of the community.**

SB acknowledged that it was a real challenge for the Trust as although good things are happening we still have a way to go before we can sing our praises. But SB accepted that the Trust could do more to communicate the good news.TF agreed but felt that the Trust was starting some work that would help to bring the Trust back into the community.BM stated that this was why the Governors were looking to go out into the community more.No further questions were raised. |
| **CLOSING REMARKS**SB again thank the staff for all the hard work and it was the Boards aim for the Trust to exit NOF4 by March next year.SB thanked the Executive team, the Lead Governor and all Members for attending the meeting. There being no other business, the Annual Members’ Meeting closed. |

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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