

Thank you for taking the time to read this summary of the Thames Hospice Board of Trustees Meeting, which took place from 3.00pm – 5.30pm on 10th December 2015 at Pine Lodge.

The Thames Hospice Trustee Attendees at the meeting were: Martin Jervis (Chair), Chris Aitken, Jacinta Ashworth, Ken Coppock, Richard Goss, Steve Moore and Margaret Neal.

Also in attendance from Thames Hospice staff were: Ruth Bartholomew (Finance Director), Jacque Batchford (Director of Patient and Family Services), Jackie Geeson (HR Director), Juliana Luxton (Head of Governance and Quality) (Minutes), Debbie Raven (Chief Executive Officer).

The Board meeting always starts with a presentation on patient care. This time it was a presentation given on behalf of Dr Cecily Wright by Dr Anita Martin (Thames Hospice Palliative Care Doctor). The subject of the presentation was a patient who had recently been with the hospice for nearly a month. The patient had complex health issues, and a complex family situation. This had been extremely challenging, but Thames Hospice staff had found skilful, sensitive and thoughtful ways to deal with the issues presented. The presentation was fascinating and Trustees noted how Thames Hospice had provided holistic care to both the patient and his family.

We had a new structure to our meeting this time, and it worked very well. All trustees received the thick pack of meeting papers well in advance and had plenty of time to review the contents. Our Board 'Consent Agenda' items included Committee papers and items submitted for the Board members to review and note, as well as an updated Reserves Policy.

In my Chairman's report I drew the meeting's attention to the increasing focus on Governance, especially in the Fundraising arena.

In her Chief Executive Officer's report Debbie Raven advised that NHS negotiations were progressing, and there was general support for our expansion plans. We were very pleased to learn from Debbie that the Santa Dash had exceeded its target for runners by 304, and this meant it had doubled its target. It had been a very successful event. We have nothing but praise for the commitment of the fundraising team.

Debbie then presented the Thames Hospice Operating Plan update for Q2 2015 – 2016 to the meeting. We also discussed the Board Assurance Framework, which allows us to identify the main risks to the delivery of Thames Hospice's strategic objectives.

There are some items sent on for Board review from Thames Hospice Committees. At this meeting we looked at a paper on Patient and Family feedback, noting the success of the new feedback token collection, which patients and visitors seem to have really taken to – and all the feedback is extremely positive! We also reviewed and approved a paper requesting a new Community Consultant post. We also noted the kind gift of £100,000 from Thames Valley Community Trust to support this post.

We then reviewed the progress of the PT5 project, and noted that work was well underway. There are, of course, risks associated with any major project, but we reviewed the PT5 Risk Register and are happy that the project is progressing efficiently with a sensible consideration of potential risks.

The final special Board paper was a report on Retail benchmarking in the Charity sector. This report illustrated the excellent contribution that Retail makes to the hospice, and also showed how well we do in sales when compared to other charity shops. The Board commended the performance of the people that had made that possible.

We also reviewed the actions noted at the Board meeting a year ago. We do this to ensure that we have progressed decisions and actions that were taken at that meeting. I am pleased to be able to report that all actions and decisions had been completed or were longer-term strategic decisions which are now underway. At that meeting we had raised concerns about the progress of our lottery strategy, and we are confident one year on that measures taken are showing a positive impact on Lottery results.

All of us felt that this Board meeting had been efficient, and strategic decision-making was evidenced. This flowed from the work of Committees and the Senior Management Team.

Thames Hospice Trustees do not just turn up to Committee meetings! Before this Board meeting started all the board members attended a training session on Fire Awareness given by Kerstin Fenton the Thames Hospice Health and Safety Consultant. And, since the last meeting, Trustees had been to a number of Hospice events, to internal meetings with staff, and to external events and conferences that support our work with Thames Hospice.

I hope this is a useful update – please do let me have any feedback good or bad! Meanwhile may I take the opportunity to thank you all for your dedication and support, and to wish you and yours the compliments of the season along with a happy, prosperous and healthy 2016.

Martin Jervis
Chair of Thames Hospice Trustees