

Thames hospice

Thank you for taking the time to read this summary of the Thames Hospice Board of Trustees Meeting. It was a longer than usual meeting that took place from 3.00pm – 7.30pm on 3rd March 2016 at Pine Lodge, Windsor.

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

Also in attendance from Thames Hospice staff were: Ruth Bartholomew (Finance Director), Neil Harman (Fundraising Director), Juliana Luxton (Head of Governance and Quality) (Minutes), Debbie Raven (Chief Executive Officer) and Julie Rowley (Retail Director).

The Board meeting always starts with a presentation on patient care. Dr Cecily Wright and Jacquie Batchford described to us the treatment that the hospice gave to a young male patient, who was admitted towards the end of 2015 with cancer for symptom control and future planning, but stayed with Thames Hospice for end of life care.

The presentation was very moving, and no one said anything for a few moments when it finished. We learned that dealing with a young person and a complicated case had been challenging for our teams, but we were also pleased and proud to note that Thames Hospice staff had coped very well. The hospice had accepted how he wanted to be cared for, and had dealt with his care beautifully.

I then presented my Chairman's report and Debbie her CEO's report. Both of us were pleased to note that Project Twenty-five (PT5) planning was proceeding apace. PT5 and Finance items are standing Board items. At this Board meeting, the Trustees also decided that another standing item in future will be Fundraising Governance, and we agreed the set of Fundraising Governance Metrics that the hospice has developed in order to review and give assurance against our fundraising activities. It is very gratifying to see how promptly Thames Hospice has responded to recent media and public concerns about Fundraising, and we were pleased to review the careful consideration that is given to the hospice's Fundraising efforts. We were proud when Debbie was able to tell us that Hospice UK is now using our work on Fundraising Governance with other hospices.

Debbie presented the Thames Hospice Operating Plan update for Q3 2015 – 2016, noting that it had already been discussed in some depth by each Board Committee meeting. We also

discussed the Board Assurance Framework, as we do at every meeting. This allows us to identify and manage the main risks to the delivery of Thames Hospice's strategic objectives.

There were several items sent on for Board review from Thames Hospice Committees. We spent some time discussing nurse recruitment, and we also reviewed the approach to salaries paid at the hospice noting Thames Hospice core positioning for salary levels, living wage, matching working-time regulations and general pay-rise levels. The focus is to ensure that pay scales are equitable and fair.

It always feels good when we discuss feedback on the hospice. This time the Trustees reviewed the results of the independent FAMCARE Audit. These findings were fantastic, and place Thames Hospice at the top of the hospice league.

We then reviewed the Q3 financial results and forecasts, and considered the proposed 2016 – 2017 budget which we agreed, noting that the budget was very accurate and with very tight cost forecasts. We have once again planned for a deficit, knowing we are investing for future sustainable growth in service provision

We then looked at a Shop Acquisition and Refurbishment Report. We noted the new site at Gerrards Cross, which will open in May, and the refurbishment project for the Sunninghill shop, which is just about to get underway. Julie Rowley advised us that she is looking at potential site acquisitions, and was confident that she could grow the hospice's retail portfolio in line with our strategy of two shops per year.

Finally in this part of the meeting we looked at a proposal to review the Thames Hospice website. The project implementing a new design to the website is well underway and aims to make the website more informative, easier to navigate and also easier for people to make on-line donations.

Debbie presented the new Thames Hospice Strategy paper to the meeting. Thames Hospice Vision, Mission and Values had already been extensively discussed by the Senior Management team and Trustees at an 'away-day' in January. It is a five-year strategy, encompassing PT5 and kick-starts the 2016 – 2017 Operating Plan. We unanimously supported the Thames Hospice Strategy paper.

As we now do at each Board meeting, we then reviewed, this time with some excitement, the progress of the PT5 project. In January Trustees and the hospice Senior Management Team had selected a team of architects, kke, to work with us in designing our new hospice. We reviewed the PT5 Risk Register and are again happy that the project is progressing properly with a sensible consideration of potential risks.

We also reviewed the actions noted at the Board meeting a year ago. We do this to ensure that we have properly progressed decisions and actions that were taken at that meeting, and learned any lessons hindsight teaches us. I am again pleased to be able to report that all actions and decisions had been completed or were longer-term strategic decisions that are now underway.

Before the Board meeting started several of the Board members had attended 'Tea with Trustees' an informal event which allows Thames Hospice staff and Trustees to exchange ideas and opinions. We always enjoy spending time with staff and volunteers, and find these events immensely useful. The cake is good as well!

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 everyone for their dedication and support as the hospice progresses on its exciting journey towards providing even greater care for patients and their families.

Martin Jervis

Chair of Thames Hospice Trustees