

Healthwatch Hertfordshire Annual General Meeting

10am on Monday 19th October 2015, at
Douglas Tilbe House, Hall Grove, Wewyn Garden City, AL7 4PH

Present:

HwH Board: Michael Downing (Chair), Sue Reeve (Vice-Chair), Jean Brown, Meg Carter, Brian Gunson, Virginia Kirri-Songhurst, Steven Palmer, Michael Taylor, Mel Wood

HwH Executive Team: Geoff Brown, Jane Brown, Monika Brzozowska-Neroth, Sharon Meakin, Paul Regan, Keith Shephard

Doreen Bratby (HwH member), David Brewer (East and North Herts NHS Trust), Mark Edwards (East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group), David Law (Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust), Lesley Lopez (West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust), Declan O'Farrell (Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust), Anne Priest (Pohwer), Barbara Suggitt (Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust), Kristy Thakur (Hertfordshire County Council), Ron Tindall (Hertfordshire County Council)

Apologies: Tap Bali (HwH member), Jill Bartlett (Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group), Marion Birch (HwH Board), Ruth Bradford (Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust), Denice Gateley (HwH member), Fiona Guest (HwH Member), Sundera Kumara-Moorthy (HwH Board), Sue Last (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group)

1. Welcome and apologies

Michael welcomed everyone to the first Healthwatch Hertfordshire Annual General Meeting.

Apologies as above.

2. Annual General Meetings for this year and next year

Michael commented that it was pleasing to see that the health and social care organisations in Hertfordshire were well represented and thanked them for their attendance. However the AGM this year is only a small affair with the main purpose of appointing new trustees to the Board which is a legal requirement and the signing off of the accounts. Attendees were invited to stay on for the Board meeting following the AGM which will focus on strategy for the coming period.

Next year, the AGM is likely to be a bigger, more participative event.

3. Election of Trustees for 2015 -2018

The articles of association for HwH were amended earlier this year which changed the process from appointing trustees to electing trustees following a selection process. As a result of that process, Michael has nominated four people for election to the Board. They are:

- Jean Brown
- Virginia Kirri-Songhurst
- Steven Palmer
- Mel Wood

Members of the company (Healthwatch Hertfordshire Ltd) are able to vote in this process. Michael Taylor seconded the nominations and the nominations were carried unanimously by those present.

The following candidates were therefore duly elected to the HwH Board:

- Jean Brown
- Virginia Kirri-Songhurst
- Steven Palmer
- Mel Wood

Ron Tindall asked if the new Board members could give a potted history of their background. (There is some information on the website but it is incomplete).

Steven Palmer:	Background in finance and worked in social housing for many years. Treasurer of HwH.
Virginia Kirri-Songhurst:	Acute medicine, midwifery. Worked with LINK and now with HwH Quality Improvement Sub Committee.
Jean Brown:	Background in education. Worked in LINK and now as HwH Chair of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Service Watch Group.
Mel Wood:	Background in the development and management of social care for children and adults. Governor at HPFT.

[Action: All Board members to complete their bios for the website.](#)

4. Receiving the Annual Accounts and Review

Steven Palmer has become the HwH Treasurer and presented the accounts. HwH is in a healthy position financially with a surplus and substantial cash reserves. The Accounts need to be seen within the context of the annual report which details our activity.

The strategy which will be discussed at the following Board meeting is likely to make an impact on HwH's finances as we make plans to meet our objectives up to the end of the current contract (March 2017).

No questions were raised about the accounts. The Annual Accounts were duly approved by the members.

5. Important business notified to the Chair before the start of the meeting

No business was notified prior to the Annual General Meeting. Michael asked if anyone present would like to make any comments about their experience of Healthwatch Hertfordshire.

1. Michael Taylor asked if this meeting should approve the auditors. Geoff as Company Secretary stated that in terms of our income we do not need to have a formal audit but that the Accounts are examined which has been done by Bradshaw Johnson fulfilling our legal obligation. Within the articles of association if two or more trustees request the accounts to be audited, that will happen but a decision will need to be made by the Board. At this point the auditors would then be appointed, if Steven (Treasurer) is happy with that approach.
2. Ron Tindall asked what would happen post 2017 when the contract ended. Michael stated that the contract with the county council ends in 2017 but assuming that there is no further re-organisation by the government, the county council would be required to have a Healthwatch in place and can either renew the contract or set up a new organisation.

3. Lesley Lopez (Head of Patient and Public Involvement WHHT) wanted to thank Healthwatch Hertfordshire (and particularly Jane) in the work HwH does with the Trust.
4. Brian Gunson asked Geoff to give some key highlights of HwH's work. Geoff mentioned:
 - The GP Access work in Bishops Stortford which HwH won a national award for. There has been a positive response within Bishop's Stortford and lots of support from East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group to make access to services better.
 - The engagement work with young people has seen a huge shift from where HwH was in the beginning. HwH now has significantly larger numbers of younger members and the model of the Youth Health Ambassador has worked well to create opportunities for young people to give their views and to work in partnership with commissioners to improve services.
 - The opportunity to be involved with significant issues within the health and social care system in Hertfordshire over the last year thanks to many of the organisations represented at today's AGM is very much welcomed. HwH has also been able to work with the voluntary sector and commissioners to help solve more immediate issues.
5. Brian also talked about the sustainability of funding for HwH and the challenge of embracing new models of care and how that is communicated and discussed with the public.
6. Michael Taylor gave thanks to the Chair, Michael Downing and to thank Geoff and his staff for the work they do.
7. Jean Brown gave thanks to the mental health and learning disabilities committee in HPFT which has been very helpful to achieve change by working together.

Michael closed the meeting by saying it will be important for HwH to retain its ability to be independent, critical and constructive in the coming year as changes within health and social care will become inevitable. Michael also thanked his Board colleagues, the staff and the volunteers who work on behalf of the people of Hertfordshire who deserve high quality services.