



Healthwatch Hertfordshire Annual General Meeting

10am on Friday 23rd September 2016, at
Douglas Tilbe House, Hall Grove, Wewyn Garden City, AL7 4PH

Present:

HwH Board: Michael Downing (Chair), Meg Carter, Brian Gunson, Virginia Kirri-Songhurst, Sundera Kumara-Moorthy, Steven Palmer, Michael Taylor

HwH Executive Team: Tom Barrasso, Geoff Brown, Jane Brown, Monika Brzozowska-Neroth, Nuray Ercan (minutes), Alice Lovell, Paul Regan, Natalie Stone, Priya Vaithilingam, Frankie Walsh

Kenneth Appel (HwH Member), Eve Atkins (HwH Board nominee), Steve Barnett (West Herts Hospital Trust), Alan Bellinger (HwH Board nominee), Kam Bhangal (Herts County Council), Leslie Billy (Viewpoint), Christopher Bland (Mind in Mid Herts), Sue Bolton, Victor Boulter (Patient Advocate), Ruth Bradford (Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust), Doreen Bratby (HwH member), David Brewer (East and North Herts NHS Trust), Sarah Clemerson (HwH Member), Rachael Corser (West Herts Hospital Trust), Robert Dearie (Herts Urgent Care), Roan Dyson (POhWER), Scott Eastwood (Alzheimers Society), Mark Edwards (East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group), Michael Farrell (Crossroads Care), Sue Fox (Herts County Council), Louise Haffer (CGC), Caro Hart (Franklin Hart Consultancy), Emma Hollingsworth (East and North Herts CCG), Chris Knibb (Hertfordshire Community Trust), N. Kyriacou (Froebel Family Support Group CVS Broxbourne & East Herts), Jess Lievesley (Herts Partnership Foundation Trust), Iain MacBeath (Herts County Council), Daniel Marshall (Citizens Advice Bureau Stevenage), Roma Mills (Carers in Herts), Ken Moore, Tim Napper (Hertfordshire County Council), Hansa Nariapara (Herts County Council), Norman Phillips (Carer), Richard Pecout (Herts Library Services), Jenny Pennell (East and North Herts NHS Trust), Graham Phillips (Local Pharmacy Committee), Carol Pillinger, Mike Pym (HwH Board nominee), Sara Rees (Herts Mind Network), Donna Richards (Herts Urgent Care), Pamela Rochford, Juliet Rodgers (Herts Valleys CCG), Natalie Rotherham (Herts County Council Scrutiny), Andrew Smith (Viewpoint), Clare Saunders (Herts Valleys CCG), Keith Shephard (HwH Member), Tim Sims (HwH Members), F. C. St Abbs (Froebel Family Support Group Broxbourne & East Herts), Ian Stevens (West Herts Hospital Trust), Barbara Suggitt (HwH Board nominee), Billie May Thorpe (Herts Community Trust), Carole Whittle (Carers in Herts)

Apologies: Heather Aylward (HVCCG), Suzanne Bannister (HertsAid), Kate Barker (ENH CCG), Elizabeth Biggs (Herts Valley CCG), Philip Bircham (WHHT), Jean Brown, Lynn Burling, Tom Cahill (HPFT), Katie Chad (HVCCG), Diane Curbishley (HVCCG), Alex Ferguson (HCC Youth Connexions), Beverly Flowers (ENHCCG), Michael Francis (HCC), Carolyn Gale (HCC), Denice Gately, Tom Hawkyard (HCC), Yasmine Jaffer (NHS England), Vinnie Jarman (Healthwatch England), Susan Last (CPCCG), Lesley Lopez (WHHT), Sue Maskell (CIH), Chris Munt (HPFT), Sheila Reavey (E&N Herts CCG), Sue Reeve (Vice-Chair), Jacqui Sheppard (Home Instead), Deryn Sparrow (CIH), Mary Stevenson (HPFT), Sarah Styles (HVCCG), Kate Sullivan (HCC), Shelly Taylor (HCC), Sophie Taylor (HPFT), Angela Thompson (E&N Herts CCG), Jane Twelves (HPFT), Cameron Ward (HVCCG), Annabelle Waterfield (HAD), Nicky Williams (ENHCCG)

1. Welcome and apologies

Michael welcomed everyone to Healthwatch Hertfordshire's Annual General Meeting. Apologies as above. Michael ran through various housekeeping announcements.

Since the last AGM the following Board members have stood down: Marion Birch, Jean Brown, Sue Reeve and Mel Wood. Michael thanked them for their considerable contribution to HwH.

2. Our strengths. Our Challenges

Geoff spoke about our strengths and opportunities HwH has and also about the context that HwH is working in and some of the challenges within this.

The national picture is one of uncertainty, especially with regards to funding which is also true locally. There are pressures on health and social care budgets. As an independent charity, HwH offers a really important service representing the views of patients, service users and of communities, and provide that important voice within the health and social care system.

Within HwH there have been challenges throughout the year. There were a considerable amount of projects that were being worked on at one time. We have done a lot of work on developing the strategy and focussing and determining on what we can do - what we do that is different from others and this is reflected in this year's annual report.

The HwH team is small and the workloads that the team manage are huge and it's been a brilliant achievement on their part to do so much.

Despite all the changes and challenges, the national context and commitment to the patient voice had not gone away. Healthwatch England has faced challenges over the last year and we have been fortunate as part of the national steering group to influence the direction of travel for Healthwatch England. We are very fortunate that our commissioners understand our role, as being independent representatives and we've always had a positive relationship whereby they have understood that we need to set our own priorities.

In terms of support from within health and social care, represented by a number of attendees today, patients, CCGs, Acute Trusts and primary care, without the relationships HwH wouldn't be able to be as effective.

HwH has a good reputation in Hertfordshire and also Nationally. The HwH team is now at full strength having recruited to a number of posts earlier in the year. We have energy and drive and this has been added to by new skills and talents. We have an opportunity to build on the strengths: Enter and View, having a strong research base, work with Children and Young people. The strategy and operational plan has enabled us to move to a more efficient way of working and more as a team. There are opportunities to deliver as a team with challenging times ahead. Geoff concluded by saying that he is very proud of the HwH team and what they've been able to deliver in the last year.

3. Thoughts and Musings on our Past, and What's to Come

Michael talked about his past experience of the NHS. His talk spanned from 1966 to the present day and beyond. He experienced the first Green Paper on the reorganisation of the NHS in 1968, as well as the royal commission of the local government which was going to reshape and modernise the local government.

The Seeborn Report was awaited for which was going to modernise and bring in to a new era personal and social services. Bringing together various disparate services into a fifth social service.

In 1970 the Charter for Disabled people established in law for the first time meant that local authorities would document how many disabled and chronically ill people there were in their areas.

There was the intention that they would be able to provide a range of services to them. Even if many of these were unaccomplished, it was a period of great optimism for better services.

We are in a much less optimistic age, many of the problems identified back then are still unresolved and they are tasks for HwH to undertake. The NHS in crisis has been on the agenda for a very long time, the need for better integration was raised in 1963. Crisis in funding means real reductions and real changes that will affect patients. Rising expectations means difficult choices have to be made. A challenge for HwH over the next year is increased public awareness, to listen to the public about their experiences and represent these as a critical friend to ensure that in the very difficult circumstances which face us and the people of Hertfordshire get access to the services they need and deserve. HwH looks forward to the help and cooperation of many people in attendance today to achieve this.

4. Election of Trustees for 2016 -2019

The process of electing trustees is as follows: Michael and other trustees conduct interviews and recommend the election of new trustees at the AGM. Geoff read the names of nominated trustees and they identified themselves. They are:

- Eve Atkins
- Alan Bellinger
- Mobeena Khan
- Michael Pym
- Barbara Suggitt

Members of the company (Healthwatch Hertfordshire Ltd) are able to vote in this process.

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

- Eve Atkins
- Alan Bellinger
- Mobeena Khan
- Michael Pym
- Barbara Suggitt

Geoff welcomed the new Trustees to Healthwatch Hertfordshire.

4. Annual Accounts and Review

Steven Palmer, HwH Treasurer presented the accounts. HwH's funding is received from Hertfordshire County Council and only guaranteed until March 2017. We are currently in negotiations for the following year. HwH is not subject to a formal audit but has been brought together by HwH's accountants. The Accounts need to be seen within the context of the annual report and strategy which is now in place and which details our activity.

The following questions were taken:

1. Is it acceptable to have bank charges?
This was an error on the banks part and due to HwH being a charity these have been refunded in full.
2. There is money carried over as surplus and there was money carried over last year also, where will that money go to?
Any surplus will go into general reserves. This year HwH will be in deficit and money will come out of reserves to cover this.

The accounts were formally moved.

5. Questions from the floor

1. Norman Phillips asked for everyone to imagine a funnel and at the bottom there is a service user. There is lots of change going on but there is no co-ordination for all this so it all gets tipped into the funnel at the same time. This is confusing, difficult and stressful to manage. Michael acknowledged the accuracy of this experience. Caro, Chair of the Stakeholder Panel for HwH agreed with Norman and asked that it be raised and discussed at the Stakeholder Panel. The next meeting will focus on the Care Act.
2. Ken Appel stated that one of the most distressing things for patients are cancelled operations. Ken asked for HwH representatives on Trust Boards to challenge them about this.
Michael confirmed that he would take this issue up.
3. Ken Appel: mental health represents the Cinderella service and it is asked that HwH challenge the government about this.
Michael responded by highlighting that there is more recognition. This week the death of a young person in a mental health unit as a result of self harm was the lead item on radio 4 news for much of the day, and this would not have been the case half a century ago. HwH has a flourishing Service Watch Group and there is an opportunity for anyone to raise such issues there.
4. Roma Mills commented that there is a lot of attention on health. It would be good to see attention on public health and preventative services such as school nursing, health visiting, smoking options, drug and alcohol services etc. She asks to what extent HwH can pick this up to ensure that these preventative services do not continue to be reduced at the expense of the acute sector.
Michael responded by saying he strongly agreed. Part of his duties as Chair is to meet with the Chair of public health and address these issues.
5. Scott Eastbury asked if a view could be provided from HwH on the strategic direction on the use of anti-psychotic drugs and people who are affected by dementia. People who are prescribed anti-psychotic drugs are at an increased risk of stroke.
Graham Phillips replied that it is a nationally recognised problem and it is a strong ongoing national initiative to reduce the use of anti-psychotic drugs. There are ongoing problems. The next stakeholder panel will look at this issue.
Jess Lievesley added that it is important to recognise that a lot of the work has gone into the work in secondary care. Where there are further challenges in care comes, and HwH's support was asked for here. Mental health services have moved away from prescribing.
6. Michael Taylor asked if this meeting should approve the auditors.
In response Steve as Treasurer said this was something to look into later. [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.]
7. Ken Appel stated that there is a great variation of waiting times for cataract operations. Some wait 15 days and others are waiting for over 45 days.

Kumar responded to say that he is a member of the Ophthalmology Pathway redesign of HVCCG and this is precisely one of the considerations of the model.

Victor Boulter reported a personal patient story which was a very successful experience.

8. Graham Phillips commented that from his experience of HwH is that it has a very open culture, very cooperative and very focussed on the right sorts of things. He encouraged celebration and asked that everyone show this for the award that HwH was awarded last year. He said it had been a pleasure working with HwH.

5. Healthwatch Hertfordshire Report Launch: The Patient Experience of the NHS Complaints System 2016

The report and all presentations are available upon request.

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.