

73rd AGM Newsletter May 2025

Slow start to our year up until April! And then!!



What is happening to the Community Beds?

It is fair to say the issues are complex. The use of the community beds in Haslemere have changed quite radically over the last decade. Changes in the commissioning of services (changes and approach of community providers and Covid) have certainly contributed to this.

What has become very apparent is the lack of engagement at a local level as to why the service delivery has changed. Patients who end up in the acute beds in Royal Surrey Foundation Trust don't understand why, nor are they informed as to why, they can't transfer back to Haslemere.

Haslemere Health Centre was built on the hospital site to provide hospital practitioners for all the services in the hospital. Basically, a Health Hub.

The changes in the inpatient bed usage required the practice to review their cover arrangements. The practice told me that six years ago they felt that neither staff nor patients were receiving the best medical model of care. There was no single designated doctor therefore there was a lack of continuity and stability for patients, staff and carers. In addition, the complex discharge planning required for the patients warranted a different approach.

Out of the blue, when the practice was considering their role in the hospital, they were contacted by a physician looking for full time work. Her background was perfect for sub-acute hospital work. The practice developed a job plan for her. Initially she covered the Minor Injuries Unit and inpatients areas. The GPs continued to provide weekend, bank holiday and evening cover.



For six years this medical model has worked extremely well for the patients, carers and staff. It provided continuity and stability for the service. We've seen the plaudits. Unfortunately, all good things come to an end. The practice made me aware of the doctor's resignation and the struggle they had to replace what was needed in the hospital - delivering a lesser service was unfair to all, without additional ways of support.

The reality for the League of Friends is that we see a gradual change in the use of Community Beds. They are no longer used by Primary Care for direct admissions thus avoiding admission into the acute hospital, the Royal Surrey Foundation Trust (RSFT), but stepped down from the acute setting driven more by their bed pressures. Hence only 10% of the patients are from within Haslemere and environs.

New guidance from the NHS is all about collaborative working and developing local services that reflect the needs of our population. It's called The NHS Neighbourhood Framework 2025/26.

It's not a new concept but is now being promoted as the way forward. For those of you who get bewildered by the different terminology used in the health service, I have outlined a simple example that happened here in Haslemere in the late 90s.

Dementia Care:-

The nurse visitors to the elderly identified the need for day care for dementia patients. Carers' health was suffering. Key parties were identified to form a working group. The League of Friends had built the recreation hall for staff but it was no longer used regularly. Dr. Anne Hunter an Associated Specialist Neurologist and founder member of the Alzheimer's Society lived in Haslemere. The nurses and GPs in the practice and myself who was then responsible for the Hospital site, all worked together to find a solution. The Alzheimer's Dementia Day Centre happened with multiagency collaboration.

Our current concern is that a change in medical cover has highlighted a lack of resilience in the system.

Our focus is:-

- The loss of beds and its implications on patients and carers in the wider sense.
- The future of the hospital and how we can influence service developments on site rather than patients and carers having to travel miles for their care.

We have had assurance that the Urgent Treatment Centre changes are progressing well and are unaffected by the current bed situation. Hopefully, it will be up and running by July.

We have had assurance that the beds have been temporarily suspended - not permanently closed - whilst a medical replacement solution is found.

We will continue to monitor closely the situation regarding the inpatient beds.

What we definitely don't want to happen is the current events regarding the beds to overshadow the excellent work that happens in the hospital, which should be celebrated.

The Housekeeping Team, who provide a wonderful service in the hospital, won a well-deserved 100% rating in the PLACE audit this year for their cleaning and catering services. PLACE measures the standard of food – Cleanliness in clinical areas – Privacy, Dignity and Wellbeing - Dementia friendly – Condition and Appearance internally and externally in the hospital – Maintenance.



Millie Kohler and her mother Elisabeth Coghlan, two local residents, frequently use the Outpatients Department in the hospital. They felt the environment needed a face lift. Initially it was thought that NHS Propco might decorate the department and provide new flooring as part of their maintenance contract (it has not been redecorated in over two decades). NHS Property services state they do not have the money in the budget and this year's budget is already accounted for!

Elisabeth Coghlan donated £1500 and the family have already started fund-raising locally. The League have asked NHS Propco for the full costs required for painting the department and new flooring.



Conversion work has started in the Minor Injuries department to evolve into an Urgent Treatment Centre.



Dr. Selvie Rome is retiring from the Haslemere Practice. She was employed by the practice in a full time capacity to work in the hospital. Dr Rome has provided stability, continuity for patients, carers and staff on the wards. A real gem of a physician and she will be missed by us all. We wish her well in her retirement.



In Home Care, one of our local care agencies sponsored the League of Friends as their charity of choice last year. They raised over £1005 in their Christmas raffle. Such a generous gift. The money is to go towards a new ECG machine for the new urgent treatment centre.



Updates, For the major part of this year, despite agreeing monies for all departments throughout the hospital we have actually only been able to spend a small amount. Items we have been able to purchase ourselves and donate have gone through very smoothly. The major obstacle seems to be the response of NHS Property services. It is not reactive enough, to meet the needs of the departments in the hospital, even if we have offered to pay for items to support them. Extremely frustrating.

We have continued to maintain the patient garden areas. They are so enjoyed by the patients and carers. As one 92 year old elderly lady from Guildford said to me with a twinkle in her eye – the health centre car park was a font of life for her. To see the young men hop out of their vans in working clothes and dash into the health centre and to see young mothers trying to fold their children in half to strap them back into their car seat with difficulty! This was the best tonic ever.

Linda Danaldson and Cathy Susan, with the support of St. Bartholomew's Choir, organised the carol singing event. This year was the first time since Covid that we sung in the hospital on the wards. It was lovely.

Sadly one of Committee members, Brenda Roper, died following a short but acute illness. Brenda was really supportive with the work we do and was never afraid to challenge.

Jan Stewart, our stalwart treasurer, is stepping down after 22years - but she will remain a very active committee member which is wonderful for us. We have another committee member, Douglas Streatfield who has been on the committee over the last year. His background is finance and hopefully he will be appointed by the committee as our new treasurer formally at the Annual General Meeting.

My thanks, as always, to you our members. Your contributions are so important to the work we are able to do in the hospital.

The staff do an incredible job at maintaining a high standard of work in the hospital. The outcome for patients, their wellbeing and patient experience is excellent.