

# FRIENDS OF DAVENPORT HOUSE

## ANNUAL REPORT for 2019

### Context

This report covers the first full year since the patient group became a charitable trust (Friends of Davenport House), the ending of subscriptions and putting all our communications on-line. Although always confident that, with your support and that of the surgery, we were right to make these changes, we were unsure how they would work out in practice.

These uncertainties led us to focus on our core business of communication and education, and the process of reorganisation itself. The new on-line Bulletin has been a great success allowing us to keep you more up-to-date with the rapid changes taking place in the NHS locally and at Davenport House specifically. The new trust has broadened our terms of reference to include residents in the Harpenden area as well as Davenport House, allowing for the generous grant of £5,000 from the Childwick Trust to be awarded; and we have had the usual programme of lively and informative talks open to all who live locally.

The new arrangements and outside circumstances have not been without their challenges. Creating new bank accounts has taken forever and charges to hire the Fowden Hall, Rothamsted were more than doubled last summer. The trustees determined that a charge of more than £1,000 for an evening lecture and some refreshments was more than we should pay, requiring new bookings in a smaller room and in the Harpenden Public Halls, neither of which were wholly satisfactory. We think we have a much better solution for this year, the new Salvation Army Hall in Leyton Green.

In seeking to accommodate more stringent contractual terms for our meetings at Rothamsted we acquired greater insurance cover and then in July changed our charitable status to incorporated (CIO) (Charity Commission Registered Number: 1184307) in July in order to place a limit legally on the level of personal liability of trustees. These changes have consumed much time and effort.

Overall, as expected, we have managed to reduce our costs significantly - primarily through the online production of the Bulletin – whilst significantly increasing our income, largely as a result of your continuing generosity with most members maintaining their subscription payments as donations to the new charity, and the grant from the Childwick Trust. In broad terms our balance sheet shows assets of about £20,000, an increase of £7,500 over last year, and expenditure less than you gave us in donations.

This is an extremely gratifying situation, if somewhat unexpected, and provides a sound basis for planning future activities now that we have almost completed all the organisational changes. We are definitely not seeking to accumulate monies and want to take some new initiatives. We are writing to all members to get their ideas on what we currently do and should think of doing in the future. Please take time to reply. We will summarise your responses in a future edition of the Bulletin. The trustees also have some preliminary thoughts on working with the Practice and Primary Care Network to enhance services to patients.

Before we get too ambitious, some words of caution. This year's generous support may well not be repeated in future years. Second, we have allocated £4,000 to the surgery (not in last year's accounts as reported below) and we await their response on how they would like to spend it. Finally, the six trustees spend considerable time running the current activities of the trust and we need additional support from the membership if we are to develop new ventures. We will be writing to you later in the year asking for your help. Whilst new blood is always welcome, we are not especially looking for new trustees, but assistance in delivering what we might do. Individually, this often requires limited time and effort but is vital in providing an efficient and effective service.

The membership has remained largely static this year and we plan a membership drive next year. We hold securely more than 1,800 email addresses.

### **Activities in 2019**

The new on-line **Bulletin** has been a great success. Seven editions were produced between March and December, with a hard copy posted in the surgery. The shorter length and more frequent editions than the former Newsletter have undoubtedly kept patients more up-to-date on the rapid changes taking place in the NHS and the surgery. A party was held for those who over many years had delivered the former Newsletter. We need someone to shadow the editor, John Harris, now that he has put the new publication in place.

Four lively **meetings** have been held:

March 2nd, Annual General Meeting, speakers Dr Alka Cashyap and Dr Richard Yasotharan.

May 13th, 'What the L & D Hospital can do for you' Simon Linett (Chair of the Board) and Liz Lees (Chief Nurse). Malcolm Rainbow (Public Governor, L & D Hospital) introduced the speakers and on a later occasion he held a successful recruitment drive at the surgery for Friends of L&D Hospital.

July 8<sup>th</sup>, Doreen Beattie, Ambassador, spoke on the services provided by the Rennie Grove Hospice.

October 14<sup>th</sup>, Dr Paul Whittingham-Jones (Consultant, St Albans Hospital) talked about 'Surgical and Non-Surgical Treatment for Hips and Knees'.

### **Governance**

Your Managing Committee, consisting of the six trustees, the Senior Partner and the Practice Business Manager, met on seven occasions and, inter alia, prepared a new set of operating rules for the Trust based upon the Trust's constitution as agreed with the Charity Commission. It also held a strategy meeting to look to the future. We retain all our links with SAPG, NAPP and the Herts Valleys CCG. We are working with many others to ensure that the Red House will, after many setbacks, eventually be modernised and reinvigorated as a Health and Wellbeing Centre in 2023.

The Trust continues to work closely with the Practice and we are grateful for the support we have received from all its staff, especially from Dr Alka Cashyap (Senior Partner) and Shannon Davies, (Practice Business Manager) until her recent departure. Despite the staffing difficulties widely experienced by GP Practices today, the Practice team is fully up to strength, including enhanced nursing capacity and continues to act as a vibrant training practice. We recognise that the appointments system is unable to meet all patients' needs promptly and further discussions will be held on this matter. As an integral component of the new Harpenden Primary Care Network, linking the three Harpenden surgeries, we hope that further improvements to patient care can be expected.

Finally, I want to record with sadness the death in December of Roger Gedy, for twelve years chairman of the Patient Group. I also want to put on record my thanks to all my fellow trustees for all their hard work in putting our new arrangements in place. This simple statement does not do justice to all the arduous work undertaken for which I am very grateful. Other members have helped too, and in particular I would like to thank Colin Noakes for his advice on insurance and risk management, and Sheila Uppington for her assistance in setting up and reporting on our meetings.

**Richard Munton**

5, February 2020

**Trustees of the Friends of Davenport House:**

Bob Fletcher (Website and on-line Communications)

John Harris (Honorary Treasurer and Editor, Bulletin)

Helen Hartley (Membership)

Brian Macdonald (Vice-Chairman, link with the Charity Commission)

Richard Munton (Chairman)

Joan Shopper (Honorary Secretary)