

Axminster Hospital League of Friends

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held on

Tuesday 25th July 2023, 6.30 pm in Axminster Heritage Centre

Opening remarks from the Chair	<p>Steve Holt welcomed all and thanked everyone for attending.</p> <p>Steve Holt welcomed the guest speaker, Dr Rachel Wachsmuth, Consultant Dermatologist, Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and her colleague Claire Parkinson who provides a dermatology surgery list at Axminster Hospital.</p> <p>Steve Holt handed over to the Guest Speaker.</p>
Guest Speaker – Dr Rachel Wachsmuth, Consultant Dermatologist	<p>Rachel Wachsmuth gave an interesting and informative talk about skin. She explained the structure of our skin, pointing out various elements within the dermis and epidermis. She went on to talk about skin conditions such as psoriasis and eczema and the new biologic treatments which were having a significant effect on outcomes.</p> <p>Rachel talked about the various skin blemishes, moles and skin cancers which can occur, and what to look out for. She reminded the meeting of the A to E of self-examination: A (Asymmetrical); B (Border); C (Colour); D (Diameter); E (Evolving).</p> <p>In view of the high incidence of skin cancers in the South West population, Rachel emphasised the need for strong protection against skin damage, even on a dull day.</p> <p>Rachel emphasised the Dermatology Outpatient clinics at Axminster Hospital were very busy seeing between 50 and 90 patients at fortnightly clinics and that 8 to 10 surgical procedures are carried out weekly.</p> <p>The talk was greatly appreciated by the attendees. Rachel asked for questions from the floor.</p>
<u>Questions from the Floor</u>	<p>A question was asked about SPF ratings on suncream. Rachel explained that SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor and refers to the level of protection against UVB radiation which is linked to skin cancer. The number refers to the amount of protection the sunscreen offers compared to unprotected skin. The higher the number the more protection provided. However, these numbers were based on adding a thick layer of cream protection. A 4- or 5-star rating helps to protect skin from UVA radiation, associated with skin ageing. She recommended products that gave the widest range of protection.</p>

	<p>A question was asked about the effect of tattoos on the skin. Rachel replied that tattoos can cause skin infections and other complications such as allergic reactions. Large tattoos can make assessment of skin more difficult. Rachel added that even after tattoos are removed from the skin the chemicals can remain in the body.</p> <p>A question was asked about why cricketers wear stripes of sunscreen. Rachel replied that it was to protect the most vulnerable parts of the face, on the nose, cheeks and lips.</p> <p>Steve Holt thanked Dr Wachsmuth for her interesting and informative talk.</p>
Apologies for Absence	<p>Apologies had been received from:</p> <p>Trustees Margaret Pike, Ann Veit, Lynda Porter</p> <p>Members Karen Hussey, Keith Dean, Bill Sheppard, Chris & Hilary Sutton, Maggie Stead, Mrs B Edwards, Mr and Mrs Groves, Mrs Eyre</p>
Minutes of the previous AGM	<p>The minutes of the previous AGM held on Thursday 26th May 2022 had been distributed to the Trustees and were available to view on the website. The minutes were agreed as a true record.</p>
Matters Arising	<p>There were no matters arising.</p>
Reports <u>Chair</u> – Steve Holt	<p>Steve thanked Rachel and her team for their support in enlightening us about our skin. He acknowledged that Rachel and Claire had given their time to support us.</p> <p>Steve thanked the Trustees for their continued support and officially welcomed Julian Hussey who joined the Trustees last Autumn.</p> <p>The League of Friends continue to support the hospital and have responded to their requests for both medical equipment and other support to patients and visitors. One major spend was for a “Hover Jack”. This is an air-operated bed system that allow a patient that is on the floor to be rolled onto the jack and then raised using an air pump to bed height where they are then transferred to a proper bed. In addition, the League has helped to improve the refreshment offering for visitors and staff by contracting for a snack vending service along with the coffee machine we already provide.</p> <p>Whilst we have made some significant changes to review our future fundraising, we have continued with our local drive and have been supported by both our Trustees and residents. Our annual autumn bacon butties in the Minster Church rooms event was met with somewhat inclement weather. Despite this, we raised over £200. At the end of June this year, Hilary and Michael Pritchard from Smallridge in All Saints, opened their garden with all the proceeds from the refreshment coming to the League. Thank you to Sue who provided all the cakes free of charge. This event raised £2,057. We cannot thank Michael and Hilary enough. On Saturday July 1st, our</p>

	<p>Trustee Gillie George arranged for the Exeter Male Voice Choir to come and sing to us in the minster, raising a further £430. These are magnificent amounts which really do help in our continued support to the hospital and local health needs of Axminster residents.</p> <p>Steve reported that we must accept that there is still no end-of-life care facility in the Axminster area. Our previous attempt to engage such a service fell on stony ground. There are services for end-of-life home support in Sidmouth and Seaton and we would dearly like to be able to support one in Axminster. The cost to run such a service is around £200,000 per year. Driving towards this level of income is now our "Big Goal." Whilst we need to continue with all our fundraising efforts, to enable us to secure continued income of this magnitude, we need to think and behave differently. Prior to this year, we have run everything as a group of Trustees – all volunteers. Seaton's League has, for some years, employed a manager to look after their day-to-day activities and fundraising drives. Steve had had a meeting with the Chair of Seaton League of Friends last year and following that meeting proposed to the board of trustees that we look to employ someone to focus on all our fundraising activities and look to other opportunities with our "Big Goal" in mind. In April this year Helen Arnold started working with the League to look at how we can achieve this Big Goal.</p>
<p>Manager – Helen Arnold</p>	<p>Helen Arnold was appointed as Manager in April 2023. The purpose of her role is to raise the profile of the Axminster Hospital League of Friends and to increase fundraising to £200k per year.</p> <p>Trustees There are currently 12 Trustees Steve Holt - Chair, Lynda Porter – Treasurer, Martin Diplock, Gillie George, Hazel Cross, Julian Hussey, Margaret Pike, Jeanette Ward, Dr Phil Taylor, Dr Sarah Ellis, Ann Veit, Mervyn Symes. Due to family circumstances Lynda feels she is not able to continue with her role as Treasurer so we will be looking for someone to take on this role. Steve Holt will cover this role until a new Trustee is appointed. Expressions of interest from anyone interested in becoming a Trustee are always welcome. Please speak to Steve or myself.</p> <p>Membership Thanks to Gillie and Hazel for helping to update the List of Members. 170 invitations to this meeting were sent out to Members of the League of Friends. Since the last meeting several of our Members have moved and sadly, I have been notified that a number of our Members have passed away. Members have been asked, where possible, to provide an email address for correspondence to minimise costs.</p>

	<p>Raising the profile of the League of Friends. The League of Friends has a new Facebook page. There are 42 followers and over 3000 people saw our post about the Open Gardens. We have a new website axmlf.com. Thanks to Adrian from Pink Pigeon for support in this process. The website automatically updates with news items and viewers can donate a single or regular amount on- line. Information about meetings with the associated agenda and minutes, fundraising events etc will be uploaded onto the website. Members were asked to look at the website from time to time.</p> <p>Fundraising. During recent months we have had 3 significant events. The Axe Vale Show 17/18th June. Thank you to the Trustees and volunteers who helped on the stand. Regular attendees to the show reported that there was a reduction in visitors however donations and raffle tickets at the show covered costs. It was felt it was worth attending to have a League of Friends presence at a significant local event.</p> <p>On the first weekend in July, we had the Open Garden at Socks Orchard, Smallridge. Although the weather was a little challenging at times, the tea and cake proved very popular and Hilary and Michael Pritchard kindly donated a little over £2000 to the League of Friends.</p> <p>We also had a performance by Exeter Male voice Choir at the Minster. Thanks to Gillie and Hazel for organising this event. Although numbers attending were a little disappointing it was an enjoyable evening and the choir have said they are happy to do another performance later in the year. The concert raised £300 from ticket sales and raffle. We also received £126 in donations.</p> <p>Moving forwards. Helen will be looking at developing the Facebook page to take donations and to increase the number of people who are following the page. She will look at the use of other social media platforms and some additions to the website. Helen will be investigating the availability of other funding through businesses and charitable organisations. The League of Friends will be organising some fundraising events over the autumn/ winter. In the longer term, Helen will be exploring other opportunities such as opening a shop in the town centre.</p>
<p><u>Treasurer</u> – in the absence of Lynda Porter the Treasurer’s report was given by Steve Holt.</p>	<p>Steve outlined the financial position and made a plea to all present regarding the need for a new Honorary Treasurer. Lynda Porter recently joined Trustees as the Hon. Treasurer. She came with many years of financial experience and we were excited about her taking control. Unfortunately, due to a change in her personal circumstance and she feels that she cannot give the necessary time to support the League. Steve thanked Lynda for the work she has done to date and wished her and her husband all good fortune for the future. So, we are looking for a new trustee who would be willing to take on the role of Treasurer. It is not too onerous a task if someone has a few</p>

	<p>hours a month to spare. We will advertise the vacancy on social media and elsewhere but if you know of anyone or would like to come forward, please let our Manager know.</p> <p>We have our audited accounts from Westcotts which show very little in terms of transactions for 2022/23. We have, as previously stated, spent a few thousand on facilities for the hospital but with our Big Goal in mind, are mindful of our need to retain funds. Our income for 2022/23 was £12,900 with expenditure of £5,903 leaving a year-end balance of £474,975. For information, our current bank balance is £475,800.</p> <p>At this point Steve asked for approval from all members present for the continued use of Westcotts for the compilation and auditing of our accounts.</p> <p>The Members present at the meeting showed their approval with a show of hands.</p>
<p><u>Hospital Representative</u> – Teresa Denning</p>	<p><u>Helen Ruse, Therapy Manager</u> <u>Community Rehabilitation Team (CRT)</u></p> <p>As a team Community Rehab have continued to provide urgent community response and rehabilitation interventions to support patients within the Axminster area despite staffing and recruitment issues thanks to flexibility of staff and close and creative working with the wider community teams to support each other and patients.</p> <p>Following the pandemic, they have been able to refocus and continue to build on their work of falls prevention and health promotion. They have been able to step back up their strength and balance group which has run since the beginning of the year and after a short break will recommence in September, providing regular group therapy sessions at the hospital to focus on strength and balance and falls prevention. This has been really well attended and received.</p> <p>Recent purchase of a hover jack has added to the hospitals range of specialist lifting equipment. Community therapy key trainers have provided training sessions on its use within the team as well as extending this to wider community teams including community nursing, Urgent Care Response and hospice. They are better able to support individuals who have fallen in the community, helping to keep those who can remain at home; in turn supporting the ambulance service. As well as assisting terminally ill patients to be carefully and compassionately moved on to a hospital bed for end-of-life care with minimal upheaval.</p> <p><u>Lisa Jones, Ward Sister</u> <u>Day Surgery/Theatre</u></p> <p>The transformation team are looking at referrals to Axminster for ophthalmic procedures. There is currently a social media drive advertising that patient's may be seen quicker at Axminster, and they are looking at other ways to advertise the Axminster service.</p>

We have capacity to do cataract surgery all day Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings. Once a month one of these lists is used by Miss Irvine for oculoplastic procedures.

There will be a new Team Lead for theatre and ophthalmic outpatients, Becky Armitage, and she will be taking up her post during August.

Clare Parkinson continues to provide a dermatology surgery list on Tuesdays in Axminster.

Michaela Board, Team Lead

Community Nursing

Community Nursing are a small busy team based at the hospital. Michaela has rejoined the team as Team Lead, after an 18-month break. The team is made up of experienced nurses and band 4's and they regularly have student nurses working alongside them as placements. The team look after a variety of people, with varying degrees of health care needs. These include wound care, injections, venepuncture, continence problems, picc lines, end of life care, syringe drivers as well as supporting family members. They support the lower limb therapy service in the hospital, as well as taking referrals from the Royal Devon Hospital, GP's, and hospice nurses.

It is truly an honour to look after people in their own homes, when sometimes they are at their most vulnerable. The team attend regular training updates to ensure that they have the most up to date clinical knowledge and skills. As a team they work very closely with the local GP practice to support all the local people that are house bound for whatever reason.

The nurses visit people from Axminster, Hawkchurch, Chardstock, Stockland, Yarcombe, Membury, Uplyme, Lyme Regis, Colyton, Musbury and even over the border into Somerset. So, as you can imagine, they spend a great deal of time driving from one visit to another in all winds and weathers. Trying to avoid potholes!!!! The team is amazing, they love their jobs and would not change a thing!

Shiobhan Pickering, Dementia Matron

Axe Valley Dementia Team

The Axe Valley Dementia Team are now fully operational in our local communities again, incorporating the Dementia Matron and those from the Conybeare day care team. There are Cognitive Stimulation Groups running in Axminster, Colyton and Seaton. This reduces the stress of the travelling to and from the centre itself. The team have had really positive feedback from those that attend and the families since starting in April 2022. Saying things like, "I always look forward to the group and have great fun." And from one of the families, "He always comes back in a great mood and he sleeps well that night and

is good the next day also." The sessions are 2.5 hours long which is long enough for anyone with dementia.

The team also take referrals for home assessment and support. Even though they are a small team they work effectively at ensuring people in our communities with dementia stay independent as much as possible, stay in their own homes, support the families and promote healthy wellbeing for the whole family.

The team also prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and expedite safe discharges of those people with dementia in hospitals. Following up and using their expertise in supporting people living with dementia.

Lisa Jackson, Outpatient Manager

Outpatients

Axminster Hospital continues to be a thriving Outpatient centre. We have created an Ophthalmology hub, which continues to deliver both general outpatient and procedural work Monday to Friday.

These clinics run alongside a variety of other Consultant and AHP (Associated Health Professional) clinics e.g.: Rheumatology/Oral Surgery/Retinal Screening/Bladder & Bowel – to name but a few.

We now have a total of 38 clinics running in Axminster.

We are constantly reviewing our clinics to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the local population to reduce unnecessary journeys to the main Acute site.

Our Eastern Community Hospital locations provide essential easy access for both our local and Eastern wide patients. This allows attendance to those Services which do not need to be held in the Acute Hospital for specialist/complex or diagnostic reasons.

The Royal Devon University Healthcare Trust aims to reduce patient travel as one of our Carbon Emission reduction Targets within our Green Plan and is one of our considered contributory factors when considering new clinics.

Zoe Swan, Team lead

MSK/Physiotherapy

We are successfully running back fit classes alongside Activation groups to help patients recover and then be referred into community leisure services. We have very good links with all the current activities that are carried out in the community including the Flamingo pool.

We have new staff allocated working on waiting lists and are currently keeping to designated times for the urgent and routine patients. We are very privileged to have advanced practitioners specialising in lower limb, shoulder and spines to refer to Axminster when necessary.

	<p>Teresa finished by saying how proud she is to work with such hard working, committed and compassionate staff. All the services above value the efforts of our Hotel Services and Administration teams – without them, none of the above would be possible. She added that the staff are very proud to be part of Axminster Hospital and would like to sincerely thank the League of Friends for their ongoing support and commitment.</p>
Election of Officers	<p>As the longest serving Trustees, Martin Diplock, Mervyn Symes, Hazel Cross and Gillie George were asked to stand down. In the absence of other expressions of interest in becoming a Trustee, Martin Diplock, Mervyn Symes, Hazel Cross and Gillie George were duly re- elected. This was approved by a show of hands from the Members present at the meeting.</p> <p>Steve asked for expressions of interest in becoming a Trustee particularly the role of Treasurer.</p>
Questions from the Floor	<p>A question was asked regarding a possible Summer Fair. Steve acknowledged that this had been a popular event in the past and the league may consider a similar event in the future.</p> <p>A question was asked about the Scott Rowe building. Steve confirmed that the site had been purchased and the new owner had stated that the site would be used for community or charitable use. It was not going to be redeveloped for housing.</p> <p>A question was asked about whether it was possible to have a list of services provided by the Hospital. It was agreed this would be useful and could be available at several locations around Axminster.</p>
	<p>Steve closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance and asked all to help themselves to refreshments and to a 'goody bag' kindly provided by Rachel Wachsmuth and the Dermatology team.</p>