


Board of Directors	 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust	
Chairman's Board Report	24 January 2018	BDA/18/02

This paper is for:		Sponsor:		
Decision		Author:		
Discussion		Reviewed by:		
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It is difficult not to be apprehensive about the year ahead. The Brexit negotiations will dominate the governmental and political agenda. Their implications for the health system are well understood, but they remain unresolved. The NHS itself is operating under huge financial and operational pressures. Local authority budgets are under even greater strain, impacting on both social care and public health. While the shift towards more collaborative, networked structures for the NHS in England is welcome, much about the emerging framework of accountability and governance remains uncertain. For our staff, the position on public sector pay remains opaque, while increases in transport and other living costs are very real.

So storm clouds surround us. But there are, I believe, good grounds for saying that this Trust should approach a new year with at least guarded optimism. Thanks to the remarkable efforts of staff across the organisation, the Trust is managing the undoubtedly severe pressures of this traditionally difficult winter period very effectively. Challenges remain, but if we continue to make the progress shown in recent months we should hit our financial target – which will in turn help us to keep investing in our capital and maintenance programme. The quality of the services we offer to our patients in hospital, in the community and at home remains high. We continue to recruit outstanding staff to the Trust. Our new cancer centres are humming. Our new emergency floor should be fully operational within the next few months. We have ambitious plans to expand and strengthen a wide range of services across the Trust, supported by new as well as more familiar partners. Innovation is flourishing, not least through our ambitious Fit for the Future programmes. The Charity is supporting us to take fundraising to new levels, as well as funding other programmes and initiatives to the benefit of our patients and staff.

So as the NHS heads into its 70th year, with issues of funding, structure and policy right at the forefront of public debate, we can and should be confident in seeking to exemplify here at the Trust all that is best about the NHS and the values that it represents.

One of the occasions which, each year, provides a moving and inspiring insight into how those values are translated into action at this Trust, is the ceremony where the Chief Executive and I present, on behalf of the Board, awards for long service. This year was no exception. We paid tribute to the record of service of staff from across the organisation from different backgrounds and doing very different jobs. What always impresses

all of us who attend, including the award winners themselves and their colleagues, family and friends who attend with them, is the huge diversity of skills that are required to operate the services for which we are responsible and our mutual dependence on the commitment and contribution of others, often unseen and unappreciated by us, to do our own jobs well.

In a similar vein, later in the month, I was privileged to present the awards at a special event for staff who work in our community services. This was organised by a volunteer team of staff – who had themselves canvassed for nominations for a range of individual and team awards and laid on a splendid evening's entertainment to accompany what was a genuine celebration of the outstanding work done by our hugely committed staff who work in the community.

Last month I was part of the welcoming party for the visit of HRH Princess Royal to St Thomas', when she came to perform the official opening of the Wellcome Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Centre. A few weeks earlier the official opening of the new inpatient pharmacy facilities, also on the St Thomas' site, was performed by our local MP, Kate Hoey. She very much enjoyed, I know, visiting the new facilities and meeting staff. We were also honoured to welcome the President of Malta for a brief visit to the Trust, when she met members of our staff with connections to Malta.

Our community carol service was held this year at St George's Cathedral; and despite the bitterly cold evening it was very well attended by patients, staff and supporters: an occasion which raised the spirits – as well as a generous donation to our work for patients. At the Trust's own carol service we were able to keep proceedings very much 'in the family' as we were delighted to welcome as our guest speaker The Right Rev'd John Pritchard, the former Bishop of Oxford – who is, of course, Amanda's father.

Since our last Board meeting I have also supported the ceremony for the unveiling of the plaque memorialising health workers who have served in the field of conflict, now located in the memorial garden outside South Wing at St Thomas', and which was provided by the Mary Seacole Trust. I welcomed members of the public to the final health seminar of the year – on the work of the A and E Department, which was very well received. I

attended a degree ceremony at the South Bank University. And I explored the 31st and 32nd floors of Guy's Tower, which had been ear-marked potentially for an expansion of our dental facilities.

I was unable to attend the November meeting of King's Health Partners (KHP) Joint Boards, at which the main substantive item discussed was a progress report on the KHP Global Health programme. There was also an opportunity to welcome Jennie Younger who has recently been appointed as the new KHP Executive Director of Fundraising. (The Trust, was, of course, represented at the meeting by the Chief Executive.) Earlier that month I chaired a meeting of the KHP Education Council. There has also been a number of meetings, all of which I have attended, between the representatives of the KHP Board and the Board of the Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust, to discuss potential collaboration on which I will report orally to the Board at our meeting.

Finally, our congratulations go to Professor Andy Sheehan who was awarded an OBE in the New Year Honours list, for his outstanding contribution to research and services in the field of obstetrics. We are also absolutely thrilled that Dawn Hill, a former non-executive director of the Trust and then, until recently a member of the Council of Governors, has been awarded a CBE in part for her contribution to the development of Black Cultural Archives. Dawn was, of course, a leading member of the campaign to commission the statue of Mary Seacole; and she has been a wonderful champion of this Trust and of our local community.