

League of Friends Antrim Area Hospital

25th Annual General Meeting 2nd March 2020

Chairperson's Report

I start my report by saying that I am very pleased and consider it a privilege to present this the 25th Annual Report of the League of Friends, Antrim Area Hospital.

While I was preparing to write this report I looked back to when the League of Friends was founded in 1994. It was very early that year that application forms were available for interested members of the community to apply to become volunteers in the hospital. The first applications were received in February and March 1994.

I wonder if four of those first Volunteers Netta Mc Kinstry, Eileen Park, Jenny Pitt and Maud Simpson who are still volunteering today, would be able to recall the original Objects and Powers of League of Friends.. I won't ask them now, maybe later. If you bear with me for a few moments I shall share some with you.

The Object of the League of Friends stated :-

The League is to relieve patients and former patients of the hospital who are sick, convalescent, disabled or infirm and, generally to support the charitable work of the said hospital. For the purpose of carrying out the above object but not otherwise, the League shall have the following stated powers. In all eleven powers were stated.

I shall not, you will be pleased to know, read all eleven. But you may find the following of interest.

to educate the public of the needs of the hospital:

to publish or contribute to publications:

to hold conferences, meetings exhibitions and discussions:

and to provide or assist in the provision of amenities in the Antrim Hospital such as shops, clubs, health and recreation centres

Indeed those who volunteered then will tell of Volunteers assisting in wards, helping at meal times or arranging flowers or going round the wards with the library or shop trolleys.

As you have realised and indeed as you know much has changed since 1995 when the first AGM was held..

So during 2014 the committee updated the Object and Rules of League of Friends. . These were agreed by all at our AGM in 2015 and following that we became a Northern Ireland Registered Charity.

In the updated rules it states that the objects and the business of the League shall be conducted by the committee who are responsible to ensure that the more relevant and appropriate rules are kept.

Today at our AGM in 2020 I would like to report, as will our Secretary, Treasurer and Chair of the Antrim Area Hospital Radio, how League of Friends has kept those rules and kept them well in 2019.

To carry out our business the Committee met in January, in March prior to the AGM, then in June, in August and November. We also met in February 2020. Being on committee is not an onerous task. In fact meetings which usually last about an hour and a half, are very good humoured and decisions are made over tea, coffee and traybakes for which we thank Judy.

Following each meeting we have attempted to keep all Welcomers informed by providing our Update for all to read.

If anyone here today is interested in joining our committee why not give your name to a member of the committee and come along to our next meeting before deciding?

One of the committee's responsibilities is :-

to recruit and assist in the in the recruitment of Volunteers

We recruited a new member Wilma Houston to the committee at our AGM in 2019.

You will hear shortly from our Secretary that new Volunteers were recruited in 2019 by members encouraging friends to join us.

At that meeting Margaret Holmes retired from committee. We were all saddened to learn of Margaret's death some months later. I know Ruby will speak of Margaret. But I wish to pay my tribute to Margaret with whom I was very fortunate to spend many Tuesday mornings over some 14 years. I enjoyed her friendship and company as Welcomer and Committee Member.

Following Margaret's death it was brought to our attention that we had no process in place for informing Welcomers of such events or of an emergency.

Committee have discussed at length how best this may be done whilst being very aware of the requirements of GDPR. We now have agreed a form which we consider meets both requirements. The form asks Welcomers to give permission to League of Friends

to be contacted by text or email in exceptional circumstances or in an emergency and

to use photos in press reports about League of Friends and/or for Trust purposes..

Forms are now available on this table. You may complete today and place in the box provided or you may prefer to take the form home and when completed put in a sealed envelope and leave for Judy. The only persons with access to this information will be Judy, her successor and Joanne.

In this way we hope that we have provided a means of immediate communication with everyone.

In the rules the Committee is also required:-

to communicate with the management of the hospital in relation to service improvement or quality initiatives.

Welcomers have been very good at suggesting to committee ways of improving our service. During 2019 following reports of shortage of wheelchairs the matter was brought to committee. This concern was subsequently taken to management. and thanks to Judy the situation is much improved.

Committee have always taken seriously the requirement to provide training for all new, returning and regular Welcomers. New Welcomers were trained on the job and a number of Welcomers attended very informative and helpful training sessions organised by Nicki Sturgeon. We hope that by the end of 2020 all Welcomers will have attended training sessions specifically on Infection Control and Fire Safety.

As you all know one of our aims is to raise funds and invite and receive contributions from persons or organisations. That continued in 2019 when our focus for support was the Endoscopy Unit. Our Treasurer will give details in his report of monies raised in 2019 through Fireside Quiz, Table Quiz and Fashion Show. Later this morning we shall present a cheque to Karen Mc Kendry Lead Nurse in the Endoscopy Unit. Lyn Tennant, Manager Gastroenterology Audiology and Day Procedure Unit also hopes to attend.

At this point I wish to record thanks to the many people who have supported those fundraising events, in different ways, by selling tickets and quizzes, by attending events, and by providing prizes for raffles and by helping at events. Without such help we could not have raised funds to support the hospital.

Here I wish to single out a small number of people. Margaret Torrens who never fails to provide new Fireside Quizzes, Sean Heffron, our Quiz Master at The Table Quiz, to 3 Welcomers Joan, Ruby and Violet, to Sarah, Staff Nurse in Emergency Department and to Alison and Heather, friends of Welcomers, the six models at our Fashion Show

and of course to Julie Ann and all the staff of Simply Gifted who provided the clothes.

I must also record our appreciation of the continuing support of Massereene Golf Club for the use of their facilities for these events and to the following businesses Altered Images, ASDA Antrim, Ballyclare Golf Club, Benny Craig, Beauty and Beyond, BOO Restaurant, Clarins in the Pharmacy in Randalstown, and in McKay's Chemist in Templepatrick, Creative Expressions, Dunsilly Hotel, Jackson's, Joli, Moes Grill, Specsavers, and Tesco both in Antrim. In 2019 the number of businesses supporting League of Friends has grown as our service becomes more widely known. That is also due to the continued support of Antrim Guardian for printing reports and photographs of our various activities.

According to the rules of League of Friends the funds we raise will supplement the service provided for the health, welfare and comfort of patients and service and will provide equipment required for the treatment and comfort of patients.

You may indeed sometimes wonder how that money is spent. I can now tell you how the £4000 handed over to Natasha McCullagh for use in the Renal Unit at our AGM last year has been put to good use.

I shall read an email sent to Judy by Natasha McCullagh who accepted the cheque on behalf of the Renal Unit. Natasha's email states:-

With this donation we focussed a lot on educating our staff and patients on shared care. This involved training the nurses over in Sheffield on how to train patients to be able to undertake nursing tasks of their own for dialysis. This promoted patients' independence and overall improved their health and well being. You will see the celebration of this on the renal charities NIPKA's Facebook Page.

I am sure like me, you will all agree that this was a wonderful way of using the money raised by us and has indeed well achieved our rule to

provide for the health welfare and comfort of patients and to provide equipment to improve the service and treatment of patients..

We will look forward during 2020 to hearing how the money we will hand over to the Endoscopy Unit will be used.

Whilst having recruited new members, attended training sessions and brought forward issues to hospital management we have continued to provide the service for which we are best known and which we all enjoy, our Welcoming Service, or as some call it Meeting and Greeting.

During 2019 each week Monday to Friday, except on public holidays, Welcomers have been visible in the hospital foyer. We have accompanied about to be mums and dads to the delivery suite, walked with patients to all parts of the hospital, pointed new staff in the right direction, brought wheelchairs to less mobile patients. All this was done with a welcoming smile.

Each year the number of people assisted in many different ways has continued to rise.

I have counted and recorded the numbers we have greeted each year since 2015.

That year on average we welcomed 2,190 people each month.

In 2016 the average rose to 2,459

In 2017 the average had again risen to 2,626 and by 2,018 it was 2,758.

I wonder if you would guess what the total number and the average were last year, in 2019.

. I can tell you that the total number of people helped in 2019 was a staggering 34,658, an average of 2.888 people per month.

I have no doubt that each one of the 34,658 appreciated your help. On their behalf I say thank you to each Welcomer. To you meeting, greeting, walking with someone or pointing others in the right direction may seem a small thing but that small action was very important to each and every one.

When I think of our welcoming service two quotes come to mind which I shall share them with you.

First

It is not what people say or do that we always remember but the way we are treated.

And Secondly which I think describes us many times:-

“They might not need me but they might. I’ll let my head be just in sight, a smile as small as mine might be just what they need. “

How often has way you treated someone or has your smile and welcome the made a big difference to those who come through the doors of Antrim Area Hospital ?

As I conclude my report I wish to thank each and every Welcomer for their loyalty and commitment, my fellow committee members for their support, patience and good humour, the thanks of all to Ruby and to Netta who prepare the roster each month and on everyone’s behalf I say a very big thank you to Judy for her advice, guidance, friendship and support.

Finally I trust you will agree with me when I say that we kept the rules of League of Friends in 2019 and kept them well.

That concludes my report for the year 2019.

Barbara Black

Chair, League of Friends, Antrim Hospital 2nd March 2020

