

## ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING

### Minutes of the Annual Members Meeting held on Thursday 28 September 2023 Virtually Recorded Meeting

#### Welcome

The Chair of the Board welcomed viewers to the Trust's virtual Annual Members Meeting. The meeting would summarise the Trust's achievements during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

#### Minutes of the Annual Members Meeting held on 29 September 2022

The Chair of the Board asked members to note the minutes of the previous Annual Members Meeting held on 29 September 2022, which had been approved as a true record at the Council of Governors meeting on 24 November 2022, a copy of which could be found on the Trust's website <https://www.dbth.nhs.uk/about-us/become-a-member/annual-members-meeting/>.

#### Reflection on 2022/23 – Suzy Brain England OBE, Chair of the Board and Council of Governors

The Chair of the Board reflected on 2022/2023 and shared her appreciation of colleagues' unwavering dedication and support to restore operational services and address challenges faced during the pandemic.

In the last year the Trust had provided exceptional care for a record 795,000 patients, 3,065 of which had received support for Covid-19; alongside influenza and seasonal viruses the winter had been an extremely challenging one for the Trust, as it had been for the NHS nationally.

During 2022/23 the Trust had welcomed a new Chief Nurse, Chief Operating Officer, Chief People Officer and would shortly welcome a substantive Deputy Chief Executive. The renewed leadership team would allow the Trust to continue to develop and grow, with their guidance, invaluable experience, and insight.

The Trust had delivered record breaking capital projects in year. With a focus on the future, vital upgrades and expansions had taken place, including the Community Diagnostic Centre, Mexborough Elective Orthopaedic Centre, Bassetlaw Emergency Village, and a state of the art Central Delivery Suite at Doncaster Royal Infirmary.

The Chair reflected on the spirit of teamwork and the collective efforts to ensure safety, care, and health for all and thanked local communities for their support.

## **Council of Governors' Report 2022/23 Lynne Schuller, Lead Governor**

The Chair of the Board introduced Lynne Schuller, Lead Governor, to provide an update on behalf of the Council of Governors.

The Lead Governor recognised the roles, responsibilities, and breadth of experience of the collective Council of Governors and its role in representing the local voice of communities and holding non-executive directors to account for performance of the Board. Special thanks were extended to the Deputy Lead Governor, Andrew Middleton.

Following recent governor elections, the Lead Governor took the opportunity to welcome new governors and share her thanks with outgoing governors whose terms of office had ended. During the year governors had been involved in the recruitment of non-executive directors and provided collective input into the Chair and Non-executive Director appraisal process.

Reflecting on recent national press coverage, the Lead Governor confirmed the time taken by governors to understand local, regional and national developments, recognising the implications for the Trust, which was then incorporated into their scrutiny. Governors had attended governor briefing and development sessions, observed the Board of Directors and its Committees and joined system events, adding to their wide knowledge base which enabled challenge and scrutiny leading to transparency and safety.

Plans to increase face to face interactions with local communities were being considered, a meet your governor event had taken place at Bassetlaw Hospital and this would be arranged across the remaining Trust sites. The Trust would like to hear more from its local communities and details on how to become a member of the Trust could be found via the following link <https://www.dbth.nhs.uk/about-us/become-a-member/>

## **Welcome from Richard Parker OBE, Chief Executive**

The Chair of the Board welcomed the Chief Executive, Richard Parker, to the virtual Annual Members meeting.

The Chief Executive provided some local and national context, noting that during 2022/23 there had been four major peaks in Covid 19 activity which presented operational challenges, particularly during the winter months. A return to normal infection, prevention and control measures had now been seen, with changes to the requirement to wear face coverings and the lifting of visitor restrictions. Should the level of infection increase the Trust would take necessary steps to return to heightened controls.

Organisational change had been seen in the NHS in 2022/23, with integrated care systems adopted on a statutory basis with effect from 1 July 2022 and a greater focus on collaborative partnership work. A significant change in Board personnel had been seen, with new executive and non-executive directors joining the Board, seven Board members now originated from a clinical background which provided a good balance of experience.

Throughout the year, the Trust had cared for 3,065 patients with Covid-19, a 25% increase compared to the previous year, the benefit of the vaccination programme and enhanced treatment resulted in a reduction in mortality, sadly the Trust continued to see deaths attributed to the virus and the Trust extended its deepest sympathy to all families who had lost a loved one.

The winter of 2022/23 had been extremely challenging, considering the measures in place and community support it was hoped that the NHS was better able to support the challenges of the winter ahead.

During 2022/23 the Trust had cared for 115,000 inpatients, 482,000 outpatients, 194,000 visits to the emergency department and delivered 4,572 babies. Flow through the hospital had been challenging, with a significant increase seen in the number of patients remaining in a hospital bed who were medically fit for discharge, as a result the Trust's bed occupancy was greater than the recommended 92%. Extensive partnership work to improve this position had taken place and going forwards the use of virtual wards and quality improvement practices would support improved flow.

During the year significant attempts to recover services had been made to return to pre-Covid performance levels, particularly in view of the increased number of patients waiting for treatment, which impacted upon the Trust's ability to reduce waiting lists further.

There had been workforce challenges in year, due to an increased demand for services and with staff personally affected by the virus. A rise in sickness absence had been seen and the resultant need for temporary staff had created budgetary pressures, it was pleasing to report that absence was now returning to pre-Covid levels. A relaunch of the Trust's People Strategy had taken place and significant efforts to recruit and retain colleagues had been prioritised, with an extensive health and wellbeing offer supporting this work which had been recognised by the gold standard Be Well @ Work award. The Chief Executive shared his appreciation of colleagues' hard work and commitment to ensure the best possible care was provided. Despite these challenges 2022/23's staff survey had seen a significant improvement as compared to the previous year with 81% of scores showing an improvement, 1% remaining the same and 18% deteriorating. The Board remained committed to support further improvements to improve colleagues' experiences.

In 2022/23 the Trust had delivered its deficit financial plan of £10.1m, the Trust would continue to contribute to the overall system financial plan in 2023/24 and the importance of spending public money wisely was reinforced.

A significant capital programme had been delivered, totalling £56m, which included the refurbishment of the Central Delivery Suite at Doncaster Royal Infirmary, removal of Reinforced Aerated Autoclaved Concrete at Bassetlaw Hospital, a Community Diagnostic Centre at Montagu Hospital, and the development of Mexborough Elective Orthopaedic Centre as a centre of excellence in partnership with the Rotherham and Barnsley NHS Foundation Trusts.

The Doncaster Royal Infirmary site had a significant maintenance backlog programme, with approximately 600 repairs required, with a capital value of £160m. It had been disappointing to learn that the Trust's bid for the New Hospital Programme had been unsuccessful and efforts were now focused on potential opportunities to secure funding to refurbish services in the short to medium term, with a longer term ambition to pursue a new hospital with the support of elected representatives. The significant cost of a new hospital was recognised but clearly deserved by the community it served.

The Chief Executive shared his appreciation with colleagues and the local communities for their ongoing support.

## **Annual Accounts 2022/2023**

The Chair of the Board welcomed the Chief Financial Officer to the meeting to provide an overview of the Trust's financial performance. 2022/23's accounts had been audited by Ernst & Young and an unqualified opinion on the financial statements and use of resources had been provided.

The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the Trust had continued to operate under the national financial regime during 2022/23. In year its revenue totalled £555m, with a staff and capital spend of £368m and £56m respectively and following payments and liabilities, a year end deficit of £10.1m had been delivered before any technical accounting adjustments. At the end of the year, the Trust reported a closing cash balance of £32.4m, however, due to a backloaded capital programme there was a significant amount of capital creditors to be paid, and a high proportion of this was due for payment in April 2023.

Covid continued to have an impact on costs in 2022/23, with a £5m spend on covid related costs, £3m of which was pay related, to cover patient segregation, sickness absence cover and additional hours for testing and the vaccination programme and £1.4m was spent on non-pay expenditure, relating to testing kits and laboratory tests.

Looking ahead to 2023/24, the Trust continued to address the impact of the pandemic, working to reduce patient waiting times and recover the elective backlog. The impact of inflationary pressures on the delivery of patient care was noted and a challenging £27m deficit financial plan had been set for 2023/24. The Trust would continue to undertake essential estate maintenance and progress significant capital plans and the Board remained focused on providing value for money by making the best use of resources.

## **Question and Answer Session**

The Chair of the Board introduced the question and answer session.

### **"What kind of impact are we expecting from Covid 19 this winter?"**

The Acting Medical Director confirmed the Trust was sighted on the emerging new variant and was working closely with community partners to roll out the Covid-19 vaccination programme, it was hoped this would mitigate the impact, although planning would assume an increase in admissions over the winter months. Going forwards the delivery of antiviral medicines would be supported in the community, with intravenous infusions remaining the responsibility of the Trust. In addition, an infectious disease department had been developed in the Trust to support planning.

### **"From a staffing perspective what are the biggest challenges the trust is facing and how do you plan to tackle this in the next 12 months?"**

The Chief People Officer confirmed there were two aspects to this question. Firstly, workforce supply, ensuring that the correct number of people undertook the most appropriate roles, equipped with the relevant skills. Secondly, the culture and experience colleagues had whilst working at the Trust, plans to support both aspects were in place.

Earlier this year an ambitious fifteen year, national long term workforce plan had been published by NHSE; the Trust had launched its refreshed People Strategy which articulated the ambitions as an organisation for the next 5 years, underpinned by delivery plans and with clear success measures.

In respect of workforce supply a significant amount of work was ongoing with the Trust's educational partners, engagement with schools and colleges prior to entry into the workforce and the development of a series of training programmes across the various professional groups to support career opportunities and pathways in support of workforce planning and development.

People's experience at the Trust, either as a colleague or learner, was very much addressed by the focus on culture, including development of the DBTH Way framework to clarify behaviours built upon trust values, the Leadership Development Programme, Just Culture, working with the Patient Safety Team and Speaking Up. All approaches supported colleague retention and development.

**“What are the plans for the phlebotomy service now that the drive-through Eco Power service is closing?”**

The Chief Executive confirmed the Trust had received several questions and concerns with regards to this decision which had been taken in consultation with the commissioner of the service, NHS South Yorkshire Doncaster Place. The decision signalled a return to pre-pandemic practice where patients would have accessed phlebotomy services either via their general practice or on the hospital site. In taking this difficult decision Doncaster Place has consulted with GPs about the availability of facilities and took into consideration that the drive-through service was largely only accessible by car. If the service had continued to be offered across three sites this may have restricted access. A number of patients had raised concerns relating to infection, prevention and control measures where they were immunocompromised and both general practice and the hospital had confirmed they would be able to put in place additional precautions if advised in advance of patients' circumstances. The service would be kept under review to ensure a safe and quality service to meet patient needs.

The following question was received from a member of the public, the response was not available at the time of the recording; for completeness the question and answer are provided below and has been added to the Trust's 2023 Annual Members Meeting web page.

**“How are accessible facilities for the differently abled being implemented at Bassetlaw, and particularly as part of the Bassetlaw Emergency Village development?”**

At present, there is a Changing Place facility within the Outpatients department at Bassetlaw Hospital. This is available to all visitors and patients at all hours, however from 5pm, individuals may need to request the key from ward colleagues or the team within the Emergency Department. The room features a height adjustable adult changing bed, an electronic ceiling hoist, height adjustable sink, peninsular toilet, shower, non-slip floor and privacy screen.

A full briefing can be [viewed here](#) which describes the accessibility and facilities which will be put in place as part of the Emergency Village project.

**Annual Report & Accounts 2022/23**

The Chair asked that the Annual Report and Accounts for 2022/23, the annual audit letter and the Trust's Constitution be received. Copies of which could be found on the Trusts website at [www.dbth.nhs.uk](http://www.dbth.nhs.uk)

In closing, the Chair of the Board thanked all viewers, whilst there had been challenges in 2022/23, the year had been defined by teamwork, hard work and dedication to ensure quality of care.

Looking forwards to 2023/24, the Trust was committed to working tirelessly to provide the best care and treatment to its patients.

**Date and Time of Next Meeting (Verbal)**

The next Annual Members' Meeting would take place on 26 September 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzy Brain England', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Suzy Brain England OBE  
**Chair of the Board**  
9 November 2023