

Chairman's annual review – 2019/20



As I write my report for the financial year ended 31 March 2020, we find ourselves in unprecedented times amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. This has created many challenges across the whole organisation, both in terms of clinical delivery of services and financial stability. The senior management team with support from the Board of Trustees have shown immense leadership and innovation in the way they have adapted to a very different working environment. I am pleased to report that at the time of writing, the latest financial indications are that the hospice has sufficient reserves to continue to meet its charitable obligations and remains financially stable.

Following agreement last year to the development of new service models and senior management structure, this year saw the detailed planning and development of this begin. After consultation with the staff and Board of Trustees in the summer, initial stages of implementation commenced early autumn starting with the Information and Support Centre and the recruitment of two senior managers to replace several previous management posts. Work on the new service models also began including plans to refurbish the reception and patient areas of the hospice building.

During the year, we were approached by a respected local end of life charity Helen's Trust with a view to working with them as one of their care providers. After several constructive meetings, agreement was reached on a collaboration to improve end of life care across the Derbyshire Dales. Following on from this, we identified many areas in which the two charities shared the same philosophy and commitment to delivering the highest levels of care. Further talks between the respective Chairs and CEOs commenced to explore options for a merger, which if approved, would happen later in 2020.

Throughout the year, the Board of Trustees met quarterly to review clinical activity, management, HR and finance against our strategic aims and goals; Services, Environment, Workforce and Finance, and that we continue to meet our Mission Statement. As a Board, we remain committed to effective leadership, strong governance, regulatory compliance and fulfilling our legal, custodial and morale responsibilities as Trustees. We regularly cover other areas including board development, training, risk and strategic planning.

I would like to acknowledge the long and outstanding contribution by Dr Simon Cocksedge who retired from the Board of Trustees in November 2019 after 26 years. During that time, Simon has seen many changes and been instrumental in key

developments serving as both Board Chair and Clinical Committee Chair. In later years, he joined the hospice pastoral team and remained active in supporting patient care. On behalf of the Board, I extend our sincerest thanks to Simon and wish him all the best as he explores pastures new.

I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome Anne Cawthorn MBE on her return to the Board. Anne has a long and distinguished career in nursing and palliative care, and has been involved with Blythe House for many years. I am delighted to welcome her back and look forward to working alongside her.

My report would not be complete without acknowledging the contribution made by and thanking the remarkable team lead by Janet Dunphy CEO, senior managers, staff, our many loyal and dedicated volunteers, supporters and donors. We continue to be both fortunate and privileged to have enjoyed and inspired your commitment to the values of Blythe House throughout this year.

Timothy J Mourné

Chair, Board of Trustees