

Chairman`s Annual Report for 2022

Your Worshipful the Mayor, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I give my annual report on the activities of the Friends of Eastbourne Hospital. As many of you know the Friends financial year runs from September 1st 2021 until 31st August 2022 but I will, as I have done in previous years, talk about our fundraising events up until this AGM. All financial details, however, will relate to our Financial Year, September 2021 to August 2022.

As has been customary I will mention some of the formalities before talking about the specific events of the year. Fortunately, even though Covid has far from gone away, we have been able to reinstate most activities, and bring our fundraising and shop activity levels back towards the levels they were pre Covid.

The aims and objectives of the Friends of Eastbourne Hospital have remained much the same in the 74 years since it was formed. I realise that these have been mentioned in previous Chair`s reports but I think they are worth repeating. They can be summarised as follows:

- 1) To provide funds for extra services, equipment and amenities for patients and staff at Eastbourne DGH and the related community services, and to make donations where the expenditure has been recommended by the NHS Trust, and has been approved by the Committee.
- 2) To encourage voluntary work in the hospital.
- 3) To provide a link between the hospital and community.

The Charity is managed by a Board of Trustees who are elected and, thereafter, re-elected at three year intervals at the Annual General Meeting. It is very sad for me to announce that Peter Nash has decided to step down from the Friends after this AGM after 17 years, 10 as Chairman and 7 as President. Peter has overseen the biggest expansion of the Friends funds during his tenure allowing the Friends to stretch to bigger projects than ever before. I know the two achievements over the years that stand out to Peter are the expansion and refurbishment of Pevensey Ward, and the purchase of the robot for Urology at a cost of £1mill, an amount never before considered. But there were many more. I personally would like to thank Peter for all his wise counsel during the 7 years since I took over from him as Chair. I was appointed a trustee of the Friends after Peter asked if I would join when I retired. I was flattered and said yes. He then immediately said "did I tell you that I am standing down as Chair". I said "no. Who is taking over from you?" he replied "I am looking at him and the trustees have approved your appointment." A novel way of being appointed. I personally wish you a long, happy and healthy retirement Peter, as I know all involved with the Friends do too.

Another stalwart of the Friends has also retired. Sue Hitchen, the manager of the Friends shops, has finally stepped down after being manager since 2010. Sue started as a volunteer but it soon became clear that she was destined for greater things and on the retirement of the previous shop manager Sue was appointed. Since then the shop profits have increased year on year apart from the Covid years. Sue has managed to get a 7 day a week trolley round to the wards up and running for staff and patients. Sue has always gone the extra mile covering for any absent volunteer and has put in an immeasurable amount of extra hours. You will see her at almost every Friends event helping out in various roles. We hope that Sue will continue to organise her extremely popular quizzes. Everyone at the Friends, from the trustees, office and volunteers thank Sue for her hard work, friendship and support and wish her a long and happy retirement.

But we are pleased to welcome a new trustee. Terry Henson is a retired teacher who has plenty of volunteering experience and a real interest in interior design and other art related things. She has boundless energy and I am sure will make a massive contribution to the Friends. We are also pleased to announce the appointment 10 days ago of Rai Hitchen as successor to Sue as manager of the Friends shops.

So let us look at the Friends activities and the income they bring in first, and then later how we spent that money. So firstly income.

INCOME:- Where do the Friends get their income from? I know most of you will have heard this before but I do think it is worth repeating to put things into context. Funds are raised for the Friends in a number of ways:

- 1) **Shops and Trolley Services**
- 2) **Legacies and in Lieu Donations for Flowers**
- 3) **Donations and Fundraising from the Eastbourne Population**
- 4) **The Friends own Fundraising Activities**

I will go through each of these one by one, starting with the shops.

1) **Shops**

The shops are once again doing a grand job with income approaching pre-covid levels. But like so many charities the shortage of volunteers threatens the shops` activities. Sue Hitchen has done a grand job keeping the shops going with her hard working team and volunteers.

- a) **Two shops** – these are a main shop in the entrance to the Hospital, and a small outlet by the staff side entrance to the Hospital. The income could have been higher in the shops if there had not been such problems with our card reading machines. This was due to several issues, predominantly to EE moving the mast

outside the hospital. So the card readers did not work. Now the mast has been moved back the machines work in most places in the hospital again, much to the delight of staff, and the Friends of course and takings have shot up. No one carries cash anymore apart from me!.

- b) **A Flower Shop** – Sadly this has stayed closed this last 12 months. With no or limited visitors to the hospital there was little need for flowers, especially as at the height of the pandemic flowers were not allowed on the wards. Purchasing just a few flowers for the shop for the occasional sale was not financially viable. It has however been agreed recently with the Trust that we can open a small mobile flower outlet in the hospital foyer but the Friends as yet have not taken this forward as there are not enough volunteers to run it. We are hoping that this might restart
- c) **A cafe outside the Radiotherapy Unit** – The café has been open over the past year but only for 3 days a week. Again a lack of volunteers stops it opening 5 days. Again sales were affected by the card machines not working. However the biggest reason sales are poor is because the Trust have done building work in the Day Surgery Unit that has led to the corridor from the main hospital being permanently blocked off. Access is therefore much harder resulting in falling sales. Sadly we are having to continually review the viability of the café.
- d) **The Trolley Services** around the wards for the convenience of hard working staff and patients who are unable to visit the other shops. Sales have now shot up again since the mast has been re sited outside the hospital and the card machines work again. More volunteers are still needed to make sure the service can continue on a daily basis.

Again I cannot thank Sue Hitchen enough for all the hard work she has put in to all these ventures, much of it in her own time. Without her and her other staff members and the volunteers none of this success would be possible.

2) Legacies:-

These remain an unpredictable but very important source of income particularly in the last two years with our own fundraising so reduced. This financial year there has been £181,703 left to the Friends for which as always we are incredibly grateful. This is less than the last two years. Some of this has been left to specific departments and we have been working with these departments to purchase the equipment they need.

Many donations have also been received **in lieu of flowers**, contributing £1000s throughout the year. We are very grateful to relatives who, in their time of bereavement, still think of us and we can assure them that all donations are gratefully received and make a significant contribution to our activities.

3) Donations:-

Can I take this opportunity to thank all the individuals and organisations who have donated money to the Friends over the last year. I am overwhelmed by the many and varied ways people fundraise on our behalf. Due to less events happening people looked for more imaginative ways to fundraise and donate. I will mention some of them here.

- a) Robin & Sue Weldon Diamond wedding, donations in lieu of gifts - £925
- b) Eastbourne Historic Vehicles Club from Festival of Transport - £1,000
- c) Heaths Butchers – collecting bucket for donations for bones - £2,577
- d) Pentrunder UK – in lieu of sending Christmas cards to customers - £500
- e) Denise Bliss, Hailsham Artists Network refreshment sales at events - £757
- f) Waitrose Heathfield - £900
- g) Sussex Austin 500 club - £500
- h) Verity Lodge 4870 - £200
- i) South Downs Singers from summer concert - £200
- j) Ocklynge School cake sale - £294
- k) Eastbourne Borough Charity Quiz (Friends were nominated charity) - £600
- l) House Clearance Shop, Old Town (Collecting pot for customers) - £222
- m) Anonymous donor`s silk pictures auctioned by Eastbourne Auctions - £90
- n) Donated seeds, sold in the Shop - over £1000
- o) Willingdon Table Tennis Club - £880
- p) Eastbourne & District Old Town Dance Club - £1000

It is very sad that the last two donations were because both those clubs have closed down. I think this is sadly a sign of the times. But we are very grateful that the clubs thought of us.

There have been so many other donations, many given anonymously. Many people gave donations in lieu of sending Christmas Cards and presents, and there were many donations in appreciation of care in the hospital. There are far too many to mention once again. But all, however big or small, have been gratefully received and are hugely important to the work the Friends are able to do for the Hospital. I thank you all on behalf of the Friends for your donations whether you are mentioned in this report or not. Can I also thank those who have used Gift Aid for their donations as once they are registered, the Friends get an additional 25% back from HMRC.

Regular sums from Recycle4Charity have been received from used cartridges, milk bottle tops, Amazon Smile, and the Eastbourne Borough Council lottery. However there was sad news when the Friends heard about the death of John Carden. He and his wife have made lots of money for the Friends over many years through collecting and selling

millions of milk bottle tops. Our condolences go to Mary, his wife, who I believe has said she will continue collecting the tops.

Simon and Carolyn Farrar, since taking over the stamp sales, have continued to do great things raising money in online sales, this last twelve months raising nearly £1500.

A big thank you to those who have made generous donations of wool, for the army of volunteer knitters to make goods to sell in the shop, stamps, jewellery, and raffle prizes.

But I cannot end this part of my report without mentioning two other incredibly generous donors. Firstly the Masonic Charity donated £50,000 towards this year's major project, the Urology Robot. And only last month the MediTech Trust donated £25,000 towards the same project to finish off that fundraising. The Friends are extremely grateful to both of these charities for their continuing support to the Friends.

The Friends have so many generous benefactors but sadly I cannot name them all. So if you have not been mentioned my apologies but be assured your donation is equally as important as those mentioned.

4) Friends Fundraising Activities –

This last year has seen the return of many of the Friends fundraising events that had to be cancelled the last two years because of, you guessed it, Covid. However the Spring Coffee morning and Tennis tournament are two that did not happen but we hope will restart next year.

The events that did happen showed a return to something like the pre Covid levels.

- A) **Open Gardens** – There was a fear that with inflation and the fact there is less money available in peoples' pockets that the Gardens might not be as much of a success as previous years. However, the numbers attending were high, helped by good weather, although slightly down on previous years. The gardens in the end made over £18,000, also only slightly down on the last two years. I must thank all the owners and the tireless volunteers for manning the gate, erecting signs, organising the car park, making cakes, and running the stalls. I wish particularly to thank Margaret Lonsdale and Ros Rolls-King for organising the season and leading the team this year. Sadly Margaret will be leaving Eastbourne in the months ahead and so a new garden team is being formed. Planning for 2023 is already underway.

- B) **Art Exhibition** – the 17th annual Art Exhibition last month was once again a great success. Ann Caffyn seems to have never ending enthusiasm and energy in organising this event with her great team behind her in support. Once again the exhibition was a great success raising almost £4000 through picture sales, the

raffle of a painting by Robert Stevens, the silent auction of a painting by Alan Everard, and donations over the two day exhibition. This was the first year a painting by a one-year-old was entered in to the exhibition. It was certainly better than anything I can do!

- C) **Dine around the World** – The first of three of these was held at the Spice Garden in March with a lively and joyful atmosphere and raised £794. Although it was only two months later, we took the chance of having another event in May at the Dem Shish Turkish restaurant. We need not have worried as over 120 people attended, I think our biggest attendance ever at one of these events. The evening raised £953, again another record I think. The third dinner is planned for 1st December at the Thai Marina and was fully booked within a week of advertising leaving a lot of disappointed people who could not get in. It pleases me that these events are so popular. Our thanks go to all the owners of these restaurants for providing us with excellent food and service. We will be back!
- D) **Fashion Show** – The long-awaited and three times postponed Fashion Show finally happened. Guests were greeted on arrival with a glass of bubbly, donated by Barry & Co Solicitors. The show lasted about an hour with many clothes being modelled. And the show raised a very substantial £1,135. Our thanks go to Rosemary Cameron and her terrific team of helpers for organising this great event and it is hoped it can be repeated next year.
- E) **Barn Dance** – After the success of the first Dance at Carters Corner Farm before Covid struck it was time for another. Lots of appropriate cowboy attire and plenty of interesting dancing was accompanied by a barbecue in the interval. A great evening that raised £1400. Our thanks of course go to our hosts at the farm, Nigel and Heather Harper, and to those companies that donated beer and to those who donated goods for the raffle.
- F) **Wine Tasting with a difference** – Our two wine experts, Henry Butler and Tom Surgey, spent the evening trying to convince us that each of their wine choices was the superior wine across three rounds. After a really tight finish Henry Butler just pipped it. A really entertaining evening that raised over £1300, that included 10% of all wine sales after the event.
- G) **Autumn Fair** – After a gap of two years the Autumn Fare, previously the Christmas Coffee Morning, took place on 5th November at St John`s Parish Hall. With many stalls as before the Fair made £1780. Our thanks go to Bo Phillips and her team for organising it.
- H) **Quiz** – It was nice to get back to running three quizzes this year that once again were extremely well attended. They made about £1,700

So you can see that the Friends` fundraising activities are almost back to their pre-covid levels. Hopefully we will increase them further next year.

EXPENDITURE:-

What have the general funds been spent on?

The amount spent is approximately £160,000, but this figure doesn't include other items we have agreed to buy but haven't as yet been billed for, or the major project.

So how did the Friends spend the funds received? At the last AGM I announced that the Friends' major project for the year just finished was to raise £500,000 towards a replacement Da Vinci robot for the Urology department which as you know is a Regional Centre for cancer. The robot has revolutionised the treatment of so many patients. This £500K has been achieved and will keep Eastbourne at the forefront of Urology Cancer services. An amazing achievement and our thanks go to all who helped in this fundraising.

The Friends have been able to provide, or agreed to provide, equipment to other departments as well.

Here is some of the equipment the Friends have paid for, or agreed to pay for, within the financial year:-

• Podiatry	Shockwave system	£10,995
• Ophthalmology	Laser machine	£36,000
• Sexual Health	Examination Light	£540
• Infusion Unit	8 armchairs for day cases	£8,085
• Paediatrics	2 Spirometry machines	£2,404
• Crisis Response Team	Portable ECG machine	£2,694
• Anaesthetics	Ultrasound machine	£47,785
• Microbiology	Thermocycler	£23,798
• Moving and Handling	Training machine	£851

As I am sure you remember the Friends also set up a Covid fund in 2020 from generous donations from the public for the benefit of the staff through the terrible Covid times. Although most of it was spent in the last two years there was an amount left. The Trust approached the Friends to see if we could provide £10,000 towards an upgrade to the staff restaurant and the adjacent coffee shop area to make it much more relaxing and staff friendly. This we were very glad to support.

Welcome packs for patients who come into hospital urgently are still being provided and contain a toothbrush, toothpaste, and a few other essential items for care. These are purchased by the Friends and are very much appreciated by patients and often result in donations to the Friends as a thank you.

And at Christmas the Friends were still able to give donations to wards and departments that are working on Christmas day and these are used for gifts for patients or Christmas food for the ward. The library also gets a donation for books, and the Hospital Radio to help it keep running. All these Christmas donations amount to about £6,500.

The Friends have continued this year to make available **Educational Bursaries** for up to £2000 per year from a legacy left a few years ago to the Friends, not for equipment, but "for the benefit of staff at Eastbourne DGH". This year the trustees have sadly not had any applications. We hope that we have more applications to choose from in the coming year and we will push hard to get staff to apply. I am sure it has been the pressure of work that has stopped people applying.

Sadly the Friends were unable to hold its usual 3 educational talks for the public, once again, due to Covid but we hope to resume them next year.

The Friends have also decided to sponsor two football teams. Firstly the hospital staff football team was in desperate need of a football kit. The team brings staff together from lots of departments and has been great for staff morale. We agreed to fund the kit from the Beavan legacy which was left to the Friends for the benefit of the staff and we thought this fitted the criteria perfectly. All shirts have the Friends logo on the front and bucket collections and some match fees will be given to the Friends in return. The team has several matches planned and I personally hope the kit will be enough of a boost for the team to beat the Conquest Hospital team at next year`s annual match!

The second team we are getting involved with is Eastbourne Borough Football Club. Against the background of the club`s "One club, One community" ethos, the Friends will be sponsoring the junior team for two seasons. We see the work that both bodies do as being at the heart of Eastbourne`s community and are excited about the mutual support that we will be giving each other. We have two sponsored first team matches in the first season, which will see a hospital team doing a fundraising penalty shootout at half time against a Borough goalie, as well as a bucket collection carried out by the junior team around the crowd. We will also be holding our own events using the club facilities such as quizzes, fun days, and an Easter fundraiser to coincide with the April sponsored match. This is one for everyone, young and old.

Please be assured that no donations that are made to the Friends by the people of Eastbourne, or monies made at the Friends fundraising events, has been used for this venture. Your donations are always only used for the benefit of the hospital in the form of equipment and support for the staff.

The Future:-

So what is the major project the Friends of Eastbourne Hospital are supporting this coming year. After many months of asking the Trust for a project, I finally got them to agree to one. As many of you will have heard, and after the public consultations, acute cardiology and specialist cardiology in-patient services are to be based in Eastbourne. This is really good news for our hospital. So the Friends have agreed to raise £250k to buy specialist equipment for the cardiac catheter lab. I am sure this will be a very popular project for the people of Eastbourne.

The Trust continues to be grateful to the Friends for all that we do for the hospital, although it would be nice, as I have said before, if members of the Trust Board attended a few of our fundraising events. Seeing Board members face to face is great for our volunteers and shows that their efforts are appreciated.

I would like to thank all the trustees, Amy and Sue in the office who are unbelievable, and the shop management for all the support and hard work that they continue to give me as Chair of the Friends which has made my role so much easier. It has been a year of recovery for the Friends after Covid but it has gone better than I thought it would. So without this support none of this could have been achieved. However my biggest thanks must go to you, the members of the Friends, volunteers and helpers, and the population of Eastbourne who so generously support us in all our endeavours. You make all this possible and without you none of this is achievable. It is an honour to be chair of this great organisation.

However, please can I make a plea for more volunteers to join us. Without volunteers we cannot do what we do. Speak to your friends and relatives. However little time you and they can spare is very much appreciated. I am aware that many clubs and charities are struggling to survive, some due to lack of volunteers. None of us would want the Friends to be one of them.

It is impossible to pick out all individuals in this report or else I would be here forever, but I have already mentioned several. But can I apologise to anyone who has donated or raised money for the Friends, or given up their time to volunteer, who I have not personally mentioned. Please be assured your efforts are as much appreciated as those I have mentioned.

Mister President that concludes my review of the year. I am happy to answer any questions members may have. But if there are no questions I would like to propose that the meeting adopts this report.