

Chairman`s Annual Report for 2025

Deputy Lieutenant, Your Worshipful the Mayor, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. This is the 10th annual report that I have given as Chair on the activities of the Friends of Eastbourne Hospital. As many of you know the Friends of Eastbourne Hospital`s financial year ends on 31st August, and our Treasurer will quite rightly talk to that timetable, but I will, as I have done in previous years, talk about our fundraising events up until this AGM as it seems inappropriate to me to leave the last 3 months of activities until next year`s report.

I know I have every year mentioned the aims and objectives of the Friends but I think it appropriate that I mention them again for those who may not know them. And then I will talk about the specific activities of the year.

The aims and objectives have remained much the same over the 77 years since the Friends was formed. 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 our 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. I am delighted to say that those due for re-election this year have agreed to do so, apart from Trish Hamblin who works in the DGH Operating theatres. Due to pressure of work she has decided to step down but we hope we will see her as a trustee once again in the future. I would like to personally thank Trish for the work she has done for the Friends over her time as a trustee.

However it is with great sadness that I have to announce the news that in August we lost one of our long time trustees after a short illness. Bo Phillips had been a trustee since 1995. She was an extremely hard working trustee having served 30 years without a break, untiring in her efforts to raise funds for the hospital. Her energy and enthusiasm was infectious. She organised the Friends tennis tournament for many years, started the bathroom stall which she ran at many events, and organised the annual Christmas Coffee Morning with the support of Rosemary Cameron and her team of supporters. If help was needed Bo would be there. She was such a stalwart for the Friends and she will be greatly missed, not just for her work for the charity but also for her wonderful

personality. Our heart felt condolences go out to Michael her husband, daughter Harriet, son Anthony, her 4 grandchildren, and the rest of her family and friends.

We have however appointed, subject to approval at this AGM, five new trustees. James Wilkinson and Richard Grace who are retiring consultants at the hospital, Angie Jarvis and Elaine Higgins retired nurses, and Denise Rowe who ran an International Medical Conference Company. They have already helped out at our events and come up with ideas for future ones. I know they will be a great support and asset to the Friends.

So let us now look at the activities that have brought income for the Friends, and then how that money has been spent. So firstly let us look at 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 the best way of showing it. 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 by 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

As in recent years the shops go from strength to strength. Shop takings were up to £682K, an increase of 10% on last year with a 33% profit margin. As usual, although they may be fed up with me saying it, I have to thank Rai, the shop manager, her two deputy managers, Fiona and Tracie, and all her fabulous shop volunteers for all their hard work, including covering for each other when absences occur through holidays or sickness.

- α) Two shops** – these are a main shop in the entrance to the Hospital, which continues to be busy, and a small outlet by the staff side entrance at the back of the hospital. This latter shop suffered a bit with all the building work on the Sussex Surgical Centre reducing footfall but now that work has come to an end it should increase.
- β) The cafe outside the Radiotherapy Unit** – A lack of volunteers had stopped the café being open 5 days a week but this year 5 day opening has been possible most weeks. Although takings are not huge the shop continues to make a regular income and provides a valuable service to patients, visitors and staff.

χ) **The Trolley Services** around the wards are for the convenience of hard working staff, and for patients who are unable to visit the other shops. The wifi issues, although still problematic in some areas of the hospital, are slightly better. However this year the shop has had to stop selling sandwiches on the trolley round much to the frustration and annoyance of ward staff. This is due to central guidance concerning the potential risks posed by Listeria in sandwiches and chilled ready-to-eat foods to all patients. This guidance comes from `The British Sandwich and Food to Go Association`. Sounds like something from `Have I got news for You`. The guidance makes it virtually impossible to reimplement the round although we are looking at how we might overcome it. At this point I must say that in the 15 or so years of the sandwich trolley round there have been no cases of food poisoning as far as we know. However if we were to ignore the new guidance and someone did get ill or, heaven forbid die, the ultimate sanction I am told would be prison. As chair of the Friends I expect that would be me! Sue and Amy in our office have said they would visit me in there though! More volunteers are still needed to make sure the service can continue on a daily basis serving things other than sandwiches.

2) **Legacies:-**

These remain an unpredictable but very important source of income. The last two financial years has seen well over £1mill left to the Friends with more still to come. As always we are incredibly grateful to all those who think of us in their Wills. Without them we would not be able to do all that we do for our hospital, and particularly this year with our £1mill donation for the Sussex Surgical Centre

Some of these legacies have been left to specific departments and we are working with these departments to purchase the equipment they need. For example the Friends have had legacies totalling approximately £78K left specifically for the Ophthalmology Department. This has taken well over a year to sort due to a disagreement within ophthalmology about which microscope to buy. Finally a decision has been made and the microscope the DGH consultants want will now be bought. .

Many donations have also been received **in lieu of flowers**. We are once again 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. I will mention some of them here as there

are far too many to list them all and I apologise to those that I do not mention but your donations are equally important to the Friends, however big or small.

a) Tuesday Craft Club – sales table (£729) & hand made goods sold in shop	- £3650
b) Haulaway Skips – donation for each skip hired in one month	-£1006
c) Eastbourne Historic Vehicles Club	- £625
d) South Downs Singers cake sale	- £140
e) The House Clearance Shop	- £440
f) Sponsored Read by Parkinson`s Group	- £425
g) Lisa Harrison – donation from cancelled Barn Dance	- £480
h) Lade family – appreciation of care of relative	- £310
i) Daniel Isted-Hicks – recognition of care to father	- £1215
j) Heaths Butchers donation box	£1400
j) Mike Sibbering 80 th birthday donations	- £825
k) Bob and Sue Mulvey quiz	- £330
l) Darcy Leonard-Burn of Rix and Kay – London Marathon	-£1200
m) Hartington Lodge donation	- £660
n) `Katefest & Eastbourne 41 Club music festival money for Cystic Fibrosis	- £5500
o) Raffle prizes from local businesses, hotels & members	

There have been so many other donations, many given anonymously. I cannot mention them all individually so apologies to those donors. You know your donations all mean so much to the Friends however big or small.

I would like to thank Simon and Carolyn Farrar who have made £1167 this year from the sale of donated stamps, and June and Brian Briscoe for the sale of donated jewellery. I am not sure of the amount raised this year as some jewellery has been sold through Eastbourne auctions, who do not charge us commission, and some through several other sales sites but it has been in four figures.

Lightening Fibre, one of our Corporate Members, very kindly installed a fast fibre connection in to the Friends shop for free which has made a big difference to our wifi speed.

But I can not end this section about donations without mentioning a phenomenal man and his wife, Peter and Heather Valentine. During the Covid pandemic, a then 96 year old Peter, a local Eastbourne resident and World War 2 veteran, walked the incredible total of 96 miles to raise money for the Friends. This year Peter, now 101, and Heather challenged themselves again by walking once a month from their home to the hospital and donating £10 each time to the Friends. We set up a donations page which raised more than a further £500 in support of Peter. Peter became quite a local celebrity being stopped in the street and being interviewed by the local papers. As a result of the Valentines efforts they were invited to the VE Day celebrations at a packed Cavendish Hotel which I took great pleasure in taking them to. It was an evening of nostalgia with Glen Miller music and a sing along of Cockney songs. The room went

quiet and Peter was announced as a war veteran and was presented with a birthday cake and had a photograph taken with the mayor. On leaving the celebrations Peter was given a standing ovation. On the way home he said nothing. He was overwhelmed. An incredibly modest man. I also had the pleasure of taking them, with Sue from the office, to the 100th anniversary of Drusillas Zoo where about 20 other centenarians were also present. And Peter was not the oldest! Very sadly Peter died suddenly last month and had a full military funeral two weeks ago. It has been an honour to have known Peter and his adoring wife Heather and listening to his stories. He did tell me that as far as the army is concerned he is 102 as he signed up at 17 years old in 1941 having lied about his age.

A big thank you also to those who have made generous donations of wool, for the army of volunteer knitters to make goods to sell in the shop. These make a lot of money over the year. Please continue to donate stamps, jewellery, silver, bags, and used printer cartridges. They all bring in valuable funds for the Friends. Unwanted gifts, unopened bathroom products, bottles of wines and spirits, and chocolates, within their use by date of course, are also all gratefully received either to sell or use as raffle prizes at our events.

The Friends have so many generous benefactors. If you have not been mentioned my apologies but be assured your donation is equally as important as those mentioned.

2) **Friends Fundraising Activities –**

Many of these have been running for several years but there have, and will be, a few new fundraising events I will talk about in a minute.

- A) **Open Gardens** – It is quite unbelievable that despite having an incredibly dry summer there was rain at 3 of the 7 gardens. Two were able to continue but with very few visitors but sadly the last garden, Folkington Place, had to be cancelled due to torrential rain. As far as anyone can remember this was the first time a garden had to be cancelled. However despite that the Open Garden season raised £17K, a quite phenomenal amount considering the rain. All the gardens had their own unique charms and I, on behalf of the Friends, thank the owners for allowing us to use their gardens. I would like to thank the individual event coordinators, the car parkers, the cake makers, the invaluable volunteers, our visitors and of course all the garden owners. Even at the rain effected gardens I personally attended I could see what a happy team they were. I would also like to make a specific mention of Sue Duffell who led and directed this great team. Planning for next year is already underway with several gardens already booked.
- B) **Art Exhibition** – the 20th annual Art Exhibition last month was once again a great success. There were 340 paintings submitted from 67 different artists. Ann Caffyn seems to have never ending enthusiasm and energy in organising this

event with her great team behind her in support. It was most appropriate that Ann was presented with an engraved glass trophy from the Friends in recognition of her 20 years. On top of that we announced a new annual award named after Ann for the `best picture` chosen by a trustee. This year I did the choosing even though I know nothing about art. But I know what I like. Once again the exhibition was a great success raising a magnificent £3500 through picture sales, the raffle the silent auction and donations over the two day exhibition.

C) Dine around the World – there have been 4 dinners this year, the fourth one being last week. Because of the huge popularity of the Thai Marina we managed to persuade the restaurant to do an extra event in February this year on top of the usual November one for all those disappointed that missed out in November 2024. Other meals were held for a second time at the Ganges Indian restaurant and the Trident Fish bar in Old Town. The Trident was a new venue for the Friends but despite some reservations beforehand was an absolutely resounding success. Most of us felt it was the best fish and chips we had ever had. How can you cook 80 pieces of perfect fish all at once. And last week we returned to our usual November Thai Marina meal. All these meals are always sold out and usually with a waiting list, and make on average £1000 each. Our thanks as usual to the owners of the restaurants who always look after us so well and often donate raffle prizes too. Our thanks also to the various other raffle contributors from restaurants, hotels, and individuals.

D) Christmas Fair – This year`s Christmas Fair/coffee morning returned to Meads Hall two weeks ago. This was one of the events Bo Phillips organised so it was very sad to not have her there. With many stalls as before it was a great success. Our thanks go to Rosemary Cameron, some of our new trustees, and the team for organising what I hope will continue to be an annual event despite Bo no longer being with us. Thanks also go to all those who donated unwanted gifts, toys, toiletries, etc , and those who made and donated cakes and savouries for the cake stall. It raised approximately £2500.

E) Quizzes – It was nice once again for Sue Hitchen to run the quizzes this year at the Fishermens` Club. This year she delegated one to Chris and Gill Conlan to run which was as equally successful as Sue`s. They are such relaxing fun so please book for one of next year`s.

F) Football – our community partnership with Eastbourne Borough came to an end this year. However we joined up with Eastbourne United with the view to possibly running some Friends events there in their very good facilities. The DGH football team, shirts sponsored by the Friends, have played all their matches there this year. Of course the highlight is the annual EDGH match against the Conquest. Once again the Conquest won, this time 5-3, despite the EDGH leading 3-1 at half time. We raised a small amount of money with a bucket collection. We were then the charity of choice for a public services 8 team tournament a few weeks later. Cakes were made and sold and there was a bucket collection. Sadly we only made about £250. Our thanks go to Paul Gosling for all he does organising the DGH team and the charity opportunities he is making.

So what about new events done this year and others planned for next year?

Well in April a Supporters lunch was held at the Hydro Hotel followed by a talk on local artists by Terry Henson, one of our trustees. The food and talk were excellent and our thanks go to Sandy Boyce-Sharp for organising it. It raised £523.

The second new event is a Lunch Club, also at the Hydro Hotel, with a guest speaker at each. These have been organised by the Hydro in conjunction, once again, with Sandy. The Friends will receive a donation from the Hydro for each talk. The first of these happened earlier this month with the talk given by Alex Polizzi, who also kindly gave up her fee to the Friends. It was sold out with a waiting list. These lunches are planned right up until 2027 and will happen bimonthly. Bookings are done through the Hydro Hotel so please do not try to book through the Friends office.

What next? Well we have a new event on 30th January next year. A Murder Mystery with a buffet at the Alexandra Arms. The pub will be closed so we have it to ourselves. And also the Race Night will be returning after a years gap. This will be held at the Crown and Anchor pub on 24th April. And of course there will be our usual events too.

So what did the Friends spend the funds raised on?

EXPENDITURE:-

I said last year that there have been problems and delays with the approval and purchasing of equipment because of Trust processes. Some delays have been up to a year. However things have improved and the Chairs of the Friends organisations of the 4 hospitals have worked with the Trust to produce, we hope, a better and quicker process.

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 £250K towards our £1mill donation to fund £500K of essential equipment for the 4 operating theatres on the ground floor of the new Sussex Surgical Centre, and a similar amount for the endoscopy unit on the first floor. Some of the latter equipment will provide the ability to perform investigations that previously had relied on our patients going to Guildford. Clearly a great investment for our community. The trustees were able to have a tour of both units prior their opening. They are absolutely stunning. If I had not retired I would have loved to have worked in them. I also managed to get the trust to put up three plaques on the ground floor acknowledging our £1mill contribution. I am working on getting a similar two in the upstairs endoscopy unit and one in the lift. This is only the second time that the Friends has spent £1mill in one year. I thank all those who have helped raise the money and to the benefactor who left £750K in a legacy to the Friends. This centre will be one of 40 across the country and has strong environmental

credentials with at least 50% of the power provided by solar panels, and a green anaesthesia system.

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 last year, for the benefit of patient treatment or for the benefit of staff:-

• Operating Theatres – LUCAS resuscitation chest compressor	£12,500
• Urology – bladder catheter training mannikins	£2,550
• Urology Investigation Suite – Sara Steady	£930
• Resuscitation training mannequin	£14,995
• Speech & Language Therapy – examination chair	£9,050
• Urgent Care Ward – 2 cardiac monitors	£12,000
• Physiotherapy – transfer aid	£1,394
• Elderly Care Wards – 2 interactive sensory tables	£15,408
• Paediatrics – Interactive OMI Vista table for cystic fibrosis clinic	£5,500
• Stroke Ward – Team hoodies (specific donation)	£1,215

Apart from the Sussex Surgical Centre donation there is a second project the Friends have also helped to fund for a total of £25,000. One of the EDGH Courtyard areas has been converted in to a Japanese themed area called the Cherry Tree Garden, an area intended for use by staff and patients, or families in need of space. Many teams and volunteers at the hospital have been involved in the gardens design and build. The trustees were invited to the opening where the ribbon cutting was shared by Trust CEO Jayne Black and Teodora Richardson, the lead for the project. The local MP Josh Babarinde joined the opening. Once again the Friends contribution is acknowledged on a plaque in the garden.

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 at a cost of about £1,800 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 either for gifts for patients, or Christmas food for the ward. The library also gets a donation for books and other learning materials, and the Hospital Radio to help it keep running. All these Christmas donations amount to about £6,900. The Friends also donated £1000 towards the Trust Awards ceremony in July.

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" who cannot get funding from the usual sources. Sadly this year we have not had any applications.

The Friends only held one Educational talk for the public this year. There was a full house in April to hear James Evans, Consultant in Anaesthetics, and Emma Smyth, Head of Major Projects, talk about the new Sussex Surgical Centre. James spoke of how the Centre will be used, and Emma about the actual building process.

Lastly in this section of my report, which is nearing its end, I want to mention our Corporate members, something the Friends started last year. Currently there are seven companies signed up – Mango Insurance, The Dental Barn, Lightning Fibre, Travelosophers, Gaby Hardwicke, Portman Smile Clinic, and Archer and Partners. If any of you are here today then I thank you for your support. We are hoping and expecting more Corporate Members. In exchange for £250 annual membership the companies get one half page advertisement in one Hospitality magazine per year and regular mentions on the supporters page of each magazine and the website, as well as features on the Friends social media. Great value for money we think.

The Future:-

So what is the major project the Friends of Eastbourne Hospital are supporting this coming year? .

After some considerable deliberation by the Trust we were offered two big projects to choose from only last week. One was to support buying equipment for the third cardiac lab at a cost of £500K, and the second was to purchase a second robot for Urology at a cost of £1mill for their ever expanding service. In the end the trustees have agreed to support firstly funding the Ophthalmology microscope as previously agreed at a total cost of about £160K of which we have already got £78K from designated legacies. This will secure the service by replacing the 16 year old microscope with the latest model. Secondly we will fund raise the £500K to equip the third cardiac catheter lab which will complete the cardiac department which is one of the most advanced in the country. A total fundraising cost for both these projects for the coming year of £582K.

Currently we are looking to fundraise for the second Urology robot in 2027, the other major project the Trust offered us. This gives us time to try and plan fundraising for this huge project. We think this is a really important purchase to increase the capacity for the ever expanding regional urology cancer service.

So as you can see we have a really major job over the next two years to raise a huge amount of funds. I think these are all great projects for our hospital so I hope all our supporters and volunteers will once again help us reach these targets.

It is nice to see Steve Phoenix, the Trust's Chairman is here at our AGM as it shows the Trust's appreciation of our work. I am hoping there will be more attendance of Board Members at some of our fundraising functions in the future, attendance at which is currently still very sporadic. Having said that, there were two members of the Trust Board and other hospital managers at our Fundraising Dine around the World at the Thai Marina last week. Very much appreciated. Seeing members of the Board face to face is great for our trustees and volunteers and shows that their efforts are appreciated.

I would like to thank all the trustees for their hard work and the support they have given me as Chair throughout the year. What can I say about Amy and Sue in the office that has not been said many times before. They are quite unbelievable. They work way beyond their hours and are the cogs that holds the Friends together. Without them I know the Friends would not be anywhere near as successful as it is. They also keep me under control which is not always easy I believe!

Once again records have been broken. A record turnover for the Friends shop of over £680K . And an all time record attendance of visitors at one of our Open Gardens also happened this year. This was at Ocklynge Manor and I am delighted that the owners, Wendy and David Dugdill, are here at this AGM today. Let us see what records we can break this coming year.

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 the Friends as I enter my 11th year in that role. As last year I ask that you let me know if any of you think that I am time expired and should be put out to pasture!

My pleas in previous years for more volunteers have paid off. I am told by Rai, the shop manager, that the shop has enough volunteers now but they still need more volunteers for the trolley rounds around the hospital. That is a very rewarding role in providing a much needed service for patients and staff who really appreciate it .So if any of you are keen please contact the Friends office. I was delighted that we recruited more volunteers for the Open Garden team this year. However little time you and they can spare is very much appreciated. Some volunteers do their training just to be available on an ad hoc basis so Rai has a list of those she can call on if she finds herself short at any time. I am aware that many clubs and charities are struggling to survive, many due to lack of volunteers. None of us would want the Friends to be one of them. Fortunately that is a long way off which I think reflects what a great community the Friends is.

It is impossible to pick out all individuals in this report or else I would be here forever, but I have already mentioned many. But can I apologise, as I do each year, 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.

Madam 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.