

DAVENPORT HOUSE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

Davenport House, Bowers Way, Harpenden, Herts AL5 4HX

ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS, 31 December 2018

Officers and members of the Management Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting on Monday 5 March, 2018

Officers:

Chair:	Richard Munton
Vice-Chair:	Brian Macdonald
Honorary Secretary:	Joan Shopper
Honorary Treasurer:	Richard Sewell (1)

Members of the Management Committee:

Bob Fletcher:	Website and Communications
Helen Hartley:	Membership Secretary, Newsletter Distribution
John Harris:	Editor, PPG Newsletter
Gillian Thornton	Journalist and Press Relations
Sheila Uppington	Education

(1) During the year Richard Sewell became unwell and John Harris became assistant Treasurer

Unlected members of the Management Committee

Dr Andrew Chafer, Senior Partner, and Shannon Davies, Business Practice Manager (ex officio).

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT: HEADLINES

2018 has been a very significant year for the PPG. At the March AGM we celebrated its 25th anniversary as one of the most active patient groups in the country. Before the formal meeting, well over a hundred members enjoyed a social event, including its founding Chair, Geoffrey Mainwaring, and Senior Partner, Derek Bird, many previous members of the Committee and current members of the Practice. Dr Andrew Chafer reviewed the previous 25 years before the current Chair outlined a new way forward.

After extensive discussion, your Committee concluded that it had to find ways to increase its engagement with the patient body, especially with younger patients. It decided that all adult Davenport House patients should, as a matter of right, be members and no subscription would be charged as from March 2019. The Practice and NHS fully supports this view.

In future, all communication will be online, in particular replacing the quarterly Newsletter with a more frequent Bulletin. The Bulletin will provide more timely information on changes to the Practice

and the availability of other local NHS resources, and reflect current NHS policy which emphasises preventative medicine and the need for patients to become more responsible for their own care.

The loss of subscription income, our major source of income, requires a reduction in operating costs, including printing costs. It is with some reluctance, therefore, that we are losing our excellent printed Newsletter and we are very grateful to John Harris who has been its accomplished editor for the last eleven years. We also need to find new sources of income and our first initiative has been to seek charitable status as a way of accessing grants whilst encouraging existing members to translate their subscriptions into donations upon which we can obtain Gift Aid. This change carries financial risks which is why we have taken these steps now as we have sufficient reserves to bridge any short term reduction in income.

A Special General Meeting was held at Rothamsted Research on October 11th to seek the agreement of members to this change of status. 75 members were present and they unanimously endorsed the Committee's proposals, including a name change to Friends of Davenport House.

A submission was duly made to the Charity Commission and on December 18th we were granted charitable status (Charity Number 1181235). Brian Macdonald is to be congratulated on obtaining our new status so quickly. Committee members will become trustees elected annually. The new PPG will continue to work as before in partnership with the Practice to improve the welfare of Davenport House patients and, where relevant, to work in cooperation with other local surgeries in support of all residents in the Harpenden area.

At the time of writing, some of the practical consequences of these changes are still being worked through but we are convinced that they will allow us to be more supportive of members and the Practice in the future.

Changes in personnel at the surgery in 2018 have been too many to list but the Practice's ability to make GP appointments to fill vacancies is very encouraging at a time of national shortage of GPs. The Committee would like to thank Dr Chafer and the other partners and staff for their continuing support, and Shannon Davies for her strong commitment to the PPG.

Finally, we would like to thank two committee members who are leaving the committee and will not become Trustees of Friends of Davenport House. Gillian Thornton, a long-time member who has interviewed all the new doctors for the Newsletter, is leaving the Committee for work reasons – but she has agreed to continue to interview new staff for the Bulletin. Very unfortunately, Richard Sewell who took over as Honorary Treasurer from Ken Holmes a year ago became unwell during this last year and will also withdraw. We thank him for all his work on behalf of the PPG and wish him a full and speedy recovery.

We are always looking for patients interested in the PPG's work. In particular we need additional editorial expertise for the Bulletin and members interested in the wider working of the NHS locally who are prepared to act as a link to the PPG (for further details contact the Chair on rjcmunton@outlook.com).

MEMBERSHIP: Helen Hartley

Membership numbers have fallen by 74 this year, or about 10%, reaffirming the Committee's concern over retaining membership and stimulating the search for new ways of operating. As we move to an online Bulletin we will only need updates to email addresses rather than other details except where members give donations. I am very grateful to all those deliverers who have helped me over many years by distributing the Newsletter.

NEWSLETTER: John Harris

The final printed Newsletter for Winter 2018/19 was distributed by the team of voluntary deliverers in January 2019. A history of the Newsletter is contained in this edition as so many people have been involved in writing articles, particularly our GPs, and in producing the 12 page colour copies distributed to our members. I commend this article to you.

As has been advised the printed Newsletter will be replaced by a more frequent Bulletin sent to all the Friends of Davenport House at no cost where email addresses have been provided.

Arrangements will be made for those without access to email to receive bulletins via a named family member or friend.

So a big thank you to all those who have contributed to producing 25 years of Newsletters whether in providing articles, as a member of the editorial team or as one of the deliverers organised by Helen Hartley for very many years.

WEBSITE AND COMMUNICATION: Bob Fletcher

During 2018 the manager continually updated the website on a regular basis. On-line (KiT) members received email reminders of coming events and changes to the surgery.

Once the Friends of Davenport House charity is initiated after the AGM, we will request that the Surgery send out an email describing the new organisation to all email addresses on their database. The email will contain a link to the Friends registration page allowing patients to enter their name and email address if they wish to join and receive email copies of the Friend's Bulletin and Surgery updates.

Please note that our database is quite separate from that of the Surgery and so there is no possibility of compromising patient confidentiality. The Patient Group Privacy Notice describing how we keep member's information safe can be found on the website's "Privacy" page.

If you have not provided your email address to the Patient Group and wish to receive email updates please access the website and follow the links to the Home Page. Select either www.patientgroup.org.uk or www.davenporthouseppg.org.uk

EDUCATION: Sheila Uppington

In response to members' suggestions we held four well-attended meetings at Rothamsted. At the AGM in March after our anniversary celebrations we heard from Dr Alka Cashyap on Lifestyle Choices. In May the focus was on problems of digestion with a presentation by Dr Matthew Johnson.

At our July meeting, entitled Caring for our Feet, we heard from Dr Lucinda Elston, a specialist podiatrist, and Mr David Gordon. The final meeting in October, led by Mr Nick Clifton, expanded our knowledge of common ear/nose/throat problems.

An account of each of these meetings can be found in the Newsletter. As always our sincere thanks go to our speakers who volunteer their time and expertise free of charge. We plan our programme in response to members' expressed interests and so here's hoping you will support the meetings in 2019. It will be **free entry** for all.

EXTERNAL: Richard Munton

Good links are maintained with the national body for PPGs (NAPP), with the St Albans and Harpenden Patient Group (SAPG) and with Herts Valleys CCG. Each organisation produces extensive material and we put important articles on the website and prepare synopses of others for the Newsletter. John Harris sits on the Red House Steering Group and Malcolm Rainbow, a former Chair, is a Public Governor of Luton and Dunstable Hospital. He organised a very successful membership drive (over a hundred patients signed up to be Friends of the L&D from the Surgery) at a time of anticipated merger with Bedford Hospital which could reduce the Hospital Group's overall commitment to residents in our part of Hertfordshire.

TREASURER'S REPORT: John Harris

The group ended the year with Bank and Building Society balances totally nearly £13,000 which provides a strong foundation for the launch of the new charity and the ending of annual membership fees.

The reasons for the change are strongly highlighted by a further fall in membership fees representing the loss of over 70 members during the year continuing a trend of recent years as members have aged. Despite numerous efforts over a long period it has proved difficult to recruit younger patients.

The main feature of the expenses has been the very high cost for the hire of the hall at Rothamsted Research. This has been due to the very late invoice for an October 2017 meeting, the additional catering costs for the Special 25th Anniversary meeting in March and additional drinks for the October meeting 2018 meeting which incorporated the Special General Meeting.

Otherwise costs have been consistent with previous years. No contributions have been made to the purchase of Surgery equipment this year in view of ending membership fees in March 2019. However, the trustees will re-consider this when the finances for the new charity look clearer. For example, it is very much hoped that members will make gift aided donations in place of the previous membership fees.

The audited account for 2018 are on the following page.