

LHNT AGM Chairman's Report 2016.

I would like to warmly welcome you all to the 2016 AGM for the Lawrence Home Nursing Team. After several years of major change and development I am pleased to report that the last 12 months have been a time of slower consolidation and implementation of all the innovations and developments that have recently been instigated. However on the clinical side we have seen an unprecedented increase in our service provision and hours of care provided to our patients in the past 6 months.

Our new group of Trustees have worked very effectively together in overseeing all the different aspects of the charity and pooling their shared expertise. Trustee meetings have been very stimulating and enlightening. It is a great privilege to utilise different trustee's insights and experience in helping to optimise all aspects of the charity's functioning; from the best way to deliver clinical care to looking at interesting financial graphs to best understand our investment strategies. The new team of Trustees have worked together so well to optimise every facet of our charity's role.

The clinical team has provided more care in the past year than ever before and we have seen in recent months an unprecedented increase in the number of hours of care provided to our patients. Although we have attempted objective analysis it is very difficult to be sure of the precise reasons. Palliative Care is by its nature very unpredictable with peaks and troughs in demand for the service. However there are indeed developing factors which are important, not least that there continues to be welcome moves to discharge terminally ill patients from hospital into the community as early as possible. It is no secret that the hospitals know that the LHNT is in a position to offer this care directly which means that the patients that we serve can often be sent home considerably sooner than in other areas which is greatly welcomed and appreciated.

We are seeing an increasing proportion of patients who are not suffering from cancer. Again this is very important and encouraging development because our founding objective is to offer care to all and any patient in their final illness. In addition more complex patients are being discharged from both the hospitals and the hospice; as increasingly we are able to deal with patients now who for a variety of reasons could not have been cared for in the community before. Demand and expectation are rightly growing that patient's wish to die in their own homes.

In addition this year we have implemented our provision of service to include all patients from Bloxham Surgery. This has been highly appreciated by the local community and recently I had the privilege to be involved with a fund raising event which has raised awareness of the charity and what it provides for local people. This will clearly have a welcome impact as the community experiences the positive benefits of our involvement.

The financial group have continued to optimally manage the financial reserves that we hold. Increased demand in clinical services coupled with increasing administrative and statutory costs means that the overall cost of the service continues to increase considerably. However this is offset with a now steady investment income which is invaluable in helping to buffer the inevitable peaks and troughs in annual fundraising. Overall our strategy remains to take our investment income to support the daily running of the charity, but to be in a position to reinvest any surpluses that we are able to accumulate during the year. This is a prudent and sustainable policy.

The biggest development this year has come within the Fundraising Group and Verity Fifer's development of this area since she was appointed over a year ago. It has been a great pleasure to find an ever increasing and innovative list of fundraising activities that she has overseen and developed this year. These range from establishing a considerable number of annual events which are likely to grow, to excellent one off events where Verity has taken the initiative with various well known people to get support for the charity. The number and diversity of our fundraising events continues to grow which has a combined benefit of both raising money, but also equally important increasing the awareness and understanding of the LHNT.

Verity and other trustees have also been instrumental in increasing our profile as a charity. This includes creating and increasing our social media presence as well as huge amounts of work in modernising the website and creating a more reactive and user friendly electronic supporter's data base. Our website has been extensively modernised and is now very functional. I am also proud to endorse the increasing number of local and national partners that we have who are developing regular and long term support for our interests.

In March Jenny Nolan and myself were invited to Heythrop Park to the West Oxfordshire Business Awards ceremony and Gala Dinner as their current Charity of the Year. It has been a wonderful recognition and endorsement of all that has been achieved in recent years. The evening went very well and raised just over £1000 for us.

Although it is always important to give an overview of the year, what I have always found so compelling is to include some direct feedback from a service user to highlight most powerfully the impact of the work that we do. In November 2015 we received this very moving letter of thanks from a patient's wife. She says:

"There isn't a day that goes by when I don't think of the Lawrence Home nursing Team. From the first day I met Katrina, to the first night my husband and I met Jane & Carol. From the hours spent talking to the nurses; to the times they laughed with my husband and I. From the day you all went above and beyond and enabled my husband to have 48 hours in one block... to the day that Carol spoke with my husband about how he might die. That is all before I think about the level of care they, and others in the team provided my husband; getting to know him, respecting him and ensuring his dignity at all times.

Your charity had a huge impact from May to September 2015. However that impact continues. At the time your support enabled me and my husband to spend precious time with our daughter and to come to terms with his death (as much as is possible). It was your team that supported, advised and helped me the most with my husband's illness. As a result it is your team that has helped me with the transition into these darkest of days. However, through these tears and pain I see laughter with my husband in our home and through his illness, my daughter and I now have the strongest of bonds. Thank you.

You picked us up when we had no help and felt hopeless. I will be eternally grateful to you all and a life-long supporter... May you always exist to be there for others like my husband, my daughter and myself... with my eternal gratitude"

It is feedback like this that binds all the members of the team together and reminds us all so powerfully, through all our different roles; of the overriding purpose to which we all aspire.

In common with all healthcare providers we face daunting challenges going into the future. We support the transition of palliative care into the community but this will involve overall costs increasing. It will also mean looking to making more robust changes to our nursing structure to ensure we are in line with other neighbouring palliative care nursing charities and to be certain of our long term future. Now, more than ever, we need to plan wisely for the years ahead; creating a secure financial future but most importantly attracting and retaining the highest quality nurses to provide the standards of care that our patients have grown to expect. I am confident that we can continue to develop and achieve these aspirations through all the diverse and different members of our team and the overwhelming generosity of time, spirit and enthusiasm that everyone brings.

Thank you to everyone involved for another very successful year

Jonathan Moore