THE LEAGUE OF FRIENDS OF QUEENS MEDICAL CENTRE
NOTTINGHAM

PLAN
2013-2016
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(Available on request)
i. **Current Position Assessment**

ii. The League of Friends of Queens Medical Centre is a registered charity and plays a small but important role in the support of Queens Medical Centre patients and staff. Established in 1978 the League has grown from small beginnings to a charitable organisation with an annual income of £80,000, 100+ members and good reserves, though our policy is to aim is to distribute funds as they are raised.

iii. The League’s charitable objects, detailed in its Constitution are:

   - to relieve patients and former patients of the Queen’s Medical Centre Campus of the Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust who are sick, convalescent, infirm or in need of financial assistance, and generally to support the needs of patients and the charitable work of the said Trust and its staff in the Trust’s various locations.

iv. Recent developments and achievements of the League include:

   - The establishment of a working relationship with the Nottingham and Notts Roosevelt Travelling Scholarship, with three nursing members visiting the USA on NUH projects
   
   - The establishment of a series of lectures (now five or six p.a.) by clinical specialists to whom we offer approximately £2500 for equipment that will benefit their own department and patients.
   
   - The opening of a Charity Shop in Keyworth 5 years ago, now producing a steady weekly net income of around £1000 for the charity and NUH

   - The introduction five years ago of new Constitution, acceptable to the Charity Commission, with the restructuring of the Committee into eight active Trustees, each with specific responsibilities, supported by an elected, active Committee currently numbering twelve.
v. The League held its 34th Annual General Meeting in October 2012 and introduced some changes to its leadership. The recent past President, Mrs Jenny Farr retired as a Trustee to become a Patron, and was joined by Sir Stephen Moss a former Chief Executive of the QMC also as a Patron. Mr Gordon Waine, a trustee, retired following 7 years as Chairman to take up the role of President and Mr Bertie Pinchera was elected by the trustees to join the League as its new Chairman. The League currently has eight Trustees who are responsible for the efficient and effective running of the League. There are currently no employed staff, with the League being run and supported entirely by its voluntary membership.

vi. The League is an open and transparent organisation holding bi-monthly meetings, often with an external speaker, and an AGM which is open to all who wish to attend.

vii. The League has from its early beginnings supported QMC, with a sister League supporting the City Hospital. The merger of the two hospitals in 2006 to form the Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust has not affected the separate running of both Leagues. But additionally the University Hospital has its own charitable organisation formed at the time of the merger of QMC and the City Hospitals. This is much larger and employs paid staff. Its objectives are to provide:

- new facilities, like family-friendly wards and ‘comfy’ chairs for visitors
- the latest specialist equipment, such as state-of-the-art ultrasound scanners that the NHS alone is unable to provide
- medical research into a whole host of conditions, from breast cancer to osteoarthritis
- NHS staff development - funding leadership and other development programmes to help hospital staff provide the best possible care they can

The League of Friends complements this activity supporting patients, relatives and staff in numerous ways with the ability to assess applications quickly and meet demands which range from a few hundred pounds to several thousand.

viii. Within this context the League has decided to review its current operations and plan its future to ensure it remains relevant, valued by its beneficiaries and continues to be supported by its volunteers who wish to support QMC in their own unique way.
2. Issues

i. The League is successful, well run and efficiently and effectively managed. Its support comes wholly from a relatively small group of committed volunteers who work energetically to ensure the League is well respected and valued. The League considers that it can continue to progress and develop its volunteer base and does not see any requirement to engage professional paid staff for the period of the Plan.

ii. Developments in the NHS continue to change the environment within which we work and the Trust’s plans for Foundation status continue to press ahead. We need to understand how such changes may impact upon the League and what our beneficiaries expect from us in the coming years.

iii. We regard ourselves as complementing the work of other charities involved with Nottingham Hospitals; but we need to understand the respective roles of each to ensure there is minimal, if any, duplication of effort and particularly ensure that supporters and donors understand our respective roles. We should recognise that needs of organisations change over time, be responsive to any change that comes our way, and be prepared to adapt our organisation accordingly.

iv. Trustees consider that there is scope to increase awareness of the League and what it does. The Hospital and its staff are probably not as familiar with the League as we would wish and this will be addressed at all levels so that the League is fully supportive of its beneficiaries’ ambitions but also so that the Hospital understands what the League can achieve if supported and assisted in the right way.

v. Membership is recognised to be lower than it could be with an ageing profile and is probably a function of low awareness rather than a reluctance to join and become active in the variety of activities we engage upon. Our levels of engagement with our members is being developed and the active voluntary group expanded as we plan our future activities.

vi. Fundraising is active and the establishment of a shop in Keyworth 5 years ago has made a very valuable and steady addition to our income. It has also shown to be a good social centre for those committed to the future of their local hospital. However, currently we are raising more funds than we are expending and this is being addressed. Our aim is to support the needs of our beneficiaries and not simply to raise funds without a clear purpose.

vii. The League has a number of external relationships with other organisations. These are valued and important and are regularly reviewed to ensure they are maintained and developed but also remain relevant in a way which benefits the League, its members and beneficiaries.
Our beneficiaries are the patients, their relatives and the staff of Queens Medical Centre and the Trust in general. We rely on staff in all departments to make requests for funding to us. We have a panel of Trustees and Committee Members who assess applications and this works well. The recent introduction of clinical lectures at our bi-monthly open meetings is one way of informing our members of activities within the Trust and engaging hospital staff with the League but there are likely to be other activities which we should also explore. Developing a closer working relationship with Wards and Departments would help us appreciate their needs and better able to assess any requests for assistance.

The League has progressed well over its lifetime and it is important to members that it continues to remain relevant to its beneficiaries who value its work and take full advantage of what the League has to offer. Our local hospital is important to League members; many are passionately and fully committed to its success in treating patients and meeting the ever rising expectations of the community it serves. The relationship the League has with the Trust is of paramount importance and underpins all that the League does and will continue to do.

The League has recently canvassed the views of its membership and the Hospital to help it plan where it should direct its future resources and activities. Overall we are pleased with progress made in recent years but two areas in particular stand out as requiring improvement and are being addressed. Specifically highlighted are awareness and communications.
3. Recommended Actions

Overview

i. The Trustees have reviewed the responses we have received as to the future direction the League should take. They were heartened by the positive support that they received and the many ideas and suggestions that were forwarded for consideration.

ii. In putting together a plan for the next few years it was recognised that the League was developing its plans from a position of some strength and not weakness. It was building on a platform of solid achievement and evolving in full recognition of its strengths and areas for improvement and in particular the wishes of its beneficiaries and the desires of its voluntary membership.

iii. The priority areas for the League over the next few years are to improve awareness and communications with its Members the Beneficiaries and the Public.

iv. The League has prepared an outline plan for the next three years the details of which are as follows:

Beneficiaries

v. The League will continue to act as ‘Friends’ to Queens Medical Centre patients, their relatives and staff in accordance with the League’s Constitution.

- Recent feedback from the Hospital confirms that the League is valued and its contribution welcomed. There is recognition that a better understanding of the needs of QMC and the Trust and in particular less well-known areas critical to patient treatment and care, combined with the League’s capacity to promptly meet demands, will help in future.

- As ‘Friends’ we will be non-judgemental, supporting and assisting whenever and wherever possible. Being there for people who need our help and caring what happens to the hospital and those involved with it. Engaging with all in a positive and helpful way to enable progress to be made and positive outcomes to be achieved.
Membership

vi. The League aims to increase its membership by increasing awareness, recognizing that the League wishes to remain a totally voluntary organisation.

- Membership is currently around 100 and within three years it would be hoped that we could increase this significantly, over the period of this plan
- We recognise that we cannot expect a greater participation from our volunteers than they are willing or able to contribute and that by increasing the membership we may reasonably assume that more people will be able to contribute a valuable skill and/or their time
- We will develop activities to engage our Members in a variety of areas which will interest them from social events through to education and medical and nursing developments
- We will seek to improve our communication with the Membership and actively involve them more in the affairs of the League

Income Generation

vii. The League is committed to generating its income in line with the expenditure proposals received from its beneficiaries and its capacity to deliver. The success of the shop in Keyworth and the Picture Gallery in QMC encourages the League to protect both but not to extend this activity within the next 3 years

- All existing activities which both raise worthwhile sums and assist in building awareness and promoting a spirit of community within our volunteers will continue. Their hard work is both recognised and valued and not taken for granted by our beneficiaries or the trustees
- By its nature income can be volatile, particularly with regard to large donations. In contrast income from trading through the shop and the Art Gallery is more resilient particularly when disposable income is affected by economic conditions
- The League will examine ways to improve donations and legacy income by raising its profile with patients and their relatives and friends.
- Fundraising will be more focussed with a smaller number but more effective activities which will not only provide valuable income but provide a social forum for members to engage with the League and QMC in a way which suits them
Expenditure

viii. **Expenditure is expected to increase in the foreseeable future as we release restricted funds to our beneficiaries in keeping with the donors wishes and we explore worthwhile schemes for our existing free reserves**

- We will continue to supplement the funds of the NHS and look sympathetically on requests from Departments who often struggle for funds or who want to provide patient services which are valuable but perhaps not regarded as essential or a priority within the budgeting process.
- We will seek to fund Wards and Departments which will directly or indirectly benefit patients and their doctors and nurses. The introduction of the Roosevelt Scholarships being a good example of targeted support for professional development.
- We will examine ways of supporting those Departments seeking ways to engage with patients and relatives in a direct way.
- Expenditure on administration and management is expected to remain unchanged at around present levels.

External Relations

ix. **The League has a close working relationship with the following organisations and it is the Leagues intention to continue to nurture the relationship and to seek others that will benefit the League in the longer term.**

The Nottinghamshire Roosevelt Travelling Scholarship

‘Attend’, our charity’s national association, and its County and Regional representatives

The League of Friends of the City Hospital (Campus), Nottingham

The University of Nottingham Medical School

The Nottingham City and County Councils

Local Media Outlets
Communications

x. **We will continue to produce our Newsletters as one of our principal means of communication to our Members but will in addition explore cost effective ways of improving our communications to others, in particular Hospital Staff, Patients, their Families and Carers**

- There are no plans for a stand-alone web site as the costs to maintain this would likely be excessive. However, we hope to maintain a permanent feature on the Hospital’s web site
- We would seek to have a regular presence in NUH News using this to communicate to a wide audience – this would include regular features, advertising and other messages we wish to convey to our target groups of Hospital Staff, Patients and Relatives and our Membership
- Continuing and developing our regular lecture series organised with the kind assistance of Dr Richard Allibone, Consultant Pathologist and a member of our League of Friends Committee, will help to provide points of interest to our Members and bring the work of the League to the attention of those clinical areas who may seek financial support from the League. This may be further developed for a larger and wider audience
- Engaging with the Hospital’s Executive will receive more direct attention as will building external relationships with those that have an interest in our work.

Governance

xi. **There are no changes to our Governance arrangements, though the specific responsibilities of individual trustees may change with time**

- The League is governed by its constitution and the role of the Trustees is to collectively ensure that the League is run in accordance with the Constitution and particularly to ensure that the financial management of the League is audited and compliant with all relevant regulations. A copy of the Constitution is attached in the Appendices
- One third of the Trustees retires at each AGM and may offer themselves for re-election within the terms of the Constitution.
The current Trustees and their specific responsibilities are as follows:

- Esther Ashkenazi – Peggy Greenfield Art and Craft Gallery in the QMC
- Nora Bradley – Deputy Chair and Leader of the Fundraising Group
- Tony Fletcher – Retail activities, including our Keyworth Charity Shop
- Andrew Jarrett – Honorary Treasurer and Charity Commission Relationship
- Bertie Pinchera – Chairman
- Joyce Rapley – Beneficiary support – Applications for funding
- Alison Scrimshaw – Communications – Newsletter Editor
- Gordon Waine – President and external relationship management, in particular with the Roosevelt Travel Scholarship

The League is further organised into mutually supportive Groups of Committees and Members, each led by a Trustee with specific areas of responsibility.

Resources

The League will strengthen its operational roles by seeking to fill the position of Honorary Secretary to strengthen our skills in the management of the League’s affairs and to work with the Chair to deliver on the League’s plans.

- The League values the contribution it receives from its voluntary membership and is confident this will continue. There are no plans to introduce paid staff during the period of this plan.
- Trustees will lead on specific topics as required and seek to involve Committee Members and other volunteers to help maintain and build upon the work we do.
4. Review

The Trustees will review progress of the plan at 6 monthly intervals and report on progress at the bi monthly Trustee and Committee meetings and adjust the plan accordingly should there be a need to do so.

5. Appendices

i. The Constitution of the League of Friends is a legal document and defines our charitable status and objects.
ii. Report and Accounts- the League reports annually on its activities with its year ending on the 31st August.
iii. Copies of both documents may be requested or can be viewed at www.nuh.nhs.uk/working-with-us/volunteering/league-of-friends together with other information on our activities