

Friends of Holy Cross Hospital Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2021

ISSUE 44

Message from Holy Cross CEO – Ross White

The adventurer Bear Grylls once commented, *'The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is often simply that little word – extra'*!

Walking around the hospital recently, evidence of 'extra' was everywhere. Ordinary walls had 'Banksy' style artwork on them; our Patient Activities room had been transformed into a Glastonbury style festival (with tents, banners, a large screen, and even a bar (non-alcoholic!)); and volunteers were giving up their free time to undertake activities with patients. All this, of course, was in contrast to a highly unusual previous 18 months where coronavirus restricted many of the things we are used to doing.

Indeed, it was only just ahead of the national lockdown in March 2020 that the Friends of Holy Cross so generously handed over an ambulance to the hospital, and, like so many organisations, things changed substantially as the year progressed! We did not host an international conference in 2020 as planned; patient outings, volunteer-led programmes, group activities and visits to the Selsey cottage were either halted or severely restricted; and our outpatient physiotherapy and hydrotherapy services were suspended for several of months. However, the impact was more personal than that. The start of 2021 saw the loss of five patients to coronavirus as well as the loss of an excellent nurse. The discharge of two further patients between January and March meant that we ended the financial year with seven empty beds. With increased costs due to PPE and covering staff absences and with reduced income, the 2020/21 year has been one of the most challenging in recent times.

The first six months of 2021/22 has yet to see the demand for inpatient beds yet return to 2020 levels. The most likely reason is that bed under-occupancy is currently widespread across the neuro rehabilitation sector. If this is the case, the fall in demand will be temporary, but may be prolonged.

In spite of the above, there have been plenty of achievements. Solar panelling was installed as part of our environmental strategy; we have written a bespoke electronic patient record system that will eventually move us away from paper; we introduced radial shockwave therapy and post-natal services within the outpatient Physiotherapy Centre; we extended our car-parking capacity; we initiated an international recruitment programme and had nurses join from India and the West Indies; we introduced virtual visiting and remote working; and we double-vaccinated everyone by the end of March. We also were delighted to invite representatives from the Friends Committee to the opening of the Treehouse in August. This structure – a wheelchair accessible platform into the trees, adjacent to our education centre, has been supported generously by the Friends and is now in use by patients and families. Future plans include the addition of nine electric car-charging points, further solar panelling, the upgrade of bathrooms in the Selsey holiday cottage, and the provision of additional inpatient beds within the hospital.

I am also pleased to report that clinical standards remain high. During the pandemic, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) adopted a mixture of onsite and off-site monitoring to ensure the public have assurance as to the safety and quality of the care they receive. In August, we received confirmation from the CQC that our overall 'Outstanding' rating remains unchanged.

Holy Cross Hospital is built from the charism, vision and commitment of the Catholic sisters of the Congregation of the Daughters of the Cross of Liege, who created many well-respected hospitals and schools. Most exist to this day, but Holy Cross is the only one that remains within the Congregation. The time may come when Holy Cross Hospital becomes separate from the Congregation, but, for those we serve, we will always remember that little word 'extra' that transforms the ordinary to the extraordinary!

Finally, the generosity of the Friends makes that 'extra' a reality for the patients and families we serve, so I would like to take this opportunity to record our very deep gratitude for your continued help and support.

Ross White, CEO – Holy Cross Hospital

Dates for the diary

Tennis: Friday 8th October. This will take place on courts in Haslemere and Godalming. If you or your friends would like to take part, please contact Marie-Claire Wilson (marieclairewilson@icloud.com) for further details.

Quiz: Saturday 13th November. The quiz, postponed from 2020, will take place at the Holy Cross Hospital Living Room at 7pm, for a prompt start to the quiz at 7.30pm. Richard Royds of the Haslemere Cellar has kindly agreed to host this year's quiz, and give us all the chance to show off how much (or how little) we have learned during lockdown. It is £25 per person, including food. There will also be a bar selling wine and soft drinks and a raffle, so come along and take your chances on some fantastic prizes. Please contact Sue Mitchell (sue.j.mitchell@btinternet.com) if you are interested in attending or in booking a table of 8 for you and your friends and family.

Boxing Day Fun Run: Sunday 26th December. It's time for the most festive fun run of the year! It's a fabulous 5k run designed to undo the excesses of Christmas Day, and at 11am it means you have plenty of time to get ready for Boxing Day lunch afterwards. If there are any volunteers to either run or to be a marshal, please contact Matt Dellar on the run's website: <http://www.boxingdayrun.org> Taking part is a great way to raise money, as your entry fee goes towards supporting Holy Cross.

Fundraising events

Sponsored walk 2021: over £1200 raised. The sponsored walk took place on a sweltering hot day on 18th July in 29 degree heat! We set off from the top of Harting Down and after a very hot two and a half hours, with everyone drinking plenty of water, we arrived safely at the White Horse in Chilgrove for a much-needed cold drink or three and some lovely lunch. After a walk that was mainly downhill in the morning (except for the very steep climb up to Beacon Hill), the brave remaining walkers faced the long, slow and steady post-lunch climb through Hooksway and past Telegraph House before making it back to very hot cars indeed at Harting Down. A lovely

day but we hope for slightly cooler weather next year!



Little Lumpy: over £2250 raised. 11 riders took part in the delayed Little Lumpy ride on 1 August to raise funds for a Vital Signs Monitor, used to monitor a patient's blood pressure, temperature, pulse and oxygen saturation. A total of £2,252.50 (including Gift Aid) was raised, more than covering the cost of one monitor and raising money towards a second one.

The Little Lumpy Challenge route is a beautiful 60 mile ride through the very hilly South Downs. Now in its 13th year, the organisers offer riders the chance to experience the charms and challenges of three proven designated routes while being supported by food and mechanics. Indeed, in 2019 one of the riders was so overwhelmed by the beauty that he proposed to his now wife the following day near one of the summits. He was absent this year as they were on their honeymoon!

The warm, dry and still weather made a perfect day and the riders were fortified by refreshments and cakes at a number of stops en route. All the riders finished within an hour of each other as the younger members of the team kindly waited for their elderly relatives at each feed station and identified themselves as riders for the 100 mile route in 2022.



The treehouse, opened with support from the friends of Holy Cross