

**Minutes of the Public Meeting of the Council of Governors of the  
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust  
Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021, 10:00 – 12:00  
Virtual via MS Teams**

**Present:**

Alison Ryan, Chair

**Public Governors**

Anne Martin  
Suzanne Harris  
Gill Little  
Melanie Hilton  
Jill Scott  
Peter McCowen  
Peter Buttle  
Nesta Collingridge-Padbury  
John Osman  
Virginia McNab

**Staff Governors**

Julie Stone  
Sophie Legg  
Sarah Bond

**Stakeholder Governors**

Alison Born  
Bryn Bird  
Johnny Kidney

**In attendance:**

Ian Orpen, Non-Executive Director  
Jeremy Boss, Non-Executive Director  
Nigel Stevens, Non-Executive Director  
Michelle Hopton, Engagement Lead, Deloitte (*item 8*)  
Simon Cook, Programme Director (*item 9*)  
Joss Foster, Director of Strategy  
Members of public  
Adewale Kadiri, Head of Corporate Governance  
Dan Asamoah, Interim Deputy Head of Corporate Governance  
Emily McConnell, Membership & Governance Administrator  
Abby Strange, Membership & Governance Administrator (*minute taker*)

**CG/21/09/01 Chair's Welcome and Apologies and Resignation**

The Chair welcomed the Governors to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Cara Charles-Barks, Antony Durbacz, Anna Mealings, Sumita Hutchison, Narinder Tegally, Baz Harding-Clark, Mike Midgley, Catrinel Wright and Dave Clarke.

The Chair reported that the Internal Significant Incident had been stood down and thanked colleagues for their hard work to create capacity.

**CG/21/09/02 Declarations of Interest relevant to items on the agenda**

There were no declarations of interest noted.

**CG/21/09/03 Approval of the minutes of the Council of Governors meeting held in public: 3 June 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2021 were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**CG/21/09/04 Action List and Matters Arising**

All action updates were agreed as presented.

**CG225** – The Head of Corporate Governance had identified Microsoft Teams as a more appropriate project and communication tool for Governors than Trello as it was used across the Trust. Gill Little noted her disappointment in the time it had taken to reach this decision and requested that newer Governors in particular receive more in depth training on Microsoft Teams. Peter Buttle relayed his concern that Microsoft Teams would not be appropriate for Governors due to their limited level of access as volunteers. The Head of Corporate Governance suggested that the action remain open and agreed to work with the Interim Deputy Head of Corporate Governance and Membership and Governance Administrators to ensure that further training was arranged. The Chair asked that resolving this issue be given some priority.

**CG226** – Gill Little shared that the availability and suitability of video links for outpatient appointments needed to be considered on an individual basis. The Chair added that the Patient and Carer Experience Group were in the process of reviewing the experience of using video outpatient appointments and would be able to provide an update to the Council of Governors.

Anne Martin enquired whether patients could choose the format of their appointments and if virtual appointments had impacted the delivery of unfavourable news. The Chair informed the Council of Governors that telephone appointments were offered initially, with alternatives available if this was not appropriate. The ability to achieve this was limited due to pressure on the appointments system and the Patient and Carer Experience Group were in the process of reviewing how patients could have more input. The Director of Strategy added that the Trust was participating in research on patient experience of virtual interactions with the University of Bath and results would be submitted to the Board of Directors. There had been a number of technological issues and this was being reviewed to ensure patients received the right interaction.

**CG/21/09/05 Chief Executive’s Update Report**

The Director of Strategy presented the report on behalf of the Chief Executive and highlighted:

- The rise in the number of COVID patients had led to the closure of three medical wards and many parts of the hospital had staff shortages due to self-isolation;
- The 2021 Annual Members Meeting would be held virtually on 22 September at 2pm and it was important for Governors to publicise this with their constituents;

Gill Little noted that uptake of the COVID-19 vaccination in BANES was lower than regional and national levels, and suggested that Governors could assist by supporting

Author: Abby Strange, Membership & Governance Administrator	Date: 9 September 2021
Document Approved by: Alison Ryan, Chair	Version: 1.3
Agenda Item: 3	Page 2 of 6

external communication. The Director of Strategy welcomed the support and clarified that uptake was lower for under 18s only. Bryn Bird added that Primary Care Network (PCN) sites had not yet taken up vaccination of some low risk groups due to management of waiting lists and other responsibilities of primary care.

Gill Little enquired whether COVID-19 related nursing home closures were increasing and how the Trust planned to mitigate increasing expenditure on high cost drugs. In addition, she queried the timeline of the Transformation Programme and how Governors would be involved. The Director of Strategy explained that the number of nursing home closures would be variable and agreed to investigate if there was any information available about the trend which could be shared.

**Action: Director of Strategy**

The Director of Strategy provided assurance that expenditure on high cost drugs would be mitigated by transferring patients onto biosimilar drugs where clinically appropriate. Jeremy Boss commented that high cost drugs had previously been the responsibility of the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the risk to the Trust was higher than budgeted due to increased demand. The Finance and Performance Committee were undertaking a deep dive into this and the Governor observer would be able to provide feedback. The Director of Strategy added that the Transformation Programme was in development and Improving Together methodology would be used to understand how this could be delivered. The Chair indicated that the Strategy and Business Planning Working Group would receive an update prior to the Council of Governors and the Director of Finance could facilitate this.

**Action: Director of Finance**

Melanie Hilton enquired whether the Dyson Cancer Centre would have single rooms to aid infection prevention and control and whether the Racecourse Vaccination Centre was run at cost to the Trust. The Director of Strategy indicated that the Dyson Cancer Centre had been designed to the latest standards and national best practice in terms of single rooms. The cost of the vaccination centre was met by the BANES, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) system rather than the Trust individually. Jeremy Boss added that any costs covered by the Trust individually were fully recovered.

Nesta Collingridge-Padbury enquired whether the Trust requested the vaccination status of patients and if it was aware that care homes had a quarantine period for patients admitted from hospital. The Director of Strategy reflected that it was not the role of the Trust to monitor the vaccination status of patients. Jeremy Boss added that the Trust was aware of the vaccination status of patients as the information was contained in their records. Bryn Bird indicated that quarantine care home sites could be stood up for patients admitted from hospital and would be established if necessary.

Sarah Bond queried the timeline for the development of Sulis Hospital Bath as a diagnostic hub, whether the medical division was involved in planning, and how the additional scanner at Sulis would be staffed. The Director of Strategy explained that clarification on the role of Sulis as a diagnostic hub was dependent on the development of BSWs plan for a community diagnostic network. Relevant teams would be consulted

on diagnostic support required at Sulis to ensure that staff were well informed and engaged. The Trust had applied for funding for a new MRI build and increased capacity would be dependent on recruitment and receipt of funding.

The Council of Governors noted the report.

**CG/21/09/06 NED Update on Assurances from Board and Committee**

The Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) provided assurance on questions submitted by the Council of Governors relating to discharge, the staff survey, communications, and DNAR Policy.

**Discharge**

Jeremy Boss assured the Council of Governors that ongoing projects and work with system partners was in progress to improve system performance and address issues on a long term and continuous basis. He added that this would continue to be a closely monitored issue.

**Staff Survey**

Ian Orpen provided a response on behalf of Anna Mealings. He reported that the NEDs were assured that the Trust had a good understanding of the cultural issues raised in the staff survey and a clear plan was in place to address the root cause.

**Communications**

Nigel Stevens assured the Council of Governors that, although communication with patients, families and carers required improvement, a number of existing mechanisms were in place to support this. The Quality Governance Committee (QGC) was aware that communications continued to be an issue and regularly reviewed progress with an understanding of the need to balance this work with the wider concerns of the Trust.

**DNAR**

Nigel Stevens assured the Council of Governors that a draft report had been produced to review how the DNAR policy was applied and whether it required amendment. The Chair informed the Council that QGC reviewed serious incidents to ensure that the Trust was systematically learning from these, however it was not the role of a NED to become involved in complaints due to their confidential nature. She reminded the Governors that it was their role to seek assurance on whether the mechanism was in place, not to become involved in individual issues or the drafting of policies. Nigel Stevens provided further assurance that the committee scrutinised whether complaints were managed properly, lessons were learnt, and incidents processed within the correct timeline.

In future QGC would assess policies in further detail to ensure that a better mechanism was in place to review them at appropriate intervals and guarantee that the greatest risks to the hospital were scrutinised and assured on regularly. Work was required on this and the committee would spend more time on assuring itself that policies were rigorously and consistently applied across the Trust.

Author: Abby Strange, Membership & Governance Administrator	Date: 9 September 2021
Document Approved by: Alison Ryan, Chair	Version: 1.3
Agenda Item: 3	Page 4 of 6

Gill Little thanked the NEDs for their responses and raised her ongoing concerns relating to audit capability and practice.

**CG/21/09/07 Governor Working Groups Chairs' Reports & Approve Annual Reports**

**Strategy and Business Planning Working Group**

Melanie Hilton reported that:

- The working group discussed two solutions that were being explored to address the difficulties in patient record sharing between organisations with the Chief Information Officer;
- A True North update was received from the Deputy Director of Strategy, and the working group discussed elective recovery and the implementation of the recommended measures from the Ockenden Report into maternity care;

**Quality Working Group**

Gill Little reported that Ian Orpen had informed the working group on measures taken to comply with Ockenden Report recommendations such as recruitment to the consultant team and funding for the role of the Senior Independent Advocate.

**Membership and Outreach Working Group**

An update was not provided.

**People Working Group**

Sarah Bond reported that:

- The working group discussed raising the profile of the Staff Governors with the Head of Communications;
- Staff Governors fed back that the Trust needed to look into meaningful ways to help colleagues reconnect with their relatives following the pandemic, and staff were feeling strained and tired post-COVID;
- Assurance was sought on the time available to managers to support health and wellbeing of staff;
- The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian provided an update on Restorative Just Culture the working group discussed time as a significant factor in the way that managers conducted HR processes;

**Board Monitoring Group**

Gill Little reported that the Board Monitoring Group had met the previous day and planned to submit questions relating to the patient story and the deferral of elective surgical lists to create capacity.

**CG/21/09/08 External Audit Letter**

The Chair welcomed Michelle Hopton, Engagement Lead for Deloitte, to the meeting to present the External Audit Letter. She reported that an unmodified audit opinion had been signed, a clear opinion given that the Trust financial statements were true and fair,

Author: Abby Strange, Membership & Governance Administrator	Date: 9 September 2021
Document Approved by: Alison Ryan, Chair	Version: 1.3
Agenda Item: 3	Page 5 of 6

and a clean opinion given on use of resources. All findings were immaterial and would not have had an impact on the Trust.

**CG/21/09/09 Shaping a Healthier Future Update**

The Director of Strategy and Simon Cook, Programme Director, provided an update on the Shaping a Healthier Future programme. They reported:

- Wider engagement on the health and care model would be undertaken between September and November;
- New funding of £1million had been announced for 8 schemes nationally and the Trust had put forward an expression of interest;

Gill Little enquired whether Governors could be involved in public engagement scheduled for October. The Programme Director welcomed Governor involvement.

Anne Martin queried whether the 20% Mendip patients would be engaged. The Programme Director provided assurance that the entire RUH catchment area would be involved in the engagement undertaken between September and November.

Peter McCowen enquired whether the Health and Care model would be simplified for engagement purposes to aid understanding. The Programme Director confirmed that the model would be broken down into understandable sections.

**CG/21/09/10 Lead Governor Report and Governor Feedback Survey Responses**

Gill Little reported that meetings had been arranged between the Head of Communications, Mike Midgley, and herself. 19 members had attended the Governor and Members' Virtual Coffee Morning on 18<sup>th</sup> August and she was working with the Interim Deputy Head of Corporate Governance to arrange constituency meetings on a rotational basis going forward.

**CG/21/09/11 Stakeholder Governor Feedback**

No stakeholder feedback was given.

**CG/21/09/12 Items for Future Work Plan**

The Council of Governors noted the work plan.

**CG/21/09/13 Meeting Review**

The Chair noted her appreciation for the thought provoking assurance questions that had been discussed and thanked the Council of Governors for their time, commitment, enthusiasm and support.

*The meeting closed at 12:00*

The next Council of Governors meeting is due to be held on 2 December 2021.

Signed .....Date .....

Author: Abby Strange, Membership & Governance Administrator	Date: 9 September 2021
Document Approved by: Alison Ryan, Chair	Version:1.3
Agenda Item: 3	Page 6 of 6