

**GOVERNORS' FORUM MEETING**  
**Held on 11 November 2014, Boardroom, RHH**  
**NOTES OF MEETING**

**Present:** Andrew Manasse in the Chair

George Clark (GC)	Caroline Irving (CI)	Hetta Phipps (HP)
Sally Craig (SC)	Jacque Kirk (JK)	Nicola Smith(NS)
Anne Eckford (AE)	Joyce Justice (JJ)	Craig Stevenson (CS)
Frank Edenborough (FE)	Chris Monk (CM)	Sue Taylor (ST)
Dorothy Hallatt (DH)	Kath Parker (KP)	Graham Thompson (GT)
Christina Herbert (CH)	Nick Payne (NP)	Michael Warner (MW)

<b>Apologies:</b>	Jo Bishop	David Owens	Paul Wainwright
	Heather MacDonald	Shirley Smith	John Warner
	Kaye Meegan		

**In attendance:** Jane Pellegrina (JP)

**ACTION**

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

AM welcomed everyone to the meeting. The above apologies were noted.

**2. Notes of Forum Meeting held on 12-8-14 and Matters Arising**

The Notes were agreed as a correct record.

**Matters arising:**

**Item 5:** Governors agreed that a presentation on the subject of medical staffing numbers would be very helpful and AM/JP would approach the Medical Director to arrange this. **AM, JP**

**Item 7:** Future GovernWell training events should provide information more suitable for governors of longer standing not just new governors

**Item 9:** Governors asked JP to arrange a meeting to review feedback following this year's Annual Members' Meeting. **JP**

**Future visits/presentations:** AM reported that he will be progressing arrangements for a presentation on Right First Time as soon as possible. The presenters will be Penny Brooks and Steven Haig. **AM**

**Visit to Central Food Processing Unit at NGH:** JP was asked to arrange a visit with Emma Wilson interested governors **JP**

**3. Council of Governors (CoG) Meetings**

**Draft Minutes of last Meeting held on 2 September 2014:** Noted

**Dates of next year's CoG Meetings:** were noted as 10 March, 2 June, 1 September and 1 December

**Possible Agenda Items for next CoG Meeting on 2 December 2014:** Governors agreed to request an item on "ways the Board is representing and supporting Community Services" JP was asked to have this included on the Agenda **JP**

#### 4. Outcome of Meeting about Holding NEDs to Account 10/11/14

AM provided a brief summary of the discussion that took place. A full report is being prepared and would be circulated to all governors.

AM/JP

#### 5. Update on Governor links to Directorates

JP said that some links had already been established and some were still to be arranged. Governors should be in a position to provide reports from their activities in Directorates at the next Forum meeting.

#### 6. Next Edition of GoodHealth

CI said that prior to the Forum meeting there had been a meeting of the GoodHealth planning group which had agreed topics to be put forward for inclusion in the governors' section of the next edition. AJP was asked to arrange an urgent meeting with Laura Kirby from the Communications team where the plans for the next edition will be discussed and taken forward.

JP

GC suggested that GoodHealth should contain fewer "good news" stories and tackle some more challenging topics that would be of interest to members and the public. Other governors agreed.

#### 7. Feedback from Staff Governors

CS reported that there had been a recent meeting of all 4 staff governors and the following issues were raised:

- Consider having more staff governors in view of the size of the organisation and that the Trust is located on two completely separate main sites.
- Staff governors consider that there is a disconnection from their constituents (staff).
- A previous meeting with the chairman had been valuable and further meetings would be welcomed.

Following discussion other governors suggested that:

- It might be good if there were regular Staff governor input into LINK and
- The Staff governors should themselves initiate a further meeting with the chairman, soon, to discuss the outcome of their recent meeting.

Staff  
governors

#### 8. 2015 Forum Meeting Dates

Thursday 29 January, RHH Boardroom  
Thursday 30 April – NGH Boardroom  
Wednesday 29 July – RHH Boardroom  
Thursday 29 October – NGH Board Room

The dates were noted. It was also noted that the dates are planned to enable the draft minutes of the preceding CoG meeting to be available beforehand and to give time for governor input into the agenda of the following CoG meeting.

#### 9. Governors' Matters

- AE gave details of a tea party that governors are holding on December 10<sup>th</sup>, from 3pm to 6pm in the Boardroom in the Northern General Hospital and it was agreed that the whole board would be invited along with other guests to be agreed. AE

said that a lunch for governors is being planned after Christmas. AE promised to circulate further details

AE

- JP was asked to organise a meeting of interested governors to plan the visit/presentation schedule for next year.

JP

Outcomes of a governors' meeting to discuss future arrangements for Forum Meetings held on 4-11-14 are attached to these Notes.

Enc.

## 10. General Discussion Time

The time was used to discuss CoG Meetings. Governors split into groups of three to consider all aspects of CoG Meetings. AM asked governors to suggest answers to two questions:

- **What is good about the CoG meeting as it is?**
- **What might be improved and how might this be achieved?**

**The following points were highlighted:**

### **What is good about the CoG meeting as it is?**

- Reports mainly good
- Generally very good; well chaired; responsive; EDs and NEDs do well;
- Good presentations, inclusive, not patronising;
- Governors feel respected and valued

### **What is not so good?**

- Participants not always audible
- Agenda very full
- Need papers earlier
- It feels a bit as if we are invited to the meeting – there should be a more equal balance of importance
- Too much focus on what goes well – on positives
- Not an easy environment in which to question: partly because of the size of the meeting; partly because of (felt) pressure of time; partly because, unless we have the papers in advance and can prepare for the presentation, there is not enough time to digest the presentation and then ask questions.
- Does information have to come from EDs?
- Not enough time for questions
- Need more governor input into agenda

### **What might be improved and how might this be achieved?**

- It would be very good to have presentations in advance
- Suggest reducing length of presentation to 5 or 6 summary slides circulated with previously circulated papers. This would leave more time for questions/discussion.
- Papers could be introduced briefly by the NED that chairs relevant BoD sub-Committee to be followed by more detailed analysis from ED.
- Briefer, summary reports would allow more question time
- Agree how governors can get topics/questions on to the agenda. Provide

mechanism for querying if the request is rejected.

- More NEDs should be encouraged to attend more often
- Need more summarising and up dating as to latest changes
- Handouts accompanying PowerPoint presentation in advance would be helpful
- Very hospital focussed; need more about the community – perhaps on a regular basis
- CEO's paper /presentation might be improved: shorter, more summarised, perhaps more personal, maybe just dealing with current key issues.
- Questions need to be focussed and brief – maybe the chairman can facilitate this?
- It would be better if the seating were mixed up more

**Other points:**

- CoG not necessarily the best forum for NEDs to present themselves to governors; governors would be better to attend BoD meetings etc to hear from NEDs.
- Primary interactions are mainly between governors and EDs and governors; rather than NEDs who don't seem to have a specific role

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**Andrew Manasse's summary of a meeting of Governors to review the effectiveness and future of Governors' Forum Meetings held 4 November 2014**

**Introduction:**

Timing: 4.00 to 5.30

*Note taking needed*

Why are we meeting today?

Here is a sense of a muddle re holding Forums pre and post CoG meetings. There is a general feeling that they could be better and a query about the length of the meetings.

This presents an opportunity for a fresh look:

- Why do we have forum meetings?
- What are they for?
- Do we want to go on having them?
- What do we want to get out of them?
- How frequent should they be?
- What time of day?

As an outcome of this meeting, AM would like to see answers to the above and any

other questions that Governors have, and a plan for the way forward.

### **Points that were raised (including comments tabled from absent Governors)**

- They are worth continuing, if only as it gives us a chance to meet up with our fellow governors.
- I think too much time is spent on going over reports, of which we already have a copy - they should just be tabled, and only discussed if a governor wishes to raise a point arising from the report..
- It would be good to invite one or two Neds along, not to ask them what they do, but to get them to discuss any problems or concerns that they have about the Board, or the Trust.
- There should be time for individual governors to raise any questions or concerns that they have, with enough time to allow for a good discussion.
- Timings of these meetings are important, to allow for working governors, e.g. staff governors, to attend. This probably means meeting after 5, which might not be popular with us OAP's!, but it is important not to disenfranchise those who work, and pay taxes to pay for our pensions!
- Also, I would suggest they occur at a sufficient time before a Council of Governors meeting, to allow any concerns to be put on that agenda, rather than afterwards.
- Individual governors can follow up any points they wish to raise following the council.
- I think it would be useful, if we are allocating responsibilities more, to use these meetings to inform each other more fully about any issues or problems that arise in these roles.
- Additionally to use the meetings to grapple with such subjects as how to work with NEDs, accountability to members, how not to think you run the Trust, etc.
- To have allocated time for real discussion would be very helpful. Meetings will need tight ground rules and chairing.
- It would have been good to be there to think this through together... this being the essence of what I am suggesting we use the time for!

AM's thoughts:

- Not about keeping up to date; meetings too infrequent and there are other sources.
- Hearing where everyone is up to and any thoughts or experiences from which we might all learn.
- Planning visits and presentations
- Having an outsider present, e.g. a NED or the chairman to add another view (and for us to get to know the NEDs a bit.
- Hearing about experiences from directorate meetings
- Allowing Jane to share anything that she wants to share.

AM sees the Governors as a team, made up of a diverse group of people, all with different skills and experience and each therefore able to offer different things to the role. However Governors rarely met together and do not normally have the opportunity

to learn from one another, or to celebrate the good things they do. Forum meetings offer one such opportunity.

**Outcome:**

There was a clear majority view that the **Forum meetings are worth having** and worth going on with because they meet the following objectives:

- Enabled governors to meet
- Enabled governors to share experiences, issues, questions,
- Enabled review of CoG meeting and input into the next
- Enabled planning of visits and presentations.

**Issues/Thoughts:**

- Too long;
- Need tighter planning
- Agenda setting by convenor(s) together with, rather than just by, Jane.
- Attendance of a NED as participant, generally welcomed
- **Need CLEAR OBJECTIVES for the meetings**
- Reports and other information can be pre-circulated and discussion limited to important/learning points arising.
- 4 meetings a year with openness to an extra one if something important crops up
- Timing at 4.00 pm unless impossible for staff governors – Jane to explore further

There was discussion about the value or otherwise of the CoG meeting and it was agreed to discuss this at the next Forum meeting.

**Agreed:**

- Objectives: as described above
- Agenda setting by convenor(s)
- Draft minutes of CoG to be available before Forum meeting

**Draft Agenda: Aim at 1-½ hours.**

- Discussion of salient points of circulated papers
- Staff Governors' slot
- Experiences from Directorate meetings
- Good health (briefly and for information)
- Visit and presentation planning
- Planning for Cog meeting
- Slot for Jane

This should all take no more than one hour and the remaining time to be for free discussion or for a particular topic e.g. The Council of Governors' Meeting and our views, reservations and suggestions.