

# **Hunts Community Cancer Network**

## **HCCN Charity Annual Report 2020**

Registered Charity No. 1163051  
HMRC registration reference EW23930

# HCCN Charity

## Trustees Report for year ending 30 April 2020

### 1. Introduction, purpose and executive summary

The Hunts Community Cancer Network (HCCN) comprises of the charity working in partnership with the Community Cancer Nursing team to provide community-based care for people across Huntingdonshire living with or recovering from cancer. HCCN the charity operates as a fully constituted membership charity, registered with the Charities Commission, number 1163051.

Our purpose is to preserve and protect the health of patients across Huntingdonshire with a diagnosis of cancer by providing and assisting in the provision of facilities, support services and equipment not normally provided by the statutory authorities. Also, to advance the education of the public in healthcare related to cancer by the provision of lectures, for and by the publication of newsletters devoted to cancer healthcare.

HCCN's trustees are:

Jan Davis, Chair (reappointed )  
Susan Moore, secretary (reappointed)  
Karen Mosely, head nurse (reappointed at the 2019 AGM)  
Amanda Orchard (reappointed)  
Sallie Crawley (seeking formal appointment at the 2020 AGM)

Sallie Crawley was co-opted as a trustee on 12 November 2019 and is seeking formal appointment at the AGM.

All trustees give their time freely: no remuneration or expenses were paid in the year in relation to the work of the charity. The trustees have a good mix of skills and are well supported by a growing team of enthusiastic volunteers. Their 'gift of time' makes a significant contribution to the impact that the charity achieves - delivering a clear programme of activities focused on health, emotional wellbeing and education, that delivers evidence-based impact. We take seriously our commitments to our people and their care, and reserve to the trustees responsibility for establishing and implementing procedures in this area.

The trustees are responsible for setting the strategy for achieving the objectives they have agreed. At the monthly trustees' meetings, they agree the broad strategy and areas of activity for the charity, including consideration of risk; policies, procedures and performance; safeguarding; training; diversity; financial decisions and reserves management. In the context of the charity's 5-year strategy, this report includes an explanation of the target level of reserves, the reserves held, and the charity's plans to increase its reserves.

2019/2020 has been a turbulent year, reflecting continued growth of activities, a maturing team of volunteers, opportunities for local awareness raising – and a strong response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The charity has reached financial stability to fund its current objectives, with a healthy balance sheet and strong reserves, ensuring we are able to cover our outgoings for the year.

## 2. Impact of COVID-19

Progress made in 2019/2020 was overshadowed by the impact of COVID-19. All HCCN activities were postponed from 15 March.

The trustees agreed on 26 March to delay the AGM during the pandemic, as allowed by the Charity Commission, (ref. *Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for the charity sector*). Our financial accounts have been finalised. From 19 March the trustees moved to fortnightly Skype calls to continue to run the business of the charity.

The lockdown means that we suffered from lower income through reduced fundraising events and face-to-face collection methods. All room hire has been temporarily cancelled due to the pandemic with people generously saying that they would be pleased to welcome us back. We continued to pay our contractors as normal whilst they continued to support their groups, using innovative and virtual contact methods, such as Instagram, closed Facebook groups, Zoom exchanges etc.

From 26 March Karen Mosley temporarily stood down from her trustee role during the COVID-19 crisis so that she could focus on her nursing role, with the other trustees make appropriate decisions during her absence. She remains fully updated and able to record her views.

## 3. Objectives

HCCN is a local charity run by volunteers. We work together with the nurses, who provide a home-based service that aims to help people who are recovering from, or living with, cancer to play an active part in managing their health. This results in a reduced use of hospital-based services. The charity funds evidence-based supportive activities such as health and wellbeing services, rehabilitation classes and nutritional advice, as well as specialist nurse training and equipment used to deliver an improved patient experience.

The charity focuses effort on:

- Raising our profile across Huntingdonshire eg educating a wider audience,
- Creating sustainable fundraising processes eg securing a major donor(s)
- Developing our programme of activities, services and conferences in response to research eg practical nutrition and cooking advice

- Monitoring developments in cancer care which might be incorporated into our portfolio of offerings.
- Growing our family of volunteers
- Researching and costing our own accommodation/premises
- Using all available technologies to make our support available to all users.

Our goal is to encourage a more objective view of cancer and to help people understand the trajectory of cancer is ever changing. Increasingly cancer can be lived with in the same way as other long-term health conditions, particularly when individuals are actively involved in managing their health.

## 4. 2019/2020 Achievements

The Trustees continued to pursue the agreed 5-year strategic direction for the charity, based on our unique proposition, namely:

- Enabling people diagnosed with cancer to live well and feel in control
- Powered by a unique clinical nursing team partnered with its charity that provides the things the NHS cannot
- Ensuring patients receive an holistic care package to treat the effects of cancer
- Treating the whole person
- Designing and delivering interventions proven through research to make a difference

### 4.1. Conference

We held our first bi-annual patient conference of the year in November 2019, welcoming around 70 participants. Conference management is in the safe hands of Gill Monsell, supported by audio and visual facilities from PRISM Events.

Our speakers included: Dr Abby Richardson, Clinical Lead on CCG, *How to get the best from your GP appointment*; Dr Suzanne Turner, University Reader in Cellular & Molecular Tumour Biology, *How cells change when they become cancerous*; Colin Russell, Management Development Consultant, *Overview of Patient to Person programme*; Jude Cope, former Chief Pharmacist at Great Ormond Street Hospital, *The way drugs work in the treatment of cancer*.

The April 2020 conference has been postponed to 3 November 2020 due to Covid.

### 4.2. Programmes & activities

The charity funds and delivers a wide range of activities that help people as they seek to regain control of their lives and reduce the impact (physically and emotionally) of their cancer. Everything we do is underpinned by a proven evidence base and a desire to support people back to independence, whether recovering from or living with cancer.

#### 4.2.1. Exercise

The clinical evidence for being active before, during and after treatment is clear, compelling and well accepted, but is not implemented by the NHS as part of the care pathway or mandated by NICE. However, getting a person newly diagnosed with cancer, or who is in treatment and may be physically and emotionally at their lowest ebb, to re-engage in being active is a huge challenge. This is one of the most significant contributions our volunteers make through emotional encouragement, motivation and mentoring. All our offerings are free to cancer patients and their partners.

*Circuits* is a gym based 1-hour fun circuit training class where people of all ages and capabilities spend 1 minute at each station to do what they can achieve. It is not competitive - rather it is a very supportive atmosphere. Our ex-nurse Personal Trainer reminds everyone to stay within their capabilities. Sadly, the paying classes at Huntingdon Leisure Centre for recovering cancer patients ceased due to lack of numbers (pre Covid).

We offer three regular seated *Yoga* classes – seated, seated/standing and standing. These free classes can be used sequentially to rebuild strength or accessed according to capability.

Two *Tai Chi* classes are available - a seated class followed by a paying standing class. People can choose to stay in the seated class. Those taking part describe feeling a great sense of peace and deep relaxation after each class. Over time balance improves for those in the standing class.

Our contractors for these classes created video-based exercises, available on the HCCN YouTube channel, and kept in touch with their participants during the Coronavirus lockdown.

#### 4.2.2. Emotional Wellbeing

We know that the emotional impact of cancer can be long lasting.

Our *Patient to Person* programme, designed for people who are ready to move on but find themselves emotionally stuck, who don't need counselling and don't have deep seated psychological issues, has continued to benefit participants. It is delivered by highly trained and skilled facilitators who are able to work across a range of emotional issues.

In April 2019 we launched a new *Sleep Course* to offer skills and emotional awareness for those struggling to sleep at night. The programme is designed and delivered by Sallie Crawley.

In response to the impact of isolation caused in particular through Covid lockdown, we launched a '*Fancy A Chat*' buddy scheme in April 2020, putting people together to enjoy a pleasant chat with someone who understands the journey.

For those requiring in-depth *Counselling*, we maintained the level of one to one referral to a team of qualified counsellors for adults, couples and children.

## 4.3. Groups

### 4.3.1. Holistic Wellbeing Centre at Ellington

Our Holistic Centre at Ellington is run by Annie Thantrey and her volunteer team, providing a drop-in for people who want somewhere safe to talk and try new things. Described by many participants as a place where they feel welcome from the moment they open the door, Ellington provides a wide range of classes and activities including arts and crafts; reflexology, hand massage and facials; guided relaxation, Tai Chi, yoga and line dancing. There is always a warm welcome, a drink and piece of cake for anyone who wants to take part.

### 4.3.2. Men's Group

Although everything offered by HCCN is available to anyone affected by cancer, most activities attract few men. The men's support group was established in April 2019 to provide men with a sociable place to connect with other men coping with cancer or supporting someone with cancer or bereaved through cancer. Managed by nurse Andrea Lines and supported by a committee of users, the men attending are helping to create an environment welcoming to all men. Darts, carpet bowls, snooker, table tennis, and a drop-in to chat are offered as standard.

### 4.3.3. Women's Cancer Group

*Hollywood or Bust* was a successful breast cancer support group based at Hinchingsbrooke, supported by two breast cancer nurses (including Mel Scholes), with monthly evening meetings, social events and a focus on fundraising. When the nurses transferred to different roles, the HCCN charity agreed to incorporate the group and refocus it as a Women's Cancer group. Monies previously raised by the women are held in a NWAFT charitable fund and will be drawn down by the group for the wider benefit of HCCN.

## 5. Fundraising

An important part of running the charity is going out into the community to talk about the nursing service and the charity. We do this so that people know about the help we can offer and to hopefully be in their minds when thinking of a charity to support. We have focused on raising our profile in the Hunts area, to make sure that everyone who could benefit from the charity and nursing team know we exist, and that we can encourage more people to support us financially.

In November 2019 we held the first HCCN Ball - building on the success of the annual Ball held by *Hollywood or Bust* – when we welcomed 190 guests to the Huntingdon Marriott hotel.

We have been Charity of the Year for M&S Food hall, Huntingdon, where our volunteers have raised awareness of HCCN amongst shoppers.

We appointed a new collection pot volunteer to coordinate the placement and collection of pots across the county.

Fashion Shows at Houghton and Catworth Village Halls proved to deliver a strong income stream.

Funds continued to be generously donated by the local Rotary's, supermarkets – such as the Co-op Local Community Fund, Waitrose stores, etc – as well as local clubs and organisations.

We were the Mayor of Huntingdon's Charity of the Year, providing opportunities for awareness raising.

Individual giving and sponsored activities continued to be a very generous source of much needed funds.

Several fundraising activities such as our first Fire-walk and sponsorship by Buckfest have necessarily been postponed to next year.

## 6. Volunteers

HCCN is run entirely by volunteers. We are gradually growing our team of regular volunteers and received support from new volunteers both to help us fundraise and to become part of the charity management team. We said goodbye to some volunteers as their own plans changed, though we remain very grateful for their support. We ended the year with 30 volunteers, excluding the Trustees and nurses.

In October we launched a new newsletter specifically aimed at recognising and engaging with our volunteers – called eVOLution. Four issues have been published to date.

## 7. Impact and value

While the NHS funds the HCCN nursing service, every other aspect of the support offered to people is provided through the charity, free of charge. Everyone involved in running the charity volunteers their time freely.

We entered for one external award during the year, The HSJ Partnership Awards, which celebrate the most effective partnerships with the NHS and highlight the benefits which working with the private and third sectors can bring to patients and NHS organisations. We were not successful – however, our category was a strong one, all the entries were of a high quality, and we understand that we just missed making the shortlist.

*"A nice example of how working with a local charity can enable more holistic provision. Reads quite clinical/NHS led rather than making clear role and benefit of charity partner (other than provider of resource/funds). This is a compelling entry that demonstrates great partnership working and real value for NHS patients and their families living with cancer. Particularly*

*impressive was the return on investment of almost £6 for every £1 invested and the public patient involvement achieved through educational conferences."*

To manage the visibility of HCCN nursing information, charity funded activities and to raise awareness of volunteering opportunities within the charity, we set out to recruit GP Surgery 'Champions' across the region. The role could extend beyond the surgery to include other public spaces such as Village Hall notice boards, etc. We now have a strong group of *Village Voices*, who will come into their own once more, post lockdown.

The charity also launched a Small Grant programme to make one-off grants up to a maximum of £250 funding per quarter to individuals who can show that such a grant will make a significant difference to their lives. The purpose of the grant is to address a personal need that is generated by, or is as direct consequence of, a cancer diagnosis.

## **8. HCCN Nursing Team**

Karen continues to develop the capabilities of the team of NHS funded community cancer nurses. The team is growing and saw some changes during the year.

Two valuable team members moved on to pastures new, while another took maternity leave, to return in August 2020. Two new team members joined - Sarah Rimmer from the Woodlands unit is chemotherapy trained and experienced with cancer patients and their treatments. Fiona Hope joined with a district nurse background and is fully aware of the role of a community nurse and wants to expand her oncology experience.

Andrea Cliff and Sandra Langstaff completed their acupuncture training bringing the number of trained acupuncturists within the team to four. Karen and Harriet Dacosta expanded their acupuncture knowledge by attending a study day specifically for palliative patients. Unfortunately, due to COVID we temporarily suspended the acupuncture service.

Also due to COVID the introduction of new treatments speeded up. The plan to offer clinical treatments at home was deferred due to the restraints of the Trust. The nurses have now started seeing patients in the community and will carry on into the future. The charity has bought the nursing team some portable drip stands to use whilst carrying out these treatments.

Also, this year the charity has purchased new mobile phones for the nurses, ensuring the team remain accessible and move forward with technology.

The ongoing support from the charity not only enhances the nurses' training and development but also enables the nursing team to expand the events/activities they can directly offer patients. This is forever growing, and we listen to what patients want or where

we see the need and feed this back to the charity so they can continue to expand what is on offer.

## **9. Finances**

The charity has reached financial stability to fund its current objectives, with a healthy balance sheet and strong reserves. HCCN is increasing its offering to users while managing to control expenditure.

HCCN has shown a 37% increase in income over expenditure this year. However, in line with most charities, fundraising and reputation management require constant attention if the charity is to continue to grow its share of the local charitable giving market.

Our annual operating budget is in the region of £73,000 per annum, funded mainly through donations from a wide range of people, grants and fundraising, hence our income remains largely out of our control.

Income increased by 20% - from £97k in 2019, to £117k in 2020. Outgoings increased by 46% caused by a mismatch in timing between expenditure and income on significant new fundraising activities. We forecast to even this out in the coming year, subject to fundraising under difficult circumstances.

A copy of our audited accounts is appended at Appendix 1.

An analysis of our expenditure highlights the significant cost of suitable places (room hire) for our wide range of activities - we are committed to minimising this or preferably using our own accommodation. If we could use this same money to create our own permanent space then the return on the payment would be greater as it would allow us to increase our equipment holding (storage) enabling us to cater for more people, as well as having a permanent display area of useful information such as key health messages.

### **9.1. Reserves Policy**

The trustees have agreed to hold reserves (unrestricted funds) to cover one year's running costs of the charity £60k.

The charity is building its reserves to fund the rental of a specific HCCN building which would enable the charity to deliver more of its services to its users more easily. It will seek to build these reserves to £200k in order to look for external support to ensure long term viability of this plan. Reserves are held in interest bearing accounts. The charity holds no designated reserves.

## **10. Ambition and long-term strategies**

Above all we seek to assure our continued close partnership with the Hunts Community Cancer Nursing Service – Karen and her team – to understand how we can best work with the team to ensure the best possible care and activity for their patients. The emotional impact caused by a diagnosis of cancer is devastating. We firmly believe that being part a community of people sharing a common experience can help people return to or build a ‘normal’ life.

Our vision is to normalise the experience of cancer by providing a place where people can go, as and when they need to, to access therapy, learning and social interaction. In line with our philosophy of providing a local service for local people, our goal is to create a smaller, non-clinical supportive environment where learning, information, rehabilitation, and survivorship can all take place, that is by having our own accommodation, creating a ‘one-stop-shop’ where service users, their families and individuals can access the services and information they need. We thoroughly investigated one space at the end of the year, which did not prove viable as the costs, space and terms kept changing. We continue our search.