

HCCN Trustees' Annual Report For the period May 2020 to April 2021

Aim and Purposes

The Hunts Community Cancer Network (HCCN) comprises of a charity working in partnership with a Community Cancer Nursing team to provide community-based care for people across Huntingdonshire living with or recovering from cancer.

Our purpose is to preserve and protect the health of patients 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.

Objectives and Activities

HCCN the Charity provides support to local people with a diagnosis of cancer through the provision of support in the areas of nutrition, emotional wellbeing and exercise, and educational activities. All our offerings are free of charge to cancer patients and their partners.

We also ensure the HCCN nursing service is well equipped to provide the best quality of care to people being supported at home.

Achievements and Performance 2020/2020

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.

Performance in 2020/2021 has been overshadowed by the impact of COVID. All HCCN face to face activities stopped from March 2020. Lockdown meant that we suffered from lower income through reduced fundraising events and face-to-face collection methods. However, we continued to pay our contractors as normal whilst they continued to support our groups, using innovative and virtual contact methods, running classes online via Zoom, and using WhatsApp, Instagram and closed Facebook groups to stay connected.

Conferences

We held two conferences during the year: conference management is in the safe hands of Gill Monsell.

We held our Autumn conference via the Zoom platform on 3 November 2020. Our speakers were **Henry Goodfellow**, GP and researcher and lecturer at University College London, speaking on “Digital Tools to help people with cancer”; **Jenny Wilson**, a GP from Bedford, on “A Story of Hope” which told us about how her recovery from breast cancer had been greatly aided by exercise; and **Gini Melesi**, former lead nurse and joint founder of HCCN. Gini now works for the Cancer Alliance in the East of England and she explained how the Alliances work.

The choice of breakout groups included **Lymphoedema** led by Andrea Cliff (HCCN nurse) and Alex Brooks (Advanced Occupational Therapist and Lymphoedema treatment specialist); **Physiotherapy** led by Kate Abrahams, a Physiotherapist and Director of a private practice in Bedfordshire; and **Yoga** led by Jill Wiles, HCCN yoga teacher.

We continued online for our Spring conference held on 20 April 2021. Our first talk was on “Early Diagnosis of Cancer” with **Professor Paul Pharoah**, Professor of Cancer Epidemiology, University of Cambridge and the second speaker was our Patron, **Professor Robert Thomas** who addressed the subject of “Gut Health, Cancer and COVID”. We then heard from **Dominic Weaver**, coach of the St Ives Rangers girls football team, about how the team had been keeping up their motivation and fitness during lockdown, and their fantastic fundraising for HCCN.

The choice of breakout groups included an introduction to **Tai Chi** from Dimitry Sokolik who has provided Tai Chi classes for HCCN for many years; **Reflexology** led by Lynn Reader, a volunteer with HCCN at the Ellington Drop-in; and Alix Malone, a Trainer & Discharge Buddy Service Manager at Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and South Lincolnshire MIND, on the **stressors causing anxiety** and potential mental health issues experienced through lockdown.

We also heard from Eileen Murphy, Macmillan Transformation Manager Northwest Anglia NHS Foundation Trust at Hinchingbrooke Hospital about the new Cancer Patient Partnership Group (CPPG) being setting up.

Programmes and 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.

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.

Circuits is a gym based 1-hour fun circuit training class delivered online 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.

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

Efforts to maintain our *Tai Chi* did not prove popular over Zoom and have been suspended until in person activities can restart.

Emotional Wellbeing

We know that the emotional impact of cancer can be long lasting. In response to the impact of isolation caused through COVID lockdown, we launched a '*Fancy A Chat*' buddy scheme in April 2020 (now *Keeping in Touch*), putting people together to enjoy a 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.

In April 2021, we ran 2 online workshops for patient buddy volunteers, their managers and activity leaders to provide skills building in remote working and role boundary management.

Groups

Holistic Wellbeing Centre at Ellington

Volunteers Annie Thantrey and Mary Warren took the Ellington group online, providing a safe place to talk and try new things. Except for yoga, the various classes and activities could not continue online, and Annie brought together an interesting range of guest speakers. There is always a warm welcome, a drink and piece of cake for anyone who wants to take part.

Men's Group

Although everything offered by HCCN is available to anyone affected by cancer, most activities attract fewer men than women. The men's support group was established in 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 volunteer Bill Asling and HCCN nurse Andrea Lines, the men attending create an environment welcoming to all men. Sadly, the standard offer of activities such as darts, carpet bowls, snooker, table tennis were halted by lockdown, while Zoom and WhatsApp offered a chance to chat and keep connected.

Women's Cancer Group

Efforts to incorporate the *Hollywood or Bust* breast cancer support group as the HCCN Women's Cancer group were thwarted by COVID as the women chose not to meet up virtually.

In January 2021, Sallie Crawley, HCCN trustee, commenced a 3-month paid role as HCCN Programme Manager, working up to a maximum of 20 hours per month.

Financial Review

Despite the impact of COVID, the charity has maintained its financial stability to fund current objectives, with a healthy balance sheet and strong reserves. HCCN is increasing its offering to users while managing to control expenditure.

The COVID pandemic significantly impacted the activities of the charity and, as a direct result, HCCN income decreased year on year from £117k (in 2019/2020) to £90K (in 2020/2021), a reduction of 23%. Previously organised fundraising activities could not take place and have been deferred to a later date. Funds have been raised, 'in aid of' HCCN, from funeral donations and the initiatives of individuals who have donated via online platforms such as Just Giving. The HCCN eBay shop also contributed with gross receipts of £19k. Included in the figure for 2020/2021 is a restricted grant from the NHS Cambridge and Peterborough CCG of £18k specifically for the provision of a bespoke exercise programme for cancer patients.

Due to the charity's inability to operate on an 'in person' basis, room hire has not been required; this is largely responsible for the reduction in expenditure: £37k (2020/2021) down from £73k (2019/2020), a reduction of 49%. Exercise, wellbeing drop-ins and Men's Group activities, where possible, have continued via Zoom.

Financial controls were implemented during COVID restrictions to ensure that cash management was reviewed monthly at trustees' meetings to safeguard the continued delivery of services to vulnerable users during the period.

At year end, HCCN reported a £52k surplus for 2020/2021 vs £44k in 2019/2020, a 19% increase.

A copy of our independently reviewed accounts is appended at Appendix 1.

Fundraising

An important part of running the charity is going out into the community to talk about the HCCN nursing service and the charity, focusing 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. All fundraising 'on behalf of' HCCN ceased due to COVID and lockdown.

Individual giving and sponsored activities 'in aid of' HCCN continued to be a very generous source of much needed funds. Sadly, funeral donations made up a large percentage of our income – and one gift in particular, in memory of Peter Branch, has been ring fenced in support of the Men's Group.

Grants

In January 2021, we received a restricted £18k grant for Prehabilitation Exercise Classes from the NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This was part of Innovation Funding received from the Cancer Alliance.

HCCN Small Grants

HCCN the charity has decided 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 a direct consequence of, a cancer diagnosis. Our first award of £250 was granted in September 2020.

Reserves Policy

The trustees have set a reserves policy which requires that reserves are maintained at a level which ensures that a minimum of one calendar year of the charity's core activities could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty. Consequently, the charity has reserves (unrestricted funds) of £85k, ie the maximum FSCS cover.

Reserves are held in interest bearing accounts. The charity holds no designated reserves.

A proportion of reserves is maintained in a readily realisable form. The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of the organisation's planning, budget and forecast cycle.

Volunteers

HCCN is run entirely by volunteers. Their 'gift of time' makes a significant contribution to the impact that the charity achieves. 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 29 volunteers, excluding the trustees and nurses. We also received temporary support from three young women volunteering for HCCN as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award.

All trustees give their time freely: no remuneration or expenses were paid in the year in relation to their work as trustees. We have a good mix of skills. 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.

Structure, Governance and Management

HCCN the charity operates as a fully constituted membership charity, registered with the Charities Commission, number 1163051.

HCCN's trustees are responsible for setting the strategy for achieving the objectives they have agreed. At the monthly trustees' meetings we 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.

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.

HCCN Nursing Team

Karen Moseley continues to develop the capabilities of the team of NHS funded community cancer nurses. As a team of full and part time nurses, they have been able to take on administering additional medications in the community, including infusions and injections at home. This saves additional visits to the hospital and is a more comfortable experience for patients. To assist, the charity equipped each nurse with a telescopic drip stand.

At the peak of COVID the nurses moved back into their nurses' uniforms – as community nurses they were a were a non-uniform team, well received by patients and families. They continue to wear PPE and observe full infection control measures. The charity purchased the team HCCN blue fleeces for the Summer and HCCN waterproof coats for the Winter.

The charity continued to support nurse development through the nurse prescribing course, an online survivorship summit lecture, acupuncture and cancer care acupuncture, etc. The nurses have been able to resume the acupuncture clinics.

Administrative information

HCCN's trustees are:

Jan Davis, Chair - appointed 1 January 2016

Amanda Orchard - appointed 28 July 2017

Sallie Crawley - appointed 31 October 2019

Gill Monsell - co-opted 17 May 2021: seeking formal appointment at the 2021 AGM

Susan Moore - deceased 12 September 2021

Karen Moseley - resigned 17 May 2021

In September 2020 we sadly lost trustee Susan Moore to cancer. Susan was the founder and driving force behind HCCN the charity. Based on her own experience and needs, Susan had the vision to create a cancer charity providing an holistic approach to managing a diagnosis of cancer. Susan worked tirelessly to improve the wellbeing of cancer patients across Huntingdonshire. She wanted people to take control for themselves - she was passionate about giving people the information and tools to remain in control of their diagnosis and not be dictated to. Despite her own health issues, Susan lived her life to the full, always maintaining a positive outlook and a realistic view of her own mortality.

In May 2021, following a review of interests by NWAFT, Karen was asked to stand down as a trustee with immediate effect. Karen remains a close adviser of the charity as the Trust wishes to maintain the HCCN partnership.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Jan Davis

Janet Audrey Davis
Chair of Trustees
2 July 2021