League of Friends St Helier Hospital

2025 NEWSLETTER to Members

Chairman: Mr James Dalton **Treasurer: Mrs Lynda Fletcher**

I hope that this newsletter finds you well and thriving, and apologies for there being no 2024 newsletter, but there have been many changes since the 2023 edition. Key to that is the Chairman you will have been familiar with – Valerie Brundle – moved on, along with her deputy Jeanie Beatty. However, the treasurer (Lynda Fletcher) did not change, and our financial controls have continued in her hands. Further details of the 2023-2025 charitable donations are provided later in this Newsletter.

To introduce myself; I am James (Jim) Dalton. I have volunteered with the League since 2012 and was Vice Chairman at the time of the last Newsletter. On the 1st of April this year I took over as Chair, with the support of the Treasurer and our team of 40+ volunteers. In the coming year we hope to return to having a more structured team, with a deputy, secretary etc. to continue our work.

We held our 2025 AGM here at the hospital on the 3rd September 2025 which was advertised publicly in the local press as well as around the hospital. Unfortunately, we were unable to notify the wider membership, for the reasons below, resulting in a much smaller attendance than usual. However, and in case you were not aware at that time, the website https://lofsth.org.uk (simply search lofsth) where you are reading this Newsletter also contains the minutes of the last AGM.

A key issue raised was communication and how we stay connected with our membership. The increases in postage costs, including these newsletters and e.g., Raffle tickets, means sending out any kind of regular communication is prohibitive. In 2023, we gained little income from membership renewals and ticket proceeds after our costs. Plus, a lack of volunteers in the office means we haven't had the resources to process *Gift Aid* recovery. Finally, our membership has fewer annual members than lifetime ones, and the administrative effort/cost in processing the fee for annual membership has also been part of the drive to review costs & benefits.

To continue our key mission of donating the benefits of our operations to the hospital, we need to reduce communication costs, and we have very reluctantly decided that there will be no more Newsletters sent by post, and our supporters will have to rely instead on our website for future newsletters and any other information, such as the date of the Annual General Meetings. As to the Raffle, we continue looking at an online Lottery if it is cost effective, otherwise it will also be discontinued.

We continue to be very grateful to all of our supporters and would like today to ask that if you wish to continue that support please use one of the options on the Donations page of our website https://lofsth.org.uk/membership/#donations. Of course, we will be happy to receive cheques, in which case please use the **DOWNLOAD FORM** button, but it is better to use the **JustGiving** button which benefits us all as the *Gift Aid* element is processed automatically. I am sure that like us you are seeing more things move online, and we may not like it but the 21st Century is here and we have had to adapt to the world we operate in. **Thank you for your continued support in this – everything you contribute to The League does benefit the patients and staff of St Helier hospital**.

During Covid and the following years, we incurred losses in our businesses (the shop and cafe) mostly because we were unable to open either business during the lockdown, and we gave what goods we had in stock at that time to the hospital wards, free of charge, rather than have them go to waste. In addition, there was a general increase in prices across the board resulting in an overall loss for our company, Friends of St Helier Ltd, of £17k in 2023. However, with our operations settling down through 2024 the company returned a profit £12k, and we continue to see improvements in the financial

position. Overall, The League of Friends remained in the black throughout that period and could respond to funding requests.

The 2025 Treasurer's Report highlights that our supporters, hospital staff and the public have continued to donate generously to the League through purchasing donated goods from our shop, contributing to collection boxes, ad hoc donations, and through some bequests and legacies. In fact, all donations for the financial years from April 2023 to March 2025 amounted to around £139k, which included the sources already mentioned as well as any profits from our businesses. This has enabled us to fund numerous requests from the wards and departments for various items of equipment, and other items that hopefully help to improve the patient's hospital experience. Our full accounts can be found on the Charity Commission website (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission).

Looking back at the previous Newsletter and some of Val's thoughts. Yes, we are incredibly lucky to operate in such a friendly and helpful place. We had a meeting earlier this year with the Chief Executive who was very positive that The League of Friends is here to stay and is a much-valued part of St Helier hospital. When it comes to volunteers, we can always use more so that we can extend the opening hours of the shop and café, and maybe even re-instate the trolley rounds. Time will tell.

We hope you will continue be there for us as we contribute to improving the patient experience in St Helier hospital. We know our buildings are old, and we know the plans for the new acute hospital are very delayed, but the treatment is good, the staff and volunteers enthusiastic, and we hope the League will be at the heart of it for many years to come.

I will sign off with a few very familiar reminders:

If you, or anyone you know, wants to volunteer, please use the contact details below. It goes without saying that our volunteers are a team of devoted people and our most important resource, and I want to say a big **Thank You** to them here for everything they do to make the hospital a better place.

If you knit/crochet or know anyone who does, or belongs to local knitting circles etc., we are always happy to receive baby clothes, blankets, toys etc., to sell. Maybe you no longer knit/crochet but have surplus wool, we will happily take it and pass it on.

The League of Friends Memorial Book can be viewed in the Multi-Faith Room on the Ground Floor of the main building. Sadly, this year, we have had to add the names of two of our own long-standing volunteers, Martha Boylan and Evelyn Clare whom you may have known. Please use the contact details below to let us know if you would like to add a name (with date) to that book.

And finally, our sincerest wishes at this season – our hearts and minds are with you however, and whatever, you celebrate.

Contact us: theleagueoffriends@hotmail.com or james.dalton4@nhs.net

020 8642 4567 where you can leave a message or 020 8296 2462 (no voicemail)
(should you need to contact the Shop: 020 8296 2760 or Café: 020 8296 2431)

Website: https://lofsth.org.uk