



The Friends of
Conquest Hospital

Chairs Report, AGM 2025

The last year has been one of transition for us. With both the CEO leaving us last summer and Angie, who many of you know, leaving us this year. This has meant that our ability to hold events has been somewhat limited, but we have been lucky enough that pubs have still been holding quiz nights and a few companies have nominated as their charity of the year. Also, our trading activity through our hospital shop has continued to improve and we are now trading at pre-covid levels again. We do now have a new General Manager and Administration Manager in place so normal service can be resumed, and we hope improved.

While it has been a slow year for donations we have funded almost fifty-seven thousand pounds worth of equipment. We are currently working with the hospital for a more ambitious target for this summer and hope to launch a new campaign later in the year.

We are launching our new website today. I hope you will all log on and see that it is a bright new look for us. And again, help us be ready for the future. With our donations having been slow this year, we have not used them to fund this new website, but Sarah Kowitz has been generous in funding this on our behalf.

Before we get to the website we would like to introduce you to our new logo. The helping hands of the old logo has been given a modern take, and I hope you agree with me that the heart motif indicates the position the NHS holds for many of us. Again, a subtle change in colour also give a modern image. We will be rolling this out over the next few months across the organisation, but you can already see it on the new website and soon across our shop and social media too.

In the near future we plan to make changes to our membership scheme. We hold our members dear to us and support you give is vital to the organisation.

However, we have found it hard to increase our membership numbers and to broaden our appeal in the wider community. So, it is our plan to launch a new scheme later this year, that will introduce a new tiers of membership, requiring no up-front financial commitment, which we hope will enable more people to join and potentially take part to help us raise money as a volunteer or running a race or knitting or one of the many other ways people show their support. When we are ready to make this change, we will let everyone know and anyone wishing to change their membership status will be given an opportunity to do so.

As you all know, we have an on-going programme of regeneration of the courtyard gardens of the hospital called Conquest 21 and it remains on going, but this year we will look to push forward with new vigour and this time next year the I hope the chair can report the substantial progress can be made.

I would like to thank a few people.

Firstly, you our members, without you we would not be able to half the work we do in helping the hospital and with your future support we hope to do more.

Secondly, to our staff, past and present who are often the face of the charity, and whose hard work makes plans happen and through who people feel our presence.

Thirdly to the conquest hospital. Its staff are just outstanding and every time we come in contact with them, we put ourselves in their caring hands and we rely on them. So, any help we can give by way of additional equipment is always more than retuned to us.

And Lastly to our volunteers without whom we would be nothing. No event or shop opening takes place without our volunteers. Jill Vale, one of our volunteers won an award this year, for all of her hard work for us so while I do not like to pick anyone out, I would like to recognise her work for us once again. Sadly, Jill's husband passed away last week so our thoughts are with her at this time, and we look forward to welcoming her back if/when she feels she want to be back with us.

Thomas Gardiner, May 2025