

Minutes of the 50th full Healthwatch Warwickshire Board Meeting
Tuesday 10th November 2020
10.00am to 12.00pm
MS Teams Conference Call

Present:

Liz Hancock (EH) - Chair	Gita Patel (GP)
Mike Flaxman (MF) - Chair FAG	John Copping (JC)
Jerry Roodhouse (JR)	Leonard Harvey (LH)
Katie Weetman (KW)	

In Attendance:

Chris Bain (CB) - Chief Executive (CE), Claire Jackson (CJ) - Head of Operations, Su Jenkins (SJ) - Authorised Representative, Lucy Dean (LD) - minutes.

1) Welcome and Apologies

Apologies received from Paul Tolley and Mike Flaxman.

2) Declarations of conflict of interest

Liz Hancock, Chief Executive, Mary Ann Evans Hospice
Jerry Roodhouse, Councilor, Warwickshire County Council

3) Minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes of the Healthwatch Warwickshire (HWW) Board meeting on 8th September 2020 were agreed to be an accurate record of proceedings and were electronically signed by the Chair.

Minutes from the recent AGM to be agreed at next meeting. Recording is available to view on the HWW website.

4) Matters Arising

Suggestions from board members on the format of the agenda have been incorporated.

The Engagement strategy document has been circulated.

The CE has raised the lack of representation from South Warwickshire Foundation Trust (SWFT), University Hospital Birmingham or any of the Warwickshire CCGs with the Midlands Adult Critical Care Executive Reference group - further meeting to be held later this month, CB to advise if the comments are taken on board.

Interviews for the new Insight & Communications Lead vacancy have taken place. Volunteers David Alexander & Gill Fletcher were thanked for being an important and valuable part of the recruitment process.

Local HW database - an ongoing piece of work.

The Chair commented that the virtual AGM event on the 15th October worked really well and was well attended. It was positive that some questions were asked by members of the public. CB reported that there were some follow up questions from Simon Cottingham of Independent Advocacy following the AGM. CB has met with Simon to discuss how HWW and Independent Advocacy could work together - dialogue ongoing.

5) Chair's Report

Chair & CE presented HWW's annual report to the HWBB - a valuable opportunity to highlight a positive year - some of the successes from HWW's year and some of the changes forced upon us. Thanks to Chris and the team for rising to the challenge.

The first informal briefing for directors took place in October and was a useful chance for more detailed discussion. A member of staff will be invited to the next one, to present an area of work recently carried out. Next meeting 8th December at 10am. ACTION: LD to send out details of informal directors briefing.

The Chair also attended the Volunteers' forum, a positive meeting as always. Next one 7th December at 10am.

The Chair and CE met with the Chief Executive of Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership Trust (CWPT), who highlighted ongoing and additional pressures on Mental Health services.

The Chair and CE attended an NHS England briefing for Healthwatch on ICU provision in the Midlands.

Healthwatch England (HWE) annual conference - the Chair managed to attend 3 sessions (Health equity in England; Shaping HWE's future strategy; and Health & Care systems - the new normal). The agenda came out so late that her diary was already full; plus a lot of sessions were already fully booked.

There were some high-calibre speakers, however the sessions were not very interactive, and it is unclear why the numbers in attendance had to be so limited.

The Chair and CE attended Coventry & Warwickshire Joint Place Forum to hear updates on progress made so far. Not a very interactive meeting, not helped by the virtual format - it was difficult to establish relationships, which was one of the objectives for the meetings. CB added that the South Warwickshire Transition Board is looking at informal Board Meetings to improve relationships.

Upcoming meetings - quarterly meeting with University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire (UHCW); Next week Quarter 4 performance report meeting with HWW's commissioner.

Recruitment of chair - the process is currently on hold, but the Chair highlighted that a potential timeline should be put in place to continue the process. It was suggested to review in March/April 2021.

There was a discussion on the decision whether it is better to recruit a Chair externally or from within the board. It was decided that under the current circumstances, it is too uncertain to progress this until after Christmas. The Chair will send a survey to board members and the CE, for people to express their preference.

ACTION: Chair to send a survey to the Board regarding recruitment of a new Chair.

HWW have been approached by an individual interested in potentially becoming a board member. There was a discussion on whether there are sufficient board members, and if now is an appropriate time to recruit.

The most recently recruited Board member (who was recruited/ inducted virtually) was comfortable with the process as she is accustomed to virtual meetings in her other work - however recognised that this may not suit everyone.

Generally, it was felt that there is space for one or two more board members, however we are not in a place to recruit immediately.

ACTION: The Chair will review the Board skills audit to assess what skills are lacking, draw up an 'advert' for the post (draft to be ready for the January Board meeting) and contact the interested individual. It was agreed that it would be good to have someone with digital and marketing skills. It is known that the individual is knowledgeable about mental health issues and has campaigning experience.

Further discussions will be had on how to distribute the advert to ensure that people's attention is drawn to it.

6) Report from Finance and Audit Group

Attached to the Board papers are the annual accounts (which have been audited), the audit findings report, CIC34 report - to be sent to Companies House and Letter of Representation.

CB outlined the details of the finance report and supported MF's recommendation that the report is adopted by the board. The recommendation was seconded by John Copping and Jerry Roodhouse.

The audit papers (2019-2020) were approved.

Also to be discussed: succession planning for all roles in HWW (including the Board).

ACTION: EH to electronically sign letter of representation (CJ to liaise).

The Chair thanked MF and CJ for their close accounting procedures which allow us to be in the current healthy position, and a clean set of accounts and good audit report.

7) CE's Report and Update on Emerging Strategic Issues

The Chair highlighted that feedback has been received from Adrian Stokes, (Accountable Officer NHS Warwickshire North and NHS Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Groups) That 'Healthwatch (Warwickshire) have been a fantastic support to the CCG through our recent Stroke consultations and particularly during Covid, we look forward to working with you.'; a testament to the work of CB and the team in raising the profile of HWW, particularly the work of Poonam Thompson, E&O officer, making and securing relationships in the north of the county.

The CE ran through section 7.1 of his report, regarding whether a unanimous vote is needed to make decisions in virtual meetings, and recommended that the Board agrees that all virtual meetings can be treated as though they are properly constituted Directors meetings under the terms of the Articles of Association, and that normal voting rules shall apply (simple majority with Chair casting vote).

All Board members agreed that all virtual meetings of the Board will be seen as Directors' Meetings, properly convened in accordance with the terms of the Articles of Association and that normal voting rules shall apply. There is no need for a special resolution.

There will be an Addendum to AGM minutes, explaining the decision.

ACTION: LD/CB to ensure there is an addendum to the AGM minutes regarding decisions made during virtual Board meetings.

There was a question at the AGM about non-emergency patient transport - HWW are looking into it and will respond.

There was also a question about blanket Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders in care homes.

Following some research, it appears that HWW can find no evidence to suggest that there is a major issue with the blanket use of DNRs in Warwickshire Care Homes.

There was a discussion about non-emergency patient transport. Patients being discharged from hospital at 2am is unacceptable (although the hospital may say that the bed is needed for an emergency). Patients are frequently moved around the hospital to different wards, sometimes at night, which is disorienting for the patients and distressing for families to turn up to visit and not know where their relative is.

The CE's report covered the continuing discussions regarding reducing the amount of office space rented from WCAVA.

The Board agreed to delegate further discussions and decisions to the Lockdown task group and the CE.

ACTION: CB/CJ to continue discussions with WCAVA regarding future rent for office premises.

The Expenditure report was presented and was accepted by the Board.

The CE has been approached by the West Midlands combined authority and was invited to present the work of HWW to the Covid task group in January. A representative from the combined authority will be attending the HW regional meeting to present their work and seek the support of HW across the region.

The Chair commented that it is an indication of HWW's prominent position in health and social care that we are getting these types of invitation - we need to ensure that resources are not spread too thin.

8) Head of Operations Report

CJ reported that 3 interviews were conducted last week for the Insights & Communications Lead role. All were strong candidates and one of them was offered and has accepted the position. The individual is unable to start until January due to current work/handover commitments.

Priority project update: The Discharge project has been completed and the report is on our website to be viewed.

HWW has been asked to do a piece of engagement work in Shipston on people's views on the development of a Health & Wellbeing hub. We will be exploring how to contact people whilst we cannot carry out face to face engagement e.g. targeted digital marketing, postal marketing. Board members suggested various contacts to get in touch with: Shipston town or parish council; Shipston home nursing (EH has contacts there); Stour Health & wellbeing partnership. JR offered help if needed. CJ confirmed that we have engaged with another Local Healthwatch (LHW) that has done similar work to ask their advice.

HWW has begun a project contacting care home managers in the area to find out how they are coping during the pandemic and where they feel they need more support. From the results of the Covid survey it was clear that we had not heard as much about care homes as we would have liked. We will be sharing the information as we find it, rather than holding on to it until the end of the project. The first findings are on the website, and some things have been shared in meetings already. The aim is to create positive relationships and dialogue with care homes moving forward.

South Warwickshire Foundation Trust (SWFT) have approached HWW about helping with a piece of work on End of Life - having a discussion with the public (families, carers, individuals) on the information available and people's rights. So far CJ has pulled together work previously done by other LHW. It is recognised that it is a sensitive topic at the moment so is being approached with caution. The Chair expressed interest in the project and offered support.

ACTION: CJ to update the Chair on progress of the SWFT End of Life engagement project.

It was noted that some years ago the County Council carried out a scrutiny exercise on end of life care - there may be some reports to be found that contain recommendations that were made at the time.

SJ noted that she and CB sit on a RESPECT project at Warwick Medical School, which will be publishing their findings early next year.

Another piece of work is with the acute hospitals and the County Councils; on the impact of delays to cancer care during Covid - due to start early next year.

The new website was launched on 13th October and has been well received so far. Covid report published and will be used in future discussions with the community.

The E&O officers are working on implementing the engagement plan. This quarter we have distributed over 1500 leaflets to organisations that have asked for them.

ACTION: LD to forward a copy of the Engagement Plan to JR and LH.

Exception reporting:

- HWW is not doing face to face work or Enter & View visits due to current circumstances.
- We are currently one staff member down and have one on maternity leave. There is not an easy solution to the short-term gap but staff are filling the gaps as best they can. Bringing in temporary staff is difficult as it takes time to bring them up to speed with the work in hand, causing more work in the process.

The Home Working policy was presented for approval. The Chair has sent a comment on the wording around reserving the right to change where someone works.

The Board approved the Home Working policy, subject to The Chair's comments.

9) Volunteer report

SJ reported that the volunteers involved in the recent interview process were happy to have done so. The volunteers have also been involved in calling care homes for the aforementioned project and have been pleased with the responses received. Several of the volunteers took part in a meeting on the future of adult social care and how to support the whole population. Looking forward to getting involved with the Shipston and SWFT surveys.

SJ has been involved in the STP cancer board. There is a planned community diagnostics hub at Shipston - not very close to main site, but supplying staff to the hub; with plans to expand in the future. Comments have been received about GPs not wanting to take homeless people back on after they were rehoused during the first wave of the pandemic. Cancer screening is getting back up and running; There will be a pilot lung screening in Coventry & Rugby. There is more protected learning time for GPs to learn more about cancer. Living With and Beyond Cancer is rolling out.

10) AOB

CB commented that we were approached by the County Council network to be one of two LHW to host the Future of Adult Social Care Forum discussion that was held yesterday, where a full and interesting discussion was held. CB has been asked about another meeting - they would like HWW to be involved going forward; Positive evidence that HWW is beginning to make an impact on local government.

The question was raised if there should be a director responsible for safeguarding, to attend safeguarding meetings if the CE is unable to attend. CB confirmed that we do have a statutory place on the safeguarding partnership board.

ACTION: if any board member has a particular interest and capability to attend Safeguarding meetings (either regularly or occasionally) should advise the Chair.

KW asked how HWW is engaging researchers; to whom should interested people be directed; and is HWW interested in supporting Public & Patient Involvement (PPI)? CB confirmed that HWW are in process of discussing with the Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) how we might work together, and we have been invited to join the AFC. We have been co-applicants on 3 projects with Warwick Medical School (WMS) now and PPI is how we get involved, as HWW's focus is on patient voice.

ACTION: CB and KW to discuss HWW's involvement in research and PPI projects.

Q - Could we promote HWW's profile at WMS? HWW are not well known there and a seminar/ presentation would be good to present and promote the work of HWW (perhaps when the new Insights & Comms officer starts).

The Chair highlighted that we do have reserves, there is the possibility we could buy in someone for a one-off project.

GP does PPI work for organisations locally and offered help.

11) Date of next meeting

The next Board meeting will be held online via MS Teams, from 10.00am to 12.00pm on Tuesday 12th January 2021.

Other upcoming meetings:

Volunteers' forum - 7th December.

Informal Directors' briefing meeting - 8th December 2020.

Summary of Actions:

Item 5:

- LD to send out details of informal directors briefing.
- EH to send a survey to the Board regarding recruitment of Board members
- EH to review the Board skills audit to assess what skills are lacking, draw up an 'advert' for the Board member post (draft to be ready for the January Board meeting) and contact the individual interested in joining the Board.

Item 6:

- EH to electronically sign letter of representation (CJ to liaise).

Item 7:

- LD/CB to ensure there is an addendum to the AGM minutes regarding decisions made during virtual Board meetings.
- CB/CJ to contact WCAVA regarding future rent for office premises

Item 8:

- CJ to update the Chair on progress of the SWFT End of Life engagement project.
- LD to forward a copy of the Engagement Plan to JR and LH.

Item 10:

- If any board member has a particular interest and capability to attend Safeguarding meetings (either regularly or occasionally) to advise the Chair.
- CB and KW to discuss HWW's involvement in research and PPI projects.

Minutes Approved by:

Signed:

Date: