THE ROTHERHAM NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held on Wednesday 20 September 2006, in the Roof Top Restaurant,
Level A, Rotherham General Hospital

MINUTES

Present: Mrs M Oldfield, Chair
        Mr T Hercock, Vice Chair

Public Governors: Graham Ashton
                 Sylvia Bird
                 Anna Chester
                 Patricia Draycott
                 Joan Durkan
                 Joan Green
                 Peter Hinchcliffe
                 John Martin
                 Alan Thompson
                 Lew Vizard
                 Sandra Waterfield
                 Anthony Wilkinson

Staff Governors: Bev Doane
                 Julie D’Silva
                 Dr Mike Kesseler
                 Lee Marshall
                 Jill Ward

Partner Governors: Jean Flanagan
                   Dr John Radford
                   Janet Wheatley

Non Executives: Lorainne Wainwright
                Giles Bloomer

Board Secretary: Mrs K Rogers

In attendance: Mr B James, Chief Executive
               Mr M Lowry, Chief of Finance
               Mrs J Wilson, Chief of Operational Support

1. Apologies
   V Lindsay       Jean Dearden       E Smith
   Professor P Fleming  Dr W Al Wali
   P Hinchcliffe  T Yaseen
   G Moss          J Fenwick

2. Introduction from the Chair
   Mrs Oldfield welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked all for attending.
Mrs Oldfield commented that although a difficult first year as a Foundation Trust, it had been a successful one with a great deal of achievement for which staff and management should be proud.

3. Annual Report
Mr James presented both Annual Reports, the first for the 2 months as a NHS Trust and the second for the 10 months of Foundation Trust status, and explained to the meeting how he would roll the two Reports together when taking about what had been achieved across the year.

Mr James went on to say how most of the year had been spent implementing the Service Development Strategy and getting the new Divisional structure in place.

The meeting heard how the Trust felt that Governors were now beginning to influence strategy and how it was hoped the engagement would continue to improve as the Trust moved forwards.

Mr James commented how the Hospital Live programme had generated a tangible buzz around the hospital and was a great success. The meeting heard how Gerry Robinson and the BBC were still in the hospital filming their documentary to demonstrate how the Trust was striving for step change and continuous improvement. Staff were recognised for working extremely hard to provide best possible care to patients and Mr James expressed how proud he was of their efforts going on to describe increases in productivity and improvements in access times.

4. Annual Accounts and Auditor's Report
Mr Lowry reflected on the year as a whole and described how for finances nationally, 2006 had been a very difficult year for the NHS, with the reported £500m national deficit reflecting a range of issues.

Mr Lowry explained that Rotherham Foundation Trust had ended the year with a deficit of £1.6m, equating to 1.2% of annual turnover. It was explained where the Trust had spent more than planned particularly in terms of Agenda for Change, Bank Staff usage and energy costs.

Mr Lowry went on to comment how the Trust had also received less income than planned including a reduction in income through reduced lengths of hospital stay (a good thing for patients).

The Trust had ended the year with £1.1m in the bank providing sufficient headroom but not as much as the Trust would prefer. Mr Lowry described the number of actions that had been taken to reduce expenditure and increase income including the targeted reviews of all non clinical areas. The meeting heard how the Annual Reports had received unqualified opinions evidencing External Auditor satisfaction
with the Trust’s systems and processes and the robustness of its reporting.

5. Appointment of External Auditor
The Board of Governors’ approval of the appointment of KPMG as the Trust’s External Auditors was announced to the meeting.

6. Looking Forward
Mr James explained how the Annual Plan for 2006/07 would return the Trust to a surplus after making savings of £6m. The Trust’s plans had been independently assessed by PWC who were very complimentary of their content, and Mr James reported that the Trust was currently ahead of plan.

Mr James explained where the Trust’s money came from, with over 90% coming from the Primary Care Trust, and on what the Trust’s money was spent, emphasising how often that spending was outside the control of the Trust – e.g. Agenda for Change, Consultant Contract.

Mr James explained that nursing levels met the requirements agreed nationally but that he would be looking to increase the nurse to patient ratio where he could, and how he was working with the Primary Care Trust to address issues of community beds and keeping patients in safer more appropriate surroundings once they had gone through the acute phase of their care.

Mr James continued to provide more detailed information to the meeting about the priorities documented within the Annual Plan and explained that a full version of the Plan could be obtained from Mrs Rogers the Trust Board Secretary.

7. Minutes of the last AGM
The minutes of the 2005 AGM were approved as an accurate record.

8. Questions from the floor
Jean Flanaghan: How will choice and competition work?
Mr James confirmed that any individual could ask their GP to send them to Rotherham but there had been anecdotal evidence to suggest some GPs were boycotting Choose and Book which could, if true, have an effect on patient choice. He continued by commenting how patients were exercising choice and were willing to travel to do so, which figures for outside Rotherham GP referrals were confirming. The meeting was reminded it was an individual’s right to be offered at least 4 providers and Mrs D’Silva commented that individuals should request choice.

Joan Durkan – Following the £650k spend on car parking, how much income will be generated?
Mr Lowry explained that the Trust expected around £500k per annum which would predominantly be spent on improved lighting, maintenance and security so that public money for health care wasn’t
used on parking cost pressures. He reminded the meeting that over £2m had been expended in capital costs over the last 2 years alone, evidencing it was not a cheap service to provide.

Joan Durkan – For a pre-9am appointment recently, she had been unable to locate a parking space.

Mr Lowry confirmed that only within the last week over 300 spaces had been freed up with the introduction of a dedicated staff parking area and it was hoped this would improve patient/visitor parking. It was confirmed that the Council had agreed to consider planning applications for more spaces if the patient car park continued to be full.

Member of public – As a successful Trust which will encourage the use of Rotherham hospital, how did the Trust plan to meet an increase in the number of patients?

Mr James stressed RFT’s priority was its Rotherham patients who should benefit from reduced waiting times and not have these forced up by an increase in the number of patients using Rotherham. Consequently, the Trust was creating a standard for everyone who comes to Rotherham hospital, priority remaining with the Rotherham population.

There being no further questions, the meeting closed with closing remarks from the Chair, who expressed her thanks to the Infection Control Team who had presented an extremely informative presentation to the members, with a special thank you to the Non Executive Directors, Executive Directors and all staff for their continued hard work and dedication.

9. Next Meeting
The next AGM would be held on Wednesday 26th September, 2007 in the Lecture Theatre, Education Centre.