

St Raphael's Hospice
Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Held at 13:00 on 19 March 2025
at St Raphael's Hospice

Trustees:

Norman McWhinney (NM) (<i>Chair</i>)	Alan Cogbill (AC) (<i>Vice-Chair</i>)	Paul Holmes (PH)
Sister Veronica Hagen (Sr VH)	Grahame Darnell (GD)	Steve Chambers (SC)
Carrie Chill (CC)	Manjit Lall (ML)	Bernard Marley (BM)
Sister Kathleen O'Reilly (Sr K'OR)		

In attendance:

Rebecca Trower (RT) (<i>Joint CEO</i>)	Nick Stevens (NS) (<i>Joint CEO</i>)	Kate Billingham Wilson (KBW) (<i>Director of Fundraising & Communications</i>)
Naomi Collins (NC) (<i>Lead Consultant</i>)	Ed Cook (EC) (<i>Advisor to DoC & Finance Committee member</i>)	John Groom (JG) (<i>Director of IT & Estates</i>)
Alison Linwood (AL) (<i>Legacy & In Memory Manager – items 1-2</i>)	Alex Rudkin (<i>Director of Quality & Governance</i>)	Sara Jane Harris (SJH) (<i>Director of Income Generation</i>)
Jenny Wingate (JW) (<i>Governance</i>)		

Agenda item	Action	Responsible	Timeline	Ref.
4. Strategy	Feedback on presentation to Becca Trower	All Trustees	March 25	19.03.25/1
5. Lottery	Facilitate meeting with MD of a canvasser firm	Graeme Darnell/Kate Billingham Wilson	May 25	19.03.25/2
	Sub group to review findings – and report back to Fundraising Committee	Nick Stevens	April 25	19.03.25/3
7. Budget	Criteria for additional shop to be shared with Trustees	Sara Jane Harris	April 25	19.03.25/4

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed Trustees to the meeting, and there were no apologies shared.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to items on the meeting agenda.

3. Minutes of Board meeting held on 29th January 2025 & Actions List

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved as an accurate record of proceedings, with all actions from that meeting having been completed.

4. Strategy discussion:

Becca Trower shared a presentation on the draft 2-year strategy for discussion. She began by explaining that the previous strategy had covered the period 2019-24, but that due to uncertainty about the wider funding and political context, it was proposed that the current strategy is set for two years to enable review should the context change. The Board had been involved in strategy planning since last Autumn, and what was presented now was a reflection of these discussions along with consultation and feedback from staff and leaders on values, priorities for focus, and St Raphael's mission and purpose.

As a result of this engagement, what was proposed included a reduction in the number of values to six from ten – five retained from the previous strategy, and a sixth added – that of compassion. Proposed values were therefore:

- Safety
- Respect
- Honesty and integrity
- Person-centred
- Teamwork
- **Compassion**

Further consideration was given to the current vision and mission, both of which were considered to need further review and streamlining.

The core of the draft 2-year strategy was the four priorities proposed through which the strategy would be shaped: our care; our community; our people; and our income. For each of these priorities, a statement of intent and how it will be achieved has been drafted along with examples of the work that St Raphael's would be doing to meet them.

It was intended that the strategy be a public facing 8-10 page document that is published on the website and that alongside this is developed a management plan which includes objectives and timeline to measure progress. The aim would be to publish this by end of April in the first instance.

Comments and questions were requested from the Board:

The Chair noted that there was a great deal in the document which might need further careful contemplation outside of the meeting – it was agreed that in addition to the discussion at the meeting, Board members should share subsequent comments with Becca Trower via email. The Board welcomed the overall direction and streamlining of the strategy and were pleased to hear about the engagement of staff in the development of this.

It was requested that the reference to 'paid-for' services was explained given the purpose of St Raphael's to provide 'free at the point of delivery' services. Becca Trower explained that any patient in receipt of clinical care receives a free service, but should a user access support through a different pathway, e.g. bereavement services, they would access a limited number of free sessions and then could be offered further sessions at a cost. Likewise, those who come to the Wellbeing Centre are asked for donations for complementary therapies, but it might be that consideration was given to charging after a certain number of sessions had been completed. Becca Trower emphasised that this concept was not a proposal at this stage, but something that might be considered given the funding needs.

Becca Trower was asked whether the 2-year strategy would be accompanied by an annual plan with KPIs. She agreed that KPIs would be developed whilst suggested that some would be harder to define than others at this stage.

Trustees agreed that the proposed strategy included a significant number of concepts and ideas for review to assess viability. They suggested this would be a fairly intensive process and that it would be important to prioritise actions, agree the order in which they would be focused on and what success indicators would be. Becca Trower agreed with this but also emphasised that much of what was in the plan was happening already and so could be built on, albeit it was important that each directorate was clear about what the year 1 and 2 priorities would be.

It was noted that collaboration with external partners was a core element of the strategy and Becca Trower was asked about this. She responded that due to the funding challenges over the last few years, the hospices had made great progress in working together and collaborating and this work would be built from a solid base that existed already.

Other more specific comments included:

- The extent to which there was a direct reference to quality within the priorities – Becca responded that this was implicit but agreed that it would be helpful to make this more explicit, for example by adding reference to CQC in the ‘our care’ priorities. It was also agreed that it might be important to test out whether terms were interpreted in the same way by those interested, e.g. did quality mean safety?
- The context setting is an important component of the strategy – the reference to the ‘new economic reality’ was crucial and should be potentially referred to in the strategic overview
- Was it possible to test out the ‘values’ with patients, families and supporters of St Raphael’s? **GD confirmed he could help with an online survey if that would be helpful**
- Agreed that compassion was an important core value given the roots of the organisation in Catholicism – this might be the value that sets St Raphael’s apart from others.
- Whilst three of the priorities are clearly outcome focused, the ‘our community’ one might need more consideration – whilst trustees agreed that community awareness and engagement was important, they also agreed that there was a need to be clear about the purpose of this and why it was being focused on.
- It was acknowledged that this process of reviewing and ensuring the right values are reached was something that might take longer and might continue alongside the two year strategy development

The Board returned to the matter of the strategy being only two years. Becca Trower suggested that the two years was a realistic timeframe as it was not possible to predict certain projects beyond this time, albeit they did not want to give anyone the impression there was any risk to the organisation by limiting the strategy to this timeframe. Trustees suggested that perhaps it could be a rolling strategy agreeing that there was no reason why the priorities would need to change at the end of the two-year period, but it would be helpful to try and visualise what would be different in two years’ time. They posed the question as to whether financial stability was the core issue that would impact on the organisation, but agreed that whilst this would be advantageous, it was not the sole focus.

They concluded by suggesting that consideration be given to using a matrix approach to show how the work and projects being proposed could support a number of the strategic priorities at the same time.

ICB update – it was confirmed that colleagues had met with the ICB in February who had confirmed that no additional funding would be forthcoming. A further update is awaited but given the recent government announcements and the likelihood of significant cuts at ICB, this is likely to be delayed. Nonetheless it was agreed that it was positive the proactive engagement from the ICB to St Raphaels is happening, and that there is such strong collaboration with hospices locally. Trustees considered whether there was a likelihood that key personnel would leave the ICB and new relationships need to be developed. It was agreed that this was a risk that needed to be considered as matters developed. There was also discussion as to whether approaches should be made to South East London hospices to bring them into the collaboration network given potential for working across the wider region. It was noted that good relationships were in place and that there were existing London CEOs and London Chairs’ group meetings which would be sufficient for now.

5. Lottery discussion

Nick Stevens updated Trustees on due diligence carried out by Kate Billingham Wilson and Sara Jane Harris following the proposed move to the Local Hospice Lottery from Britevox. In the light of their findings, leaders considered it important to bring the matter back to the Trustees for a review and a decision.

Trustees heard from Kate Billingham Wilson about their findings and concerns related to the potential risks arising from moving from LHL in the light of these. These included: limited flexibility about the model of ticket selling; potential for canvassing on behalf of St Raphaels as opposed to hospices; lack of contact directly with LHL canvassers; risk of being in direct competition with LHL should St Raphaels want to pursue promotion of regular giving; risk to the current low attrition rate amongst St Raphaels lottery player and the potential for further donations directly to the hospice once signed up to the lottery scheme. They also heard about some of the additional activities that could be done through Britevox to promote greater participation, e.g. with more 1:1 contact with players including birthday draws.

The Chair asked for questions and comments from Trustees:

It was queried whether in the context of recent media exposure signups to the lottery had increased. The media exposure has resulted in greater funds through donations rather than lottery subscriptions but through recent experiences, the team are focusing on reviewing the donations strategy to include more options including lottery subscriptions – these would not be possible should the lottery operation be outsourced.

Trustees welcomed the thorough due diligence analysis agreeing on the uniqueness of the St Raphaels audience and the multiple touch points that exist for individuals who might be involved in the hospice in a number of ways, e.g. lottery, regular giving, attending events.

There was recognition of the complexity in terms of the various touchpoints and advantages of this, but Trustees wish to understand what the perceived financial benefit of moving to LHL would be. Nick Stevens confirmed that this had been reviewed previously by Trustees and based on the attrition rates provided by LHL it was evident that the financial benefits from LHL were the highest, but since that meeting, greater clarity has been obtained of St Raphael's own attrition rates which are lower than those of LHL and which reduces the level of financial benefit from LHL. It was also the case that an inhouse model as opposed to Britevox might bring a level of financial benefits more in line with LHL over the longer term should the lottery continue to grow.

It was agreed how useful the modelling was and how at first sight, it appeared that LHL was the most profitable option by far. However it was important not to ignore feedback from users as shared in the due diligence paper. With regard to the option of inhouse canvassers, it was agreed it was important to be realistic about the ability to recruit and how feasible it would be to sustain the level needed – albeit this was a universal challenge and it might be that LHL would face a similar issue and St Raphael's more likely to be able to staff it locally. Graeme Darnell spoke of his experience of this suggesting the hospice should be of thinking they could compete with specialist canvasser recruitment companies. **He suggested that it would be helpful to have a conversation with the Managing Director of such an agency and offered to set this up.**

Trustees thanked colleagues for the research agreeing how important it was that this had been shared before a final decision was made. They suggested there were important factors to be considered prior to making the final decision and asked what action needed to be taken at the meeting. It was confirmed that Britevox would be happy to continue with St Raphael's until such a point as a decision had been made and so the lottery could continue whilst further consideration of options is done. **It was agreed that a short-term subgroup should meet to investigate the matter in more detail**, given the importance of balancing the potential financial benefits from LHL compared with staying with Britevox or moving inhouse. It was noted that the executive leaders were keen to consider the cost and potential of moving inhouse – this would be something that would be discussed by the subgroup.

Trustees commented on what a good example of cross department collaboration this piece of work had been.

Committee Chair updates inc minutes

6. 11th March 2025 Finance Committee Chair update & meeting minutes inc. external audit tender update – Alan Cogbill and Bernard Marley updated the Trustees about the recent meeting confirming that in addition to the lottery and the budget, both of which are on the agenda, they also discussed IT matters and approved the Anti-laundering policy. The Committee had been pleased to hear about increases in donations and income and considered that the budget proposed was robust, albeit there are always risks.

The Committee also discussed the need to recruit a new external auditor given the departure of the current partner from haysmcintyre. The company had offered another partner, but given the change in personnel, it was agreed that it would be timely to conduct a tender process. Three possible options had been identified, two of whom had been interviewed that morning by **Ed Cook, Nick Stevens and Alan Cogbill**. The interview panel were clear in their preference and were recommending Crowe to be appointed on the basis of service, expertise, creativity, and comparable price.

The Board of Trustees accepted the resignation of the partner at haysmcintyre and approved the appointment of Crowe to be the new auditor for St Raphael's Hospice.

The Chair added that in relation to proposed stretch income generation target in the budget for next year, they had asked to see a clear plan of how this ambitious target would be achieved.

Trustees asked how leaders could be confident that the recent increase in donations was not merely due to the publicity campaign. It was agreed that some of the increase would have related to the publicity but there were other longer term expressions of interest which were likely to provide assurance of regular donations, for example interest from a local company who wished to support in a number of ways.

The Chair of the Income Generation Committee stated that he had reviewed the fundraising lines in the budget and had a number of questions. These particularly related to the confidence levels behind some of the projections. He added that one should be wary of adhering to a stretch target despite the excellent job done last year. It was agreed that these questions and points might be helpful to have as a standing item on the Income Generation Committee agenda so they could be reviewed regularly.

It was noted that the five-year grant from City Bridge has shaped the projection for trust funding. Kate Billingham Wilson confirmed that there were ongoing conversations about strategies for fundraising that a good level of confidence around plans to increase income through fundraising. It was also noted that there was flexibility on spend built in for next year – in-year reviews would be important in keeping track.

Finally, the Daughters of the Cross were thanked for their recent gift in kind.

7. 2025/25 Budget and Month end accounts

Trustees welcomed the RAG report for year-end Feb 25, noting that it was almost uniformly green which was positive given the challenging year and testament to all the hard work from staff. The red related to the lottery income is explained by the delay in starting the campaign and there being no bumper draw. Trustees also welcomed that the cost aspects were below budget in all areas.

Trustees commented on how remarkable the last 5-6 months of donation income had been noting that 'In memory' donations were up 8% in the first 6 months and then up by 60% in last five months which is unprecedented. Nick Stevens alerted the Board to the fact that, whilst legacy donations are green this month, unless there is a large donation in March, it is likely to become red again.

Nick Stevens presented an outline of the 25-26 budget and beyond noting that the draft budget for 25/26 projects projected a surplus of £269k after the drawdown from the DoC grant of £600k. The shortfall ultimately is predicted to be a deficit of £701k for 25/26 when DoC and Government grants have been taken into account, with this projected to fall to £175k deficit in 26/27 and then a surplus of £138k in 27/28 marking a transition to a solid sustainable future. He spoke through the assumptions and the potential uncertainties (see presentation) adding that there would be a need to update the budget line related to the lottery given the decision not to move to LHL yet.

Trustees raised a number of questions and comments.

Consideration was given to the flexibility around how capital grant can be spent and how specific the criteria was. It was noted the Crowe, the new auditors had agreed that there could be some flexibility around this which would be helpful moving forward. Nick Stevens was asked about the potential disjuncture between a two-year strategy and a 4-5 year budget. He explained that the budget was set out over the longer term in order to be able to stretch the budget over several years and demonstrate how sustainability could be reach in the longer term. It was agreed that reaching financial sustainability was an important facet of the strategy but that it was not a concern that the timeframes were not aligned as long as financial sustainability was considered within the strategy – and this was the case in strategic priority 4. It was suggested that the fundraising strategy should be emphasised further in the strategy to reflect the sustainability plan.

Trustees noted that opening another shop was within the financial plan. **It was agreed that Sara Jane Harris should share the criteria for what she was looking for in case Trustees could help.**

Having reviewed it, the Board of Trustees approved the budget proposed.

8. Agreement of next steps, Any Other Business & Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 14th May 2025.

Signed:

Date:
