

# THE POLICE REHABILITATION CENTRE

## FLINT HOUSE

Notes of 125<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting held at Flint House, Goring-on-Thames,  
on Wednesday 17 June 2015 at 13.00hrs

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Present: Mr David Ball - Chairman  
Mr Tom McAuslin – Chief Executive  
Mrs Tracy Allum – Finance Manager  
Mrs Sarah Allen – Head of Health & Wellbeing  
Mrs Clare Laker - Minutes

Trustees: Mr Tim Jackson  
Mr Barry Knott  
Mr Andrew Menzies  
Mr Kevin Phillips

And 30 guests and members of Donating Forces

1. Opening Prayer

The Rev Don Axcell, Chaplain to the Police Rehabilitation Centre, opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Letter from H.M. The Queen (The Centre's Patron)

The Chairman read out a letter from Her Majesty The Queen:

Please convey my warm thanks to the President and Members of The Police Rehabilitation Centre for their message of loyal greetings, sent on the occasion of their first joint Annual Meeting and Donating Forces Meeting which is being held today. As your Patron, I much appreciate your thoughtfulness in writing as you did and, in return send my best wishes to you all for a memorable and successful gathering.

ELIZABETH R.

3. Opening Brief from New Chairman – Mr David Ball JP

Mr Ball introduced himself as the incoming Chairman and made the following comments:

For those of you who have attended previous Annual Meetings you may be wondering where Daphne Priestley is, Daphne retired in December of last year after more than 25 years of service to the Centre for which we are immensely grateful. As this is my first Annual Meeting as Chairman I should perhaps introduce myself. My name is David Ball, I have been a Trustee at Flint House for a little over five years and with more than 40 years business experience within the health care sector, I have a very relevant career background that I am confident will be of value to this Centre. I am also a serving Magistrate of some twenty five years and have been Chairman of a cancer care charity for the past ten years. Crucially, I am not a Police Officer, I am not influenced by Federation or Benevolent Fund Politics, I see Flint House for what it is – a business, albeit a charity, but always a business that has to pay its way in the world.

This Annual Meeting has a dual purpose. We have an opportunity to explain the work of the charity and you as our guests have the perfect opportunity to see at first hand the quality of care

that is provided here. Please take advantage of that opportunity and address any question to any of our Trustees that are here today – Trustees please take a bow.

Contrary to popular opinion in some quarters the Police Rehabilitation Centre is not a part of any Police Force, it does not in any way report into any Police Force. The Police Rehabilitation Centre is very much an independent charity registered with the Charities Commission. Having made that clear I must now say that our primary objective is to provide care and rehabilitation to sick or injured Police Officers – serving or retired – and it is those Police Officers who, through a weekly subscription provide the Centre with its principal source of income.

As you drove through the entrance to Flint House this morning, wandered through the gardens or observed our residential or clinical facilities, one impression must have been uppermost in your minds – quality! Without any question this is a five-star Centre providing five-star rehabilitation to Police Officers. We employ outstanding clinical, housekeeping, catering and administrative staff who deliver outstanding care to our residents.

Guess what, that quality comes at a cost.

It is an unfortunate and undeserved truth that the Police have suffered a two pronged attack over the past five years – firstly from central Government who as part of their austerity programme have significantly reduced officer numbers – our subscribing members, and secondly from an often hostile press who have effectively closed the door on other, potential sources of funding. That leaves the Trustees of this Centre with some very difficult decisions.

To what extent can we reduce our operating costs? Well we have been focusing on cost reduction for the past several years and have made significant savings. Any of you who attended an annual meeting three or more years ago will remember the marquee in the garden and the exceptional lunch. Today we meet here and we have lunch with our patients in the dining room. Despite these sometimes deep cuts in expenditure we have maintained our focus on quality. Austerity measures are rarely popular as we have seen on a national economic level and further cuts to expenditure at Flint House will inevitably begin a transition from Five Star to Travel Lodge. Will that be acceptable to our subscribers?

Of course we have also seen the inevitable impact on expenditure from the recent building project which added a further 25 bedrooms to meet increasing demand for our services.

We can investigate alternative sources of income and on that note our lottery has proven very successful, but still only provides a fraction of our potential shortfall. We could open the Centre to a wider audience but have to be mindful of the impact that that would have on standards of care and potentially on security.

Or of course we must ask the question, how much are Police Officers prepared to subscribe to guarantee the future of the Rehabilitation Centre. The Centre is for the exclusive use of Police Officers, is it not reasonable therefore that it is funded by those Police Officers? Unfortunately we have been rather complacent over recent decades with a large subscriber pool enjoying relatively modest subscription levels. That subscriber pool, and I hardly need to tell you, has reduced very significantly – by how much more will Officer numbers decline? - hence our current dilemma.

I don't wish to finish on a negative note and am encouraged by the dedication of both our executive team led by our CEO, Tom McAuslin and our Board of Trustees who are all fully committed to the future success of the Police Rehabilitation Centre.

4. Activity Update – Mr Tom McAuslin – CEO

This was Mr McAuslin's fourth annual meeting. He spoke about the past, present and future of the Centre.

**Past:** 125 years ago on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1890 Clarendon Villas opened both as a seaside home and orphanage. The home had strong links with the Christian Police Association which continue today and are represented at the meeting by Don and on our Board by Barry Knott, his last meeting before he retires. Barry was thanked for his support as a Trustee. In 1890 some of the 111 patients had been injured apprehending runaway horses! In the second year the committee struggled with funding for the home. In 1890 Officers donated 8 shillings per week, by 1925 shillings they paid 31 shillings, and in 1945 donations were 35 shillings. In 1947 the NHS was introduced and the biggest change in funding arrangements since the first home opened almost 60 years before. After difficult negotiations the NHS agreed to cover the full costs of a patient's stay therefore the payment directly from Officers ceased. The Forces picked up the bill for those who were at the home for "a rest".

In 1949 the first female Officers were admitted to the home. In the early 1970s it was agreed that Officers would donate 2p per week and use the home for free. In 1975 the changes in the NHS meant that their funding ceased and regular significant increases in Officers donations commenced. There has always been independent fundraising going on and the planned move of the Charity to Flint House in the mid 80's established the Police Rehabilitation Trust which has generated millions, first to establish the Centre and then to support the major expansion projects over the years. Mr McAuslin was pleased to report that only yesterday he received a call to say they had secured significant funding for one of our patient support initiatives. The Charity has evolved from Police Officers taking in the smog free air of Hove in the 1890s to accessing three Centres of excellence, here at Flint House, Harrogate and Castlebrae in Scotland. Catherine Gurney would be proud of her legacy – getting Police Officers back to duty.

Mr McAuslin welcomed Patrick Cairns and Peter Moore from Harrogate, and in recognition of our support to retired officers, Clint Elliot and Ian Potter from NARPO. He welcomed our wider supporters; the PRT represented by Barbara Marchant and those who represent the Officers themselves; Occ Health, Fed Reps and Ben Fund Managers and of course our own Trustees.

**Present:** In 2014 we treated 3,238 Serving and 444 Retired Officers. The 2014 Operating Costs were £5m and Officers donations were only £4m. The Current Donation is **£1.38** per week, Cost of Care is over **£130** per day.

The Physio Department have run an in-house Research Project supported by Herts University to ensure that our treatments are the most appropriate and evidence based. They have established a Networking Group across similar organisations including Harrogate, the Fire Service Charity and the MoD. David Flint was commended for his inspiration in driving this forward. He is always looking at innovative equipment to support patient rehabilitation and we are grateful to the Police Rehabilitation Trust who invariably find the funding for us.

Within the Nursing Department there has been recognition of the increasing sickness absence in the Police community due to psychological illnesses. This has resulted in a more proactive approach and with the services of Prof Neil Greenberg a new course has been developed, the first of which is running now. This has led to recruiting new non-nursing staff and the re-naming of the Nursing Department into the HEALTH & WELLBEING Department. A slight downside of this initiative is that we are no longer able to offer psychological support to retirees in the short time they are with us.

This initiative and others would not have been possible without the Cabinet Office Grant which was received as a result of the LIBOR Fines – We were able to purchase the bespoke timber lodge

to give us much needed education space, an amazing outdoor gym facility in the woods and many other smaller things that enhance our patient care. The Mental Health Charity MIND received £4m to initiate a programme across the “Blue Light Services” to help de-stigmatise mental health problems in the workplace and we are working closely with them to get that message out.

Mr McAuslin summarised that all of this care is available for less than the cost of a cup of coffee per week.

**Future:** Very much in the hands of those who we support. We will continue to deliver the best evidence based healthcare under the watchful eye of the CQC. We will further develop the Psychological services with the aim of getting them as synonymous as our physio services. We are looking to provide an outdoor rehab area where practising for the compulsory Fitness Test can take place and we have just secured funding via the PRT for that.

And in a bid to remain financially sound for the foreseeable future, against reducing Police numbers, we will be looking at Officer donation levels and Income Generation Initiatives, that will not impact on the delivery of patient care, utilising the “state of the art” facilities that will hopefully enhance the finances so that contingency funds can be established for the inevitable major expenditures such as Kitchen Refurb and Swimming Pool replacement.

5. Financial Update – Mrs Tracy Allum – Finance Manager

Mrs Allum has now worked at Flint House for 18 months as Finance Manager, giving guidance, assurance and strategic direction to the Charity’s finances. She is a qualified accountant who has previously worked for 15 years in the commercial sector.

Mrs Allum gave a brief overview of the 2014 accounts highlighting the key areas compared to previous years. The net resources in the 2014 unrestricted column on the statement of Financial Activity highlights that the Officer donations do not cover the day to day operating costs of the Centre. This is where focus needs to be placed for the future.

Mrs Allum explained the breakdown of the Centre’s reserves of £29m for 2014 demonstrating that 66% relates to land and buildings. The reserve’s policy should be kept to the equivalent of between 1 and 2 years of resources expended, which for Flint House is currently £5m pa.

Mrs Allum then presented the statistical data highlighting the forces donations compared to expenditure by illustrating the trend and that the gap was increasing. Her key concern over the last 18 months is the sustainability of the charity’s future. Mrs Allum went on further to highlight top expenditure categories compared to the previous year and stated that not much has changed but as the Centre is delivering a service you would expect to see staff salaries as the major cost and 85% consists of front line serving staff. Other graphs and statistical data was presented – see attached slides.

6. Open Discussion – Chaired by Mr David Ball JP

Mr Ball opened up the plenary session with a timely reminder that capacity was increased by a further 25 beds to meet increasing demand, and this comes at a cost. In addition the number of donating Officers has dropped so some challenging decisions have to be made.

Clive Benson – Thames Valley Federation – Asked why there was an expenditure peak in 2012. The CEO replied that it was not because it was his first full year in post! It was due mainly to the costs of the extensive roof repairs allied to the costs associated with establishing the Charity as Company.

Ian Potter – President NARPO – Asked that in a time of cost saving why spend money on enhancing the new Health & Wellbeing services?

The CEO responded that the Health & Wellbeing initiatives are part funded by the LIBOR funds. In addition he stated that the Centre must recognise the needs of its patients and there is growing evidence that the amount of time serving Police Officers are having off work for “non-physical conditions” is increasing. The Centre delivers high class physiotherapy and there is a need to match that for psychological support. However the changes unfortunately mean that dedicated psychological support is no longer available to retired Officers who can still come for physiotherapy.

David Marchant – NARPO Berkshire – Questioned about the impact of recruiting the 30k non donating officers on the waiting lists on the Centre.

The CEO replied that unlike a high class Golf Club who may run a waiting list to join, these non-donating officers are entitled to join now therefore any impact would have to be managed.

Jeff Mapps – Gwent Federation – Commented that there is a large pool of retired Officers who don't donate anything to Flint House, and suggested that a significant number of them may be prepared to donate?

The Chairman responded that this is something that the Trustee Strategy Group will be looking at. The CEO added that currently there is no mechanism for retired officers to continue paying once they had left the Force. He did add however that quite a few retired members subscribe to the lottery and some of their monthly subscriptions are more than a serving officer's monthly donations.

Ian Potter – President NARPO - Expressed concern about the suggestion that retired officers should be asked to pay, reminding those present of the donations his members made whilst serving over the years. He thanked the CEO for mentioning the retired Officers' ongoing contributions to lottery. He went on to say that as NARPO has 87k members that perhaps consideration should be given for NARPO to be represented on the Board of Trustees

The Chairman responded to say the governance of Charity and skill mix on the Board was currently being looked at. He stated that the Board has 13 serving Police Officers on it and it was more important to have a Board with the right balance of skills and not be necessarily driven by the demographics of those who use the Centre.

Mr Paul Robertson – Hampshire Federation – Asked if there any plans to increase the Officer's donation rate?

The Chairman replied that whilst there would not be one announced today the Centre cannot maintain the level of service provided at the current donation rate.

The CEO added that the last increase in donations was from £1.15 to £1.38 and although possibly realising £700k pa was still not enough to cover the £1m shortfall in annual operating costs. This being compounded by the fact that 4 Forces (one being Hampshire) do not pass on the Gift Aid contribution (currently 25%).

He also advised that a survey of Officers, both at the Centre and the recent Federation Conference, found that over 80% of those who responded would happily donate £2 or more per week to maintain the services of the Centre.

Mr Neil Goosey – Federation Secretary Northants – Suggested that perhaps donations should be “rank ranged “ as a Chief Constable clearly earns more than one of their Constables.

The Chairman replied that this is something that has already been suggested and will be looked at.

Dominic Gallimore – Staffordshire Federation – Observed from the Table of Attendance by Force that certain Forces appeared to be over represented and asked what analysis was done.

The CEO advised that the Centre delivers health care against a clinical need and does not limit according to which Force an Officer is serving in.

Barbara Marchant – PRT - said on the subject of Gift Aid that the Met (who are one of the Forces who do not pass on the 25%) were quite unique in in how they collect donations.

The Chairman advised that in the main all 29 Donating Forces do it differently.

Mr Jamie Harrison – JBB Secretary/Treasurer, West Mercia – Suggested that it would be beneficial for the Chairman to write to each Joint Branch Board to request support from their No2 Bank Accounts.

Clive Benson – Thames Valley Federation - Suggested that one key to influencing the 30k non-subscribing Officers was communication at the highest levels.

The CEO advised that he writes every January to the Chief Constables and Crime Commissioners with statistics for their Force, he invites/encourages them to come and visit and see the structured healthcare that is delivered. He went on to explain that not all Forces work in the same way. Some still give Officers pocket money to attend, another Force only sanctions Officers a week of time to attend, the other week being taken as leave. He explained he has to be careful not to step out of the boundary as the provider of a charitable service and start telling Forces how to manage their people, but reiterated his assurance that the Centre is here to support.

Barbara Marchant – The Police Rehabilitation Trust – Stated that she as disappointed to see no Chief Officers at the meeting.

The Chairman advised that he did not invite them as they have a standing invitation renewed every year.

Mr Gary Sutton – Benevolent Fund Secretary, Kent – Observed that the deductions from a new recruits pay are in excess of £60 and suggested that probationers pay a reduced rate.

The Chairman advised that the way that Officers currently donate will be part of the Strategic Review.

Ms Jane Willets – National Police Federation – Commended the Centre for increasing their mental healthcare explaining how difficult it is for Officers to access help with mental health.

7. Vote of Thanks and Lunch Arrangements

Mr McAuslin thanked everyone for attending and was delighted to have received questions from floor. He also commended Mr Ball on his first meeting as Chairman.

Mr David Marchant, Chairman of the International Police Association camping and caravanning Club presented two cheques, one for The Police Rehabilitation Centre and one for The Police Treatment Centre in Harrogate.

8. Guests were invited enjoy to a Victorian themed lunch in recognition of our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

9. A tour of the Centre was scheduled for 14.45pm. The meeting closed at 14.10 hours.