



# Governor Update

## Kent (including Medway)

Dear member

### Who are your Governors?

This is an update from your public Governors. In Kent, we are Maggie Fenton, Ken Davies, Robin Kenworthy and Margaret Bridges. Elections were held in Kent in March 2013 and Lesley Long was elected. However, Lesley has unfortunately had to resign for personal reasons and so Robin Kenworthy, who came second in the election, is back on the Council. Welcome back Robin! We would like to thank Lesley for her energy and enthusiasm during her time with us.

We have also recently heard that Richard Pavey (Medway) has resigned from the Council due to other commitments in his local area. We would also like to thank him for his contribution to the Council and wish both Richard and Lesley well for the future. The Medway governor post will remain vacant until the elections early next year, since there is no alternative candidate to approach to fill the role until then.

Ken Davies (Lead Governor, and member of the Nominations Committee which makes recommendations to appoint the Chair and Non-Executive Directors of the Trust), Margaret Bridges (member of the Governor Development Working Group which works to ensure governors have the information we need to make sure the Trust is moving in the right direction) and Maggie Fenton (member of the Membership Development Committee) remain part of the Council until the next elections in early 2014.

The Membership Development Committee inputs heavily into the Annual Members Meeting and devises strategies for listening to you - our members. Recently Maggie

has also been involved in the Constitution Working Group (which helped revise the Trust's Constitution) and also attended a discussion and planning session on the Francis Report recommendations. She has made contact with Community First Responder groups within the area with a view to sharing experiences of volunteering and was at the recent Kent County Show talking to the public and recruiting new Trust members. Margaret Bridges and Ken Davies were also at the Kent Show, and between us we helped the Trust recruit more than 600 new members.

In Maggie's local area, there have been some issues regarding the Trust's Make Ready Depot at Paddock Wood and she and Ken Davies have been instrumental in bringing together local residents and SECAMB staff to resolve those issues.

Ken works closely with the Chair of the Trust, Tony Thorne, to agree Council meeting agendas, and as part of the Nominations Committee has helped recruit two new Non-Executive Directors in recent months.

### What we do

It is now over two years since SECAMB was granted Foundation Trust status, bringing new responsibilities, both operational and financial, and the Council has flexed and adapted its ways of working over the years. There has also been a raft of new regulations to cope with (not least the Health and Social Care Act 2012) and changes made to comply with the same.

The Trust's Board of Directors has been refreshed and two new Non-Executive Directors were appointed by the Council of Governors, bringing with them specific skills to complement those already existing on the Board. A further Non-

Executive will be appointed in the coming months to replace an existing colleague who is retiring.

Likewise there have been a considerable number of changes within the Council of Governors, not only in Kent and the other representative areas, but also to the Appointed Governors, who represent various authorities and organisations throughout the SECAMB area.

The Council of Governors holds six formal meetings each year. Governors are also encouraged to attend the regular meetings of the Executive Board as observers, where they may also ask questions in their role as members of the public. Any member of the public is welcome to attend both the Board and Council Meetings and the dates are advertised on our website or alternatively can be obtained by contacting the Membership Office.

In addition to the Council of Governors' meetings, most of your elected members sit on one or more of the sub-committees, as well as attending other briefings, meetings, conferences etc.

### Current Issues

The 'Make Ready System' for the preparation of our ambulances (i.e. clean, stock and maintain) is continuing to expand and now covers Ashford, Chertsey, Hastings and Paddock Wood with Brighton, Polegate, and others to follow. This process moves the responsibility for fully maintained vehicles away from the ambulance crews to specialists.

The introduction of the new '111' service has not been without its problems, but with careful planning and the recruitment of significantly higher numbers of call-takers, the service is now operating close to its original plan. One of the major problems was the extra demand placed on the service – instead of the envisaged 5000 calls over a week-end, the number of the public using this service, which replaced the 'out-of-hours' and NHS Direct services is closer to 7000. Governors are receiving regular updates and continue to work with the Trust to get this operating as well as possible as soon as possible.

Both of the call centres – Ashford (operated by SECAMB) and Dorking (operated by Harmoni) – are now operating at full capacity, albeit with additional clinical supervision by qualified personnel.

The 'Hazardous Area Response Teams' (HART – which respond to incidents in challenging environments such as involving chemicals or fuel, or on waterways) are now both fully operational at Ashford and Gatwick, each staffed by 72 paramedics to provide cover 24 hour / 365 day per year including training and time off. When not required for 'HART' activities, these staff undertake normal ambulance duties.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have now taken over the commissioning (procurement) of health services for the public.

We are regularly discussing ways to enable the views of members of the general public to be heard on all aspects of the SECAMB operation. Suggestions about how this may be achieved would be welcome.

### Future Events

We would love to see you at the Annual Members Meeting on 26th September 2013, at Effingham Park Hotel, Cophthorne, RH10 6EU. This is an opportunity to hear from the Trust's leaders, meet the governors, and learn more about the ambulance service from our staff. We do hope to see you there.

### Get in touch

We are keen to hear from members about your experience of the ambulance service or the 111 service. While we cannot respond to individual complaints (and will pass these on to the Trust's complaints office), we would love to understand our members' views so we can represent you more effectively. Contact details are in the newsletter.

Best wishes,

*Maggie, Ken, Margaret and Robin.*

