

**Minutes of the Annual Members Meeting
The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust
Thursday 17th November 2022
Virtual Event via MS Teams**

Present

Governors

Emily Butler
Jill Faulkner
Catherine Lane
Mary Turner
Sarah-Jane Stevens
Yvonne Peers
Alan Rowbottom
Cllr Alan Taylor
Alex Giles

Status

Public elected Governor
Staff Governor
Staff Governor
Public elected Governor
Appointed Governor
Public elected Governor
Public elected Governor
Public elected Governor
Lead Governor

Representing

DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT

DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT

Board of Directors

Sir David Nicholson
Adam Thomas
Mary Sexton
Diane Wake
Lowell Williams
Catherine Holland
Karen Kelly
Alan Duffell
Kat Rose
Kevin Stringer
Andy Proctor
Julian Atkins
Thuva Amuthalingam
Gurjit Bhogal
Julian Hobbs
Gary Crowe
Vij Randeniya

Status

Chairman

Chief Information Officer
Chief Nurse
Chief Executive
Non-executive Director
Non-executive Director
Chief Operating Officer
Interim Chief People Officer
Director of Strategy & Transformation
Interim Director of Finance
Director of Governance
Non-executive Director
Non-executive Director
Non-executive Director
Medical Director
Non-executive Director
Non-executive Director

Representing

DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
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DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT

Others

Helen Board
Helen Attwood
Mark Stocks
William Guest

Status

Board Secretary
Directorate Manager
Partner
Associate

Representing

DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
Grant Thornton
Grant Thornton

Clare Inglis
Theresa Morton
Babar Elahi
Harvey Woolf
Ian Bevan
Karen Shakespeare
Rachael Allcock
Madhuri Mascarenhas
Edith Nyongesa

Staff Member
BSL Interpreter
Chief of Surgery
Foundation Trust member
Staff member
Local Councillor
Communications officer
Administration assistant
Staff member

DG NHS FT

DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
Dudley MBC
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT

Heather Taylor
Dara Bradbury
Ken McClymont
Nithee Kotecha
Annelise Waldron
Richard Beeken

Staff member
Staff member
Foundation Trust member
Staff member
Staff member
Chief Executive

DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospitals
NHS Trust
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT

Caroline Chiotto
Diane Lynch
David Stenson

Staff member
Staff member
Foundation Trust member

Helen Ashby
Ann Conroy

Foundation Trust member
Foundation Trust member

DG NHS FT
DG NHS FT

Apologies

Name

Liz Abbiss

Status

Head of Communications

Representing

DG NHS FT

Item No	AMM 2022
1.	<p>Welcome and Chairman's Opening Remarks</p> <p>Sir David Nicholson – Chairman</p> <p>Apologies received as listed above.</p> <p>The Chair formally welcomed everyone to the 2022 Annual Members Meeting (AMM) and declared the meeting quorate.</p> <p>The meeting heard that the Chair was also the Chair of Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust and that he was looking forward to the benefits that the dual role would bring to both Trusts.</p> <p>Collaboration across the Black Country was well under way through the Provider Collaborative for which The Chair is Chair and Diane Wake is Senior Responsible Officer.</p> <p>The Chair took the opportunity to thank his predecessor Dame Yve Buckland for her dedication and professional leadership in Dudley. She had left the organisation in an excellent position and ready to move into the next chapter. The Board of Directors and Council of Governors provided professional leadership with supportive challenge and the Trust was fortunate to have two interim Board members from Royal Wolverhampton Trust, in Kevin Stringer, Director of Finance and Alan Duffell, Chief People Officer which brought further knowledge and experience to Dudley.</p> <p>The Chair thanked staff, patients and volunteers for their hard work and commitment to the Trust. He had been visiting areas across the Trust, meeting staff and learning about their services, first hand and will continue to do this to ensure Dudley, and the Black Country, is a place for people to thrive and receive excellent healthcare.</p> <p>The Chair also acknowledged the fantastic amount of awards that teams have been shortlisted for or won over the last 12 months, including:-</p> <p>The Dudley Group's Virtual Paediatric Ward – which is featured later on the agenda, was the first of its kind in the UK. It allows children to be cared for in their own homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• were 2022 finalists for a prestigious Royal College of Nursing (RCN) award and were also finalists in two categories at the 2022 The Nursing Times Awards <p>Patients who would otherwise be treated in hospital, are able to be treated in their homes, enabling earlier supported discharge and reduce admissions, all whilst maintaining specialist care.</p> <p>Alex Griffiths – honouree in the Queen's birthday honours list 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alex Griffiths, 22, from Dudley, was awarded a British Empire Medal in the Queen's honours after being recognised for his dedication and commitment to helping COVID patients during the pandemic.• He is also a long-term carer having cared for his mother, who had multiple sclerosis,

since he was five, and later caring for his grandparents also.

- Joining an apprenticeship scheme at Russells Hall Hospital in 2019 as a clinical support worker, Alex's day to day role involved end-of-life care and supporting seriously ill patients in what could be their final moments. He said care is "a lifelong career" which is extremely rewarding as it gives him the chance to make "somebody smile".

Clare Nash – outstanding contribution award at the NHS Midlands Excellence in Supply Awards.

- Dudley Group employee, Clare Nash won an outstanding contribution award at the NHS Midlands Excellence in Supply Award in May 2022.
- Clare Nash, head of clinical products management for the Black Country Alliance at The Dudley Group, was recognised for her Outstanding Contribution to Procurement at the awards night, which was attended by professionals from NHS Trusts across the North, West and East Midlands and the East of England.

As part of our **Black History Month 2022 celebrations, the Royal College of Nursing West Midlands Region** approached colleagues to ask them to nominate individuals who had made a real difference in the delivery of healthcare. Those nominated had to be from the black, Asian or minority ethnic nursing community, or have made a real difference as an ally on behalf of the black, Asian or minority ethnic nursing community. Black History Month and the awards themselves present the Royal College of Nursing and our members with a unique opportunity to recognise and reward nursing staff who have made a real difference to patients and/or colleagues.

Sarah Gregory – Black History Month Making A Difference Award

- Her nomination was for assisting Internationally Recruited Nurses to integrate and settle into the team.
- Sarah supported our international nurses by discussing and helping them to address the difficulties they may have been going through as a group coming to the trust.
- Sarah was there as voice, which meant others were alerted to the support they required.

Janice Nelson – Black History Month Making A Difference Award

- Her nomination was for implementing an Equality Diversity and Inclusion procurement strategy which set the aims, outcomes and key metrics for the next three years.
- The nomination said that because of her work engaging with small and medium enterprise (SME) businesses and supporting them to access contracts, the team are delivering improved EDI and social value outcomes, increasing the opportunity for Black and ethnically diverse partners to access NHS contracts.

Harriet Wanrin – Black History Month – Outstanding contribution award

- Her several nominations were for being an inspirational leader amongst her colleagues and for having a clear vision, she is courageous, had integrity, honesty, humility, professionalism, and a clear focus.
- The nomination said she goes above and beyond to provide positivity and inclusion in the workplace and strive to improve the vaccination service.
- She faced adversity head on and didn't let it change or beat her, her strength had been an inspiration.

	<p>Our Communications team have been nominated for a HSJ award for 'Communications Initiative of the year', for their 2021 staff survey campaign, engaging staff for a better future. They will find out this evening if they have won! This was for the 'Queue for You' initiative where the team took staff members places in the canteen queue while they went and completed their staff survey.</p> <p>Minutes from the last meeting held October 2021 The minutes from last years Annual Members Meeting were noted as a correct record of the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair introduced Diane Wake, Chief Executive.</p>
2.	<p>Chief Executive's Overview</p> <p>The Chief Executive welcomed the opportunity to share with the people attending the many success stories from the past year and to look at plans for the coming year.</p> <p>It was now more than two years after the first COVID-19 cases in the UK and the NHS was still navigating its way through a huge demand for its services, including a massive increase in demand for its emergency services. The NHS had changed dramatically during the year with the introduction of Integrated Care Boards known as ICS's or ICBs. Our ICB covers the whole of the Black Country so the trusts that are part of the Black Country ICB are the Dudley Group, Walsall Healthcare, Royal Wolverhampton and Sandwell Hospitals.</p> <p>The Chief Executive commented that she was full of pride for the amazing work that staff, volunteers and partners do each and every day for the communities of Dudley and beyond and she thanked every person involved with providing services across the borough. She highlighted that as we moved forward into the winter months, we turned our thoughts to those residents who are struggling with the rising cost of living and recognise that some of the staff may have some of those real concerns too. The Trust was providing as much support as possible to individuals who need help and our health and well-being offer was stronger than it's ever been with many services established during COVID-19.</p> <p>Research was an important part of the Trust's day to day business and the Medical Director, Julian Hobbs and clinical colleagues, and in particular Gail Parsons, champion research within the organisation. Following the success of our COVID-19 research studies, our Research and Innovation Department continued to expand the offer to patients for increased opportunities to take part in research. We have reopened studies that were paused due to COVID-19 and have now been able to open new studies to improve treatment options for our patients. A really good example is that the Trust is the top recruiter in the UK for a new treatment for patients with heart failure, which is the Victor study, we recruited the first UK patient into the repairs MDZ, which is a haematology treatment study and we were the first to recruit two patients in the UK into the MOSAIC study and that is for patients with acute kidney injury in critical care. It is exceptionally rewarding to see that our research activity translates into real advancements and improvements in patient care locally, nationally and internationally.</p> <p>Russells Hall Hospital is the home to the Black Country vascular hub and are absolutely delighted that once again it was rated number one in the country for ensuring patients with abdominal aortic aneurysm get potential lifesaving surgery in a timely manner.</p> <p>The Chief Executive thanked the members of the Black Country Vascular network for their hard work and outstanding performance.</p>

There was further ground-breaking news with a new procedure now being used in Dudley for men with prostate problems that prevented them from having more invasive surgery, improving their quality of life and saving them days of staying in hospital. The revolutionary treatment was being used for non-cancerous prostate gland enlargement, which was common in men over 50. With symptoms like needing to pass urine more frequently, trouble starting to urinate and loss of bladder control which affects more than 1 in 3 men over that age. The Urology team at Dudley led by consultant Mr David Matthews, had begun treating patients with male benign prostatic hyperplasia as day cases, previously men having moderate to severe symptoms which did not respond to medication had to have a much bigger operation, meaning often several days stay in hospital to recover.

The Trust was also delighted to offer the new closed loop insulin pump system which monitors glucose levels and automatically adjusts the rate of insulin infusion through a pump. This had been shown to improve diabetes control and also frees the patient from painful finger prick tests and having to do lots of complex calculations and allows them to get on with their lives. We are now able to offer devices to all eligible patients, including adults with type one diabetes, pregnant women and even children.

The kindness and empathy of our healthcare staff had also been praised in a report by the national body into the Audiology service located at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre. The service had retained its certification by the United Kingdom Accreditation Services UCAS, following an onsite assessment and submission of evidence. The Audiology service provides adult and paediatric audiological assessments and rehabilitation.

Looking forward to future collaboration and building on the past 18 months where we have built on the best practice that came from the pandemic and collaborating across all partners within the Black Country. Dudley is an integral part of the integrated care system in the Black Country with key leadership roles that enable us to put collaboration at the heart of the Dudley Group.

In embracing new ways of delivering the best possible healthcare, working with our partners across the Black Country, we have focused on reducing the longest wait for our patients across the region, supporting one another where we have capacity and we are really pleased to have no patients waiting over 104 weeks and we are working very hard to eliminate waits of 78 weeks for our elective patients and 52 weeks and we have done this through working together. We have also focused on improving access and reducing variation across all the four Black Country places. For patients with cancer we are working together on key pathways and have managed to improve two week wait access times for patients with suspected cancer and also the treatment time within 62 days.

To support Community Diagnostics, we have facilities at Cannock hospital, and a Phlebotomy hub at Merry Hill, we also have community diagnostics at Corbett and Guest hospitals enabling faster diagnostic tests to be undertaken. We have secured funding for additional theatres at both Cannock and Walsall Hospitals. We have supported tele-dermatology and are currently rolling that out into the community and we have secured funding for robotics, bringing in robots to undertake surgical procedures here at Dudley and at Sandwell and we are soon to have a robot that will operate out of Cannock Hospital for orthopaedic surgery.

The Rainbow Unit opened on 10th November 2021 and provides extra bed space and patients receive early single assessment by medical teams avoiding duplication of the work in our emergency department.

The Chief Executive introduced the featured service, Ophthalmology to share their latest development in being the first Trust in the country to offer a new form of injection that can

	treat ailments such as macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy.
3.	<p>Service Area Feature Ophthalmology – Launch of Intra Vitreal Injection</p> <p>Babar Elahi, Chief of Surgery, Women and Children and Consultant Ophthalmologist shared a presentation of a new service launched in Dudley that is a new treatment of an injection which is used to treat blindness which could be caused as a result of macular degeneration or diabetic eye changes. The Ophthalmology Department had the privilege of giving the first injection in the UK.</p>
4.	<p>Trust Financial Accounts 2021/22</p> <p>Mr Kevin Stringer, Interim Director of Finance presented the Trust's Financial Accounts for 2021/22. It was noted that the Annual Accounts and Report are available on the Trust's website and anyone requiring a hard copy was to contact the Foundation Trust Office.</p> <p>Turnover had increased from 451 million in the previous year to 519 million, an increase of 15% and an achievement of 1.8 million surplus, then taking away technical adjustments and impairments to get to break even the Trusts delivered 3.8 million surplus, which is an incredible achievement given the context in which it was working. Capital spend was 19.3 million and the cash balance as at 31st of March 2022 was 24.6 million.</p> <p>Breakdown of income for the Trust against its 519 million turnover, the majority of money came from the Black Country and West Birmingham CCG that accounted for around 74% of the total income of the Trust. Throughout the year while dealing with COVID and recovery, the vast majority of contracts which we earn money for our patients were under block contracts.</p> <p>For expenditure spend against the 502 million cost base, the vast majority of the money that was spent on salaries and wages: for all of our nurses, doctors, allied health professionals, admin and ancillary staff and they account for around about 66% of the total cost base of the organisation. Other spend related to drugs, supplies and services for frontline care, totalling around 20%. He highlighted the clinical negligence scheme for Trust's which is the insurance paid by the Trust and accounted for 6-7% of the total cost.</p> <p>The financial ask for the year 2022/23 was challenging and as we move out of COVID-19 and into recovery there are a number of financial challenges for the Trust. The Trust was encouraged to deliver a break even position and that came with a high degree of risk. There was an opportunity for the Trust to earn monies based on elective activity levels, but this proved to be extraordinarily challenging and whilst significantly increasing activity it hadn't yet been able to deliver additional Elective Recovery Funds. A cost saving and efficiency target of £29.7 million was set so that the Trust can be as efficient as possible with the money it spends on behalf of taxpayers.</p> <p>Achieving this target had proved to be particularly difficult, although the Trust was going to make a significant contribution towards it by year end.</p> <p>One of the aims of the organisation had been to reduce agency spend and great work had been done in terms of recruitment for our nursing and our doctors in particular and the overseas recruitment had gone extraordinarily well for the organisation.</p> <p>Mr Stringer thanked the Board, Directors, budget managers and staff for delivering the financial duties of the organisation.</p>

	<p>Mr Stringer presented The Dudley Group NHS Charitable Fund Accounts. The Charity aims to support the Trust's vision to provide safe, caring and effective services, whilst enhance and improve services provided by the Trust by providing additional comfort and benefit to patients and staff.</p> <p>For 2021/22 the fund achieved a total income of £764,000 with expenditure of £625,000. The Trust raises donations from companies, individuals, events, wills and legacies and we are extremely grateful for the generous donations we receive and behalf of those donors. Some examples of how money had been spent includes iPads for patients to contact their relatives, glide away folding beds for patients' relatives to use on the children's ward, skylights for Ward C4 the Georgina Unit, creation of a dedicated baby bereavement suite and staff rest areas.</p> <p>Mr Stinger introduced Mark Stocks, Head of public sector assurance and partner for Grant Thornton.</p>
5.	<p>Auditor's Report</p> <p>Mark Stocks (MS) – Partner, Head of Public Sector Assurance, Grant Thornton introduced Alex Giles</p> <p>MS presented the External Auditors Report and explained that the purpose of external audit was to make sure that financial statements presented a true and fair view of the Trust and to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to secure value for money.</p> <p>MS presented on the 3 key areas of external audit work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the financial statements give a true and fair view of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The financial position of the Trust at 31 March 2022? - The income and expenditure for the 2021/221 year? • Are the Annual Report and the Annual Governance Statement misleading or inconsistent with our knowledge of the Trust? • Are there any uncertainties over the Going Concern assumption? <p>No material issues were identified in any areas relating to fraud or for revenue and expenditure, there is no evidence in any management override of control in terms of how accounts are prepared.</p> <p>In terms of financial statements a modified audit opinion was given.</p> <p>For Value for Money, there were concerns around financial sustainability in the current climate and noted that the Trust had a strong record of financial management. There was a significant savings plan to deliver to break even this year and there was a risk that the Trust would be in deficit at year end due to savings gaps of between 10 and 16 million.</p> <p>There were no significant weaknesses in relation to governance and a green rating was awarded. It is difficult to rate economy, efficiency and effectiveness and the auditors provided some recommendations in this respect.</p> <p>The Board Assurance Framework was considered in detail.</p> <p>The auditors made a number of improvement recommendations around economic efficiency and effectiveness with improvement needed in respect of financial modelling and registers</p>

	of interest. The auditors in overall terms are very comfortable with where the Trust was in terms of managing economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
6.	<p>Council of Governors Update</p> <p>Alex Giles (AG) – Public Elected, Lead Governor</p> <p>Alex Gile welcomed guests to the virtual Annual Members Meeting and highlighted the work of the governors over the year and gave thanks for their dedication and commitment to the role.</p> <p>At this current time there were vacancies in the Public constituencies of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stourbridge • Central Dudley • Brierley Hill <p>And in the Staff Constituency of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursing & Midwifery <p>He encouraged Foundation Trust Members to come forward and could find out more, by contacting the Foundation Trust off or visit the Trust website for more information.</p>
7.	<p>Quality Report 2021/22</p> <p>Mary Sexton (MS), Chief Nurse</p> <p>The Chief Nurse presented the highlights of the Quality Report including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Quality Priorities set to improve quality of care and patient experience including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient Experience: increasing Friends and Family Test responses, increased patient involvement and a target of 95% for recording a patient's pain score. - Pressure Ulcers: reduction in category 3 ulcers and no avoidable category 4 ulcers all year. - Infection Control: Flu vaccination rate of 75%, C.Diff. performance of 20 cases against a target of 28, introduction of a catheter passport and robust antimicrobial prescribing. Only 1 MRSA case experienced in the last 4 years. - Nutrition and Hydration: to make sure that any high risk patients are identified on admission, 90% achieved in hospital and 97% in the community. Menus re-designed across the organisation and snack boxed introduced with positive feedback. Launched re-fuel and rehydrate campaign for staff. - Medication: 94% of all medications signed for in line with Trust policy. - Discharge Management: Large reduction in delayed discharges, the Trust continues to work with health and social care colleagues. - Incident Management: Open and safe culture, which is displayed by a high level of reporting. Improved reporting by 3.4% with a 52% decrease in the number of serious incidents. This priority will also be included in the current year's Quality Priorities.
8.	<p>Service Area Feature</p> <p>Paediatric Virtual Ward</p>

	<p>The Chief Nurse introduced Lucy Rozga who presented on the work of Paediatric Virtual Ward. Lucy had been instrumental in the development and implementation of this work stream, working very closely with her multidisciplinary colleagues to reduce hospital admissions for children but more importantly, to support families to keep their children well.</p> <p>The Virtual Ward supports children in the Community without them having to go into hospital, it also provides guidance and support to their carers to enable them to live as normal a life as possible. The work on the Paediatric Virtual Ward was the first programme in the country and had been recognised by the Nursing Times and Royal College of Nursing who had shortlisted the initiative for an award. The Team had also recently won a Committed to Excellence Award.</p> <p>The Trust was also supporting Sandwell, Royal Wolverhampton and Birmingham Children's Hospital in developing their own virtual wards.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Lucy for her presentation and commented that it was an example of providing the best service for the people of Dudley and doing it first so that the people of Dudley get access to first class care and then spreading our influence across the Black Country. He thanked Lucy for being a fantastic ambassador for the organisation,</p>
9.	<p>Resolution</p> <p>Sir David Nicholson, Chairman</p> <p>The Chairman thanked everyone for joining the meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman asked members of the Trust present at the Annual Members Meeting to formally acknowledge and accept the presentation of the formal and statutory documents.</p>
10.	<p>Questions</p> <p>Sir David Nicholson, Chairman</p> <p>The Chairman confirmed that questions had been invited in advance of the meeting. Two questions had been submitted:</p> <p>Question from Rex Parmley, former Governor: How is the hospital ensuring that all visitors wear a mask? There are signs around the hospital asking people to wear masks, but not everyone is wearing a mask. How do you stop or make people wear a mask?</p> <p>The chief nurse confirmed that in some respects this did come down to personal responsibility of the public. The Trust was doing everything it could to ensure that in the areas that masks must be worn, members of the public are encouraged to do so and provided with the relevant mask and or any other additional hand washing facilities within the public areas of the Trust. When entering the main entrance, or in public corridors, there was not a requirement to wear a mask in line with the national guidance.</p> <p>On entering the clinical areas, which also included outpatients, the Trust had undertaken a risk assessment and require members of the public to wear a mask and ensure that they are provided and encouraged their adherence. The majority of the public were very supportive and comply, but noted that there were some individuals that were less accommodating and we will work with the clinical teams and those individuals.</p>

2nd Question from Mr Rex Parmley: How had SDEC benefitted the hospital?

Mr Parmley had been referred to SDEC directly by his GP and asks if SDEC had helped in relieving the pressure on the A&E Department.

The Chief Executive confirmed that SDEC was Same Day, Emergency Care. KK outlined the benefits of the service.

Patients are referred into the hospital either by their GP or via ED, meaning that they met a criteria to be seen, treated and discharged in the same day and did not require a stay in a hospital bed overnight. Patients were streamed to an area where they are seen by a specialist consultant in medicine or to a specialty such as Cardiology where they are treated and discharged home. This meant patients can be pulled out of our emergency care portals or even prevented from entering them and did relieve pressure on ED. Patients were seen in the correct place for the correct treatment giving the hospital more space to offload ambulances.

The Trust was very proud of SDEC and it had been a great success for the organisation.

The Chair opened up the meeting for any further questions.

Helen Ashby, former Governor: Is there any opportunity to have a virtual clinic for patients with learning disabilities? It would be an ideal way to help patients with health inequalities who struggle to access hospital.

Lucy Rozga confirmed that certainly for children with learning disabilities it worked very well because they felt more comfortable at home and we see better outcomes because they are at home and they feel more relaxed and they do not have the anxiety of being in the hospital.

The chief nurse added that there was some directly transferable learning that could be applied to the adult pathways. There was a slight difference around adults in respect the virtual ward as adult pathways have are based respiratory or specific specialty pathways and patients with learning disabilities would fall into different work and different pathways, but this is something that we can look at how we capture that group of patients together. She noted that the Trust had a very effective learning disability nurse, Jackie Passmore, and there were moves to look at providing wider support for people with learning disabilities to avoid hospital admission when it was not really required and make sure they are effectively supported in their community settings. There was further work to be done and the chief nurse gave assurance that would be taken forward as it looks at support for people with learning disabilities and patients with autism as in order to strengthen our practices.

Ken McClymont, Foundation Trust member: Is there a plan at some point to merge all four of the Black Country Trusts together into one? And if so what would happen to the status of the Dudley Foundation Trust, particularly of the members?

The Chairman confirmed that the Black Country did not need a merger and cited the significant disruption it could cause in the current environment. A better way forward was to work collaboratively and benefit from having a local Board with local focus and local connections to the community who can play a really important role in things like the development of Place. Additionally, in a group model there was also the opportunity of learning from good practice, for spreading good practice and for working much closer together in terms of staff and patients and equipment and investments.

There was no plan to merge the organisations together. He stated that he saw his role to make sure that the organisations in the Black Country get the best out of their relationship

	<p>with the local community, through their Boards locally and then secondly being able to work together where it's sensible to get the best benefits for patients.</p> <p>Ken McClymont asked for his thanks to be noted to all of the paid hospital staff in Dudley and also all the fabulous volunteers without whom the Trust would struggle to function and to all those forgotten staff without whom the hospital again would not function. People who work in places like the kitchen, laundry, cleaning staff and security, they are all vital parts of the hospital.</p> <p>Ken McClymont Raised the Accessible NHS Data Standard. The idea behind this was the people that had different communication needs from standard print could inform their GP and the system would then pick up on whether you wanted large print, Braille or diary, e-mail, phone calls, texts, etc to communicate with you. Although our preference is noted, it never happens and it's not just by Dudley Group, by all hospitals.</p> <p>The Chief Information Officer commented that the Trust did meet the Accessible Information Standard and does capture this data. If this was not working for the family the Trust would act on that feedback and make sure that the solutions in place are meeting those needs. He apologised if communication had not been effective and promised to pick up with Mr McClymont directly after the meeting.</p>
11.	<p>Close of Annual Members Meeting</p> <p>Sir David Nicholson, Chairman</p> <p>The chair thanked all for their attendance and drew the Annual Members Meeting to a close and invited guests to stay up to date by following the Trust on Facebook and Twitter.</p>