

March 2020

From the Chairman:

I would like to thank you for your support for Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust at this very difficult time for our communities. It is very important for us that the Trust communicate with our members to provide assurance about all the arrangements which are being put in place to care for not only for people with Covid-19, but also for the other patients who will need the support of hospital and community services over the coming months.

By the time you read this it is likely that much of the guidance in place will have changed. It's a very fast-moving situation. However, something which will never change is the absolute commitment of all the colleagues in Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust and Harrogate Integrated Facilities to work with great professionalism and kindness to care for everyone who needs us. Whether they work in the hospital, in community services or supporting families of healthy children in North Yorkshire and the North East, our teams are truly magnificent. They are facing considerable conflicts between their professional and personal responsibilities which can be a cause of great worry for them. The Board of Directors and Council of Governors recognise these tensions and thank everyone in the Trust for their selflessness and great compassion.

Readers can be assured that there is strong and experienced leadership at the Trust, who are following tried and tested incident management processes and complying with all national guidance. We are working closely with other organisations locally and with neighbouring NHS trusts in North and West Yorkshire to ensure that we are using our combined resources as effectively as possible.

Members of the public and companies in and around our area have been very generous with their messages of support and gifts. These are very much appreciated and make a real difference. Cake is really uplifting. A big thank you to everyone who has shown such kindness.

While we are extremely grateful for all the kind donations we are receiving from the community and individuals, we must stress the importance of following the donation procedure to allow us to properly co-ordinate where donations are sent. All donations, from individuals and businesses, must be directed to the Harrogate Hospital and Community Charity Fundraising Team, who will co-ordinate their distribution to acute and community locations, and ensure proper thanks can be given. The team can be contacted on 01423 557408 or hdft.hfcc@nhs.net.

We've also been overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of local people who have been in touch with us following our request for volunteers to support us at Harrogate District Hospital. We've had contact from dozens and dozens of people, which just goes to show the strength of feeling in the town and local area about how much Harrogate District Hospital means to people. Thank you. We are currently working through all of the messages we've had and are making contact with people as we identify roles for them. Finally, please continue to keep following the national guidance and instructions which you will be seeing in the media. You can find the latest guidance at nhs.uk/coronavirus, which is a really helpful website to bookmark and keep referring to.

With your support we wish to minimise the impact of this virus for our communities. Thank you for your continued understanding and support in this challenging time.

*Angela Schofield,
Chairman*