

GUY'S & ST. THOMAS' KIDNEY PATIENTS' ASSOCIATION

REPORT BY THE CHAIR OF THE KPA APRIL 2006

It has been a little over six months since I took over as Chair of the KPA. I made it clear that I felt that the Association had become tired and needed to refocus on its core role, become more businesslike and recognise that it was in existence to service its members not the other way round.

Lots of background work has taken place to ensure that the Association is based on firm ground and is becoming fit for the twenty-first century. Our work will be on display on 10th June at the re-launch. This is a big event and will need the Committee's full support and attendance – I hope I can count on you all.

When people ask – as they will at the re-launch – I hope that you can say that we a patient focussed, forward looking Association. We particularly care about young people, people in pre-dialysis and on dialysis. We look beyond the hospital and welcome patients in the Satellite Units (Forest Hill, Camberwell, Penbury, Guernsey and soon New Cross). We support the hospital in all that it does, but are not afraid to be a critical friend on occasions. We support research. We wish to find a role on the national stage as often the National Kidney Federation seems not always to represent the multicultural urban view. Above all we are businesslike and take the stewardship of donations extremely seriously.

I need to report some initiatives that I have taken on your behalf. You will recall – because I will remind you at every opportunity – that I wish to see all that the Association does to be businesslike. Accordingly I have had discussions with the Guy's Charity and the Modernisation Initiative on ways forward. I have opened discussion with the Charity with a view to the Association keeping its identity but having access on, a fee basis, to its professional services. Likewise with the Modernisation Initiative, the Association may wish to continue services/ideas beyond the life of the Initiative. Should the discussions with the Charity not be successful, I would ask the Committee to consider alternatives to managing, what is, a multimillion pound business. My suggestions are the appointment of a part-time Chief Executive and secretariat or paying the Chair an exgratia payment for say 400 hours a year commitment plus a professional secretariat.

Colleagues have reshaped the Constitution, developed a new logo, prepared a more interesting newsletter in A4 format, and zappy website. Above all we will welcome all patients, carers and staff into the Association without cost.

I have visited the Evelina children's hospital and all the satellite units (except Guernsey). I have attended a number of conferences organised by the NKF and the Department of Health. I am a member the Modernisation Initiative Steering Committee (but meetings tend to clash with spells in hospital). I have completed training as a Peer Support and received CRB clearance. I have met with senior members of the Guy's team on several occasions. I have taken part in the work of the Emotional, Psychological and Spiritual Committee (see questionnaire with newsletter)

I accepted the post of Chair on the basis of a six month stint to get the Association "ship-shape" and with a weekly commitment of about 5 hours. The number of hours has exceeded 5 a week by an order of magnitude. I also feel that it is probably too early to stand down, so with your agreement, I'm prepared to remain until the next AGM. I mention this as the Committee may wish to start to seek a replacement.

Trevor Cook
April 2006