

**Minutes of the LINK Annual General Meeting**  
**18.30 11 June 2009**  
**Copthorne Hotel Plymouth**

Speakers: Chris Boote (Chair Stewardship Group), David Connelly (Chair NHS Plymouth), Claire Hendy (LINK Host Team), Emma Childs (LINK Ambassador), Gennifer Gomez (LINK Stewardship Group/ Ambassador), Vicky Shipway (LINK Host Team)

18.30 Chris Boote opened the meeting. He welcomed everyone and ran through the agenda for the meeting. He requested that all questions be kept until the end of the meeting when a question and answer session had been scheduled.

18.40 Claire Hendy introduced the Plymouth LINK. Claire is the communication and liaison officer for the host team. She talked about where LINKs had come from and explained the structure of the Plymouth LINK and the roles involved.

18.50 David Connelly, Chairman of NHS Plymouth (Primary Care Trust) spoke about the Trust, including their responsibilities to provide and commission services in response to the needs of the region within budgetary constraints. He talked about the aims of the Trust and also about the need for public involvement in the NHS, via public meetings, surveys of patients/visitors, and the use of monitoring complaints as a tool to assess the quality of service provided to the public. Mr Connelly encouraged more public involvement, and expressed his enthusiasm for working with the Plymouth LINK, requesting any other ideas from the audience as to how public involvement could be improved.

19.0 Gennifer Gomez described how the LINK was launched last year, described the logo competition, and talked about how the Plymouth LINK promotes itself, highlighting the number of languages in which LINK information is produced. She also spoke of the LINK Conference in London which she attended, and of how well Plymouth is doing in comparison to other LINKs in getting information out to the public. Gennifer talked about the governance framework for the Plymouth LINK and about the main events and activities to engage with people in the city.

19.10 Emma Childs spoke of her experience of volunteering in the Plymouth LINK and of the role of ambassador. She commended the enthusiasm and support provided to her by the Host Team, and talked about the projects she had become involved with.

19.20 Chris Boote talked about the way the Plymouth LINK will work to identify and put forward local issues and about the relationships it is building. He talked about the powers available to all LINKs to ensure that positive steps are taken to improve services. Chris also talked about the work Plymouth LINK is involved in to create good partnerships with our neighbour LINKs to work on issues which affect large geographical areas.

19.40 Vicky Shipway provided an explanation of how the Plymouth LINK is funded, how much has been spent, and how this money was spent. At the end of the first year there is an under spend, which the Stewardship Group is currently discussing how best to use. A request was made to LINK members for more participation in deciding how best to spend the money.

19.50 Chris Boote then spoke about the future of the LINK. The ongoing ambition is to increase membership, train visiting teams, seek out the 'seldom heard' to provide a voice for their concerns, and to provide a strong voice for local people in general. He discussed new ways of reaching out to the community, e.g. social networking sites on the internet, has stressed that the prime target for the LINK in the coming year was listening and communicating.

20.0 This concluded the meeting, and the floor was then opened for questions from the audience (see appendix A).

### **Appendix A**

Betty Gray - Has a carryover been agreed on the overspend? - Yes  
How many in membership? - Over 700 people now on database.

Vanessa Crosse - How many complaints received have a case to

answer? - Not complaints agency.

How many reports on a specific issue are received before there is a case to answer? - Matrix chart developed to deal with the prioritisation of queries.

Margaret Carr - How many LINKs are there in the UK? - 185, each developing independently.

Jo Atkey - Feedback boxes in doctors' surgeries - what are they for?  
- The boxes are for patients to fill in with any concerns while they are waiting for their appointments. The boxes are currently on trial in the PL5 and PL6 areas, and are left in situ for three months before being relocated to a different area of the city. Ms Atkey extended an invitation for the feedback boxes to be located in Council offices.

Vanessa Crosse - How much feedback is gathered through the boxes. - This is an unknown as yet as the boxes are still in the trial period.

Councillor Joan Watkins - How are priorities decided? - These are set by the level of feedback received.

Tom Jeffrey - How does LINK make items specific in view of the level of cutbacks in all areas, and what action will be taken? - Health and Social Care is the Plymouth priority.