

EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

Minutes of proceedings of 13th Annual Meeting of the Eastern Health Board
held in
St Mary's Hospital, Phoenix Park, on
Thursday 7 July 1983 at 6 pm

PRESENT

DrJD Behan
Cllr L Belton
Mrs B Bonar
Cllr D Browne
Dr M Butler
Dr J Buttimer
Cllr M Carroll
Mrs D Clune
Cllr E Doyle
Prof J S Doyle
Dr R J Draper
Cllr B J Durkan TD
Mr P Finegan
Ald A FitzGerald
Cllr Mrs E Fitzgerald
Cllr M Freehill,

Mr J Gahan
Cllr Mrs A Glenn TD
Cllr A Groome
Cllr T Hand
Dr R Hawkins
Cllr PHickey
Cllr FHynes
Mr D Kane
Dr DI Keane
Cllr T Leonard
Dr P McCarthy
Dr B Powell
Cllr E Stagg
Cllr J Sweeney
Cllr G Timmins TD
Cllr W Willoughby

APOLOGIES:

Cllr N Andrews TD, Prof J McCormick

IN THE CHAIR

Cllr Mrs A Glenn TD

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr K J Hickey
Mr F J Donohue
Mr T P Keyes
Mr L P Kavanagh
Mr J N McNee
Prof B O'Donnell
Prof I Browne
Mr P J Swords
Mr F McCullough
Mr J Doyle
Miss A Flanagan

Mr C Mansfield
Mr PA Sheehan
Mr M O'Connor
Mr T Mahon
Mr J Leech
Miss S Keegan
Mrs B Travers
Miss A O'Keefe

At the outset of the meeting the Chairman informed members of the circumstances which led to the change of venue from St Brendan's to St Mary's Hospital.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman delivered the following report.

It falls to every Chairman to review the events which transpired during his/her term of Office, and to render an account of his/her stewardship over that period.

It has been my experience that Board Members discharge their obligations admirably, and, from the somewhat somnolent location of the Chair, I have observed with acute interest the pragmatic approach of Cllr Frank Hynes, the philosophical approach of Cllr Paddy Hickey and the individualistic characteristics of Dr Jim Behan.

If, I have stopped short at this point it is because it occurs to me that to run through all of the qualities and characteristics of the various members could well be a time-consuming exercise and no little impertinence on my part.

The three singled out for specific mention are typical of all of the Board members who bring to bear upon a variety of important issues those highly personal skills and expertise which derive from their personalities and characters.

In the period under review all made my job as Chairman that much easier, and I sincerely thank them for their understanding and generosity. It goes without saying that I am unaware of any incident or occasion when Executive Management failed to respond actively to the welfare of the Board's enterprise. Indeed I would like to place on record my genuine appreciation of the assistance, always delivered with courtesy and friendship, rendered to me by Executive Management during my term as Chairman.

Perhaps our Board's most important role is in setting out policy for implementation by our staff in relation to the development of our services. This year our Board has firmly set out a very clear policy for the direction which it wishes developments to take place in the future. We have decided that, to the extent to which it improves the services for those who need them, we should move our services from the traditional institutional settings into the community.

While progress is never made as quickly as we would like, it is worth looking in particular at two of our Board's major difficulties.

The first of these concerns the decision to move the delivery of our services from an institutional setting into the community. This of course will require an increased staffing in-put, certainly in the beginning. We are trying to achieve this at a time when in fact, it is necessary for our Board to reduce the numbers of staff employed. I know that the Board's Management Team is finding this problem particularly difficult, but nevertheless it is tackling it and moving forward with the planning and development of community based services.

The second difficulty which we always face is that our Board, dealing in the main with the most intractable problems in our society, seems in particular to be given the task of supporting and supplementing other services which seem to be unable to cope fully with the problems.

Earlier in the year the Chief Executive Officer advised us that he felt that it would be necessary for priorities to be developed within the health services, otherwise we might find ourselves spreading our resources so thinly that a number of our services could be in difficulty to the point of breakdown and this is something which we may have to look after very carefully in the years ahead as it will not be possible for us to be all things to all people, all the time. I have in mind particularly the fact that a good deal of our resources go in supporting and supplementing services which are primarily the responsibility of others.

In facing these difficulties, it is important to recall the achievements which I think were important over the past year.

In the Special Hospital Programme perhaps the most important single development was that at St Ita's Hospital in Portrane we were able to move patients out of the last of the temporary buildings used for residential accommodation. This was the culmination of many years of substantial work and investment in St Ita's. Members will recall the dissatisfaction of our Board at having to have patients housed in temporary buildings and I am particularly pleased that this very unsatisfactory arrangement has been ended.

The adoption by our Board and by the Minister for Health of the Project Team Report for St Brendan's firmly established the road forward for that hospital. This will involve the scaling down of the large traditional mental hospital and the development of a range of community services.

On the hospital campus itself the planning of a National Resource Centre in association with the Mental Health Association and the planning of a European Demonstration Unit for rehabilitation are very significant developments which were initiated and on which progress was made during the year.

Despite the difficult economic climate the service has been able to open five new hostels and two new workshops. In addition two further workshops have been acquired and hopefully will be operational during the coming year.

There were a number of considerable improvements in facilities for the mentally handicapped, perhaps the most significant of these was the opening of Ballyboden as a residential centre and the provision of 30 new places in Ballymun.

Ballyraine village in Arklow was completed with the aid of EEC funds and a new hostel opened in Athy. In Newcastle a new school on the site provided by our Board has been opened and the Child Guidance and Assessment Unit opened in Kildare.

Another significant advance has been the completion of the development at Cheeverstown which will provide 130 residential and 150 day places. It is our earnest hope that Cheeverstown will be able to open in the near future because it will make a very significant contribution to the mental handicap services.

I am also very pleased to advise the Board that substantial progress has been made in the planning of the unit for the mentally handicapped at Loughlinstown which will provide over 200 places. The plans for this have now been completed, and we hope to get the Minister's clearance to go to tender in the near future.

In the Community Care Programme two major new health centres, one at Kilbarrack and one at Blanchardstown at an estimated cost of £650,000 each were completed during the year. In Wickiow the new health centre and Community Care Headquarters is due to be handed over to us by the contractor in the near future and I am also pleased to tell the Board that the work has now commenced on the new major health centre at Rowlagh.

In the development of community care services particular attention has been given to the development of two services for children, and significant advances have been made in the area of foster care, particularly in relation to the recruitment of foster parents for the older children in the 10 plus age group.

Development of nurseries in Mountjoy Square, in our new health centre at Blanchardstown and in Finglas are commencing and as a part of the plans for the development of family resource services, progress has been achieved in the development of Geraldstown House in Ballymun as a family resource centre in line with one of the major recommendations in the report of the Task Force on Child Care Services.

In relation to services for the handicapped. Officers of our Board are in discussion with the Rehabilitation Institute in regard to proposals for workshops at Portland Row, Swords and Coolock. Day Centres at Mount Street and Park House continue to provide day care facilities. Plans for the provision of a day centre for the physically handicapped at Coolock in conjunction with the Central Remedial Clinic are well advanced. We are also supporting the Irish Wheelchair Association in the development of a day activation centre in Clontarf.

Perhaps one of the most significant achievements during the year has been the work undertaken on repairs of houses for elderly persons. Apart from its primary objective of improving housing conditions for the elderly, this project, which is financed by the Department of the Environment, serves an important function in providing employment, particularly for younger people. During the year £20 houses have been dealt with under this scheme.

Drug abuse has grown to be a major problem during the year and the Board undertook formal research into the problem through its Task Force which was reported at a recent meeting of the Board. In addition a drug prevention and treatment centre for the North City area has been developed at Upper Sherrard Street and another project at Weaver Square is in advanced planning. We have also been providing counselling and contact tracers in Area 5 and a similar counsellor for Area 1 is now being recruited. We have also been working with the Health Education Bureau's Drug Education Programme through our Health Education Co-Ordinators.

The current economic difficulties have caused a rapid increase in the number of persons seeking assistance in terms of community health welfare and social services from our Board. This has placed particular strains on our resources and indeed will provide us with a major challenge in the year ahead.

In the General Hospital Care Programme a number of significant developments have also taken place. In the broad sense we have taken over from the Department of Health the responsibility for the organisation of the accident and emergency service scheme which involves the main Dublin voluntary and public hospitals.

We have had detailed negotiations with St Vincent's Hospital regarding future organisation of general hospital services in south east Dublin and east Wicklow and a detailed submission has been made by our Board to the Minister for Health.

Significant work has been done in the development of Naas Hospital through the making permanent of appointments to the consultant staff there, some of whom have already taken up duty and the establishment of a Project Team representative of the Health Board and the Department of Health to plan the further development of the hospital.

In addition a new day care unit has been provided at our hospital in Baltinglass and we have also developed physiotherapy and x-ray services there. In St Vincent's Athy we have developed an admission/assessment unit for the elderly and provided x-ray facilities. The special isolation unit at Cherry Orchard has been completed and work has commenced on the day care unit and ambulance service accommodation in the District Hospital in Wicklow. I was also very pleased during the year to record the Board's appreciation of the twelve sheltered houses for the aged built by the voluntary committee associated with St Colman's Hospital Rathdrum.

The care of the aged has been a significant problem for us over the years. During the year a joint project team, representative of our Board and of the Department of Health was appointed to draw up a five year programme for the development of specific facilities for the elderly.

This is a significant advance and the report of this project team will shortly come before our Board for consideration and submission to the Minister. I look forward to a start being made on the implementation of the improvements in services for the elderly which are so badly needed, and which have already been identified by our Board's own Care of the Aged Committee to which I had the privilege of acting as Chairman.

I was also pleased to note the significant progress which was made by the Chief Executive Officer in having a joint approach developed by all three programmes. Special Hospitals, General Hospitals and Community Care towards the development of a co-ordinated approach towards the provision of services for the elderly mentally infirm and mentally ill. If this sort of coordinated approach can be developed, I believe that it will be a very significant development in the provision of services for the elderly which are so badly needed.

While so much remains to be done, I do think it is important that we should acknowledge what has been achieved and encourage our officers to continue with the work of improving services for our area.

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ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Mrs Alice Glenn, TD was proposed by Ald A Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr D Browne. As there were no other nominations, Cllr Mrs Glenn was declared elected. Cllr Mrs Glenn, TD thanked the members for their confidence and support in re-electing her to the office of Chairman.

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ELECTION VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllr E Stagg was nominated by Cllr D Browne and seconded by Cllr L Belton. Cllr J Sweeney was nominated by Cllr P Hickey and seconded by Cllr A Groome. A vote was taken as follows:-

For Cllr J Sweeney - 17

Dr J D Behan
Mrs B Bonar
Dr M Butler
Dr J Buttimer
Mrs D Clune
Prof J S Doyle
Dr R J Draper
Mr P Finegan
Mr J Gahan

Cllr A Groome
Dr R Hawkins
Cllr P Hickey
Mr D Kane
Dr D I Keane
Cllr T Leonard
Dr P McCarthy
Cllr J Sweeney

For Cllr E Stagg - 15

Cllr L Belton
Cllr D Browne
Cllr M Carroll
Cllr E Doyle
Cllr B J Durkan
Ald A FitzGerald
Cllr E Fitzgerald
Cllr M. Freehill

Cllr Mrs A Glenn
Cllr T Hand
Cllr F Hynes
Dr B Powell
Cllr E Stagg
Cllr G Timmins
Cllr W Willoughby

The Chairman declared Cllr Sweeney elected as Vice-Chairman.

Cllr Sweeney thanked the members for electing him as Vice-Chairman.

Cllr Stagg congratulated Cllr Glenn, TD on her re-election and Cllr Sweeney on his election. Cllrs Browne, Groome and Ald FitzGerald also preferred their best wishes for the coming term.

The Chairman complimented Cllr Stagg on his performance as Vice-Chairman during the past year and congratulated Cllr Sweeney on his election, wishing him well for the coming term.

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APPOINTMENT OF VISITING COMMITTEES

It was decided to adhere to the arrangements whereby it would be open to all Board members to attend each meeting of any Visiting Committee.

CORRECT: K J Hickey
D/Chief Executive Officer.

CHAIRMAN  