

EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

Minutes of proceedings of Monthly Meeting
held in
St Colman's Hospital, Rathdrum, Co Wicklow
on Thursday 2 June 1988 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Cllr O Bennett	Mrs B Bonar
Cllr I Callely	Dr R Corcoran
Mrs D Clune	Dr P Devitt
Cllr J Dillon Byrne	Prof J S Doyle
Cllr P Dunne	Cllr B J Durkan TD
Ald A FitzGerald	Cllr M Gannon
Cllr A Glenn	Cllr A Groome
Cllr W J Harvey	Dr R Hawkins
Cllr P Hickey	Cllr F Hynes
Dr D I Keane	Dr P McCarthy
Prof J McCormick	Mr G McGuire
Cllr C Murphy	Dr J O'Boyle
Dr B O'Herlihy	Cllr J Reilly
Mr R Roche TD	Cllr J Sweeney

APOLOGY

Ms M Nealon

IN THE CHAIR

Mrs D Clune

Officers in Attendance

Mr K J Hickey, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Mr J Doyle, Acting Programme Manager, Community Care
Mr M Walsh, Acting Programme Manager, Special Hospital Care
Mr S O'Brien, Acting Programme Manager, General Hospital Care
Prof B O'Donnell, Dublin Medical Officer of Health
Mr L P Kavanagh, Personnel Officer
Mr G Brennan, technical Services Officer
Mr J N McNee, Management Services Officer
Mr M A Gallagher, Finance Officer
Mr M J O'Connor, Secretary

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CONDOLENCE

On the proposal of the Chairman a vote of sympathy was passed with the family of John O'Brien, Ambulance Supervisor, James's Street.

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CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chairman read the following report which was noted by the Board:

1. *Cheeverstown House*

The terms of the unanimous decision taken by our Board at the special meeting on 3 May 1988 were duly conveyed to the authorities of Cheeverstown House

A letter was received by me from their Chairman on 18 May 1988 to which I replied on 20 May 1988 indicating that:

- (a) Our Board's policy was unanimous regarding the three options already outlined to Cheeverstown House Limited.
- (b) Our Board's decision had been taken in the full knowledge of the service needs of the mentally handicapped in its area and is not negotiable
- (c) Our Board expects a resolution by 1 June 1988.

A further letter was received by me on 25 May 1988 requesting a meeting to discuss the matter and also the reasons for our Board's decision.

I have replied indicating that any further correspondence in this matter should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer who is charged with the implementation of our Board's policy decision.

2. *Resignation of Cllr P De Rossa TD*

We have been notified by Cllr P De Rossa TD, that he is resigning from our Board. Arrangements will be made by Dublin Corporation to appoint his successor.

3. *Official Openings*

The following Official Openings will take place during the month of June:

9 June

Extension to St Columcille's Hospital, Loughlinstown.

16 June

Inauguration Ceremony - Computer Facilities (Boardroom, St Mary's Hospital).

23 June

Mental Health Centres at Armagh Road, Crumlin and at Belgard Road, Tallaght.

30 June

Child Psychiatric Centre at Court Hall, Mulhuddart and Psychiatric Day Centre at Artane.

4. On behalf of *the* members and staff may I thank Sr Austin, Matron, and Sr Rena, Catering Officer for their hospitality and for the excellent meal provided.

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**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON
3 MAY 1988 AND OF MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 5 MAY 1988**

The minutes of the Special Meeting held on 3 May 1988 and of the Monthly Meeting held on 5 May 1988, having been circulated, were confirmed on a proposal by Cllr Dillon Byrne, seconded by Cllr Gannon.

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QUESTIONS TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

On a proposal by Cllr Dillon Byrne, seconded by Cllr Hynes, it was agreed to answer the questions which had been lodged.

- (i) *Cllr J Dillon Byrne*

'At what cost to the Eastern Health Board is the limited service on a sessional basis by private physiotherapists provided in Community Care Area No.1?'

Reply

In 1987 a sum of £2,066 was devoted to the provision of sessional physiotherapy service in Community Care Area 1. Services were provided for 40 clients at 330 sessions.

Domiciliary physiotherapy is provided only for acute cases in order to avoid admission to hospital.

- (ii) *Cllr I Callely*

'Can the Chief Executive Officer advise of the indications for use of 'Cotton Buds' available on the market in the Board's area and if any reported or noted problems have been identified with the various uses of Cotton Buds?'

Reply

'Cotton Buds' are widely available through supermarkets etc, and are mainly used for non-medical purposes. They have a limited medical use and are not known to create any medical problem. Enquiries have been made from the accident Departments of the Children's Hospitals as to whether any children have been brought in to them as a result of misuse of these appliances. The reply was in the negative.

- (iii) *Cllr I Callely*

'Can the Chief Executive Officer advise what measures, as the Health Authority in the Eastern Health Board area, have been taken to monitor radiation in our environment, foodstuffs, etc and if you can advise on long term plans in the case of a gradual or sudden rise in radiation levels?'

Reply

Monitoring of radiation levels in the environment is carried out on a national level by the Nuclear Energy Board, and also in collaboration with that Board, by the Departments of Nuclear Physics of the Universities.

Following Chernobyl, arrangements were made between our Board and the Nuclear Energy Board whereby Environmental Health Officers would take samples of foodstuffs from supermarkets and other sales outlets, for submission to the Board for testing for radiation levels.

Since then the Department of Agriculture has also organised through the Nuclear Energy Board a countrywide programme for checking levels of radiation in sheep meat. Environmental Health Officers have also participated in this programme.

Last year our Board purchased a portable food radiation monitor at a cost of approximately £3,000 and a certain number of EHOs are being trained by the Nuclear Energy Board in its use. It is used mainly for monitoring radiation levels of foodstuffs which are entering the country through Dublin Port. It is also used for carrying out spot checks on foodstuffs on sale at supermarkets and elsewhere.

Regarding long term plans to deal with a sudden rise in radiation levels, due to e.g. a nuclear accident in the UK or elsewhere, plans for such an eventuality are currently being drawn up at National level which will involve action by various authorities, including health boards.

(iv) *Cllr I Callely*

'Can the Chief Executive Officer advise if it is proposed to break down the number of HIV Positive or full-blown Aids and to be recorded, into the Community Care Sectors in our Board's area. I would also welcome the Chief Executive Officer's comments if this method of identifying the size of the problems in the different Community Care Sectors would be of benefit to deal with the need and demands on services?

Reply

HIV testing is done on a confidential anonymous basis and is a personal matter between the person concerned and his or her medical adviser. However, surveys have shown that the main incidence of HIV Positive cases is in the male homosexual and IV drugs abuser populations respectively.

These groups do not tend to be dispersed throughout the different community care areas but tend to be located in particular areas.

A specific outreach programme is in train aimed at the drug abuser population, with the objective of bringing about a reduction in the spread of HIV infection. Part of this programme involves the building up of information and of contact with this group.

Any case of full-blown AIDS is known to the particular hospital being attended by the patient.

(v) *Cllr P De Rossa TD*

'To ask the Chief Executive Officer if there are any plans to provide a Health Centre in the Confey area of Leixlip?'

Reply

There are no immediate plans to provide a health centre in the Confey area. The Board's health centre in Leixlip was extended in 1982 to cater for the increase in population in the area from 9,500 in 1981 to 12,000 in 1986. If the population of the area continues to increase it may be

necessary to build a new health centre The matter is being kept under review.

(vi) *Cllr Dr D Fitzpatrick TD*

'Will the Chief Executive Officer outline the type and range of services which the Board plans to provide, from its proposed facility at 40, North Road, Finglas, and will he state what catchment area will be covered by this facility?'

Reply

The Eastern Health Board were considering the purchase of the above premises for use as a local administrative headquarters/residential hostel for the psychiatric service.

The Board, however will not be proceeding with the purchase due to the disquiet among residents in the area towards the development and also because resources are not immediately available for the purchase.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer read the following report which was noted by the Board:

1. *Drogheda Memorial Hospital, Curragh, Co. Kildare*

The licence agreement for our Board assuming formal responsibility for the financing and operation of services at the Drogheda Memorial Hospital with effect from 1 June 1988 has been accepted by the Trustees of the Hospital and signed on behalf of our Board.

2. *Child Care Bill 1988*

I have circulated copies of the Child Care Bill 1988 together with an explanatory memorandum.

With the agreement of the members perhaps this matter could be referred to the Community Care Programme Committee for detailed consideration and report.

3. *Income Limit for Category 11 Health Services*

I have circulated with the correspondence for the meeting, copies of the Health Services (Amendment) Regulations 1988 which raised the income limit for Category 11 Free Consultant Services from £15,000 to £15,500 per annum with effect from 1 June 1988.

4. *Clean Watch*

I have circulated, for the information of members, copies of letter dated 18 May from Dr Rory O'Hanlon TD, Minister for Health regarding the Clean Watch Campaign aimed at promoting higher standards in food and drink hygiene. I should say that members of our Board's staff had a very active involvement in this campaign.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Prof O'Donnell, Dublin Medical Officer of Health and the Directors of Community Care and Medical Officers of Health in Counties Kildare and Wicklow and all our Environmental Health Officers for their support and active participation in the campaign.

5. *Measles*

The measles vaccination campaign resulted in 95% of children being vaccinated in 1986. The impetus of the campaign was not maintained to the same extent in 1987 with the result that vaccination rates dropped to a range from 48% to 74% in various Community Care Areas.

Increased efforts by the Directors of Community Care during 1988 have brought about an increased uptake in the measles vaccinations (for example in Area 2 the uptake was 81% in the year ended 30 April 1988). Their efforts are continuing. While there has been an increase in the number of measles cases reported this year it is unlikely that its incidence will reach epidemic proportions. Pockets of cases are likely to occur. The number of admissions to Cherry Orchard Hospital of measles cases over recent years is as follows:

1986	13
1987	4
1988	48 (to end of May)

6. *Psychiatric Unit, Naas General Hospital*

I am pleased to inform members that the likely date for the signing of the contract for the building work at Naas General Hospital is mid-June 1988.

7. *Publicity in 'Daily Star' Newspaper*

I wish to advise members that the Daily Star Newspaper today published an article and photographs in relation to St Brendan's and St Ita's Hospitals. The article was prepared and the photographs taken without the knowledge of our management. The journalist concerned engaged in a token exercise of seeking a comment from our Board insofar as he contacted the Press Officer on Wednesday afternoon (1 June 1988).

I have investigated this matter today and the Programme Manager has received reports from Senior Nursing Staff in St Ita's and St Brendan's Hospitals totally refuting the allegations of neglect and pointing out that the photographs published were of a highly selective and misleading nature and that some of them were taken in areas no longer in use for patient care. I am satisfied this newspaper article and photographs convey an inaccurate and totally imbalanced description of the psychiatric services being provided by our Board at and from the two hospitals concerned.'

Following a discussion to which Cllrs Hynes, Harvey, Groome, Durkan and Prof McCormick contributed and to which Mr Hickey, Deputy Chief Executive Officer replied, it was agreed to write to the staff concerned conveying the members' appreciation of the high standard of patient care provided in both hospitals and informing them that the members recognised that they were seriously maligned in the newspaper article. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer also indicated that he would be pursuing the question of what remedies are open to us to have the false information and impressions given in this newspaper article corrected.

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PROGRESS REPORTS FROM PROGRAMME COMMITTEES

1. *Special Hospital Care Programme Committee*

On a proposal by Cllr Groome, seconded by Cllr Gannon, it was agreed to adopt the report.

The report dealt with the monthly meeting of the Committee which was held on 12 May 1988 in St Raphael's Mental Handicap Centre, Celbridge, Co Kildare.

2. **General Hospital Care Programme Committee**

On a proposal by Cllr Dillon Byrne, seconded by Dr O'Herlihy, it was agreed to adopt the report.

The following matters were dealt with in the report:

- (a) Progress report on the development of the Out-Patient Department and Operating Theatre Suite, and on the development of an acute geriatric/rehabilitation unit in St Joseph's Ward, St Columcille's Hospital, Loughlinstown.
- (b) The development of an out-patient clinic at James Connolly Memorial Hospital, Blanchardstown dedicated to asthmatic patients.
- (c) Report on the geriatric assessment for patients seeking admissions to private nursing homes and requesting subventions from the Health Board.
- (d) Report on services in Clonskeagh Hospital.

3. **Community Care Programme Committee**

On a proposal by Cllr Gannon, seconded by Dr McCarthy, it was agreed to adopt the report.

The following matters were dealt with in the report:

- (a) Special Meeting of the Committee held on 6 May 1988 in Geraldstown House, Ballymun.
- (b) Special Meeting held on 10 May 1988 at St Mary's Hospital to consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive Officer regarding the Area 7 accommodation for the Community Care Team.
- (c) Special Meeting held on 27 May 1988 in St Mary's Hospital to consider the 'Mothers Alone' report.
- (d) Report on meeting held in Community Care Area No. 2 on 26 May 1988.

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NOTICES OF MOTION

1. The following motion was proposed by Cllr Dillon Byrne and seconded by Dr McCarthy:

'That the Minister for Health be requested by the Eastern Health Board to make AIDS cases a notifiable disease.'

Following a discussion to which Cllr Dillon Byrne and Dr McCarthy contributed and to which Prof O'Donnell, Dublin Medical Officer of Health and Mr Hickey, Deputy Chief Executive Officer replied, it was agreed to seek the view of the Department of Health on the terms of the motion and to refer the matter to the Community Care Programme Committee together with the Department of Health's response.

2. The following motion was proposed by Cllr Dillon Byrne and seconded by Cllr Harvey.

'That the headquarters for Area No. 1 get the go-ahead and make the facilities that are so necessary come on stream within the next six to nine months.'

Following a discussion to which Cllr Dillon Byrne, Cllr Hynes and the Chairman, Mrs Dympha Clune, contributed and to which Mr Hickey, Deputy Chief Executive Officer replied, the motion, amended as follows: was agreed:

'That the headquarters for Area No. 1 get the go-ahead and make the facilities that are so necessary come on stream as a matter of priority.'

3. The following motion was proposed by Cllr Dillon Byrne and seconded by Dr Devitt.

'That the Chief Executive Officer report on the operation of the new child sexual assault units at children's hospitals with particular reference to:

- (a) the level of demand for the service;*
- (b) the hours at which the service is available and on staffing levels;*
- (c) that delays in getting appointments for counselling from the date of report of an assault;*
- (d) whether physical examinations can be carried out by women doctors'.*

Following a discussion to which Cllr Dillon Byrne, Dr Devitt, Dr O'Herlihy, Mrs Bonar, Cllr Harvey and Prof McCormick contributed, Mr Hickey, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, indicated that he would send a report on the matter to Cllr Dillon Byrne.

4. The motion in the name of Cllr Dr D Fitzpatrick TD who was unable to attend the meeting was deferred for consideration at the July meeting.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Letter dated 25 May 1988 from the Department of Health enclosing copies of the Health Services (Amendment) Regulations 1988, copies of which had been circulated, was noted.

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OTHER BUSINESS

Arising from points raised by Deputy Roche it was noted that a report on admission procedures for long-stay care was under preparation for a special meeting of the General Hospital Care Programme Committee (to be arranged).

The meeting concluded at 7.30 pm

CORRECT: K J Hickey
Deputy Chief Executive Officer

J. Roche
12/6/88

CHAIRMAN.