

QVH Public Governor Profiles

John Bowers

Getting bored with retirement after a busy City life, I thought it was time I gave some help to the local community and what better way than to become a governor of QVH?

Having only a scant knowledge of the National Health Service, my initial thoughts were to swashbuckle through the bureaucracy and streamline the business on good old commercial lines. I very soon discovered it is a much more complex business and that the hospital was being run by very experienced and expert professionals.

But nevertheless, one is able to add some value to the organisation as your knowledge of the NHS broadened. It is a very rewarding and worthwhile experience and I fully endorse the process of becoming a hospital governor whatever your background although to do the position any justice you have to dedicate a certain amount of time during the tenure of your election.

Brian Goode

Before I applied to become a governor I was a volunteer at QVH where I helped in the outpatients and health records departments. These tasks gave me an insight into the workings of the hospital from a staff and management viewpoint. I believed that this insight, coupled with my previous business experience, offered both the knowledge and breadth of experience to be able to make a useful and informed contribution to the board of governors.

Since joining the board of governors, I have attended three public meetings where proposals and decisions taken by the hospital's board of directors were questioned to ensure they were appropriate and thought through. I was able to offer a contribution on the financial and project content of the meetings. I have since become the governors' representative on the Strategy Committee looking at the new theatres, where I am an active participant. I report back to the main governing body on the progress of the project.

Shirley Mitchell

My experience as a governor has been an evolving journey, from the early days when QVH first became a foundation trust of authorisation to the present and the seven years have been very enjoyable.

I initially stood for election hoping to give some working-life experience and knowledge to our local hospital. In the early days I was not sure how this would work but quickly got to grips with the constitution, understanding the responsibilities and learning from other governors, particularly in the areas of finance and governance, as my experience was in human resources.

I attended social events to get to know staff members and have sat on and chaired various committees. It has been really important to form good working relationships with the board of directors to get involved in all aspects of the hospital and to understand the special ethos of QVH.

Andrew Robertson

My association with QVH dates back to 1960 when I was a patient. I then joined the staff in 1968 as an anaesthetist and continued (part-time) until 2000. In the meantime my "day job" was as a GP in Lingfield.

After retirement I still took an interest in QVH and was a member of the League of Friends who have over many years contributed so much in both time and money to the hospital.

I stood and was elected a public governor in 2005. I found seeing the "other side" of the hospital of great interest. I joined the Appointments Committee and am still there. I find I am pleased and privileged to be able to keep an eye on my favourite hospital. I was asked last year to take over the role of Chairman of the League of Friends so have now changed my position from public to stakeholder governor and continue to keep a close eye on how the hospital develops.

Stuart William Barnett

I am now completing my full seven year term as public governor of QVH and have thoroughly enjoyed my involvement with this first class hospital. Initially, in putting myself forward as a governor candidate, my thoughts were to make a contribution to a hospital which had benefited my family in several ways since we moved to Lingfield in 1979. I was hopeful that my business experience would help, particularly in areas of governance and planning, although wary that I had little 'inside' experience of the workings of hospitals and the NHS.

As a board of governors we have had a number of challenges, not least representing a new role and discipline in an already tightly-regulated sector. Finding our way has very much been trial and error. However, I believe we have contributed some valuable thinking and support to the directors and management of QVH, particularly through challenging times, especially latterly.

As an accountant I have certainly contributed most to the areas requiring financial knowledge, as well as best practice with regard to governance. However, I believe it is fair to reflect that all my fellow governors have made complementary contributions at various times.

The biggest future challenge is, I believe, the continuing one of engagement with the QVH constituency and encouraging greater membership involvement.

Good luck to all my successors. I'm sure you will enjoy the experience.