

Report of the Chairman of the Worcestershire Medico-Legal Society for 2017-8.

I can report on a successful year in 2017-8 in terms of meetings and speakers. Our objective is to cover not just medicine as such, although this is obviously a main feature of our programme, but to look at health care in the light of social care and education too. This reflects the current emphasis on, so far as possible, looking at these three services as an integrated whole.

In 2017 our first speaker was Peter Pinfield, Chair of Worcestershire Healthwatch, who spoke on 'The Challenges we face in Worcestershire – A Healthwatch Perspective'. Peter is well known locally and his infectious enthusiasm for improving healthcare in Worcestershire shone through his talk. This was followed by a really fascinating evening with three speakers on 'Preparing for a Good Death – Advance Care Planning in the context of the Mental Capacity Act'. The speakers were Dr. Nicky Wilderspin, Consultant in Palliative Medicine, Dr. Maggie Keeble, Clinical Lead, Proactive Care South Worcestershire CCG and Jean Newton, Partner, Parkinson Wright Solicitors, Worcester.

When we came to 2018 Adrian Giles, recently retired pharmacist at Kitson's Worcester took the title of 'Confessions of a Gap Year Pharmacist' and we ended with retired Court of Protection Judge Denzil Lush on 'Some random thoughts on mental capacity'. Both of these were excellent talks but with disappointing attendances. I wonder on reflection if the titles of these talks were sufficiently eye catching as Adrian Giles has many years' experience of pharmacy, certainly not confined to a gap year, and Denzil Lush's talk was anything but random.

We were due to have a fifth talk, as we usually do, but the proposed speaker, Judge Peter Rank, was in the end unable to come.

There are three other matters to mention.

Firstly, like all other organisations, we had to contend with the impact of the GDPR which imposes obligations with regard to data processing and holding which, although doubtless most necessary in many ways, are in my view totally over the top for small organisations like ours. As a result, our Secretary Lesley Smallman had to contact all of our members to ask if they wished to still be on our mailing list. We decided to keep everyone, including those who had not replied, on our list for another year but after that, to comply with the law, those who have not consented will have to be removed. I know of small charities who have lost about half of their membership because of failure by members to reply to GDPR notices so please if you are one of those who have not replied to Lesley's message, can you do so?

On the subject of membership, I must stress once again that our individual membership is in fact slowly declining – this is a worrying trend and so I do urge any of you here tonight who are not members to consider doing so. The consequence of this decline is that the society is in fact being financially sustained by fewer and fewer people. This cannot go on.

Secondly, another challenge has been the loss of our meeting room at the Charles Hastings Postgraduate Medical Centre at Worcestershire Royal Hospital. Apparently, the centre is no longer open in the evenings. We have as a result moved to the School of Law at the

University which I think is an excellent venue especially as it attracts students at the University. However, it may not be to everyone's liking so do let us know what you think!

Thirdly, I try as your chairman to attend other events in Worcestershire concerned with health and social care. One of these was a meeting in July this year at the University organised by Dr. Peter Unwin, Senior Lecturer in Social Work, to establish a local branch of the British Association of Social Workers. When this takes place, we hope to hold some joint meetings.

May I thank all of our committee members for their constant support and for being such a fertile source of ideas for speakers. The committee members are: Dr. Tony Cole, Dr. Kelvin Laidlaw, Dr. Jonathan Leach, Dr. Helen Taylor, Susan Jarvis, Gill Porter, Erica Wassell Laura Taylor and Sherri Ogston-Tuck.

This marks, I think, ten years of this society in its revived incarnation, having originally begun in the mid 1980's and then having become comatose about fifteen years later. May I then end as ever by thanking you all for your support, our excellent speakers for without exception being so interesting and, on the personal level, so friendly and above all Lesley who is a real gem as a secretary/treasurer and does all the hard work!!

John Duddington

October 2018.