



Houghton Regis Helpers
07587 004514

Minutes of 7th Annual General Meeting
Held 20 February 2019 19.00 hrs @ Houghton Regis Town Council Office

Present

Members (volunteers)

Eric Gallucci (Chair), Terry Jones (Vice-Chair), Jenny Gallucci (Secretary), Sheila North (Treasurer), Rae Bird, Carol Butler, Tony Butler, John Byrne, Roger Croft, Yvonne Farrell, Susan Goodchild, Laura Hart, Joan Hensbrey, Donna Hercocock, Beka Hillyard, Jo Hillyard, Ange Kings, Charlie Miller, Bryan Owen, James Stroebel, Susan Thorne, Betty Todd

Guests

Cllr Carole Hegley, Cllr Jimmy Carroll, Simon Patterson (BRCC), Andrew Harland, David Jones (at 8 p.m.), Laraine Rason (Beds Fire and Rescue Service)

Apologies

Members (volunteers): Lucy Downs, Linda Johnson, Christine Lyus, Kev Merridew, Theresa O'Shea, Sofie Richards, Gavin Shaw, Sarah Stroebel, Peter Todd, Anne White, Paul White

Guests: Julie Ogle (Director Social Care, Health & Housing), Clare Evans (HR Town Clerk), Mike Fayers (BRCC), Coral Miller, Ruth Shaw

1. Welcome and Apologies:

EG (Chair) welcomed volunteers and guests to the 7th Annual General Meeting of Houghton Regis Helpers. Apologies received from several members and invited guests.

2. Minutes of 6th AGM held 28 February 2018:

Unanimously agreed as a true record and signed by Chair.

3. Matters Arising:

Item 3: RB questioned if the clients who have been contacted re GDPR consent have all returned their forms as the deadline was 31 January 2019. JG confirmed that the majority of forms have been received from our current clients, just four or five that are being followed up. RB stated that she is pleased the group is GDPR compliant.

4. Presentation of Annual Report 2018:

All attendees received a copy of the Annual Report, which includes a Welcome from the Chair. A copy is included with these Minutes in Houghton Regis Helpers AGM folder.

JG summarised the report:

Highlights of the Year 2018: these include the Intergenerational events, working with local young people, and the presentation of the Citizenship Certificate for services to the community by the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire. Working with the Community Well-Being Champion to support the Social Prescribing project began in 2018 and will continue to be an important partnership in the coming year, enabling socially isolated residents to join clubs, groups and to receive support for their non-medical needs.

Volunteers 2018: the year began with 36 volunteers and we welcomed six new volunteers and one returner during 2018. Some losses due to personal and health reasons means we ended the year with 39 volunteers. The report highlights, on page 4, the roles of volunteers, officers and committee. Sustainability of the group is a key focus for the coming year, and to encourage younger volunteers to sign up. JG thanked all the volunteers for their dedication, hard work and care for those we help.

Clients 2018: 147 individual residents were helped during 2018, including 49 who requested help for the first time. This figure is enhanced by the support given to relatives, the number of calls we receive from out of the area, from other groups and professionals, and through the community events our volunteers are involved in. The summary of jobs graph for 2018, compared to 2017, shows an increase in befriending, driving for social well-being activities, and other jobs, which are

often quite complex. JG commented that we have an excellent team of volunteers who visit clients regularly and we also befriend residents through phone chats and email, using whatever means of communication the resident prefers. Requests for DIY, shopping and form-filling have seen a slight decrease but overall the number of jobs completed (1450) is very similar to the previous year. A lot of the work we do is liaising with other professionals. The age profile of residents helped shows an increase in the age range of 21 to 40, while the biggest percentage is aged between 61 and 80 years.

Challenges 2018: JG explained how the biggest challenge in 2018 was ensuring Houghton Regis Helpers became compliant with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations). The committee worked hard to ensure policies, data protection privacy notices and written consent forms for volunteers and clients were in place and being distributed to, and collected from, all concerned.

Achievements 2018: other highlights and achievements for 2018 included fund-raising events and working as a team with Habinteg Housing at Clarkes Way Community Day, painting planters.

Mainly for Men Coffee Mornings: JG reported on the success of the coffee mornings, held monthly. Particularly two events, arranged with the men, to raise money for charity – a Sponsored Silence which raised £202.50 for Cancer Research and Macmillan coffee morning which raised £128.50.

Other Activities: the report shows photos from other activities during the year, including the Mayor's tea at May Fair; volunteers at the Cheering Volunteering Awards and Thank you Lunch; the Cyber Protect Presentation, a volunteer and community event organised by the group on how to keep safe in-line; Good Neighbour Scheme Network meetings; and the very successful Christmas Afternoon Tea and Talent Show.

Call for Volunteers: JG closed her presentation with a call for more volunteers and how to get in touch, and a reminder that the bi-monthly newsletter E-News keeps everyone up to date and is available via email subscription.

Comments on Annual Report:

SP (representing BRCC) commended Houghton Regis Helpers on the high numbers of befriending calls our volunteers carry out – more than other good neighbour schemes in Bedfordshire.

5. Receiving Accounts – Financial Report 2018:

All attendees received a copy of the Income and Expenditure Account for year ending 31 December 2018. A copy is included with these Minutes in Houghton Regis Helpers AGM folder.

SN presented the end of year accounts, verified by Independent Examiner DJ.

Balance b/f from 2017: £2358

Total Income for 2018: £1919. (This was less than 2017, which included a CBC grant)

Expenditure in 2018 was £2233

Balance c/f at end of 2018: £2044

Questions and Comments

- JS asked 'what is the difference between an Unrestricted Fund and a Restricted Fund'. SN explained that a Restricted Fund is money obtained, usually through a grant, for a specified use – such as the CBC grant in 2017.
- RB commented that general donations are generous (£366 in 2018) – measures of the high regard clients hold us in. SN responded that some donations were received though collection tins at events.
- JG commented on the reduced income in 2018 from the Town Crier deliveries, due to only 3 publications by the Town Council last year. This is being reduced to 2 issues per annum in 2019.
- RB stated that some people have the impression that our clients are in poverty which is why they use our service, but this is not always the case, they often have no-one else to go to for help. SN stated that some clients cannot afford a trades-person but donate what they can.

SN expressed her thanks to David Jones for acting as independent examiner of the accounts and to JG for stepping in when she was out of action earlier in the year.

6. Election of Honorary Officers for 2 year period:

Terry Jones nominated as Vice-Chair, seconded by SG.

Jenny Gallucci nominated as Secretary, seconded by SN.

TJ and JG unanimously re-elected and will remain in post until AGM 2021.

7. Election of Interim Treasurer for 1 year period:

Chair EG thanked SN for her role as Treasurer for 2018 but an Interim Treasurer is to be elected for 2019.

John Byrne nominated as Interim Treasurer, seconded by SG and BT

John was unanimously elected and will remain in post until AGM 2020.

8. Election of Committee:

New nomination – James Stroebel, seconded by JG and SG. James duly elected by unanimous vote. The following current committee members were nominated for re-election: RB, CB, YF, AK, ST, BT, and PT. All unanimously re-elected.

Committee members remain in post until AGM 2020.

9. Appointment of Independent Examiner of Accounts for 2019:

EG proposed inviting David Jones to be appointed as Independent Examiner of the Accounts for 2019. SN stated that he has indicated that he is willing to accept the role for another year. DJ not present at this point in the meeting due to him attending another meeting first.

Note: DJ joined the meeting at 8 p.m. and subsequently agreed to be appointed Independent Examiner of the Accounts for 2019. EG thanked DJ on behalf of members.

10. Plans for 2019:

JG outlined plans and activities for the group in 2019. Firstly a poster campaign to recruit more volunteers, particularly under 50's. 'Can you Help' posters being distributed across town.

Asda Green token scheme – until end of March the group is one of three community groups nominated for the token scheme this quarter, potential first 'prize' of £500.

Mainly for Men coffee mornings – revised programme available

Pancake Race Day – 5 March in Houghton Hall Park – come and support the Helpers team!

Volunteer event 15 March: CPR/Defibrillator Awareness Course, facilitated by East Anglia Air Ambulance. Places still available. JH highly recommends the course.

Easter Egg Hunt and Easter Fair – 20 April

May Fair – 4 May. Volunteers will be called on to help with Afternoon Teas!

Volunteer Drivers – cards available for display when dropping patients off or picking up from L&D Hospital. 10 minute waiting time in drop-off zone by Main reception if patient has mobility difficulties.

11. Volunteer comment:

SG shared her reasons for stepping down from the committee this year. She congratulated the group on the initiatives to encourage younger volunteers and how important it is to be thinking about the sustainability of the group. SG thanked JS for stepping forward to join the committee and commented on the outstanding work of JG and others. SG commented on how appreciated the volunteers are by other organisations, including Central Bedfordshire, and what a privilege it is for her to be part of us. She will continue as a volunteer and wishes the committee well.

12. Thank You's:

EG gave heartfelt thanks to SG and SN on behalf of the group for their support and work on the committee. They were presented with Thank You cards and flowers.

EG thanked everyone for attending. After a short break, EG introduced guest speaker Laraine Rason, Community Safety Officer from Beds Fire & Rescue Service, who gave a most interesting and informative presentation on Safe and Well Visits.


12/02/2020