



Houghton Regis Helpers
07527 004514

Minutes of 6th Annual General Meeting
28 February 2018 19.00 hrs @ Houghton Regis Town Council Office

Present Members (volunteers)

Eric Gallucci (Chair), Terry Jones (Vice-Chair), Jenny Gallucci (Secretary), Rae Bird, Carol Butler, Tony Butler, John Byrne, Yvonne Farrell, Susan Goodchild, Laura Hart, Joan Hensbrey, Donna Hercock, Angela Kings, Charlie Miller, Theresa O'Shea, James Stroebel, Sarah Stroebel, Susan Thorne, Betty Todd, Peter Todd, Alan Winter

Guests

Cllr Chris Slough, David Jones, Coral Miller

Apologies

Members (volunteers): Sheila North (Treasurer), Roger Croft, Beka Hillyard, Jo Hillyard, Linda Johnson, Sofie Richards, Gavin Shaw, Anne White, Paul White

Guests: Andrew Selous M.P., Vinod Tailor (High Sheriff of Bedfordshire), Julie Ogley (Director Social Care, Health & Housing), Cllr Carole Hegley, Cllr Ken Wattingham, Mike Fayers (BRCC), Sarah Gelsthorp (HRTC), Debbie Marsh (HRTC), Susan Slough, Ruth Shaw, Keith Wallis, Val Wallis

1. Welcome and Apologies:

EG (Chair) welcomed members and guests to the 6th Annual General Meeting of Houghton Regis Helpers and thanked everyone for coming out in the bitterly cold weather.

Apologies received from several members and invited guests. RB passed on apologies from Cllr Carole Hegley (Executive Member for Social Care and Housing) and her thanks for all the hard work we do in Houghton Regis.

EG informed the meeting that, due to the severe weather, the talk from Meaningful Education planned to follow the meeting has been cancelled.

2. Minutes of previous AGM held 21 February 2017 – unanimously agreed as a true record and signed by Chair. There were no matters arising.

3. Annual Report 2017 – presented by JG:

All attendees received a copy of the Annual Report, which includes a welcome from the Chair, and a copy is included with these Minutes in Houghton Regis Helpers records

Highlights of the Year 2017: these include the Inspiring Volunteering grant awarded at Cheering Volunteering in June 2017; achieving Pride of Houghton Local Group Award in October and supporting the Celebration of Christmas event at the Grove theatre in November.

Volunteers 2017: steady turnover of volunteers during the year, with five new volunteers joining us and two who left due to full-time work. We sadly said farewell to Rita Hicks who passed away in September. End of year we had 36 volunteers.

Increased total number of jobs compared to 2016, particularly befriending, DIY & Electrical and advocacy and advice. Fewer dog walking requests and prescription collection down as pharmacies now deliver to patients. The Annual Report includes a graph summarising the number and types of jobs carried out during 2016 and 2017.

Clients 2017: 2017 saw an increase of 23% in the number of residents requesting help compared to 2016, a total of 141 individual residents helped. JG mentioned several examples of partnership working which we are more in demand for, including requests from Adult Social Care and Children's Services; Habinteg Housing; Community Mental Health Team; and Family support workers. The age profile of clients covers 22 to 98 year-olds, with 41 % being aged 41 to 60 years.

Promotional and community events: the report includes a 2 page 'Year in Pictures' covering a range of activities, events and training completed during 2017.

Inspiring Volunteering Grant: JG summarised the aims of the grant, awarded in June 2017, which enabled the group to purchase equipment to support more social events for socially isolated residents and to involve more young people in volunteering. The report illustrates events including the Afternoon Tea with theatre performance in July 2017 and the 'Mainly for Men' coffee mornings introduced in November, now being held monthly.

Other activities and Behind the Scenes work: JG reported on other activities volunteers attend including network meetings, the annual Festival for Older People, and representation at many of the Town Mayor events. Behind the scenes work was highlighted – admin, managing the website and Facebook page, newsletter, emails and the amazing work of the phoneholders. JG commented on some of the reports that are submitted on a regular basis, including quarterly reports to BRCC and Community Transport reports to the Town Council.

Policies and Procedures: JG referred to the organisation's policies and procedures, which are regularly reviewed. In 2017 revisions and updates were made to the Safeguarding policy and Risk assessments. A new Risk Assessment for Outdoor Activities was required in 2017.

Thanks: JG thanked Houghton Regis Town Council for the use of the Council Chamber for meetings, and thanked all those who generously donated to the organisation in 2017, including Morrisons Houghton Regis.

JG welcomed to the meeting four new volunteers who have joined since January 2018 – JB, DH, JS and SS.

Questions to the Secretary

- AW asked if there is a Data Protection Policy – JG informed AW that all volunteers agree to the Data Protection Notice in the Volunteer Welcome Pack when signing up and all our record-keeping complies with current DPA regulations. JG added that the committee is currently working to ensure that the organisation will be compliant with the new General DPA regulations coming into effect in May 2018.
- CS asked how volunteers comply with Safeguarding – JG explained that all volunteers who work directly with vulnerable adults have enhanced DBS checks and also receive Safeguarding Awareness training. Recent revision of the Safeguarding Policy includes the requirement for all volunteers to be trained and to attend refresher training ever 2 years.
- SS asked who writes the risk assessments – JG explained that these are usually drafted by the Secretary, who keeps up to date with current legislation, and then examined by the committee for comment, amendment and then ratification.

4. Receiving Accounts – Financial Statement 2017:

All attendees received a copy of the Income and Expenditure Account for year ending 31 December 2017. A copy is included with these Minutes in Houghton Regis Helpers records.

In the absence of Treasurer SN, Secretary JG presented the statement of accounts and invited comments.

Balance b/f from 2016: £2751

Income for the year was an increase from 2016, largely due to the Inspiring Volunteering grant in the Restricted fund. Total income £2959

Expenditure in 2017 showed an increase in some areas, with total outgoings of £3352.

Balance c/f at end of 2017: £2358

Questions and Comments

- AW queried increased stationery/postage/Admin costs, a rise of £500 in 2017 – JG explained that, although the grant covered the cost of equipment, including a new A3 printer, it does not cover printing costs. JG pointed out that advertising costs are reduced now that more in-house printing of posters, leaflets etc is carried out plus the increase in printing as the additional social events for the more socially isolated residents are planned. Other admin costs have risen with the increasing requests for help and reports. Another cost now is DBS checks and AW suggested that these be listed as a separate item. JG agreed to put the suggestion to the Treasurer.
- AW commented on the cost of the website, which is reduced from 2016. JG explained that the 2016 accounts included a 2 year payment for the domain name. AW commented that his website is free and what are the other costs for. JG referred members to speak to SN

as the account books were unavailable.

- AW commented that he had been approached during the year to assist with the website but felt it might lead to 'interfering in someone else's work'. He offered to be the sole administrator for the website in the future should the current volunteer wish to stand down.
- JS asked about fundraising which shows an increase of £300 from 2016. JG explained that this was a result of being approached by CBC to provide refreshments at the Community Day in Houghton Regis in August.
- SG commented that we have a healthy balance, partly due to the opportunity to deliver the Town Criers by our volunteers four times a year.
- JS made suggestions for fundraising events, such as a film night. LH explained that you cannot charge to watch a film, would need a film licence or be a cinema. JG commented that although this is a great idea, the remit of our group is to help socially isolated and vulnerable adults and such an event would prevent these residents from taking part. Possible conflict with our aims.

JG suggested that if members have other questions to email these to the Helpers and she will forward the queries to SN.

JG thanked David Jones for acting as independent examiner of the accounts.

5. Election of Honorary Officers:

Eric Gallucci nominated as Chair, to stand for two-year period.

Sheila North nominated as Treasurer, with the request to stand for one-year only initially.

TJ as Vice-Chair led this item, explaining that the terms of office for both Eric as Chair and Sheila as Treasurer, come to an end this evening and asked thanks to be noted for their 2 years of work they have both put in for us all. Members applauded.

TJ thanked both EG and SN for agreeing to be nominated for re-election. No other nominations received and members unanimously approved their re-election. TJ asked for thanks to be passed on to SN.

6. Election of Committee:

The following current committee members were nominated for re-election: RB, CB, SG, AK, BT, PT. All unanimously re-elected.

EG introduced two new nominees to join the committee: Yvonne Farrell and Sue Thorne.

Members unanimously agreed to their election. Committee members remain in post until the AGM 2019.

7. Appointment of Independent Examiner of Accounts for 2018:

JG invited David Jones to be appointed as Independent Examiner of the Accounts for 2018. He expressed his willingness to give help for another year and members thanked him with applause.

8. Volunteer comment:

SG shared how much Houghton Regis Helpers are regarded and appreciated for their work across Central Bedfordshire. She often hears comments (in her role as Cllr) about how hard our volunteers work to support the more vulnerable members of our community, and thanked everyone.

SG wished to give thanks, on behalf of all, to the work of the Chair and Secretary, which contributes greatly to the success of Houghton Regis Helpers.

EG closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending, thanked those who have been elected, our supporters and all the volunteers for their work and support for the group during the year.

