

Chair's Report for Oxtalk AGM 29th October 2022

Good afternoon and welcome.

An in person 'welcome', which is very pleasing because the majority of Oxtalk volunteers have not had the opportunity to meet each other since March 2020 & that does seem a very long time ago. Sadly listeners are obviously reluctant to attend meetings such as this, as there have not been any responses to the invitation sent out during 3 of the Oxtalk recordings. But thank you to Margaret Brinkhurst, who is the Trustee representing the listeners. Perhaps some of the listeners will be more confident to attend the Autumn Meeting next year.

First my thanks go out to the Oxtalk volunteers who continue to record & compile the news items each week from their homes. I am not forgetting the News Editors, but News Editors always have selected & edited the news items at home, so thank you to the News Editors as well. That just leaves one more 'thank you' & that is to the Lawfull Team. Guy copies the weekly master recording each week, which Michelle copies for the number of wallets she has ready to post out to listeners. Michelle has prior to this emptied the returned wallets & re-addressed them. Once copied the Oxtalk USB is popped back into a wallet ready to be posted back out to the listeners. I have asked Michelle to report as Copier to this meeting, so I will say no more, but I doubt she will explain in detail her role as Copier. So thank you to Guy & Michelle, who has declined offers of help!!

Until there are more Keyholders, who have been approved by MyVision, on behalf of their Insurers, Oxtalk will continue to be produced in the same way as I have just explained to you. Volunteers will recall I asked if any were interested in being a Keyholder & to date there have been no positive replies.

The Tuesday Team – there is a total of 31 volunteers currently available to record for Oxtalk. 1 of the volunteers lives in Holland, having moved there at the end of July. Elizabeth has continued as a Reader, so can Oxtalk now be said to be international? Of the 31- 6 are Technical Officers + 1 reserve TO; 6 are News Editors and 18 are Readers. If there are not enough Readers for the rota then I can call on the TOs to read announcements or news items. Some of the Readers self-select, edit & read the news items. There are volunteers who cannot be involved at the moment but are waiting for Oxtalk to return to MyVision.

Earlier in the year the County TNs met. Some were struggling because of reductions in both volunteers and listeners numbers. I am pleased to welcome Nigel James, Chair of Witney TN, to this meeting. Thank you for joining us Nigel. I know some of Oxtalk's members are waiting to speak with you. Each County TN is organised & operates differently. In the hope to attract both new volunteers & listeners a general news sheet was produced & distributed around the County. DAWN, the TN based in Abingdon, working out of the Health Centre, was battling with the postal services who were threatening to charge for collecting & delivering their sack of wallets. I do not know what the current situation is. Other TNs were facing increases to the rents they have to pay for the recording base. Oxtalk is very fortunate, we have not been told there may be a postal charge & if & when we return to MyVision, we make an affordable annual donation.

At the end of May Oxtalk joined very many other organisations at the Headington Festival. This was a first for us. We raised the awareness of Oxtalk & we attracted new volunteers. It was a fun event, excellent for networking, though from time to time rather windy! Nevertheless I hope Oxtalk will be there again another year. At the end of June ASDA at Wheatly, had allocated Oxtalk a fundraising day & Pete's accounts show this again was a success. Not only for the welcome top up to Oxtalk's funds but again awareness raising. ASDA's Community Officer invited Oxtalk to enter the selection process with ASDA, to gain selection as a named organisation in their Green Token Scheme. We were successful & how much financial support we will receive will depend on Oxtalk volunteers voting for Oxtalk every week online, as well as the shoppers green token selection. This is on-going until December. At the beginning of this month Oxtalk was at the Oxford Older People's Day, held in Oxford Town Hall. Another event very useful for networking, awareness raising and attracting volunteers. Which it did & a new volunteer will be reading in the last rota for this year. In December Oxtalk will be back at ASDA in Wheatly for another fundraising & awareness raising day. The amounts donated at these days do help to keep Pete happy!! They may only be a few £100 at a time, but each amount keeps topping up Oxtalk's accounts, without having to spend hours completing grant application forms. None of this community involvement happens without the help of Oxtalk's committed volunteers, who are willing give the extra time. Thank you very much to each and everyone.

Approximately 3 months ago Kings Accessibility stopped trading. This was a firm we bought the wallets, USBs & audio players from. I understand as soon as this was made public the production & export of the audio players from China, where they were manufactured stopped. Oxtalk has a good supply of wallets and USBs & there are still some audio players available for the County Visual Impairment Team to give to new Oxtalk listeners. But we are not certain about the future for the free audio players. TN Federation said they were going to be testing & trialling different audio players but as yet there has been no feedback. The Sonic Audio Player sold for £65 & I am not certain this is an affordable price for a small charity to consider funding to new listeners? Fundraising as many of you will be aware is very time consuming, very competitive, with very uncertain outcomes. The views of volunteers will be very welcome.

Trustee Meetings have continued by Zoom, thanks to Guy. Guy and I have met with the TOs, again using Zoom. As I have just said the Trustees will welcome the views of volunteers, as to whether we should continue funding free audio players to new listeners? All the Trustees are attending this meeting.

Marjory Davies is resigning as a Trustee at this AGM. Marjory had been a Copier for many years & I have thanked her for her years of service to Oxtalk. She may return as a Copier if & when we return to the recording base.

My very grateful thanks to all the Trustees, who support Oxtalk in their many & various ways. Being a Trustee is not just giving your time & being interested in the organisation. It is much more a case of being collectively responsible for the organisation, the administration & the financial soundness of the charity, for which you are a Trustee. As Trustees we are accountable & I am very grateful for the support the Trustees give.

When the AGM business concludes Mark Upton will be bringing us up to date about MyVision, followed by time to relax whilst enjoying an afternoon tea, organised by Mandy Wood & Di Shaw, thank you to both of you and to other cake bakers!

But we are not quite there yet. I will answer any questions & then hand over to Mandy Tree.

Many thanks.

Margaret A Simpson, Chair of Oxtalk

28th October 2022