

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of OXTALK**

**held on Saturday 14 October 2023**

**at St Clement's Centre, Cross Street, Oxford**

Trustees: Margaret Simpson (Chair), Lesley Court, Bridget Doole, Michelle Lawfull, Guy Lawfull, Di Shaw, Mandy Tree, Peter West, Mandy Wood

Volunteers and guests: Anne Ambler, Ray Anson, Kelly Flaherty, Rosemary Shurgold; Nigel James, Witney TN; Yvonne and Terry Crane/Nicola Pamphilon - Guide Dogs

1. **Apologies for absence**: Hilary Beaton; Margaret Brinkhurst; Stewart Jeffrey; Patrick & Dione Lawrence; Janet Proudman; Jill Saint; Diane Sider; Annabel Fleming (Museum of Oxford); Kate Laybourne and the Sensory Impairment Team

2. **Disclosure of Interests**

Margaret Simpson – Trustee of MyVision Oxfordshire

Guy Lawfull – Chair of MyVision Oxfordshire

Kelly Flaherty - Oxfordshire County Council

3. The **Minutes** of the Annual General Meeting held on 29 October 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. **Matters Arising**: There were no matters arising.

5. **Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts**

The Statement of Accounts is attached to the Minute Book, along with an audited copy. The accounts had been audited by L K Pearce, Treasurer of Headington U3A.

The year end balance was £5,560.09. Expenditure of £600.12 included £235 for leaflets and printing.

Income included large donations from ASDA, £18 from Amazon Smile and a rebate from Verlingue re insurance at Bradbury Lodge. The reduced sum re TNF was the result of two payments in the previous year. Gift Aid had been claimed for two years and would show in the following year's accounts.

The Treasurer's Report was accepted and he was thanked for his hard work.

6. **Chair's Report**

The full report is attached to the Minute Book.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported that there were currently 38 volunteers, with the possibility of three more who had expressed interest at the Older People's Day. Two more would rejoin if Oxtalk returned to Bradbury Lodge.

A weekly edition had been provided for 49 of the 52 weeks of the year and the postal system had improved. The Chair acknowledged the load on Guy and Michelle Lawfull, who were involved in production of Oxtalk every week.

Oxtalk had been involved in producing an audio guide to assist people moving about the area of the railway station during the closure of the railway bridge. Some visually impaired people had walked the routes to check they could navigate the diversions and cope with street furniture, camber of pavements, etc. Oxtalk volunteers had produced the first audio guide, which was now on Network Rail's website.

Volunteers had assisted with the Headington Festival and the Pooh Sticks Day at Sandford Lock. There was to be a further collection at ASDA on 9 December and involvement in the 2024 Pooh Sticks Day alongside MyVision.

The Chair invited volunteers to consider becoming co-opted Trustees for up to a year, with no commitment to continue. Finally she thanked all current volunteers for their input, with particular thanks to the Trustees.

Guy Lawfull asked for an update about how to source affordable new players. Various suggestions were made by Nigel James, Nicola Pamphilon and Kelly Flaherty, and further discussion showed that there was a large gap in the market. More investigations would be made.

## **7. Report from Listeners' Co-ordinator**

Mandy Tree reported that there were now 75 listeners, this lower number being mostly the result of improved technology. There had been 10 referrals since the previous meeting.

MS had contacted BBC Oxford to see if Oxtalk to offer ongoing support for the retention of Radio Oxford so that local people, and VI listeners in particular, would have access to local news. GL had submitted a short item to be included in the MyVision newsletter and also onto their social media pages. Nathan Tree at MyVision recommends iphones.

## **8. Report from Copier**

Michelle Lawfull had sent out just 57 USBs in the preceding week, though anticipated that some pouches were en route from MyVision; it was possible that some of the labels were wearing out. It seemed older people often had problems with both the zippered pouches and those with velcro.

#### **9. Election of Trustees**

The Chair handed over the proceedings to Rosemary Shurgold for this item. The following were all re-elected unopposed, Ray Anson being the proposer and Anne Ambler the seconder:

Chair: Margaret Simpson; Treasurer: Peter West; Secretary: Lesley Court

Non-Officer Trustees: Hilary Beaton, Margaret Brinkhurst, Bridget Doole, Michelle Lawfull, Guy Lawfull, Di Shaw, Mandy Tree, Mandy Wood

#### **10. Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

**10. Date of next AGM:** This would be notified in due course.

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#### **Guest Speakers from Guide Dogs -**

##### **Yvonne and Terry Crane, Nicola Pamphilon (with Velvet and Flo)**

Yvonne spoke of their eight years' rewarding experience of being puppy raisers from eight weeks to 12 months, teaching them to be familiar with all situations. At 11 months the dogs are checked with a view to going into the breeding programme: in all their dog Velvet has had four litters, the maximum allowed, producing 30 puppies – 25 of which have gone on to be guide dogs. Five of the puppies did not qualify to be guide dogs but one, who sniffed a lot, went on to be a medical detection dog. Dogs selected to be guide dogs are then trained at the national centre in Leamington Spa for 20 weeks.

Yvonne and Terry decided to keep one of Velvet's puppies, Flo, who is totally funded by Guide Dogs.

Nicola is completely blind and can only see light and dark. She outlined her visual problems from the age of five; she was able to start a biomedical sciences degree but ended up not being able to see down a microscope. She then became a nursery teacher but had to give that up.

When she went to college in Hereford she was shown how to use a computer and set up her own business. She learnt how to use a white cane but after various falls she turned to guide dogs. There is usually a lengthy wait for one but she was fortunate that her wait was only nine months and after training she learnt to abandon the white cane and trust her dog. Kimber loved going on buses and knew all Nicola's routes; when he had to be retired she and her husband were able to keep Kimber but sadly the dog passed away a short time ago. There is no possibility of having a replacement dog but she has a PA for nine hours a week to help her.

Guide dogs cost £58,000 and recipients are not asked to pay as all funds come from public donations.

Terry showed those interested the various simulation glasses demonstrating different eye conditions, and there was the opportunity to purchase Guide Dogs items.