

Chair of Oxtalk's Report for the AGM 2024

Good afternoon.

Don't AGM's come round with great regularity? An obvious statement but true. Even this AGM is followed by an afternoon tea, rather like the other annual regular occasion in our lives, our birthdays!!

I would like to start at the end of this meeting by thanking Mandy Wood & Di Shaw for organising & preparing the afternoon tea as well as thanks to others for their contributions which we are going to enjoy.

We are celebrating a birthday as such, as Oxtalk has been the information support service for many people, some who have had a visual impairment for 45 years. One of the first group of listeners to receive Oxtalk was Joyce Keen. Joyce received Oxtalk until her death at over a 100, as her daughter Heather said to me recently. Oxtalk was Joyce's connection with the outside Oxford world. Joyce was one of the listeners in the group of Risinghurst ladies. Heather contacted me because Joyce used a fairly new audio player & Heather wondered whether we could use a 2nd hand audio player? We can, we will pass it on to a new listener who does not have a player.

But more about Oxtalk 45 years ago later on in the meeting.

Obviously listener numbers are reducing year on year for all TNs, no matter where they are located & there will come a time when no doubt TNs will have to consider area amalgamation for service efficiency & best use of volunteers. But that is not something Oxtalk needs to give immediate consideration to, as Guy will let us know shortly, but nevertheless the Oxtalk Trustees need to be aware.

This year has been overall a steady year. There have been a few highs & lows. It wouldn't be normal if there were not 1 or 2 lows and highs. The main lows are when I am struggling to compile the Reader rota for the 6 weekly recording rota. But during the year we have welcomed new Readers & at the recent Oxford UN Older People's Day one or two people were interested in volunteering & I need to follow up on their interests. At the start of 2024 Chad, who had been a TO, for many years, occasionally a Reader & the composer of Oxtalk's intro & closure music resigned. This left Oxtalk with just 3 TOs. 3 TOs who were very prepared to carry on compiling Oxtalk once every 3 weeks. A heavy commitment on their part but without which it does have to be said we would not have been able to continue. My very grateful thanks to Simon Garrood, David

Field & Guy Lawfull, for offering this level of commitment. We did not know just how long this would go on for.

Because I am involved with Ox Brookes Business School students who provide digital one to one training to older people I wondered if there was any possibility in another of Ox Brookes' faculty's, having students who might be interested in using their expertise in helping others? So I contacted Tutors I knew in the Audio - Film -Music - Social Media world of Brookes. We met in April & I explained what skills I was looking for from the students who might be prepared to volunteer their time & expertise. Within weeks a few of us met with 2 students, it was going to be 3, to explain how Oxtalk works. If you think about it, how would you set about explaining Oxtalk the TN, that is the easy part & how it works!! The complex part!! Those 3 students were, Brigeth & Jake, who are with us today & Ros, Rosnan, whom I had a phone conversation with & has now completed his studies & is living in London. All 3 are now TOs & for the foreseeable future there will be a 6-weekly rota. Thank you to Brigeth, Jake & Rosnan. Because Oxtalk does not have a regular recording base this is a disadvantage for some volunteers but working online is not a problem for all the current TOs & Readers with Smartphones. When Jake, Brigeth & Ros are no longer able to volunteer for Oxtalk I hope volunteering for Oxtalk by Brookes students will be an accepted norm & future Ox Brookes students will be interested in replacing them. Thank you for starting the partnership with Oxtalk.

Contact is maintained with the other County TNs. I met with Brian Stewart the new Chair of DAWN & I am pleased Nigel James, Chair of Witney TN accepted the invitation to join this meeting.

My thanks to all the volunteers who contribute to the ongoing production of Oxtalk in their various ways. Without the volunteers Oxtalk listeners, the people who benefit from the service, would become more lonely & isolated. I do hope everyone realises how important this service is to the reducing number of listeners, mainly visually impaired older people not familiar with the digital world.

Also important are the volunteers who are the elected Oxtalk Trustees, helping me and overseeing that I manage this charity Oxtalk legally and responsibly. I sent out invitations to the listeners via Oxtalk editions for them to consider being the Listener Representative following Margaret Brinkhurst's death earlier in the year. As yet no listener has made any enquiries. HB, Webmaster, has not been able to attend this meeting nor

ML, Copier, but all other Trustees are attending this AGM and are available for you to talk to, LC Secretary; PW the Treasurer; MT Listener Coordinator; GL link for the master USB and copying and MW, DS and BD. Thank you to you all for your continuing support

– oh yes and there is a funding date for your diary and Father Xmas hat on Saturday 7th December at ASDA at Wheatley!!! I will be in touch!!

Thank you.

Margaret A Simpson MBE

Chair of Oxtalk

10th October 2024