

General Meeting No 40/2 – 24 February 2011 Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action, Board Room

Present: Mr Bob Pennell *Chair*, Mr Allan Emmett *Vice-chair*, Mrs Eve Marshall *trustee*, Mrs Janet Thomas *trustee*, Cllr Mrs Adrienne Jones *BTC*, Cllr Cliff Thompson *BFBC*, Mrs Cheryl Spence, Mrs Chris Cowap

Apologies: Mrs Clair Harris, Mr John Tobin *Treasurer*, Revd Jane Manley *trustee*, Mrs Diane Goodchild *trustee*,

1 Opening remarks

Bob thanked the members present for their participation. Since the last meeting the trustees had met on December 21st and February 10th. In December they had appointed Mr John Tobin to fill the casual vacancy of treasurer. Mrs Janet Thomas was nominated to represent voluntary workers and Rvd Jane Manley was nominated to represent users of the day care facilities. Cllr Mrs Roberta Kaye, who was elected trustee on December 9th has since resigned without attending any meetings.

We do now have a strong team of seven trustees and the Executive Committee has the power to fill the vacancy created by Roberta and to co-opt two further trustees.

Mrs Sarah Frenett has resigned her position as CEO and left us on February 17th. Overall the trustees regard this as a positive opportunity to review the day to day management of the charity's affairs. There is no immediate impact on operations because trustees are directly involved on a daily basis, but some external liaisons may be affected. It was not clear exactly which bodies - such as elderly person's forum, over 50s forum, stroke network - Sarah had actively liaised with.

ACTION Cliff undertook to check his diary and advise on meetings relevant to ACBF.

At this time we are also in the throes of negotiating what grants will be available from BFBC and the NHS before making plans for the year ahead. Because of these events, this meeting would be a relatively short discussion of progress.

2 Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of General Meeting 40/2 of December 12th were approved.

Allan commented that important issues discussed under item 7 were still relevant and ongoing. In particular

- Participation in forums including Bracknell Forest Older People's Partnership
- Relationship to Age UK

3 Finance and progress report

The new treasurer John Tobin was unable to attend because of a traffic incident. Having audited income and expenditure to January 1st and found it to be in surplus, he is cautiously optimistic about the year end position. Sarah's departure and the recent increase in Day Centre fees will also have a positive affect during March. Refurbishment of bathrooms, toilets and flooring are urgent but have been deferred until we are quite sure of the financial position.

Bob and Allan met with representatives of BFBC and NHS on February 11th to discuss issues, objectives and possible grants for next year. We are anxiously awaiting feedback which was promised to be before March 11th. One issue that needs to be addressed is that ACBF reserves will only support one month of operation (i.e. long enough to close down) and if funding for the following year is an unknown until March that makes planning almost impossible. Chris said that is the situation for all charities but Cliff saw that ACBF is a special case because of the ongoing commitment to Day Care clients.

The charity had experienced increasing financial difficulties over recent years as a result of providing Day Care at less than the net cost, and that level of subsidy could not be maintained. Since January 1st, new placements are no longer subsidised from charity funds and the fee charged is £17 per day. In effect, the fee for existing placements has been increased to £12. Clients have understood the need to increase fees and this does not appear to have caused any stress or hardship. Bob felt this was a very significant step towards managing the transition to personal budgets.

Coincidentally, there was an abnormally high reduction in clients for natural reasons during November, December and ACBF is now seeking more referrals.

Cliff had received the impression that the council had expanded and refurbished Heathlands to cater for dementia clients and they assumed that Age Concern could take less dependent clients. Bob said that discussions on this subject are ongoing but it was the case that Heathlands will take the more severe cases and ACBF will target those who can gain most from the therapeutic social activities that we provide. He had estimated that there were 600 dementia sufferers in our catchment and this number is growing.

4 Forthcoming events

Open morning will be held at Coopers Hill on April 6th. Via Chris, Bob invited BFVA to have a stand representing their home help and care services for the elderly. A volunteer to help with refreshments would also be appreciated.

Eve offered that she was also willing to assist with refreshments.

Adrienne suggested that the press should be invited.

The annual Spring Walk will take place on May 15th. Diane Goodchild is leading on this and has some exciting new ideas but details are not being released until we have made necessary changes to the Age Concern website.

Janet had arranged a series of summer outings and distributed leaflets to the meeting. The trips are:

- May 11th Tour of the New Forest
- June 14th Bluebell Railway
- July 13th Chichester Market and Bognor
- Aug 18th Horse Drawn Barge Trip
- Sep 15th Visit to Chartwell
- Oct 19th Tour of the Olympic Site

These will all be published on the web site. The Olympic trip is already very popular.

5 AOB

Eve was still very concerned that Age UK national promotions were encroaching on the local area and confusing the public. Cheryl suggested that the open morning is one opportunity to educate the public. Cliff asked if national collections paid any commission to local friends. The issue for ACBF to resolve is whether to become a “friend” or break away. Berkshire had become a branded partner and E Berk had gone independent. What had others such as Wokingham done? **ACTION** Bob to investigate.

Janet asked if BFVA could introduce volunteers or “friends” for ACBF. Chris said yes this is always possible but a description of the role is needed.

Cheryl said that another possible source of “volunteers” are work placements from Bracknell and Wokingham College to encourage people into the care sector.

Cliff felt that DisabledGo, which had been launched on February 7th may be relevant to the open morning. Abby Thomas can provide literature.

Cheryl had news of a dementia conference on March 29th relevant to day care managers.

Chris announced that, also on March 29, BFVA were arranging a personalisation/funding and commissioning event that should be very useful for ACBF and other charities.

Cliff asked if ACBF attends the Ascot Golden Age retirement fair in August. Janet replied that it usually does.

6 Future Meetings

The next meeting will be held on May 26th starting at 12:30
(Please note that previous minutes had quoted the date incorrectly).

The AGM will be held on July 21st starting at 12:30