

BMSTC AGM 20th June 2024
Held at the Centre

Present

Neil Dawkins (Chair)
David Coe (Treasurer)
Ashley Harrison (Secretary)
Sue Brown
Daniela Hanuskova
Ros Hatt
Gregg Burgess Salisbury
Penny Tillson
Paul Shambrook



and Members as per personal attendance list

Apologies

Nick Webb
Imogen Fletcher

In Attendance

Pippa Vincent-Cook Centre Manager

Introduction by Ashley Harrison

Ashley welcomed everyone to the AGM. He introduced himself as the new Secretary and stated that he would run the formal business parts of the meeting. He then introduced Neil Dawkins the Chairman to say hello. Due to a communication error from Ashley, Neil then began his Chairman's report in divergence from the agenda.

1. Chairman's report – Neil Dawkins

Good afternoon and welcome to the 2024 BMSTC AGM. It's lovely to see everyone and thanks for attending today.

For those of you who haven't met me I'm Neil Dawkins and I've been a trustee since 2019 and Chairman for the last year and I'm going to be delivering a brief report to you today.

2023 was another very positive year for the Centre with lots of activity and provision of a record amount of treatments.

One of the many highlights was the roll out of our new website which includes some very professional exercise videos which are free to view and cover exercises for balance, seated exercise, stretching and others. Please take a look if you haven't already.

Another highlight was the Winter Ball which was really well attended and it was nice to see so many people having a good time. A similar function is going ahead in November so please try to support it.

During the year we finalised our strategy and identified five deliverables over the next few years, the most pressing of which was to replace our outdated and bespoke Customer Relationship Management System or CRM. For years we have used Donor Strategy but plan to replace it with a new off the shelf package called Beacon. Beacon should make the process of storing data and treatment records easier and provide some interfaces we have had manual workarounds before.

Penny Tillson has been leading a sub- committee on this and will continue to provide direction and clarity until we are fully operational.

Our other objectives include plans to provide more emotional wellbeing and peer support to our members and their families, and also to extend awareness of the Centre in the local area

The Trustee board has continued to meet monthly to provide guidance and structure on the pertinent issues and challenges the Centre has faced. After last year's member changes the Board has been stable and late last year we were pleased to welcome Ashley Harrison to the post of Company Secretary and he brings some much needed legal expertise to the group. I would like to thank all my fellow trustees for their continued commitment and dedication.

David Coe, our Treasurer, will run you through the accounts for 2023 shortly and you'll hear it was a good year financially in challenging circumstances. I'd like to thank all our members and numerous donors and fundraisers without whose generosity we wouldn't be able to keep the Centre running.

Sam and her fundraising team have done a great job again and are now properly resourced so can really focus on bringing funds in, especially important as our ongoing expenses continue to rise this year. What we have seen which makes this job more difficult is that ironically during Covid charitable donations were much easier to source than they are now and every month it's a battle to keep income up with the level of costs we incur. Please keep your support coming, both personally and financially so the Centre can continue to thrive.

David is standing down as Treasurer after holding the post for years so this is his last AGM, and I'd like to thank him for the professional job he has performed in often difficult circumstances. It leaves a big hole to fill so if you know of anyone who could volunteer as our Treasurer please come and see me or Pippa.

Just a couple more thanks to go.

Firstly to our many volunteers who generously give their time whether it be running oxygen therapy, manning bucket collections or providing a welcome at the front desk – your help is invaluable and much appreciated. I want to thank Pippa for her excellent running of the Centre day in day out and also to thank Anwen's wonderful team of physios who always manage to brighten everyone's day.

And finally please stick around for the 40th birthday celebrations which follow, and please keep an eye on all the Centre's news communications (blog, newsletter, TV screen in reception) as there is always a lot going on. Thanks for your time today and I'll now hand you over to Ashley for the formal bits of the AGM

Just as Neil was finishing his report a member Val Gouby raised her hand to state that we were not following the agenda. Ashley stated that he was aware of this but did not wish to interrupt Neil as he had begun his speech. Ashley apologised for the error on his part.

2. Minutes of last AGM Ashley Harrison

Ashley Harrison reported that the last AGM had been held on 15th June 2023 by Zoom and minutes had been presented to members.

Any matters arising were invited. Val Gouby raised the issue that it had been discussed at the last AGM that it would be useful to try to arrange for a speaker to attend the AGM to attract more members to attend. Josh Wilson the Chaplain from the Royal Berkshire Hospital stated that he would be happy to try to arrange for a specialist from the Neurology Department to speak at next year's meeting.

Another member also pointed out to Ashley that some members had attended the Centre for the meeting which he accepted.

It was proposed to adopt the minutes as a true record. Proposed by Ashley Harrison and seconded by Neil Dawkins. Vote taken by show of hands - The minutes were adopted unanimously with none against and no abstentions.

3. Accounts and Directors Report

David Coe (DC) gave a resume of the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023. The Trustees had approved the 2023 Accounts.

The annual report and accounts 2023 shows the financial results for the year 2023.

These have been independently reviewed by Crowe, the independent accountants. They have no matters to bring to your attention.

The full report comprises 30 pages and is available online. The page showing the **summary of the Income and Expenditure for year 2023** has been made available.

In 2023 the total income was £588k (2022 £501k) and expenditure was £648k (2022 £510k) – **expenditure exceeded income by £60k** (2022 £8.5k).

This includes depreciation of £62k (2022 £67k) – in respect of previous capital expenditure (it's an allocation to each year of the cost of the building and equipment in use at the Centre during the year).

The major feature impacting the four years 2020-2023 was the completely unexpected Covid pandemic in 2020 and on into 2021. In-person activities at the Centre were not possible, fundraising activities were cancelled or postponed, public collections were not possible. Much of the established fundraising methods were disrupted.

(1) Fortunately:

The regular donations from members and supporters – from individuals – continued through this period - representing some 25% of funds raised each year; in 2019 the charity secured a £343k grant from the National Lottery – which was received in half-yearly instalments through to 2023;

We were able to benefit from funding made available to charities to help them through the pandemic and the subsequent recovery period. Between 2020 and 2023 we received funding from the Charities Aid Foundation Resilience Fund, Reading BC Covid fund and The Good Exchange totalling £328k.

As you will know, the charity is wholly dependent on fundraising, grants, donations, and volunteers.

Our aim is to maintain our fund balance (mainly bank and deposits) at between 6 month and 12 months running costs. This is a challenge. At the end of 2023 the free fund balance stood at 4.6 months annual running costs.

As stated in the annual report, there is a need to generate increased financial support: to meet current needs and to achieve sustainability over the longer term.

In summary, we started 2023 with cash (plus sums owed to us and less sums we owed suppliers, taxman etc) of £340k. At the end of the year that balance was £342k.

Going forward into 2024, our income budget is £575k and our spending budget is £651k, with a projected cash shortfall in 2023 of £75k.

Our staff costs (including professionals) in 2023 were £399k. The budget for 2024 is £476k – an increase of £77k. Our staff numbers since April 2022 have increased from 8 to 14.

I'm happy to respond to any questions and invite the meeting to confirm adoption of the 2023 annual report.

David Coe announced that it was his intention to stand down as Treasurer but he was happy to continue until a suitable replacement is found. There was a question from a member as to what skills the new Treasurer would need. David stated that it would be essential for them to have considerable accounting experience.

Ashley thanked David for all of his hard work and he was given a round of applause.

There was a general discussion concerning collections and the use of card readers, which are available.

There were no further questions re the accounts.

A vote to approve the accounts and report was proposed by Ashley Harrison and seconded by Neil Dawkins. The vote was taken by show of hands to approve the accounts and unanimously passed.

4. Appointment of Auditors

The existing auditors Crowe are willing to continue as independent examiners and were proposed and seconded for that role. Reappointment was proposed by Ashley Harrison and seconded by Neil Dawkins. A vote was taken by show of hands and unanimously passed with none against and no abstentions.

5. Directors/Trustees

Ashley Harrison explained that as a result of the hard work by Mark Farnell the previous Secretary in amending the Articles of Association that we adopted at the 2020 AGM we do not need to re-elect trustees and we can co-opt new trustees but it would be good to put this to members as a matter of form. It was proposed to re-elect all the current trustees. Ashley Harrison read out the list of the current Trustees registered with the Charity Commission. –

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Proposed by Ashley Harrison and seconded by Neil Dawkins. A vote was taken by show of hands and unanimously passed with none against and no abstentions.

6. Any Other Business

There being no further questions or business the meeting was closed.