

Minutes of Director's Meeting held at
11:00 – 9th April 2014
Waterhouse Business Centre, Chelmsford

Present

John Reid, Chairman, **JR**
Stuart Holt, Vice Chairman, User Group (South), **SH**
Christine Mitchell, User Group, (North) **CM**
Roy Haycock, Treasurer, **RH**
Pat Fitzpatrick, Board Secretary, **PF**
Roger Phillips **RP**

LA Office Staff

Dave White, Chief Executive Officer, **DW**
Carly Duffett, Fund Raiser, **CD**

Apologies

Gareth Jones, **GJ** (Wales)
Dennis Small, **DS** (Northern Ireland)
Karen Stannard **KS**

2. Approval of Minutes from Board Meeting 22nd January 2014

SH proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd January should be accepted. This proposal was seconded by **RH** and unanimously agreed by all present.

3. Matters Arising

SH asked if there had been any further information regarding the Peggy and Friends fund. **DW** said that he had contacted the solicitor who had been dealing with the matter and asked him for further clarification of the terms of the donation. In particular if it would be agreeable for the money to be used to provide electronic games for use by children whilst they were being treated at DSC's; **DW** was awaiting a response.

JR explained the background of the Peggy and Friends fund for the benefit of **RP**. **JR** had spoken to a representative of REACH about the devices who had said that care would need to be taken to ensure that the devices could be used by all children at the centres.

RP mentioned that if he sees someone parked illegally in a disabled bay for a long period of time he takes a picture of the car when he first sees it and then again at a later time so that he has a 'before and after' time stamp on the picture and posts these off to the relevant authority.

SH says that he gives details to his local authority.

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CM mentioned that she had seen a picture from Lisbon where disabled activists had parked wheelchairs in non-disabled spaces with a written excuse e.g. 'I'll only be a minute'.

CM commented that in the current edition of StepForward the article that she had submitted was printed incorrectly. **DW** said that an apology would be put into the next edition of the magazine.

PF asked if we could be more pro-active in getting User Groups to communicate in the magazine. **DW** explained that he had emailed all the User Group Chairs to let them know that they could put articles in the magazine and in addition each group could have their own individual page on the LA website. **DW** also said that the user groups could have their minutes published on the website. **DW** confirmed that he would check that details for the User Groups were all up-to-date before the next edition of StepForward.

RH mentioned that the Manchester User Group had been involved in the start of the Manchester Amputee Fitness Initiative (MANFIT). Other User Groups may benefit from a similar set-up.

RP spoke of his experience in trying to obtain a well fitting limb and the benefit that a User Group might have been had he been aware that they existed.

RH mentioned that the role of the User Groups could be very helpful with the changes in benefits that are affecting many disabled people.

SH said that his User Group were putting together a leaflet of hints and tips which they hoped would be of use to new amputees.

PF said that at the recent meeting of the Joint Committee on Mobility for Disabled People it had been mentioned that the National Audit Office had recently published a report 'Personal Independence Payments: Early Progress' on their website regarding the introduction of PIP; the executive summary of the report is well worth reading.

RH suggested that if we don't get a response from Monitor, the sector regulator for health services in England, about the PIP issues that we arrange a deputation to the minister to express our disquiet. We could also write letters to our MP's and try to press for changes to the current way that the benefit is being implemented. He felt that the voice of the disabled had simply not been heard over the benefit changes. **CM** queried what could be achieved by this approach as PIP has been introduced and cannot now be rolled back.

DW stated that the job vacancy for the Benefits Advisor had not been progressed due to the resignation of **CD** and the necessity to advertise the Fundraiser post. He confirmed that candidates for the Fundraiser post were being interviewed the following week i.e. week commencing 14th April 2014. Three people were coming

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into the office for interview on 15TH April 2014; all the interviewees had the relevant experience and qualifications. The interviews were being conducted by **JR**, **CD** and **DW**.

CM wondered if one possibility for offering benefits advice was to hire an advisor via another group.

DW said the Disability Rights group were trying to set up information lines, staffed by part time individuals with very little experience who referred to a copy of the Disability Rights Handbook and gave out information. To join this system would cost the LA £15,000 per year despite the fact that we would have no control over the information given and they would be unable to offer any practical help or attend Tribunals. **DW** said that he preferred the idea of having a member of staff in the office and when queries arose being able to direct the enquirer towards a local contact point. He felt we could give the enquirer a more personal service. He also felt it was advisable to build up knowledge in the office to enable staff to deal with queries.

RP wondered if the salary we were proposing to offer was enough to get a fully qualified Benefits Advisor.

As the CAB would be losing a number of advisors it was agreed we advertise for a Benefits Advisor.

CM asked about the latest position with the AGM and User Group Conference.

DW said that unfortunately Thompsons could not now be involved until early next year. After a lengthy discussion it was decided to hold the AGM in October/November 2013 and hold the User Group Conference early next year. The conference would be sponsored by Thompsons and would include a series of speakers and perhaps exhibitors. Several locations for the venues were discussed and it was decided that somewhere in central England was the most accessible e.g. in the area around Birmingham including Birmingham itself, Leamington Spa, Stratford-on-Avon or Warwick.

CM mentioned that she had previously had correspondence with Richard Morrison (**RM**) over a theme for the User Group Conference on the subject of '**where are we now/radical changes to the benefit system**'. **RM** had put together a list of speakers covering these issues.

CM agreed with **RP**'s comment that people come to disability groups e.g. MAAF initially with a concern and once this is addressed and they have the help they needed they leave the group. However they can always come back if they need more help in the future.

CM sees the LA as a hub where people come for information.

RP mentioned that at the Nuffield, Oxford he only saw one small notice for the LA. He suggested that we make sure our advertisement is put up in all DSC's.

DW said that he was trying to work out how to get leaflets and posters into all DSC's.

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RP made the point that the amount of members you have does make a difference to the amount of influence you are able to wield.

Action – DW to keep in contact with Peggy and Friends solicitor.

Action – DW to ensure apology appears in next edition of StepForward following an incorrectly printed article in current magazine.

Action – DW to check User Groups details before the next edition of StepForward.

Action – JR, CD and DW to conduct interviews for the Fundraiser position.

Action – Office staff to look into arranging the AGM during October/November, possible location to be in the centre of UK around Birmingham.

Action – DW to try to ensure that the LA is represented in all DSC's.

4 Chairman's Report

The chairman's report had been printed in the edition of StepForward which had just been published.

In addition **JR**, in his role as patient representative, had attended the NHS Expo in Manchester. He was disappointed to find that no one person running any stall appeared to know anything about the LA. and he felt it would have been worthwhile to have a stall but they were very expensive. While at the Expo he took part in a debate about the NHS Constitution attended a meeting in Manchester on the 'A3 - step change for commissioned services'. The responses from the meeting were taken back by NHS England.

5. Treasurer's Report

RH explained that he had a meeting prior to the last Trustee meeting with **DW**, Martin Nsiah (**MN**) and **CD**. From April 2014 **MN** will provide a full monthly report to **RH** which he will present at the next Trustee meeting.

JR mentioned that he had been claiming expenses from the LA for the NHS England meetings he has attended. He has recently found out that NHS England will pay expenses, he has put in a claim with them for past expenses and will repay the association once he receives the money.

Action – JR to repay expenses money to the LA once he has received his back claim from NHS England.

6. User Groups Report

CM stated that the 'limb' Christmas Tree has been put away. It has been suggested that it be put on show at local churches.

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'Healthwatch', the national consumer champion in health and care, is coming to the next MAAF meeting.

CM would like to put an article into the next Stepforward about the Nottingham Group which she recently visited.

CM reported that the Derby Group was in a state of flux due to the move to the new hospital although some posts were still at the old hospital. The group is not very large and some of the members have been ill over the winter.

The Sheffield group has come to a standstill at the moment as DSC managers have been moved round.

Norwich have a new user group, the Walkden Crafters; the group is linked to United Amputees.

CM said her group were going to Creswell Crags, Debyshire.

SH said that after the Bank Holiday he was going to see Bryan King at Gillingham, to have a trip round the centre and to attend a user group meeting.

He has been in contact with Portsmouth and will attend a user group meeting once dates are sorted.

RM's daughter is doing a thesis on prosthetics & amputees and has requested a meeting with **SH**.

SH mentioned that the Brighton DSC are putting a display up on one wall of the centre with a Patrons board on it. This will cost suppliers £250 per year to have their details on it. **SH** suggested that the LA is put down as the first entry on the board.

He feels that as it will be in a prominent position it will make the LA name more known.

CM proposed that the LA pay for the entry out of the advertising budget. **RP** seconded the proposal and the proposal was unanimously agreed.

SH said that his user group had arranged a visit in August to a WWI exhibition at Brighton and Hove Museum. Future events include a children's Halloween party and a Christmas meal.

CM mentioned that Lloyds Bank has just introduce two new funding schemes called 'Invest & Enable' focusing on reaching young people and adults facing multiple disadvantage at key stages in their lives:

- **Invest** – providing long term funding of core costs and delivery for charities for up to £25,000 per year for up to three years, with the opportunity for continuation funding for a further period of up to six years.
- **Enable** – providing funding for smaller, shorter grants for charities with a clear development need. Grants up to a total of £15,000 are awarded for a maximum of two years.

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Partnership funding is currently the preferred method of funding and **CD** is currently looking at funding opportunities with Waitrose.

Board Secretary Report

PF had previously issued a board secretary report which showed that she had attended the following meetings:

- Together with Dave White and Richard Morrison, attended a meeting on 21st January 2014 with Ten Alps plc, the publishers of the StepForward magazine.
- Took part in a telephone conference on Quality of Life of Established Amputees (QLEA) Phase 2 Research Project on 26th February 2014.
- Attended the Joint Committee on Mobility for Disabled People meeting on 13th March 2014.

7. Business Plan

The Business Plan is an evolving document. **RH** said he was unable to confirm what funding was available for the various projects until he has the full budget details.

8. StepForward

The latest edition of Stepforward was printed under the new format, initial reactions was that the magazine had been well received.

SH mentioned that he had been asked to be one of the judges for the Sue Eckstein Award.

9. Office Report

DW had previously issued the January and February office reports to Trustees as well as a report on the monthly staff meeting. He was waiting for further information to enable him to complete the March reports.

DW said that the staff had requested that the allowance for travelling by car be increased from 40p to 45p per mile. **SH** proposed that an increase in the millage allowance from 40p to 45p from today, 9th April 2014. The proposal was seconded by **RH** and agreed unanimously.

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10. AOB

DW reported that the firm who supported the LA website had closed. One aspect of this was that if the website went down, with no-one supporting it, we would not be able to get the website back running again.

DW gave the trustees a list of 4 possible providers for updating and hosting the website. He suggested that Heybridge Creative seemed the most suitable for our needs.

Before entering into a contract **RP** advised that we find out:

- Where are the servers hosted?
- Where are the back-up servers hosted?
- Do they have a back-up power supply?
- Will the website be hosted on 1 server or will it be on a shared server? One step up from a shared server would be for the site to be hosted on a separate partition.

Has the company given the LA charity discount? **DW** said that the company would get a tax discount. He also noted that the company was situated locally.

The Trustees agreed to approach Heybridge Creative with a view to them running and hosting the website.

CD joined the meeting at 15:25. The Trustees wanted to speak to her before she resigned.

CD mentioned that we had 3 strong applicants for the Fundraiser position; they all were experienced in running events. She felt that they may possibly need training in obtaining trusts and grants as it is important for the association that this aspect of the work was followed through. One person had experience of organising corporate events. **CD** felt it was important to keep up the relationship with Kiera Roche and LimbPower. Kiera pays a PR person about £200 a month, who ensures that LimbPower get publicity at least 3 or 4 times a month.

CD thinks that the LA message is not clear or well publicised. She believes that the LA is still not project focussed enough. For example is Sport+ giving us benefit for the money it costs; LimbPower is doing what we would like to do. She wonders if it would be worth us going into partnership with Kiera. Perhaps we should go back to basics and really work out what we need to do.

CM suggests that we need to have a strategy meeting to work out what our aims and objectives are.

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CD suggested that it might be an idea to change the name of the Association, this was a point that she had mentioned in her job interview. She gave a couple of examples of successful name changes e.g. the Cot Death Trust is now the Lullaby Trust; Wheelchair for Kids is now called Whizz Kidz. A name change could be a long term aim once the charity is better known.

RP said that apart from Douglas Bader the limb loss community do not have a well known character that we could base the name on.

CD mentioned the very good work that Linsey had been doing had not been progressed. **DW** said that we hope to get a Benefits Advisor in post that would carry on Linsey's work.

PF asked **CD** if she had any news about the DJ Matt Howes, who is an ambassador for the LA. **CD** said that Matt was very busy at the moment but was hoping to create awareness of the charity. **CD** was hoping to get another ambassador to promote the LA, Ollie Pick and have a project where each of them follow the other for a day.

SH left the meeting at 16:00.

CD mentioned that charity funding has changed, lots of small charities were traditionally funded by local councils but now councils no longer have the money to support many charities. She pointed out that even more charities are looking at funding from the one big pot.

The Trustees thanked **CD** for her work in the time that she had been with us and wished her all the best in the future.

CD left the meeting at 16:10.

RH announced that **RP** had agreed to shadow him as treasurer and asked that **DW** and **MN** pass accounting information to **RP** as well as to himself.

Action – DW to check the details suggested by **RP**.

The meeting ended at 16:15