The Carers’ Centre

DRAFT Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on

Thursday 23November 2022, 7:00pm – 7.30pm

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| Item | Description | Who |
| 1 | **Welcome, apologies.**  In attendance:  Frank Mowat, Ken Littlewood, Christine Bone, Barry Hulme,  Paul Richards, Joanna Hole, Jenny Thead,  Jacqui Orchard  **Apologies :** Katie Burfitt.  Good evening, and welcome to our 27th Annual General Meeting. I am Frank Mowat, Chair of The Carers’ Centre.  Thank you for joining us this year.  This evening is our opportunity, as Trustees, to explain how we manage The Carers’ Centre for the benefit of carers and for any Members who have joined us to ask questions. In addition, we will vote on various business items.  We also want to tell you a little about our activity over the past year or so.  If you would like to ask a question or make a comment as we go through the meeting, you can raise your hand.  For voting, I will invite Members to propose and second business items. To do this you can raise your hand.  So, let us begin. | FM |
| 2 | **Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**  Proposed: **Paul Richards**  Second: **Barry Hulme**  **All** approved the minutes. | FM |
| 3 | **Chair’s Report**  The UK economy remained in difficulty in 2022 and 2023 due to the country still being in recovery following the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis which led to a sharp rise in fuel, heating, and food costs for all as well as rising interest rates/borrowing costs. Consequently, it`s been another difficult year for UK unpaid carers. Add to this, the NHS continues to be significantly under pressure to discharge patients to be cared for at home and many care homes are struggling to recruit.  A report published in November 2022 (by Petrillo and Bennett of the Centre for Care) stated that in the UK, unpaid carers are now growing at a rate of 12,000 per day. Carers UK estimates that there are now over 13 million unpaid carers in the UK and that the main challenges that they face are:   * managing stress and responsibility. * negative impacts on their physical and mental health. * not being able to take time away from caring and managing their finances and the cost of living.   As the need for unpaid carers grows, the need for organisations such as The Carers’ Centre also grows to help identify, support, connect, inform, and provide advice to carers. We exist to be here for friends and families helping their loved ones get the best out of life. Here at The Carers’ Centre our new CEO Jacqui Orchard, completed her first year and the Board of Trustees are very pleased with how quickly she has settled into the role and the positive difference that she is making. During the year Jacqui and the team:   * Held a staff Away Day which was attended by all staff, including the Senior Management Team and Trustees. We reviewed and refined our vision and current (2018-2024) strategy together. * Strengthened our governance by introducing a new People Sub-Committee which meets quarterly. * Helped secure new grants for The Carers’ Centre, such as the Henry Smith £135k grant. * Met the required security standards outlined in the NHS Data Digital Security Toolkit * Developed strong links with key stakeholders including the Integrated Care Board * Celebrated the Queen`s Platinum Jubilee in style with over 250 carers, families, volunteers, and staff attending our Platinum Party on the grounds of the Holborne Museum in Bath.   Throughout 2022 and into 2023 we are pleased to report that The Carers’ Centre has made great leaps forward in our Digital Transformation Project and this new infrastructure is starting to enable us to increase our reach and connection to the 20,000+ unpaid carers across our Region. The Carers’ Centre now connects, supports, and informs 4475 adult carers and 708 young carers.  We continued to experience changes in Personnel through the year when we said farewell to David Ford, a long-standing member of the Senior Management Team. Our excellent Treasurer Gordon Westwood sadly retired (after 7 years as a trustee) and was replaced by Ken Littlewood who has been a Trustee since 2109 and is proving to be an excellent "interim" replacement. Thank you, Gordon, and thank you, Ken.  We also have two new Trustees who joined us in 2022: Katie Burfitt and Joanna Hole who have become great additions to the Board. In the 12 months to 31 March 2023, we are pleased to report that The Carers’ Centre continued to deliver a wide range of high-quality in-person, online, and over-the-phone activities for carers and their loved ones, ranging from axe-throwing to crochet courses. We continued to also offer our support line service and provided grant application and financial advice and importantly we continued to hold our Carers’ Voice meetings where we bring together carers with lived experience of caring where we listen and understand their needs which helps shape the services that we provide. As we move into our next financial year, we are keen to grow our volunteer base which was depleted following the pandemic. We also need to fill some key staff vacancies at a time when recruitment has become challenging in the charity sector.  Our other focus is to grow our unrestricted cash reserves which have become depleted in recent years. Consequently, the recruitment of a new Development Officer and the restructuring of our Woodlands Loan (in order to reduce our monthly repayment commitments) have become priority actions for us.  Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our wonderful team of staff, volunteers, and Trustees for your commitment and resilience in these challenging times and for being there for our carers.  Thank you, Frank. | FM |
| 4 | **CEO Report**  Despite the ongoing impact of the pandemic, there have been many highlights this year. Carers and staff welcomed the return of face-to-face activities as post covid confidence grew with 968 adult carer attendances at in-person breaks, and 254 attendances online. We secured new funding from The Henry Smith Charity to increase connections and peer support between carers to help deliver 197 cafe sessions. 100% of those who attended reported feeling increasingly less lonely or isolated, which is a very positive outcome.  The number of young carers registered with us increased by 18% to 792, during the year and 194 of these carers attended one of the 47 activities arranged by us. A big achievement of the Young Carers Team this year is that all young carers whose families or schools requested a statutory needs assessment have received one and we ended the year without a waiting list. 100% of young carers who attended an activity felt they had increased opportunities to have fun and take a real break with 52% of young carers now felt part of a community.  We recognise that not all carers are ready, able, or feel comfortable with in-person activities so this year we have strengthened our digital offer of information, advice, support, and well-being activities for carers. In addition to providing dedicated resources for professionals and volunteers throughout the day and night. Our website often reaches peak viewing times between midnight and 8:00 am.  Our support team has continued to provide empathetic support to carers, helping them to navigate complex emotions, unfamiliar care systems including financial advice and assist with sourcing additional funding for a range of equipment including white goods, utility bills, and breaks. They have worked alongside carers to build bespoke support plans so that carers can have a fulfilling and manageable life alongside their caring role. Throughout the year the team reached out and spoke to 737 carers, with 10% of calls lasting for more than an hour.  The Carers’ Centre staff and carers have worked closely with our community partners and colleagues within the newly formed BSW Integrated Care Board and The Community Wellbeing Hub to ensure that carers needs are considered within developing systems and processes. We supported the development of a digital referral pathway "Riviam" for people leaving hospital to ensure that carers are identified and offered the support they may need.  As the three-year National Lottery Digital Funding draws to a close, we have increased our digital maturity from 10% to 57%, transforming how we work and firmly embedding carers' voices in all we do. We know this is not the end of the journey but laying firm foundations for future development and sustainability that will enable us to reach out and support more carers. | JO |
| 5 | **Finance Report**  Ken presented the 2021-2022 accounts which had been previously circulated.  The Carers’ Centre 2022-2023 accounts have been examined by our independent examiner, James Gare at MHA Monahans. Ken was pleased to report that in their independent examination, Monahans have concluded that they have no concerns or other matters to which attention should be drawn.  From a finance perspective, the Trustees believe there are three key performance goals:  - To be financially sustainable  - To maintain an appropriate level of free reserves  - To continue to pay off our social investment loan on Woodlands.  During the 2022-2023 year, the trustees were able to achieve all three goals.  Although the accounts showed a drop in funds of £116.5k for the year, this was entirely the consequence of completing projects for which funding had been received in previous years. On an ongoing basis we broke even for the year, with both funding and staff costs falling below budget.  We repaid a further £30,000 of the outstanding social investment loan on Woodlands. With the ongoing pressures on costs and income it is becoming increasingly difficult to fund the balance of this repayment from free reserves, so an extension of the loan facility will be sought in the year ahead to protect our free capital position. All indications were that a satisfactory arrangement could be made.  We have designated a target of £130k for our free reserves for the year 2023-24. At year end 2022/23 we held just over £100k so trustees will be taking steps during the year ahead to build reserves to the target level. The Reserves Policy is reviewed annually.  There were no questions.  The Chair thanked Ken for the report and for agreeing to take on the role of Treasurer on an interim basis for another year. | KL |
| 6 | **Business items:**   1. **Acceptance of Annual Report and Accounts 2021**   **Proposed:** Christine Bone  **Second:** Paul Richards  **Approved**: All   1. **Approval of the appointment of auditors (Monahans) for the year 2023-2024**   **Proposed:** Joanna Hole  **Second:** Jennifer Thead  **Approved**: All   1. **Re-Appointment of Christine Bone as a Trustee**   **Proposed:** Paul Richard  **Second:**  Ken Littlewood  **Approved**: All | FM |
| 7 | **Closing remarks**  The Chair thanked all the Trustees for their hard work during the year. That concludes all the business items and this year’s AGM. |  |
| 8 | **Finish**  Meeting closed at 7:30pm |  |