



Wakefield and District Down's Syndrome Support Group

AGM 6 May 2016

The Brig Community Centre, Normanton

Minutes

The AGM was well attended – all trustees were present, alongside a number of other group members.

Presentation of the annual reports

Our 2015-2016 Trustees Annual Report was circulated for discussion (although noted to be not fully completed due to the financial information – to be added after the meeting) and will be uploaded to the group web site and posted on the facebook page after it is fully agreed.

Reports from the Treasurer and Chair were presented and copies circulated – these will also be posted on the web site.

Alexis Sharp presented the projects within the £50,000 grant from the People's Projects in five key areas - Newborn, Training, Resources & Equipment, Activities, and Family Fun Day/DS Awareness - for discussion.

Our accounts have been audited and approved, details in Treasurer's report. Accounts copies were approved and signed by the Treasurer and Secretary.

Nomination and appointment of the elected positions

Treasurer Ruth – proposed by Ann-Marie Sheard, seconded by Lisa Melican

Secretary Andrea – proposed by Ruth Noble, seconded by Alison Brown

Chair Geoff – proposed by Andrea Arnold, seconded by Paula Rose

A discussion was held regarding the re-election of the same people over a number of years, and also the increase in demand on the secretary role as the charity has increased. It was agreed to create a Vice Chair post and to share the role of Secretary for this year. Ann-Marie Sheard was elected as Vice Chair and Sara Beaumont was elected to share the role of Secretary.

Jon Arnold recommended that we look into having a person with DS on our committee. We discussed this and agreed to set up a focus group or committee for the older group, supporting as much as needed but enabling our young people to make decisions about the group and potentially learn to manage a small budget. Life skills activities are included as part of the People's Projects application and this would work well. Alicia to take forward as lead for the older group.

All of our new trustees for this year (Sara Beaumont, John Crawshaw, Paula Rose and Alicia Tulley) were formally re-appointed.

Open forum

Survey 2016

The results of the recent survey were presented by Andrea. There was a really good response rate and a lot of positive feedback and constructive comments. It was agreed that we will be as open as possible, so all results have been included in the report which will be shared on our closed facebook group for all of our members to access. Some comments from the survey have been included in the Trustees Annual Report.

Not many questions were raised but a response from the group will be produced and shared as soon as possible.

Membership

Andrea discussed the possibility of formalising membership, as funders and other organisations require information about the number of families we support. A discussion took place and it was agreed that formal membership was not required, but it was appropriate to keep a database of families that access our group in any way, alongside a supporters database (mailing list, interested professionals and so on).

It was noted that, in line with the Data Protection Act, information kept would be only what is relevant i.e. a list of names including first names of children and a contact (email address where possible). This would be kept securely by group officials. There will be a process to update the records that we have (which are now significantly out of date).

Jon stated that all charity communications should now be “opt-in” rather than unsubscribe – all parents are currently asked if they want to opt-in when their contact details are collected, but an opt-in for supporters can be addressed as part of the database set-up.

Further ideas for the group’s future

Lisa Melican suggested a seaside trip away for families – this was well received, Lisa to look into possibilities and take this forward.

Sue Slater recommended that we set up welcome packs for new people accessing the group – this has been in the pipeline for a long time, and hopefully will be able to be actioned this year as a result of the People’s Projects funding and volunteering.

It was also suggested that we get hold of inserts for the red books, as these can sometimes be difficult to get hold of. Ann-Marie also suggested that we could add something more positive to combine with them, as the inserts can sometimes be distressing where our children do not follow the centiles.

Alicia Tulley suggested that we include “social stories” or life skills books within the People’s Projects – all agreed that this would be useful.