

Redbourn Care Group  
Advisory Committee Meeting  
4 July 2017



**Minutes are 'Draft until Signed'**

Members present: Barry Welch (Chair), Peter Robey (Vice-chair), Sally Bartlett (Secretary), Claire-Louise Lawlor (Office Manager), Steve Lillywhite (Street Co-ordinator), Dennis Bigham (Minibus Manager), Mollie Williams, Connie Crawley, Sheila Seabrook, Margie Johnstone, and Bernie Penny.

Barry welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced guest Graham Westwell, Trustee, The Harpenden Trust.

1. **Apologies** were received from Dennis Poole (Treasurer), Ann Mundy, Pauline Allcroft, Annie Lowe, Rev. Will Gibbs and Peta Gunson.
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting** on 4 April 2017 were approved as correct; they were proposed by Peter Robey and seconded by Mollie Williams.
3. **There were no matters arising from the minutes.**
4. **Reports:**
  - a. **Treasurer:** in Dennis' absence, Barry summarised the treasurer's report and circulated a summary of income and expenditure to date for the current financial year, together with a statement of current cash reserves. The most significant development was the decision by West Herts Charitable Trust to award the Care Group a new Citroen minibus, which is expected in the autumn. Several personal donations have been received, a £4k grant from Redbourn Parish Council and a further £1069 from a charity performance at the Abbey Theatre. The year's financial target is 20% ahead but expenditure is running just below target levels.
  - b. **Office Manager:** Claire-Louise presented the following information:
    - i. We have 275 clients on our books, this is an increase; referrals have also been received via Tracey Back, Harpenden Rural Children's Centre.
    - ii. We currently have 124 volunteers which includes office staff, car drivers, mini bus drivers, couriers and street contacts. This is an increase of four since our last meeting, however we still require more volunteers to service current demands. Our volunteers are very generous with their time however we often find ourselves calling on the same people time and time again.
    - iii. We have launched a campaign to recruit more volunteers. The Cricketers have kindly advertised for us via their database of 1000 customers and soon several bright posters will be displayed around the village. We have a regular page in The Common Round and an advert has been placed in St Albans Review, a local newspaper.
    - iv. We need to target recruitment of minibus drivers. The last few weeks has been very difficult despite what appears to be a reasonable number of minibus drivers (17) many have been unable to assist at the current time

so we have had to rely on a very few drivers to cover many outings and day centre shifts. Recognition should go to Lyn and David Paynter for all their recent volunteering, sometimes at very short notice. We currently have 36 couriers who assist the mini bus drivers on every trip.

- v. On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May, CVS St Albans organised a driver recruitment day at Bunnings in St Albans at which Peter Robey and Sally Bartlett attended. This was a useful PR exercise and again helped build a good working relationship with the CVS.
- vi. The Care Office was staffed every week day (except for the Bank holidays), two of our volunteers took residents shopping on Good Friday. The office continues to be used monthly on a Tuesday afternoon between 14.00 and 16.00 by the Hertfordshire Hearing Advisory Service.
- vii. Office staff currently number fourteen which includes the office manager and Geoff Garrad- Cole who manages driver's records. They have had some challenging days trying to organise lifts so apologise to those who have found the line engaged. The reserve staff have covered holiday periods.
- viii. We currently have 53 car drivers with one more currently starting the application process.
- ix. Over the last 13-week period we have organised 142 car journeys, down from our last meeting, however we no longer need to take clients to the Stroke Club in St Albans which accounted for 26 journeys and we had a quieter period over the Easter two-week holiday. The number of requests has increased again but cancelled appointments has decreased.
- x. The mini bus has been out every week day for RCG except for Tuesdays when it has often been on loan to local organisations such as WI, Woollams, Mother's Union, New Forge Place. Over the last 13 weeks it has been out 84 times. Shopping trips are still popular with 39 clients and we currently have space for two more clients. Swimming every Monday morning has 11 clients and Tony Pearce continues to take 5 clients to the regular Macular Society meetings. The monthly Good Companions meetings are resuming with the new organisers Ann Myring and Rebecca Jenkins. To date this year, we have provided 513 car journeys for various medical appointments and 194 regular mini bus trips (707 in total).
- xi. Meeting with The Harpenden Trust to discuss best practice and share policies, proved extremely beneficial. Peta Gunson and Claire-Louise are currently reviewing RCG policies and compliance. RCG has recently subscribed to the Fundraiser Regulator.
- xii. Stronger Together partnership meetings organised by CVS continue to provide the opportunity for useful discussion on current issues such as recruitment of volunteers.

- xiii. The Harpenden and Rural Children's Centre multi agency meeting invited Claire-Louise to their multi agency meeting as they are keen to increase the RCG profile within the children's centres.

Barry thanked Claire-Louise for all her hard work.

- c. **Minibus Manager:** Dennis summarised:
  - i. Tail lift was tested and repaired.
  - ii. It is the driver's responsibility to check the bus and report any matter however small, for example, lights, tyres as well as incidents.
  - iii. Cleaning products for internal bus use are now in the garage and drivers have been asked to leave the bus as they would like to find it.
  - iv. The wheelchair strap needs readjusting but will be urgently resolved.
  - v. The new bus (ref 4.a above) might be larger and is manual not automatic.
- d. **Street Co-ordinator:** Steve updated the meeting with a humorous interlude.
- e. **Wheelchairs/scooters:** Bernie reported the following:
  - i. An electric wheelchair suitable for indoor use only has been in the garage for a year now – Bernie suggested we contact one of the local residential homes to see if any resident could make use of it – Barry responded with the name of a resident at St Matthews who might be interested.
  - ii. Two electric scooters are also currently available.
  - iii. No need to accept donations of Zimmer frames as there are sufficient.
- f. **Outings:** in Annie's absence Barry read her report:
  - i. The outings resumed in March and April after the winter break with country drives to a variety of locations with garden centres.
  - ii. The canal trip in May was successful and included a plentiful finger buffet. Unfortunately, the trip to the House of Commons had to be cancelled for security reasons (due to the terrorist activities) but Mike Weir and Annie plan to apply for another permit later in the year if circumstances allow.
  - iii. Due to popular demand July's outing is to Southend and Annie invited members of the Advisory Group to let her know if they wish to join this special outing.
  - iv. A summer lunch at Redbourn Golf Club is planned for August; as yet September's outing is unconfirmed but might be to Whipsnade.
  - v. Annie expressed her thanks to the Advisory Group for their support.
- g. **Chairman:** Barry reported the following:
  - i. The minibus procurement from West Herts Charity Trust will mean a Care Group contribution of just £12,500.
  - ii. Grateful thanks were expressed to Marion Benzie for initiating and organising the fundraising event at the Abbey Theatre in St Albans.
  - iii. A new event for the village 'Redbourn Classics Motor Show' planned for 16 September on the Common is being organised by Friends of St Mary's.

Half the proceeds will be donated to RCG who will also have a stall with a competition called 'Spot the Care Bus' kindly organised by Steve Lillywhite. More volunteer stewards are required for this event.

**5. There was no AOB**

**6. Guest speaker Graham Westell**, Trustee from The Harpenden Trust. Peter introduced Graham outlining his many years of voluntary service to the Trust. Graham began by thanking and acknowledging the recent assistance from Redbourn Care Group (Peta and Claire-Louise) regarding sharing and collaboration on policies and procedures.

- i. Graham described the history of The Harpenden Trust which was founded in 1948 by local people who wanted to help Harpenden people in need.
- ii. Dr Charles Hill (later Lord Hill) was the first President.
- iii. Even though Harpenden is regarded as a wealthy community, there are still residents suffering hardship, financial or otherwise, and people in need of the help of a good neighbour.
- iv. For 60 years the Trust concentrated its support on Harpenden families and individuals. Then in 2008, when Abbeyfield Harpenden closed, the net proceeds of the sale of the property were handed over to the Trust to be put into a separate Community Fund for the benefit of local organisations, charities and community groups. The original Trust, with its work with families and individuals, was renamed the Care Fund and, as a community organisation, it receives a grant from the Community Fund to help finance its activities.
- v. Graham went on to describe a new venture which he is heading up with Councillor Terry Heritage. It is currently named 'Harpenden – Our Community' whose aim is to foster stronger relationships between voluntary organisations, the voluntary sector and public bodies based in or conducting work in Harpenden. It also aims to identify the gaps and challenges in provision of services for the community. This is in early stage of development but several focus groups have been established and the next steps involve mapping all the current activities, linking with the Churches and setting up a website displaying participating groups
- vi. The Harpenden Trust is investigating collaboration with RCG and Graham is currently considering cooperative ways of working. One example of this is the electronic resource called 'Charitylog' which provides cloud-based services that help charities improve their performance and compliance with the Data Protection Regulations. This is of great interest to RCG who welcome working relationships with local charities.
- vii. The Trust will support pupils from Harpenden schools needing assistance for educational trips, including those living in Redbourn.

Barry thanked Graham for coming to the meeting to enlighten and inform the Advisory Group of the work of Harpenden Trust and looked forward to further future collaboration.

Meeting closed at 9 pm

**Advisory meetings for 2017 are in New Forge Place at 7.30 on 3 October.**

**AGM is 19 October at 7 for 7.30 in the Village Hall.**

**Signed..... Chair**

**Dated.....2017**

**Draft until signed**