

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday May 7th 2025
at Goss Croft Village Hall
Reporting on the year January to December 2024**

Present: Janice Vincent (Chairman), Trustees: Louise Chamberlain (Vice Chair & VSRO), Kevin Noble (Treasurer), Jean Butcher (Deputy Treasurer), John Wilkins (H&S), Alix Pentecost (DPO), Jane Bartholomew (Safeguarding), Lucy Hay (Marketing and PR), Judy Paginton (Secretary to the Trustees), Gillian Noble, Colin Wootton, Gerda Hayes, Mike and Pam Green, Mark Vincent, Roy Pentecost, Ian Kidd, Phil Malcolm, Keith Player, Robert McLachlan, Marie-Clare Brind, David Boyle, Graham Instrell, Phil Tabinor, Mike Tarrant, Philly Lynch, Rob Beverley, Fi Carpenter, Roger Stephens, Tony Gregson, Philip Carter (C), Tracy Barker, Johnny Hobson,

1. Welcome – Janice welcomed everyone present and thanked them for attending.

2. Apologies received from:

Bridget Haines, Lindsay Tilley, Charlotte Burnaby-Atkins, Amanda Lean, Joe Bains, Tina McAllister, Fiona Hart, Alastair Davies, Jane King, Lynda Fleming, Bill Reed, Liz Cooper, Adrienne Jackson, Patrick Green, David Warrick, Aileen Hood, Mel Beeching, David Keen, Susie Brassey, Stan Paginton, Patrick Gardner, Jill McNaught-Davis, Steve and Sarah Chester.

3. Minutes of meeting on 1st May 2024

These had been circulated and were accepted as correct.

4. Matters Arising - There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's Report – Janice Vincent

JV welcomed everyone to the AGM and gave a particularly warm welcome to those who were attending for the first time.

She welcomed Jane Bartholomew, our SO, and Lucy Hay, PR, to their first AGM as Trustees and thanked them for volunteering to take on these roles. She also recorded her thanks to GN and CBA, their predecessors, for their sterling service as Trustees.

She said that each year we announce that demand for Link has increased and 2024 was no exception, rising by a further 20% over the previous year. Louise had provided details of the annual statistics in her report, but Janice highlighted the fact that Link has managed to meet this huge increase in demand and satisfy almost every request made for our support. This is down to the amazing dedication of Link volunteers and their willingness to rise to the challenge. Whenever JV thinks we are not going to be able to meet the requests for what seems an impossible number of trips, drivers come up trumps and prove her wrong!

The Trustees are aware that this level of demand leads to a constant challenge for coordinators. It isn't helped when hospitals cancel appointments at the last minute, when all the work in allocating a trip has been completed, or worse still, on arrival at the hospital. The Trustees are immensely grateful to all our volunteers for being so patient with these frustrations, and for all the time and dedication they put into Link in general.

The Community First infographics were circulated before the meeting and extra copies were provided on the tables. These summarise the Link Scheme Stats across the County and within the Malmesbury area and once again show that Malmesbury Link continues to be one of the busiest and most productive schemes in Wiltshire.

JV said she realised it was the efforts of all our drivers and coordinators who collectively work to deliver the increasing number of trips every year. However, this year she highlighted the contribution of **Pam and Mike Green** as two of Link's longest serving volunteers. Records don't go back far enough for her to accurately determine when they started volunteering, but for well over 10 years Mike has coordinated, and Pam has been a very active driver. Mike is a stickler for getting things right and JV is always on her mettle when coordinating the day before him to try to avoid any errors being picked up by him the following day. She is

not always successful! She thanked Mike and Pam for their continuing contribution to Link and said it was hugely appreciated.

It has also become an annual tradition to embarrass Susie Brassey by confirming her position as Link's busiest driver for the previous year. Possibly spurred on by what JV said last year she broke all records in 2024 with a staggering total of 72 trips!

Whilst highlighting these individual achievements, JV said she realised that Link's success is very much down to a whole team effort and thanked all the Link volunteers.

Linked to this challenge of increasing demand is how to recruit new volunteers. For the first time there had been a small drop in the number of volunteer drivers in 2024. An even greater drop in volunteer numbers is being experienced by most Link services county wide.

JV highlighted the need to recruit more volunteers to help to share the workload and meet future demand. Lucy hit the ground running as she took over from Gillian at the start of the year and is working hard to publicise the need for volunteers, but the best way to recruit is always by word of mouth. JV asked volunteers to let Louise know if they can encourage any friends, neighbours, or contacts to volunteer.

Inspired by a suggestion from Lynda Fleming, JV said some recruitment videos are being planned in the hope of attracting volunteers. Filming is scheduled to start at the beginning of June. We hope that the videos will appear on our website and on appropriate social media platforms and will inspire people to volunteer with Link. JV thanked Lucy and her committee for agreeing to take up the challenge of this project.

As mentioned at previous AGMs, work has been going on to update our 35-year-old constitution. We are extremely fortunate to have Alix with all her legal experience on the committee. She has worked incredibly hard behind the scenes on this. JV said we were now at the point at which this document needed to be approved by Link members and there would be a vote later in the meeting. She thanked Alix for all her hard work on getting this important project completed.

JV also recorded her thanks to the hard-working committee:

- to Kevin and Jean our Treasurer and Dep Treasurer who manage our finances so efficiently,
- to Louise for agreeing to act as Vice Chair and for all her work on recruitment and keeping our volunteer records up to date,
- to John for his wise advice and input on health & safety,
- to Alix for overseeing data protection issues as well as her work on the constitution,
- to Lucy for overseeing the website and all our publicity,
- to Jane for her work as SO
- and finally, to Judy Paginton the committee secretary with multiple other roles which keep us all on track.

She thanked Philip Carter of Hankerton, for his time in examining the Financial Accounts for 2024. He and his wife Georgina have dedicated many years of service to Link. Sadly, they could not attend the AGM, but we are delighted that Philip has agreed to continue in his role as Examiner for another year.

Finally, JV thanked Gillian, Louise, Alix, Jane, Lucy and Jean for all they had done to produce such a wonderful lunch and for the contributions made by others.

6. Treasurer's Report for Year Ending 31st December 2024

i. Accounting Basis

The accounts are based on snapshots of their state on 31 Dec 2023 and 31 Dec 2024.

ii. Financial Year

Trips have increased by around 20% from last year from typically 90 trips per month to 110 in 2024, with peak numbers of 138 in May and 128 in October.

iii. Administration

General Administration costs were down around 10% at £905.02, primarily through reduced Swiftlogic IT support this year (we only pay for IT support when required). Database contribution increased from £150 to £175 (see below).

iv. Insurance

Insurance increased from £533.08 to £625.78.

v. Telephone

The most significant administrative change in 2024 was to transfer our telephone contract from BT to Buzz Networks in March. The last BT quarterly payment was £195.26, versus a monthly charge from Buzz of £23.88 (equivalent to £71.64 per quarter). This is clearly a significant saving equivalent to £494.48 annually.

vi. Gift Aid

Gift Aid is only claimed on Donations. Gift Aid received for the last HMRC tax year Apr 2023-Mar 2024 was similar to the previous year at £3778.89 versus £3920.80.

vii. Database

All trips, operations and claims are coordinated via the Malmesbury and District Link Database (provided and administered by Marlborough Link). This provides a robust, centralised audit trail, and also hugely facilitates data gathering for reports and claims to HMRC, the Charities Commission and Wiltshire Community First. We increased our voluntary annual contribution to Marlborough Link for running and administering this invaluable service from £150 to £175: this still represents extremely good value.

viii. Advertising and PR

We continue to advertise our services, and for new drivers, with flyers (bought in 2023) and on our website (£71.86 annually for website hosting). We also advertise in the Dentons local telephone catalogue (£50 annually). Since we required no new flyers this year, PR/Advert spending was down from £238.86 in 2023 to £121.86.

ix. PPE / Client Aids

PPE and Client-aid expenditure was only £35.97 and was entirely for "Car Handles". These are handles available to drivers at LINK's expense.

x. Reserves

Cash reserves are held in Cambridge and Counties Bank where they are currently earning 4.41%. Since opening the account in Oct 2023 with £13,000, reserves have increased to £13,708.48 with current monthly interest earnings of £51.15. Interest received for the year to 31 Dec 2024 was £591.92. Note that because Cambridge and Counties give monthly interest statements (vs annual interest statements from Shawbrook, our previous reserve holders), interest earnings have been rebased from 31 Dec 23- 31 Dec 24. The first column "2023" in the table below is a copy from last year's annual statement; the adjacent column "2023*" includes the re-basing (see *Note under the table which is shown at the end of these minutes)

Summary

Income from clients increased by around £4921 (~26%) over the previous year from the 20% increase in activity; however driver claims only increased by £1771 (~10%). Insurance increased in line with general insurance inflation, but all other admin costs (particularly telephone) costs fell, reducing overall general admin costs by £385. In previous years, client donations were slightly less than overall expenses, with the difference being more than covered by Gift Aid claims. However, this year, as a result of the foregoing, client donations exceeded expenses by £2232. Thus, with the addition of the Gift Aid claim, and interest from reserves, income exceeded expenses by £6602. With this excess, a new policy was instituted from Dec 2024 of reimbursing drivers for refreshment expenses of up to £10 for trips over 3 hours.

These accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024 have been examined and confirmed as a true and correct record.

7. Volunteer Support & Recruitment Officer's Report for period January to December 2024

i. Statistics

Total trips: **2023** Busiest months: May (**138**) October (**127**) Other months all in range 97-120

Cancelled trips: **234**

Drivers: **45** available drivers at start of year, **43** available drivers at end of year

Total miles: **47207** (over 22% increase on 2023)

Total driver hours: **2962** (over 24% increase)

Destinations: Swindon GWH, Malmesbury Primary Care Centre and Bath RUH account for over half of our trips.

Clients: We transported a total of **337** clients in 2024.

As in 2023, appointments in 2024 were being offered to patients at short notice, putting pressure on our coordinators to find drivers prepared to fulfil these trips.

On behalf of our clients, I'd like to thank all our drivers for their dedication in ensuring our clients arrive safely and on time for their appointments. We had slightly fewer drivers available in 2024 compared with 2023, but they had a heavier workload in terms of trips, miles and time. You are all working harder than ever! This is a fantastic achievement.

ii. New volunteers

In 2024, we welcomed the following new volunteers:

- Graham Instrell from Sherston started as a driver in January
- Colin Wootton from Sherston started as a coordinator in January
- David Boyle from Sherston started as a driver in February
- Adrienne Jackson from Sherston started as a driver in July
- Phil Tabinor from Sutton Benger started as a driver in August
- Sarah and Stephen Chester from Little Somerford started as drivers in October
- Robert Beverley from Little Somerford started as a driver in October
- David Warrick from Malmesbury started as a driver in December

iii. Retired volunteers

Jonathan Robinson and Chris Blount retired.

iv. Drive Plus

Some of our drivers completed the Drive Plus assessment, provided by Wiltshire Council. They all reported that they felt it to be a worthwhile experience, giving them reassurance that they continue to be safe and considerate drivers.

We continue to encourage our drivers to do the Drive Plus assessment by paying half the cost if aged between 70 and 79.

v. Recruitment

We continue to rely largely on word of mouth / acquaintances of existing volunteers for finding new volunteers.

vi. Coordinators

Our team of coordinators continues to use their multi-tasking skills to keep us all organised and keep the database accurate, while remaining friendly and calm with clients and drivers alike. Their job is further complicated by cancelled trips and with the increasing need to combine appointments.

I am so grateful to our coordinators for their efficiency and dedication and also for their flexibility when providing cover or swapping shifts with their teammates.

8. Constitution Update— Alix Pentecost

The proposed constitution had been circulated to members and, if accepted, needs to be submitted to the Charity Commission.

Acceptance was proposed by Philip Carter and seconded by Mike Tarrant and given unanimous approval.

AP thanked the Trustees for their support during this process, as well as the creators of the previous version of the Constitution.

9. Election of Officers:

- a. Chairman: Janice Vincent –

Proposed by Louise Chamberlain
Seconded by Kevin Noble

b. Trustees: Louise Chamberlain, Kevin Noble, Jean Butcher, Alix Pentecost, John Wilkins, Jane Bartholomew and Lucy Hay

Proposed by Janice Vincent,
Seconded by Kevin Noble

All were unanimously elected.

10. AOB

- Robert asked if we should reduce the suggested payment for clients as there is a healthy balance. Drivers were reminded to stress that the size of the donation is optional and Jean said that there are some smaller payments being paid so the message is getting through to clients.
- Ian asked how to complete the claim when there are 2 (or more) clients sharing. This is easily done by giving the trips the same number when completing the claim.
- Phil asked about clients who pay by BACS. Drivers should give in a brown envelope for every trip and record that a BACS payment is promised or any other reason for having an empty envelope. There is then a trail for the Treasurers to follow.

The meeting closed after 40 mins

**Malmesbury & District link
Charity Number 1043099**

**Summary of Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet for the
Year Ending 31 December 2024**

2023	2023*	Income	2024
£18782.18	£18782.18	Client Donations	£23703.00
£200	£200	Other Donations (Somerford Land trust)	£0
£3920.80	£3920.80	(Apr22-Mar23) Gift Aid (Apr23-Mar24)	£3778.89
48.40	164.96	Bank (Reserves) Interest	591.92
22951.38	23067.94	Total Income (a)	28073.81
		Expenses	
£17567.49	£17567.49	Driver Claims	£19341.83
£744.69	£744.69	Telephone	£441.18
£997.99	£997.99	Administration	£905.02
£533.08	£533.08	Insurance	£625.78
0	0	PPE/Client Aids	£35.97
£238.86	£238.86	Advertising & PR	£121.86
	2514.62	Total Admin Expenses (ie excluding driver claims)	£2129.81
£20082.11	£20082.11	Total Expenses (b)	£21471.64
2869.27	2985.83	Income Less Expenses (e = a-b)	6602.17
£20797.44	£20979.44	Fund Balance from Previous Year (f)	23965.27
£23848.71	23965.27	New Fund Balance (e+f)	30567.44
£10848.71	£10848.71	Lloyds bank Balance 31 Dec	£16858.96
£13000	£13116.56	Reserves Balance 31 Dec (Cambridge & Counties Bank)	£13708.48
£23848.71	£23965.27	Combined Balances	£30567.44

***Note:**

2023 Reserves re-stated as £13116.56 as at 31 Dec 23 from £13000 in previous Annual report. Hence £116.56 added to Bank Interest leading to revised figures at (a) and (e), and new fund balance/combined balance.