

## Chair's Report VI Talk AGM 2021

It's safe to say that this past year has had its challenges for everyone. When we were told that we were going into lockdown we had to cancel our York event. We were lucky in that we didn't lose too much money. As a charity we wanted to support our members as much as possible and it was decided that we would purchase a Zoom license. We began recruiting more volunteers to help facilitate chats 3 times a week and Justine, Kaz, Lacey and Molly joined the team. These were well received and at times we had 20 attendees chatting about all manner of things but also offering peer support to each other. We are continuing to run our Zoom events and have had some funding approved by TPT to allow us to run more mindfulness, meditation and wellbeing sessions. We ran a few of these during lockdown and they were well received.

Our Facebook groups continue to grow and are full of diverse and interesting posts and comments. We have continued to connect and interact with individuals, charities and organisations on Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter. Maxine has been joined by Kay and between them they help Sam and Jo post regularly across all these platforms. The trustees also put regular interesting posts on the Facebook groups. Our book club run by Sam is always popular and we have taken Jane on to facilitate a monthly Zoom book group where attendees discuss a chosen book.

Sadly Ian who had run the online blog and Tracy who had produced our monthly newsletter had to step down due to other commitments. Dawn has taken on proof reading and uploading the blogs to our web site and Chris records them for Jo to put on the audio boom channel. Jo puts together the newsletter, then Sam uploads it to Mail Chimp. We are looking for a volunteer to produce and upload the newsletter.

Helen another new volunteer has been helping Sam to run a messenger chat every Tuesday evening. This is a text chat so our members with dual sensory loss can chat but also support each other. Helen also runs a twice a week crochet club and this has proved very enjoyable and successful. Sam assists Helen with this.

Jane and Dawn ran fundraising events for us last year and people joined them on Zoom to shop with Park Lane jewellery, Body Shop and Party Light. Jane had benefitted from the Zoom chats so much that she wanted to raise enough to pay for the next year's license and she exceeded expectations. We had our first payment from Amazon Smile and are always grateful to people who support us either through Amazon or Easy Fundraising.

Justine joined us as a Zoom facilitator but also expressed an interest in becoming a trustee should one ever be needed. When we found out that Katie was pregnant, we interviewed Justine and she became our Secretary. Justine still facilitates Zoom chats, she takes minutes and keeps our online files organised. Justine looks after the music, sport and travel FB groups but also admins the main group and resources. Justine regularly keeps us laughing with her sense of humour. She has quickly become a valued member of the team and is looking forward to helping at her first event when lockdown is relaxed.

Katie had a difficult year last year with lots of scans and medical appointments throughout her pregnancy. She continued to help with Zoom chats and to admin our arts & crafts group as often as possible. Katie had her baby boy Jayden in December and due to personal circumstances has had to step down from being a trustee. We will stay in touch with Katie as she has become a friend and if she ever feels she has time to commit to VI Talk in the future, we would consider a trustee application if a vacancy should arise.

Sam has taken on more responsibilities over the past year. As she is the only trustee with useful vision Sam has been instrumental in supporting the other trustees when Facebook has been inaccessible in part to screen reader users. Sam is still Treasurer and prepares accounts for each meeting. She assists Jo with the monthly FIT update and she gathers the FB group numbers for every meeting. These are helpful for funding applications. As I said Sam runs the book club and assists Jane and Jo on the book group on Zoom. Sam keeps all printed files up to date and organised. She fights with Mail Chimp to upload the monthly newsletter and she has also started doing some admin work on the web site. Sam who thought she wasn't very techie has proved herself wrong and is a valuable and supportive member of the team. At the AGM last year Sam was waiting for the opportunity to do her training to become our official first aider. This has now been completed.

Dawn admins our kitchen group which is quite busy. She also admins the main group and resources. Dawn helps with funding applications when needed and she looks after our web directory which is full of charities and organisations offering services and support to blind and partially sighted people. Dawn along with Justine and Jo conducts interviews and I think the one we got most excited about this year was the opportunity to speak to the actor Richard Hawley

who play Johnny Connor on Coronation Street and is playing the part of someone who has Charles Bonnet Syndrome. Dawn helps to facilitate Zoom chats and is a wealth of help and support when people contact us about services and support. I know Dawn is looking forward to being able to organise face to face events again, something she helps and contributes to hugely. We are a small but dedicated team and encourage and support each other to complete tasks or when things don't go exactly according to plan. We will continue to look for interesting people to interview, to make sure our groups are as safe, welcoming and inclusive as possible. As both Dawn and Jo will be working full time from April, we will be looking for moderators to help with the busier Facebook groups. As the longest serving trustee after Jo, Sam will be their point of contact if they need support. We are a very small charity but it's wonderful to know how much support we have from other organisations. Funding is never easy and Thomas Pocklington Trust have continued to support us and tell us how encouraging they are of what we have achieved. On a personal note I want to thank each member of the team regardless of how big or small their role is. We are making a difference in some way to the lives of blind and partially sighted people and will continue to do so into the future. Volunteering is rewarding but takes effort and commitment. I'm proud of each member of the team and appreciate the care and enthusiasm which they bring to their roles.

## **VI Talk Financial Report End of year Summary 16th February 2021**

Balance Brought forward 2019/2020 £5,095.48

### **INCOME for 2020/2021**

Donations £1,039.03

Fundraising £ 26.91

Refund for accommodation £ 642.00

**TOTAL INCOME FOR 2020/2021 £1,707.94**

### **EXPENDITURE**

Events £ 180.73

(arts and craft supply's)

Sundries £ 377.36

(first aid course £165.00

£143.88 Zoom licence

£15.00 phone top up

£53.48 gifts for speakers)

Equipment £ 368.00

(new phone)

Printing £ 24.09

Website domain £ 354.00

Audio boom and Skype £ 146.57

**Total expenses for 2020/2021 £1,450.75**

**BALANCE carried forward to 2021/2022 £5,352.67**