

Chair's report 2022

It has been an interesting year for VI Talk. As Covid restrictions eased, we wondered if we would still need to run zoom chats and if we would return to running face to face events. Every few months we reviewed our position on face to face events and up to now the decision has been made to wait. Whilst some people are happy to get out and about, others are still nervous and as it costs a substantial amount of money to run events, we would need to be sure that they would be well attended.

The zoom chats have been as popular as ever regularly attended by 10 to 12 people. The chats are lively and supportive. We have continued to run our book group once a month. Our wellbeing sessions with Pat have been attended by a small group, but we felt that although it costs £30 per session for two hours, it is worth it. The pandemic has left many people with mental health and wellbeing issues.

The messenger chat for our members with dual sensory loss dwindled, so we left it open for the small number of members to pop in from time to time if needed. Our crochet club run by Helen has gone from strength to strength. So much so that we have found that we needed to give Helen a Zoom channel of her own, as she was being asked for one to one crochet sessions and also to run more than two group sessions a week. The crochet group also have a Messenger chat where they can exchange patterns and offer support between zoom sessions.

The team

The team has changed slightly with Justine stepping down as a trustee. Other than that the team remains the same, small but extremely dedicated.

Dawn, still organises and updates the web directory. She uploads guest blogs to the website. She Admins all groups, but plays a strong role in VI Talk in the kitchen. Dawn has recently recorded her first cooking feature to try and help others become more confident. Dawn also carries out some of the day-to-day running of VI Talk. Despite working full time, Dawn is a supportive member of the trustee board and of the wider team. She has a wealth of knowledge to share with others due to her lived experiences as a visually impaired person but also because of her profession as a rehabilitation officer. Dawn also runs some of our Monday evening zoom chats which are now general and flourishing.

Sam, still runs our Facebook book club and plays an active role in gardening and nature. Sam supports Lacey and Kay as moderators of some of our Facebook groups. As treasurer Sam makes sure all invoices, payments and spreadsheets are up to date, saved securely and she also makes sure accounts are accurate. Sam supports Helen with the running of the crochet group, and during this past year has started running zoom chats with Lacey. Sam has great organisation skills.

At our last AGM we were recruiting for Facebook moderators and Lacey and Kay who were both members of the existing team agreed to help. This has worked really well. Lacey as I've already said still runs zoom chats and Kay still helps with LinkedIn and Twitter three days a week. Maxine has continued to help with social media and she has continued to create a social media planner once a month for the other members of the team to follow.

Kaz has continued to run zoom chats on Mondays Jane is still running our monthly book group on zoom. She researches which books we will read, publicises the choice for that month and keeps track of who will be attending. Jane is also our resident fundraiser, and since our last AGM she has organised a very successful festive market and raffle and on the first weekend in April ran a zoom quiz and raffle as a small charity fundraising can be extremely difficult. There are so many charities applying for the same grants and especially after Covid times are tough for a lot of charities. James fundraising has made a huge difference to VI Talk. Money raised enables us to purchase zoom licenses, keep our Audio Boom channel going, keep our website updated and much more.

As I said Helen's crochet club has gone from strength to strength and she has improved many blind and partially sighted peoples crochet skills and started some on their journey.

We are always happy to listen to our members and when we were asked for a wellbeing group, it was discussed and left for us to think about. When we were asked by other people, we launched VI Talk wellbeing and lifestyle. This takes us to 10 Facebook groups, and in the first couple of days, we have already had 45 people ask to join the new wellbeing group.

Covid has left people needing to take better care of themselves, Physically, mentally and emotionally. Hopefully providing a space for blind and partially sighted people to share their challenges, coping strategies and hints and tips will go some way to helping.

we are still producing a monthly newsletter and we are still always on the lookout for interesting people to interview.

One of our main objectives has always been to break down social isolation. our Facebook groups and zoom chats are definitely helping. We have no idea what the next year will hold for us but we will continue to listen and to offer services and support in line with the needs of blind and partially sighted people. I'm proud of every member of the team who has a different set of skills, they each bring something unique to VI Talk

VI Talk Financial Report End of year Summary 16th February 2022

Balance Brought forward 2020/2021 £5,352.67

INCOME for 2021/2022

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| Donations | £2,790.76 |
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| Fundraising | £ 460.51 |
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| Grants | £1,045.90 |
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TOTAL INCOME FOR 2021/2022 **£4,297.17**

EXPENDITURE

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| Events | £300.00 |
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(Wellbeing Zoom)

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| Sundries | £54.43 |
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Grin £15.00

Phone top up £20.00

Flowers £19.43

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| Zoom licence | £264.51 |
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| Equipment | £35.98 |
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(Headphones)

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| Website domain | £372.00 |
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| Audio boom and Skype | £102.41 |
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Total expenses for 2020/2021 **£1,129.33**

BALANCE carried forward to 2022/2023 £8,520.51