

Chair's Report 2024

As always it has been an interesting year for VI Talk. There have been some changes along the way. We now only run general chats for friendship and peer support on Wednesday evenings. However Pat who provides our wellbeing chats on the first Monday now also runs an hour QiGong session on the third Monday. This has been well received, with the sessions being recorded and put on our Audio Boom channel for those who missed the session to have a go.

In August 2023 Dawn sadly made the decision to step down from the board of trustees. I know this was a tough decision to make. She is still on hand to offer advice if needed and she still helps out with the wellbeing and QiGong sessions if I can't be there. Dawn still updates our helplines that we post in all groups in December. Sam is still treasurer and her skill set grows every year. Sam does a lot of admin work for VI Talk. She covers all groups in particular the book club and gardening. Sam still uploads the monthly newsletter to Mail Chimp and puts events and other information on the website. Sam updated her first aid training this year as we had taken the decision to start face to face events again. Sam is always willing to have a go at new things. Between us Sam and I put together the books for our Christmas countdown and post one each day during the lead up to Christmas. Sam makes sure that all relevant invoices, receipts and other information is printed out and held securely.

Jane has had some personal issues this year, so has struggled to fulfil some of her trustee responsibilities. Jane did however take a large role in our 2023 festive market. Once I had created the Facebook group which we decided to trial Jane did a lot of the admin work. She was also responsible for organising the raffle which as always was a huge success. I'm always blown away by the generosity of our members and friends. For another year I didn't need to do any grant applications. With support from me, Jane also runs our monthly book group over Zoom. The trustees are supporting Jane in the hope that she will be able to remain as a trustee going forward.

Lacey has continued to admin all Facebook groups particularly wellbeing and lifestyle. Along with Sam she still facilitates Wednesday evening chats. Lacey is also happy to cover wellbeing or QiGong if Dawn or I can't. Lacey is enthusiastic and supportive.

She has taken on some secretarial jobs since Dawn stepped down and takes minutes at all trustee meetings and circulates them to the other board members and saves them to One Drive. Lacey also helps with emails and other enquiries on social media. I'm hoping that Lacey will join us at upcoming face to face events.

Maxine and Kay are still supporting with social media, with Maxine still putting together the monthly planner. We are now using Buffer to schedule across all social media platforms. This is a paid service but accessible for everyone who needs to use it. Kay also admins some of the Facebook groups and created some posts for the music group during our countdown to Christmas.

Marie decided to stop facilitating Zoom chats but she does still put together the monthly newsletter. As a consequence Michael has signed up as a volunteer and is helping with some Wednesday evenings which is a great support to Sam, Lacey and myself. Kaz stepped away from facilitating Zoom chats as well due to other commitments.

Helen is still running the crochet group over Zoom and Messenger. She has had some new members which is wonderful.

As I said earlier we have made the decision to start running face to face events again and Sam and I are well into the throws of organising a 3 night break at the Cliffden Hotel in Teignmouth.

Jeanie who ran our dance classes over Zoom has offered to give up her weekend to teach the participants. I am really pleased to be getting back into offering something different.

Unfortunately the Zoom dance classes weren't very well attended, so Jeanie and I took the decision along with the other trustees to stop offering this service.

Fundraising

I've already touched on the festive market but in more detail, we had previously used a Facebook page as the platform for our stallholders but this proved to be difficult for some people. This year we agreed to trial using a Facebook group instead. I set this up just before the event and the stallholders were invited to join the group in preparation. We always run the event over a couple of weeks and during this time the stallholders post about their products. Lots of people joined the group to browse the stalls and there was a much better feel about this event, with stallholders supporting each other and encouraging members to support the stalls. It is heartwarming to see how many people support this event, whether that is paying

to have a stall, purchasing goods from stallholders, attending the Zoom presentations or buying raffle tickets. This year Sam was away but before she left for her holiday she helped me to schedule lots of posts across all platforms to encourage support for the stallholders but also support for the raffle which brings in much needed funds to the charity. Jane, Lacey, Dawn and I ran the rest of the market and there is a real buzz. We are always tired by the end but always enthusiastic to do it all again next year.

We do other smaller fundraisers during the year and this usually consists of a quiz night, sometimes a Tropic or Park Lane party along with a raffle. We are so lucky that people like Nancy from Tropic are often happy to hold a Zoom party and give us a percentage of their commission. This is very generous and very much appreciated by all.

I say this every year but I am extremely proud of the VI Talk team. We continue to strive to offer professional services and to break down social isolation. Through the work we do as volunteers we are I feel creating safe spaces where blind and partially sighted people, their families and friends can as our tag line says share ideas, information and support.

VI Talk Financial Report End of year Summary 16th February 2024

Balance Brought forward 2023/2024	£10,161.14
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INCOME for 2023/2024

Donations £ 602.63

Fundraising	£ 623.00
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TOTAL INCOME FOR 2023/2024 **£1,225.63**

EXPENDITURE

(Wellbeing Zoom) £ 375.00

Festive quiz	£	25.87
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Quiz prizes	£	5.96
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Postage	£	6.29
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Grin	£ 15.00
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Phone top up	£ 20.00
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Zoom licence	£ 287.76
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Equipment	£ 110.35
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Website domain	£ 444.00
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Audio boom	£	88.76
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Buffer	£ 115.30
First Aid	£ 222.00
Travel	£ 112.05
Accommodation	£ 318.00
Total expenses for 2023/2024	£2,146.34
BALANCE carried forward to 2024/2025	£9,240.43