



Members' Forum Notes
16 January 2019
11:30 – 13:00
Millbrooke House

Millbrooke House,
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NEWPORT, Isle of Wight, PO30 1DD
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PRESENT:

Chris Biles, Ruth Hollingshead, Miriam Tong (Chair), Liz Tuckwell

NOTE TAKER:

Chris Cane

APOLOGIES:

Chris Amy, Mel Barnes, Danielle Burgess, Helen Tunley-Smith

1 Welcome & Introductions

The CEO thanked everyone for coming along. The small turnout prompted discussion about the need to rotate Members' Forum meetings around the Island and it was agreed that we endeavour to arrange this. Possible venues to be explored: Ryde Library; Freshwater Library; The Heights Leisure Centre, Sandown; and Millbrooke House once a year.

The CEO asked if the Forum would like the previous minutes read through and they did not.

2 Responses to any Advance Questions Submitted by Members



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

Question from DB - *Would it be possible for the minibus to do a pick up and drop off from Newport Bus Station when used for the Striders walk? The reason for asking is for some of the Striders to be at Millbrook House for a 10.15 start would mean us leaving our homes extremely early to catch two buses to arrive on me. If we could be told if this is possible before the next January Stride.*

CEO Response – *Having spoken with the Member Services Manager we are endeavouring to do this and can see no logistical problems apart from parking as there isn't a designated place for the minibus to park for loading and unloading. RH said that that members could meet outside the Library by the car park. The CEO will talk to the Volunteers' Manager about this for drivers and logistics will be worked out.*

Question from LT - Please could you tell the Forum members how you are faring in your quest to obtain younger, more active volunteers, especially drivers and escorts for the various activities as sadly several of your long time volunteers are getting older and sometimes suffering with bouts of ill health. Also have you set a date for the next AGM?

CEO Response – The Volunteers' Manager and Marketing, Communications & Fundraising Manager attended a volunteer recruitment fayre at the Botanic Garden last year where they had a very positive number of enquirers and a significant proportion went on to become volunteers. This year, the lift was still out of order and one of the rooms was out of action, therefore everyone was somewhat cramped and congested and the Sight for Wight stand was right by the door and the noise level was uncomfortable. The Volunteers' Manager is going to write to Amanda Coyle at Riverside Centre strongly requesting an alternative venue and also request that it is better publicised.

LT said she is concerned about not having an escort for swimming. The CEO confirmed that she has been in conversation with the Volunteers' Manager to consider services and efforts to recruit additional volunteers to become involved in activities especially where we currently have an over reliance on one or two volunteers. These services include some audio library roles, sighted guide escorting, minibus drivers, walk leaders and buddies. Such over reliance places a large burden on those volunteers, and is also detrimental to Members as continuity of service for these activities is compromised whenever such volunteers are unavailable. LT mentioned two volunteers who have helped out with walking in the past. CEO to put these names forward to the Volunteers' Manager.

The CEO said that three volunteers came forward from the Short Story Writing Competition Award Ceremony as she referenced on the evening that she was keen to develop a Key Stage 1 education project. This shows how the wider outreach can attract volunteers.

The CEO also informed the meeting that she and the Marketing, Communications & Fundraising Manager are going for a change of software platform for the website and recently attended a meeting with Wight Computers to improve the website and make it more attractive with interlinked content.

In the February newsletter there will be dates of training opportunities for volunteers for this year. It was agreed that getting newsletters into doctors' and dentists' waiting rooms would be good. It was agreed that on the back page of the newsletter we could put a message inviting Members to pass the newsletter on in this way once they have read it.

The CEO asked if anyone had any ideas as to how we might attract volunteers then please let us know. In a previous role, the CEO had been

involved in a 'we love our volunteers' day where potential and existing volunteers were spoiled with coffee and a nice lunch. This is something that we could try here as a recruitment drive. The summer party for volunteers would still take place.

The date for the next AGM (sharing the Annual Report and Accounts for the Year ended March 2018) is Tuesday 26th February. The AGM will follow the format of the last year's meeting where there will be displays of equipment and staff will be on hand to chat about their roles and events. Refreshments will be available.

The CEO shared plans for the AGM to be moved closer to the time when the Annual Report and Accounts for the preceding financial year would be available. So the AGM with the Annual Report & Accounts for the year ending March 2019 will take place in November.

Question from CB – Raising concern that the recently advertised yoga course was again cancelled.

CEO Response – Because of insufficient interest expressed by the originally published deadline, the Member Services Manager extended the deadline by a week. Even following that extension, unfortunately CB was the only person who expressed an interest.

Following discussion with the Member Services Manager it is proposed we contact the yoga teacher and invite her to advertise with us when she is running courses around the Island. As she is welcoming of and accustomed to VI Members, with or without guide dogs, it would be preferable if members picked a date and location offered that suited them.

It was confirmed that, in future, the Member Services Manager will accept phone calls for expressions of interest rather than by form.

RH left the meeting at 12:28

CB agreed that activities don't have to be primarily for visually impaired people but for a broader audience.

LT asked if the chair yoga advertised at Millbrooke House was still happening and the CEO confirmed it was.

The CEO asked if there were any other questions. CB said he would like to explore more sporting type activities such as goal ball. CB to investigate this further. The CEO said that another activity that's growing is blind cricket and asked if CB might also explore this as he is known to be a keen follower of cricket.

ACTION: CB to investigate sporting activities.

3 Sight for Wight Future Plans Update

The CEO advised that the February Newsletter would shortly be circulated with other news of new activities. The improved and expanded content of the Newsletter is widely recognised and appreciated. It was agreed that it would be a good idea to invite members in employment to write about their jobs and work experience.

Regarding major new projects for the year ahead, the CEO identified two: the development of a Key Stage 1 education outreach programme; and securing funding to commission an outreach vehicle. The CEO is visiting a company in Sevenoaks to discuss design manufacture of bespoke vehicles in order to get quotes and a clear notion of the target cost. Once we have

a clear specification then grants can be applied for and a fundraising campaign launched.

The meeting finished at 13:00.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 17th April. Venue to be confirmed.

Date & Time of 2019 Meetings:

Wednesday 17 th April	(11:30 – 13:00)
Wednesday 17 th July	(11:30 – 13:00)
Wednesday 16 th October	(11:30 – 13:00)