

## DRAFT

To be approved at the next AGM, November 2019

**OPAL Services (Older People Active Lives)**  
*A subsidiary of*  
**Rural Community Services (West Cheshire)**

### Minutes of the 7th Annual General Meeting

November 14<sup>th</sup> 2018 at Forest Hills Hotel, Frodsham, Cheshire

#### 1 Welcome

Jane Colville, Chair of the Board of Trustees, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### Members of the Company present

Gill Clough	Trustee	Mary Diggle
Jane Colville	Trustee	Elaine Dunham
Ilene Hoyle	Trustee	Biddy Mason
Roger Parrott	Trustee	Pat Carter
Gill Swash	Trustee	
Mary Thompson	Trustee	
John Webb	Trustee	
Nikki Boardman	Trustee	
Victoria Ridgeway	Trustee	
Eula Hersey	Trustee	

#### Staff

Zoe Blocksidge  
Julie Ennis  
Linda Middleton  
Elizabeth Miles  
Brenda Platt  
Jean Toyn

#### Other attendees ....36

#### Apologies

Chris Fry  
Lauren Colville  
Morag Hutson  
Sue Jelks  
Ceri George

- 2 Minutes of the 6th AGM held on November 29th 2017 at the Barbour Institute, Tattenhall**  
Acceptance of the minutes as a true record was proposed as a true and accurate record by John Webb, seconded by Ilene Hoyle, and approved unanimously by the Members present.

### **3 Presentation of the Trustees Annual Report**

Jane Colville presented the Trustees Annual Report.

- It has been an exceptionally busy year for the charity in preparing for and implementing change, including GDPR, recruiting new trustees to the Board and forging new relationships with sponsors and funders, all of which has enabled us to enhance our range of services and build our reputation. Rural Community Services has been providing OPAL services since 2011 and in that time we have increased the range of those services each year, attempting always to address the needs of those older people and carers we provide for and their communities. We now have a much wider variety of services than ever before and an increasingly diverse and professional range of skills we have in our volunteers and trustees. This year we have really focussed our attention on building the infrastructure of the organisation in the right way to allow those services to thrive and deliver the highest quality to those who use them.
- We have introduced new talent in the new Trustees appointed during 2017/18. They are Gill Swash, Eula Hersey and Vicky Ridgway. Their appointments brings new talent which in turn give us greater opportunity to improve our governance and infrastructure, enhancing our existing professional image, and building on the way we present ourselves to the outside world.
- Our fund raising activity has again run at a high level during 2017-18 and we were delighted in early Spring to obtain a further funding award for our GoOnline service from the Westminster Foundation, together with an award from the Big Lottery (Awards 4 All). We ran some planned fundraising events through the year including a Race night, held in September. We also gained from the fundraising undertaken through the year by one or two of our individual volunteers. We benefitted from the income gained from the Chester Patchwork and Quilters Group who raffled a beautiful handmade quilt and chose us as the charity they wished to donate to. We received a welcome donation from RSK, a local business. Finally, towards the end of the year we discovered that we had been fortunate enough to be selected by Rowlinsons Solicitors, based in Frodsham, to be their Charity of the year. The relationship we are developing with Rowlinsons is very positive and we feel truly honoured to have been chosen by them for this.
- On this note, I must give my thanks to our many supporters. Firstly, of course as previously mentioned Rowlinsons Solicitors adopted us in 2018 as their Charity of the Year. It has been a very successful relationship and they have supported us in their fundraising and sponsorship. Secondly, to Frodsham Music Festival who have sponsored this event with the venue, cost and refreshments. And of course, all our sponsors who remain faithful to us throughout the year, and support us at specific events. It goes without saying that our work would not be possible without you.
- And finally, a huge thanks to our members, staff, volunteers and trustees who work harder and harder each year.
- Next year we need to constantly adapt and flex, build on the momentum we have started and plan ahead in line with demand. I am very pleased to say that due to everybody's contribution this year, there is room for optimism.

### **4 Presentation of the Financial Statement for the financial year to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2017**

Mary Thompson, Honorary Treasurer, presented the Financial Statement.

- The charity has had a good year financially, receiving a number of grants to continue with and add to the services we are able to deliver.
- We received £18,800 from Cheshire West and Chester Council to support the 6 OPAL clubs. The commissioning arrangements were changed halfway through the year such that since October 2017 our new contract has been with Cheshire Community Action. These changes have unfortunately brought about a reduction in funding of 9%.
- The OPAL Clubs themselves contributed £8419 as a management charge at the year-end towards the running of the OPAL Club service. The contribution from the OPAL Clubs is now a necessary part of the funding of this service particularly in the light of reduced funding.
- Cheshire West continued to grant funding for the Break time project. Again, there has been a reduction in funding such that last year we received £28,500, representing a shortfall of £3,500 on the previous year.
- We are very conscious that County Councils are under immense financial pressure and are grateful to Cheshire West for the support they have given the charity over the years.
- The Go On-Line project continued with the remainder of the 1-year grant of £24495 from the Duke of Westminster Foundation, which had been given in January 2017.
- At the same time, the Duke of Westminster foundation had also awarded a small grant to invest in volunteer recruitment and training, which was utilised throughout last financial year.
- In April 2017, the charity was awarded funding of £20,000 through Bright Life for New Horizons and What's Cooking, to be developed initially in the Frodsham area. These projects have seen good successes, and funding has been secured to continue and expand them during this current year.
- In January 2018, our new, Carers Connect project started, securing funding of £8000 through Cheshire West Carers Support to run initially for 12 months.
- Overall, expenditure has been kept within budget. However, with reduced funding this is becoming more and more difficult to maintain. Staff time is the greatest proportion of any budget and the company is very aware how hard the staff work to keep their increasing workload within their budgeted hours, and we are very conscious how much of their own time they give to the benefit of the organisation.
- For the clubs, 5 out of 6 ended the year with operating surpluses. Operating costs for each club vary, the main variations being rent, transport and lunch costs, so it is easier for some clubs to operate within budget than it is for others.
- The charity continues to build up its reserves for the future. We set aside funds to cover at least 6 months running costs in order to continue a service should there be any loss in funding. At 1 April, the company had a cash balance of £109,000, approximately £25,000 of which was money already received for operating projects this financial year, thus leaving £84,000 in reserve.
- The company holds its surplus funds in a Virgin Money Account and at the 31 March held £85,000 on deposit. The clubs also have savings accounts to house any surplus monies.

- A major focus of the charity is always to consider where our core funds may come from in the future. This last financial year has been particularly challenging seeing changes in the way our major income is received, with new commissioning arrangements, and a reduction in income for both the OPAL Club service and the Break time Project.
- These shortfalls in funding need to be met, and the funding group is constantly striving to find other sources of funding, as well as arranging our own fundraising events to support the organisation.
- The RCS Lottery last year brought in a profit of £1600. The Christmas raffle, collection tins, a Race Night, and a sponsored event, arranged by one of our volunteers brought in over £3000. Gift Aid brought in £325. We have recently set up a Virgin On line Giving account to which donations can be made and from which we can claim gift aid and this is already proving fruitful.
- We also received donations from outside organisations – namely £500 from RSK, and £600 from the Chester Patchwork and Quilters to be used towards a Members Event.
- The Clubs also receive local donations as well as doing their own fundraising for purchase of equipment and to pay towards outings and entertainment. During this last year one club received a legacy from a former member. This legacy has been used largely to provide much needed transport for the club at a time when local public services are being reduced.
- As always, I would like to thank all the treasures, organisers and key volunteers, who assist towards keeping accounts records and say a special thank you to Linda who has been responsible for processing the Club accounts and preparing much of the information to go to the External Examiner at the Year End. Linda has now stepped down from this role, and we have appointed a new Financial Administrator, Morag Hutson, specifically to process both the Club, and the main RCS accounts and we very much welcome her on board.
- It is at this point in the agenda I would normally introduce Sue Jelks, our external examiner, to give her financial report. Sue unfortunately has not been able to attend tonight having been called away due to a family illness. She has given a report to the trustees and there is a report within the Annual Accounts. She is satisfied that records are being kept correctly and efficiently, that they are a true record, and the accounts comply with statutory regulations.
- The next part of the agenda deals with the reappointment of the external Examiner. It is with regret that we have to accept Sue's resignation. Sue is a Sole Practitioner and new regulations have recently come in which preclude Sole Practitioners from acting as Independent Examiners. I would like to record our grateful thanks to Sue for the work she has done in this role, since the inception of the company. We have developed a good working relationship and she will be missed. Because of this, we will now be seeking to appoint a new organisation to conduct our External Examination in the future.

## **7 Retirements and Elections of Trustees**

- 7.1 In accordance with clause 29 of the Articles of Association, three Trustees were required to retire by rotation at this AGM. Accordingly, Ilene Hoyle, Jane Colville and Gill Clough agreed to retire and seek re-election. The Members present voted unanimously in favour of their immediate re-elections.
- 7.2 In accordance with clause 34 (2) of the Articles of Association, Victoria Ridgway and Nikki Boardman were required to resign and seek re-election, having been elected as trustees by the Board of Trustees during the year. The Members present voted unanimously in favour of their immediate re-appointment.
- 7.3 The Chair announced with regret the retirement of Roger Parrott, a long serving member of the Board of Trustees, having held the role of Honorary Secretary for the past 7 years. Sincere thanks and best wishes were extended to Roger by all present.

## **8 Any other Ordinary business**

The Chair was thanked for her tireless service and dedication to the organisation.

**Jane Colville**  
Chair of Board of Trustees

**Nikki Boardman**  
Hon. Secretary

**Date:** January 31<sup>st</sup> 2019