

DRAFT

OPAL Services (Rural West Cheshire)

Annual General Meeting 10

Wednesday 10th November 2021 at 5pm via Zoom

Members of the Company present:

Janet Bailey	Trustee
Kevin Bradburne	Trustee (co-opted June 2021)
Gill Clough	Trustee
Jane Colville	Trustee and Chair
Lesley Gough	Trustee (co-opted June 2021)
Brian Mackie	Trustee
Gill Swash	Trustee
John Webb	Trustee
Rhiannon Wilson	Trustee

Mary Diggle

Philip Hearfield

Mary Thompson

Staff:

Zoe Blocksidge

Julie Ennis

Janet Handley

Maria Hudson

Morag Hutson

Brenda Platt

Jean Toyn

Joy Walker

Other attendees: Rev'd Jo Brown, Juliet Compston, Tony Day, Kathy Dooley, Rebecca Ellams, Rev'd Andrew Emison, Catherine Matthews, Christine McMahon, Norma Nixey, Johanna Preston, Marjorie Pritchard, Lady Alexis Redmond, Paul Roberts, Joanne Stanton, Anne Tonge, Harry Tonge, Alan Smith, Jim Struthers, Beverley Stubbs, Harry Wright.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jane Colville, Chair of the Board of Trustees welcomed everyone to the meeting with special thanks to guests who have supported OPAL over the last year.

Lady Redmond, who has been recently appointed as the new Lord Lieutenant for Cheshire, was welcomed by the Chair and thanked for her support. Specific welcome and thanks were also offered to Rev'd Andrew Emison and Kevin Bradburne who had agreed to be guest speakers at the meeting, and to Rebecca Ellams. who is OPAL's Independent Examiner.

Trustees and Members of OPAL staff introduced themselves to the guests.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Maureen Anderson, Ian Bailey, David Briggs, Julie Connolly, Simon Eardley, Pauline Haynes, Steve Green, John Gresty, John Leather, Madeleine McCraight, Sam Moggan, Loretta Moore, Cathy Peel, Irene Skinner, Dorothy Turphy, Lynn Rischmiller, Jim Wilkinson,

3. Minutes of the 2020 AGM and matters arising

The Minutes of the 2020 AGM had been circulated with the meeting papers, having been previously checked by the Trustees. No matters of accuracy or objections to the content were noted and the minutes were unanimously accepted.

There were no matters arising,

4. Trustees Annual Report

Jane Colville presented the Trustees Annual Report for 2020/2021 and highlighted the main theme of the report of 'Adjust' Adapt and Support', reflecting the challenges of the last 12 months during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The effort and commitment shown by staff and volunteers in providing continued support to those who use OPAL services was acknowledged. The Board of Trustees were also thanked for their work in ensuring that OPAL continued to provide services safely against a backdrop of evolving guidance and regulations.

Jane acknowledged the support of external organisation and thanked them for their support over the last year, including Cheshire West and Chester Council, who provided funding for additional befriending services, and other partners who have worked with us locally.

Jane thanked Sam Moggan for her work in compiling the content and the production of the report in its current attractive format.

5. Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2021

Brian Mackie, as Treasurer, presented the main highlights from the annual accounts. Brian reported that 2020/21 had been a very challenging year financially and that the closure of clubs during the pandemic had led to a loss of income of £43000 in

membership fees. This was partly mitigated by a reduction in operating costs, resulting in a net shortfall of £8000.

Brian reported that other funding streams had been maintained and some additional funding secured. The overall impact has been an increase of £9600 in the reserves.

Brian observed that the current financial year continues to be challenging as club s and activities recommence with reduced numbers of members attending and reduced fees.

6. Report from Independent Examiner

Independent Examiner, Rebecca Ellams reported that she had no concerns with the financial practices and the accounts that she had checked and that the finances seemed to be in good order. She observed that the small increase in reserves is a good result for the end of what has been a very challenging year.

No questions were raised about the financial statements and the Independent Examiner's report and all present agreed to accept the report.

Jane Colville thanked Rebecca for her work as Independent Examiner, Brian as Treasurer and Moe Hutson for her work as Finance Administrator. Jane noted the complexity of their work in managing the finances, given the numbers of services that OPAL provides and the number of funding sources.

7. Re-appointment of Independent Examiner

Jane Colville of confirmed that the Board of trustees wished to propose that Rebecca Ellams of Hall, Livesey, Brown (Tarporley) should be re-appointed as Independent Examiner and she was unanimously appointed for 2021/22

8. Retirement and re-election of Trustees

In accordance with the Articles of Association, three Trustees were required to retire by rotation at this AGM. Gill Swash, John Webb and Rhiannon Wilson duly retired. Members present voted in favour of their immediate re-election.

9. Election of Trustees

Jane Colville reported that Ian Bailey and Janet Bailey had been co-opted on to the Board of Trustees during 2020/21. Both were formally elected as Trustees by those present at the AGM.

Jane also thanked Lesley Gough who has taken on the role of Company Secretary since September 2021 (and was co-opted as a Trustee in June 2021) and Kevin Bradburne who was also co-opted as a Trustee in June 2021.

10. Resignations

The meeting noted the resignations of Philip Hearfield as Honorary Secretary and Trustee on 31/3/2021, Ilene Hoyle who resigned as a Trustee on 31/8/2020, Victoria Ridgway who resigned as a Trustee on 14/9/2020 and Mary Thompson who retired as a Trustee on 17/11/2020.

Jane Colville thanked Philip, Ilene, Vicky and Mary for their contribution to OPAL as Trustees.

11. Any other ordinary business

On behalf of the Trustees, Staff and Guests, John Webb thanked Jane, as Chair, for the tremendous amount of work she has undertaken over the last year. Jane has expressed a wish to stand down as Chair in 2022, when a replacement Chair can be found, and intends to remain as a Trustee.

12. Presentations by Chair and Guest Speakers

Four short presentations were presented to the meeting:

12.1 OPAL services presented a short video introduced by Jane Colville as Chair and outlining some of the new activities that have taken place in the last year, temporarily replacing the regular clubs and activities during the pandemic. OPAL Reach, and Activity Packs were provided for those who would have attended the various clubs and groups normally run. Garden and doorstep visits as well as telephone befriending all took place during the time when our clubs and activities were closed.

12.2 Rev'd Andrew Emison from Frodsham and Norley Methodist Churches and Frodsham/ Helsby Open Hands outlined some of the changes and developments he had been involved with over the last 18 months and reflected on the impact of the pandemic. He reported that as a Minister, there was a rapid move towards provision of online services and a significant amount of pastoral care undertaken by Church members – both phone calls and visits. He also played a lead role in establishing the Open Hands initiative in Frodsham and Helsby. This required a significant amount of work to ensure that measures were in place for this support service to operate safely. Andrew reflected that several opportunities have fallen out of the last 18 months including partnership with social prescribers and potential for a closer relationship between health and social care and volunteering services. The partnership between the Methodist Church and OPAL is greatly valued.

Andrew reflected that although we are potentially in the recovery stage – some remain more cautious than others and this can at times lead to tensions.

Andrew closed his presentation by reflecting on the long-term impact of the pandemic and the need for long term commitment to enable communities to recover and build back up again. Well established organisations such as OPAL and the local Churches are able to provide this long-term support to communities.

12.3 The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme Organisation had provided a short slide presentation which was introduced by Jane Colville. The presentation outlined how they have adapted various elements of the Award programme during the pandemic. This included the requirements for expeditions and volunteering elements of the programme which they had to adapt and revise during the pandemic. The legacy of the Duke of Edinburgh was also acknowledged in the presentation.

12.4 Kevin Bradburne, Trustee for OPAL and Director of Operations for the Youth Federation provided a summary of how the Youth Federation has continued to support vulnerable young people over the last 18 months. In the early part of the first lockdown, the Federation had to learn to work effectively with new technology and faced challenges such as many young people not having access to lap top computers. With added help from other organisations, the Youth Federation was able to provide computers to young people in need – however, there was a significant requirement for checks and safeguarding measures to ensure the safety of online interactions.

Kevin recounted examples of some of the young people that the Youth Federation has helped and reflected that during the pandemic, they have been able to link with some they may not have reached previously. As a result, more young people than ever are linked to the Youth Federation.

Going forward, Kevin explained that there is likely to be a hybrid model of working – with some online work continuing, but with a return to face-to-face work.

Jane Colville thanked Andrew and Kevin for their guest presentations and noted the similarities and challenges faced by each of the different organisations represented that evening .

13. Close of meeting

Jane Colville gave a special note of thanks to Moe Hutson, who provided both administrative and technical support to the meeting. Finally, Jane thanked all those who had contributed and those who attended.

The meeting closed at 18.19pm

Jane Colville, Chair of Board of Trustees

Lesley Gough, Hon Secretary