

East Kilbride & District

DEMENTIA CARERS GROUP

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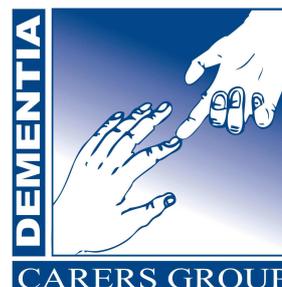
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Minutes of Annual General Meeting – 19th August 2013, in 157 Pine Cresc, Greenhills, East Kilbride

Present

Bill Craig, Bill McSporran, Liz Craig, Suzanne Bennie, Margaret McNab, Susan Bennie, Sadie Young, Janette Sime, John Vance, Brian Doig, Jean Thompson, Sam Thompson, Brian Collumb, Cllr Archie Buchanan, Veronica Scanlon, Linda Fabiani MSP, Alan Cunningham (Alexander Sloan).

1. Welcome

John Vance welcomed everyone to the 21st Annual General Meeting and ensured that those present had received a copy of the previous year's Minutes. He thanked all committee, staff and associates for their hard work and commitment over the past year.

Before proceeding further, a list of apologies was given:

Graeme Macklin, Michael McCann MP, Ann Walker, Carol Ledger, Roger Davidson, Liz Gallacher, Beth McAteer, Donna Liddiard, Sarah Boyd, Carole Richards.

2. Minutes of Annual General Meeting, 2012

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 20th August 2012 were approved by Susan Bennie and seconded by Janette Sime.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chairperson's Report

Chairman John Vance read through the key points contained in the 2013 Annual Report, which had been distributed at the meeting. Some of the highlights expanded upon included:

- We exist thanks to the generosity and support of the people of East Kilbride, and are here to support them in return. We simply would not survive without the fantastic public support we receive. We are indebted to a number of individuals, Groups and Organisations, many of whom are named in our 2013 Annual Report, but John paid a special tribute to The Robertson Trust who continued to support our core funding.
- Securing a replacement minibus had been a priority and this had been achieved. It was indicative of the Groups determination to continue ensuring our Service Users remain an active part of their community that we had committed to spending £33,600 before we had actually raised the cash! That was a "leap of faith" that was duly rewarded.
- Our care ethos saw us continue to provide regular trips and outings, as requested by our Service Users. Last year saw us provide over 260.
- We held regular social events to ensure we remain integrated within the community and provide involvement opportunities. Many of these events sold out in advance, such was their popularity.
- The Carers Support Group continues to be well attended and the Memory Café has been a great success. The Café is run jointly with the Community Mental Health Team and Alzheimer's Scotland.
- We are essentially a care provider, but as a business it is critical that we comply with legislative requirements. All Policies and Procedures are regularly reviewed and updated.
- Forward Planning is a key objective for us just now as we seek Continuous Improvement. Having received a grant from the Big Lottery, we were able to recruit the services of business consultant John McManus from MCM Associates to carry out a full independent evaluation and audit of our current service provision, along with a feasibility study for options going forward. John has previous knowledge of our Group, having worked with us during the transition from a Block Contract with the Local Authority to Direct Payments and private referrals. A big year requiring big decisions lies ahead!

Chairperson's Report (cont.)

John invited questions from those present at the meeting, either on the Annual Report or on his own verbal report. Margaret McNab asked if recruiting staff following any proposed expansion would be problematic. John said that whilst the care sector in general has problems with staff turnover showing that retention of staff is often more of a difficulty than recruiting staff, our Group had little to no staff turnover and this in turn led to continuity of service. At the Committee Meeting that preceded the A.G.M., one staff member had been recognised for reaching 10 years service. Other core care-staff have 8-9 years service each.

5. Co-ordinator's Report

Brian Doig opened by sharing a story from the book of 2 Kings in the Old Testament.

In the story, Four men with leprosy are outside their city gate, not only suffering from their terrible illness, but also suffering from the terrible famine which had a hold on Samaria.

These men were desperate, and as we join them, they are discussing their options.

“Why should we sit here waiting to die?” they asked each other. “We will starve if we stay here, but with the famine in the city, we will starve if we go back there. So we might as well go out and surrender to the Aramean army. If they let us live, so much the better. But if they kill us, we would have died anyway.”

So at twilight they set out for the camp of the Arameans. But when they came to the edge of the camp, no one was there! For the Lord had caused the Aramean army to hear the clatter of speeding chariots and the galloping of horses and the sounds of a great army approaching. “The king of Israel has hired the Hittites and Egyptians to attack us!” they cried to one another. So they panicked and ran into the night, abandoning their tents, horses, donkeys, and everything else, as they fled for their lives.

When the lepers arrived at the edge of the camp, they went into one tent after another, eating and drinking wine; and they carried off silver and gold and clothing and hid it. Finally, they said to each other, “This is not right. This is a day of good news, and we aren't sharing it with anyone! If we wait until morning, some calamity will certainly fall upon us. Come on, let's go back and tell the people at the palace.”

Like the lepers, we will have the opportunity to eat and drink wine shortly, but first of all, I want to look at the options they considered... ..

Option one which they discussed, was to go back into the city!

Looking back is something that we often do... But at what cost? Everyone will have his or her own personal feelings and memories of the past, and not all of our memories will be positive ones!

If you are coming out of a difficult, challenging or traumatic time... ..

Then simply looking back will only serve to feed your hurt! It won't help! We don't trip over things that are behind us! But we can, by looking behind us, walk into further obstacles ahead that could be avoided!

We can, by looking back, trip ourselves up, thanks to our wrong focus!

As we start a new era...

Let's not bring our past failings with us...leave them right here...**outside** the door of the year past!

Don't let your past...damage your present...and rob you of your future!!!

What is past is past...and that is exactly where we must leave it!!! In...the...past!! The four lepers spoke briefly about going back... but quickly dismissed it since it would lead to certain death!

Option two which they discussed, was to stay where they were!

As we enter a new year and a new challenge, I can't help but wonder...

How many of us are content where we are? And how many of us are content to **stay** where we are...

Settling for **less** than we **can** be???

There's a beautiful harbour in a place called Valparaiso, in Chile. Harbours are generally regarded as places of safety, but this one is strewn with the wreckage of many battered vessels.

Co-ordinator's Report (cont.)

You see, when a storm blows in from the Pacific Ocean, this particular harbour becomes so dangerous, that many ships head out into the open Ocean to ride out the storm.

Safety for them lies out in the open sea, but those who remain in the so-called safety of the harbour end up as wrecks, dashed against the walls that surround them, *the very walls that were built to protect them*.

These four lepers knew that to stay where they were, would result in death, and much as every natural instinct would tell them to curl up and give in, to surround themselves with walls, they fought against making that choice.

It is human nature to build defensive walls when challenged! I say don't just sit here biding time, waiting for the storm to pass. Whether the storms are financial, political or personal, let's tear down those walls and ride out to meet the challenges head on.

If we settle for staying where we are, then you and I become no better than trained circus fleas in a jar. You probably know that trained fleas don't need a lid to keep them in the jar. The reason is that when the trainer first puts them in the jar, he puts a lid on it and the fleas frantically jump up and down hitting their heads against it. Eventually, after a lot of headaches, they stop jumping so high and enjoy their new found comfort. Now the lid can be removed and the fleas are still held captive, not by a real lid, but by a mindset that says, "*so high and no higher*".

Has this last last year left us feeling a bit like a circus flea? Now is the time to break free. Now. If life has kicked you, let it kick you forward.

Those four lepers knew they couldn't stay where they were, and equally, they knew they couldn't go back into the city, there was no going back for them. **The four lepers decided that their only hope was to press on**, to venture into the enemy camp and meet their enemy face to face. Even there they knew that they might die, but it was the only choice left open to them.

That took tremendous courage on the part of the lepers. Firstly, despite not knowing **what** lay ahead of them, They had to decide to press on... and commit themselves to moving forward. Once the four lepers had committed themselves to moving forward, an incredible thing happened... a miracle, no less.

Their God had gone before them and dealt with the enemy, clearing the way for them to enter into a place of rest, A place where they could be nourished, a place of refreshment, A place of riches beyond the boundaries of their imagination.

The four lepers were at a crossroads and a difficult decision had to be made. They didn't stay where they were.... they didn't go back.... they pressed on, and were able to proclaim "***This is a day of good news.***" (2 Kings7:9)

We are in a privileged position where we can make a positive impact on the lives of people in need of support. We have had yet another year of doing just that despite every hurdle placed in front of us.

We should rightly be proud of our achievements... .. but like those lepers, now is the right time to stop and take stock. That is exactly why we have commissioned an independent review and audit of our service.

The past is behind us... we can learn from it for sure.

The future is ahead of us... we must march into it confidently...

Today is a gift... that's why they call it the present...

Let's use it to commit to pressing on and being the best we can be!!!

Together, we CAN make a difference. This is a day of good news and we need to share it!

Brian closed by thanking the Management Committee for their support, encouragement and leadership of the team, in the year just past, and very much in the year that lies ahead.

6. Treasurer's Report

Alan Cunningham presented the Treasurer's Report for the year 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013. This was prepared by Accountants Alexander Sloan, of which Alan is a representative.

The Annual Accounts have been prepared, approved by the Directors, and submitted to the relevant regulatory bodies (Companies House and O.S.C.R.). The Charity sector is the most regulated area of the financial sector, and he has ensured we comply with the plethora of regulations.

Alan stated that the report has an energy thrusting through it, which provides an important window when shared with funders such as the Robertson Trust. He often has problems getting reports submitted for Annual Reports, but had no such difficulty here and he commended the content.

Alan then gave an overview of income and expenditure for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013. He stated that it had been a remarkable achievement to increase income by £20,000 in the current financial climate and that despite a turning financial tide throughout the voluntary sector.

The accounts showed a surplus of £18,263 but £18,000 of this was designated for a replacement minibus, leaving the Group with an operating surplus of £263 on income of £162,018.

John Vance noted that no Management Committee member or Director had received any expenses or payments whatsoever, and that all money raised by and donated to the Group had gone directly towards ensuring we continue to provide quality care.

As Alan concluded, he commended the set of accounts submitted to him as being of a very high standard.

7. Election of Committee

The Group is keen to recruit new blood onto the Management Committee, adding new ideas and new skills. John Vance invited nominations. Anyone interested in discussing this further was invited to speak to a Committee member after the meeting. Veronica Scanlon asked about the commitment required. John said this would be whatever suited individual members, and could range from just a few hours a month to serving on sub-groups as we move forward following the evaluation.

8. Any Other Competent Business

None.

John Vance gave a final round of thanks to Brian and the team of staff and volunteers, to his fellow Committee members, and to the people of East Kilbride for their invaluable support.

Brian Collumb introduced himself as the newest Committee member and volunteer driver of the minibus for daycare. Brian sees it as a genuine privilege to witness the staff teams undying love for the people who attend Pine. He also sees it as a privilege to be part of the Committee.

John closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and inviting them to remain behind for refreshments and a chat.