

**Minutes of the meeting of Support 4 Sight**

**Held on 10th November 2021 by Zoom**

**Present: Chair Janine Collier (JC), Vice-Chair John Thompson (JT), Melvin Caton (MC), Graham Routledge (GR), Michael Fernandes (MF)**

**Apologies: Pat Arnold, Andrew Streeter,**

**In attendance: CEO, Sharon Schaffer (SS)**

1. **Chair’s instruction**

The Chair welcomed everyone, apologised for the delay in circulating the minutes from the last meeting and thanked SS for pulling together the minutes on her behalf.

The Chair shared that she will be undergoing surgery in the next few months and that she would appreciate any additional help and support that other Trustees are able to offer to Sharon, S4S and the beneficiaries whilst she is unable to be as hands on as she would like to be.

1. **CEO’s Report**

The Chair thanked SS for her report.

Finance and Fundraising: Unfortunately, the application for Stage 2 of the CAF Resilience Fund (£104k) was unsuccessful. As the focus had been on securing this and running the services, no other fund raising activities have taken place / grants obtained in the last six months. However, SS has also lowered outgoings as there are two vacancies which SS has not yet recruited - Cheryl’s role and the Fundraiser. Therefore, finances are secure at present.

The aim is to have 6 months reserves (c. £126k) and the financial projection suggests that at the end of the financial year, reserves should be c. £140k.

MF noted that fundraising is harder now than it has ever been with many traditional fundraising activities (e.g. tin shaking, coffee mornings) hindered by Covid and grants harder and harder to secure and, when secured, less than sought.

SS has attended a Seminar with Rachel Hales, Get Synergised which was aimed at helping Charities build relationships with Businesses. She would like to move more towards securing more unrestricted funds though business relationships and community fundraising. However, this will take time.

MF noted that over Covid there has been quite a lot of movement with new businesses moving in and some moving out, especially at Shire Hill and shops in the Town Centre. He suggested that someone should re-visit businesses in the community and build community relations and new contacts. **Action 0001:** once in place, FDM to re-visit businesses in communities, build community relations and new contacts.

Currently, SS’s focus is:

* working on the budget for FY 2022/2023. 60% of funding has already been secured. JC asked MC to touch base with SS to finalise the budget to come back to the Board of Trustees for approval. **Action 0002:** MC to work with SS to finalise Budget for Board of Trustees approval.
* working on a six month Fundraising Strategy with input from Fundraising consultant, Ruth Mulandi and
* recruiting for a BD Fundraiser, in the expectation that they will be in place ahead of the next FY, will draft a viable post-Covid fundraising strategy, and deliver at least the 40% deficit. Interviews will take place on 3 December.

There are a few fundraising events that are planned to keep things ticking over, e.g. 3 places on the Ride London Bike Ride (100 miles) which is going through Essex. Visionary (the umbrella organisation for all Sight Loss Charities) is launching a 250 campaign (250 start to lose their sight every day and individuals commit to 250s whatevers (e.g. lengths of a swimming pool, laps of a garden) to raise money. **Action 0003:** SS to touch base with Contamac to discuss their intentions.

Staffing and Recruitment: SS reported that the staff are fantastic – a brilliant team. They go above and beyond on a daily basis.

The ad for the **Fundraising and Development Manager** has been placed, closing date 26 November, interviews 3 December. Interviews will be conducted by SS, Ruth Mulandi and JT.

There is a need for someone to look after the Volunteers in Saffron Walden (when the Volunteer Co-ordinator was made redundant, Sue King, Support Engagement Worker**,** took on this role in Chelmsford as well as her other roles and responsibilities. However, there is no **Volunteer Co-ordinator** in Saffron Walden. In addition to her Support Engagement Work, SS would like to invite Sue to manage Volunteers across all locations. She will audit where we are, what is needed, and manage volunteer engagement. SS was clear that this is important in breaking down an artificial East / West divide. **Decision**: Trustees support the proposal that SS discuss Volunteer Manager role with Sue.

A free-lancer has assisted with the Autumn phone around project. **Decision**: Trustees support the proposal that SS offer further free-lance work subject to requirements and available budget.

JC reported that she had drafted the Trustee JD and had received comments from SS. JT said that he had not received this. **Action 0004:** JC to re-send JD to JT for comment.

Geography: SS was clear that she wants to build a presence all-over our region. It is important that S4S remains ever present with activities and relationships all over rather than focussed on two centres (SW and Chelmsford).

Social Media: MF suggested that we tag the tourist office in social Media posts. **Action 0005:** MF to discuss with Zsuzi.

Operational Plans: **Chelmsford:** SS advised that HOT have been agreed to lease **premises** 5 days per week in the newly refurbished Age Concern. It is not ready yet. JC will ask if anyone at Tees will review the Lease, once received. **Services:** There are 40 people waiting for a home visit. It is hoped that, if the heating is fixed, service users will be able to attend the premises for equipment demos and consultations. This should help tackle the waiting list. **Action 0006:** JC to ask whether anyone at Tees will review the Lease

1. **Services**

Talking Newspaper: GR observed that Mike is doing a brilliant job and asked SS to extend his thanks. **Action 0007:** SS to report back feedback and thanks to Mike.

Service Development: **Database phone-around:** SS reported that the phone around project will be completed by November 19 and thanked all staff and free-lancer Liz Sandwell for assisting with this. **Xmas hampers:** These are now unlikely to happen as the sponsorship deadline has been missed.

Christmas festivities: **Trustee, Staff and Volunteer Christmas lunch:** Cottage Place,Chelmsford, 15th December. JMC confirmed that she can attend. **Volunteers and Service Users Christmas party:** SW, 14th December. GR confirmed that he can attend. **Volunteers and Service Users Christmas party**: Chelmsford, 22th December. GR confirmed that he can attend. **Action 0008:** Trustees to advise SS which events they can attend.

1. **AOB**

Sightline: SS asked JC to put 150-300 words together for Sight Line. **Action 0009:** JC to send SS words for Sight Line plus photo by 12.11.2021. **Decision:** Trustees will take it in turns to place something short in Sight Line on rotation.

Annual Report: SS asked JC to put some words together for Annual Report. Next year, we will aim for a more Infographic report which is more meaningful to stakeholders, sponsors etc. **Action 00010:** JC to send write report for Annual Report by 19.11.2021.

Comms to Staff: The Board discussed how to improve communications post-Board Meetings to Staff. JC expressed that she supports transparency and proposed that Minutes to be circulated, subject to redaction for confidential staffing / sensitive strategic reasons. These could be circulated not just to staff, but also on the Website so that Service Users, Stakeholders and Communities have access in addition. **Decision:** JC will circulate Minutes to Trustees after Board Meetings for comment. Once this has been done, JC will send to SS who will circulate to staff, and arrange to be uploaded to Website. Board will formally approve the Minutes at the following Board Meeting.

Subcommittees: The Board discussed the need for Subcommittees to consider, in greater detail, for example, Finance and Income generation; Quality Outcomes and Complaints; HR, and Health and Safety; Marketing and Communications, JC confirmed that the Constitution permits advisory but not decision making committees. There was some discussion about the HOTs of each sub-committee and the needs to ensure that there are not too many committees for a small organisation, also who (Trustees, staff, volunteers, service users etc) would be on them. As it was clear that this needed further detailed discussion, it was agreed to hold a separate meeting to discuss this in detail. **Decision:** Sub-committees should be set up. Further detailed discussion to be held to consider what committees should be established, what their remit should be and who should sit on each.

Bank signatories: PA is now a signatory on the bank account.

Next Meeting: 15 December, time TBC (?10am), Tees