



## **Minutes of the Twenty Fourth Annual General Meeting Thursday 29 September 2022 at 12.30pm The Holiday Inn, Guildford.**

**Present:** Carol Sacchett (Chair), Evelyne Collins (Trustee), Gill Simmons (Trustee), David Gunn (Treasurer), Jo Matthews (Fundraising Manager), Sharon Spurdle (Operations Manager), Judith Hider (Group Coordinator), Saj Hussain (Mayor of Woking & Vice-Chair of Surrey County Council), Sue Doran (Mayor of Spelthorne), John Doran, John Ward (Mayor of Waverley) Gillian Ward, Simon Waugh (Mayor of Elmbridge), Heather Waugh, Keith Hopkins (Member) and Lesley Hopkins, Alison Price (Volunteer), Colin Page (Member) and Sandra Page.

### **1. Welcome and apologies for absence – Carol Sacchett (CS)**

CS welcomed everyone to the AGM. CS specifically welcomed Saj Hussain (Mayor of Woking & Vice-Chair SCC), Simon Waugh (Mayor of Elmbridge), Sue Doran (Mayor of Spelthorne) John Ward (Mayor of Waverley) and their respective consorts.

Apologies had been received from the following: Pallu Modi (Trustee), Clive Moon (Trustee) and Philippa Mitchell (Trustee) Jeff Shaw (Member) and Janette Turner (Volunteer)

### **2. Minutes of the twenty-third AGM of TALK held on 30 September 2021**

These were agreed.

### **3. Chair's report – Carol Sacchett**

CS reported that TALK has shown the necessary adaptability and agility to ensure continued regular support for its members. From April to October 2021, the weekly group meetings remained closed in line with government guidelines. During this period, TALK staff continued to support group members and volunteers through weekly activity packs, regular phone calls and updates, maintaining a sense of community and connection. In October 2021, following thorough risk assessments, the groups re-opened at all four venues (Walton-on-Thames, Ashford, Guildford and Knaphill).

CS expressed her thanks to Sharon Spurdle (Operations Manager), Alison Wainwright (Groups Coordinator) and Gill Simmons (Trustee, Health and Safety Lead) for all their hard work in making sure that the groups could open safely, in line with government and venue guidelines, and adapting as government advice changed. CS also thanked all volunteers, group leaders and group members for their commitment to TALK over the past two years

CS reported that the groups are now fully operational with no restrictions. Whilst our overall numbers of both members and volunteers fell slightly post-COVID, these are now increasing again. Importantly, several new members have been welcomed into our groups, some of whom had been waiting for over a year to come to TALK. CS expressed her pleasure that TALK is now able to offer the important face-to-face support to as many people with aphasia as possible, helping reduce social isolation and encouraging community engagement.



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CS expressed a special thank you to Hazel Steel, a founder member and longstanding trustee of TALK who retired from TALK at the start of 2022. TALK owes a huge debt of gratitude to Hazel, who contributed so much time and energy to TALK for over 20 years. Her quiet wisdom and total commitment to TALK guided us in our work.

CS thanked Gudrun Evans and Valerie Blake, two of TALK's more recent Trustees, who stepped down due to relocations.

CS also thanked Alison Wainwright who retired from the Group Coordinator role in April 2022. Alison was an invaluable staff member, providing weekly support to group leaders, volunteers and members. Alison continues to work with TALK on developing the website. CS also formally thanked Martyn Batten for his ongoing contribution to the design and development of the website

CS thanked Jo Matthews, TALK's Fundraising & Publicity Manager, for her continued promotion of TALK among potential and existing funders. We started and ended the 2021-22 financial year on a strong footing and are confident that TALK remains in a good position to continue its work and meet its objectives. CS thanked all our funders and donors, large and small for their continued support for our work.

CS thanked the Board of Trustees for their contribution. Particular thanks go to David Gunn, Treasurer, for managing the financial affairs of the charity. Projects completed this year include: update and development of TALK's website; adoption of a publicity and marketing strategy; review of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy; review and update of our Data Protection and Health and Safety policies.

CS welcomed Judith Hider, who has recently joined as Groups Coordinator.

CS reported that TALK continues to work closely with other organisations that provide support for people with aphasia across the UK. All our new volunteers receive initial training from our Aphasia Alliance partner organisation, Dyscover. All volunteers also completed online Safeguarding training during the past year. Sharon Spurdle continues to work closely with local speech and language therapy services to ensure the quality of our work and maintain referral rates.

#### **4. Election of new Trustees – Carol Sacchett**

CS declared that there were none for election this year. CS acknowledged that trustee recruitment remains difficult and urged those present to spread the word amongst their contacts.

#### **5. Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 – David Gunn**

DG reported that he accounts had been audited by Haines Watts Esher. He confirmed that they had been satisfied with the 2021-22 accounts. A copy of the annual report and financial accounts for 2021-22 is available on TALK's website.

DG confirmed that TALK is stable financially.



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## **6. Operations Manager's Report – Sharon Spurdle (SS)**

SS reported that although the numbers were lower at the groups following the restart, attendance at the groups was very good. SS said that many other groups had struggled following COVID-19 and we are pleased that we are back open and operating as before. Current group numbers are: 51 members and 52 volunteers, with two people on the waiting list.

SS commented that, as TALK is a volunteer-led organisation, we need to acknowledge the time, commitment and hard work put in by our volunteers themselves, and also as a charity, the time spent to recruit, train and manage our volunteer workforce.

SS reported that on-boarding training by Speech and Language Therapy professionals was provided to all new volunteers. Ongoing training for existing volunteers is also provided, including Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, and First Aid.

SS was pleased to see that 80% of our members who responded to the Satisfaction Survey 2021, advised that TALK made them feel more confident, and that 62% of our members who responded to the Satisfaction Survey said it helped in their recovery.

SS also reiterated the importance of our partnership with the Aphasia Alliance.

## **7. Fundraising and Public Awareness Report – Jo Matthews (JM)**

JM reiterated that things were stable with regards to Grant fundraising and that there was good recovery following the pandemic.

JM said that her focus during 2021-22 had been on maintaining the existing funders. Going forward the focus will be on developing a Community Fundraising strategy, including participation in charitable events such as the London Marathon and Ride London etc. These opportunities had disappeared during COVID and now are to be developed again.

## **8. Any other business**

Saj Hussain (Mayor of Woking) commented that he had always found Alison Wainwright to be enthusiastic when he came into contact with her in Knaphill.

Lesley H asked whether TALK ever applied to be local Charity of the Year anywhere, such as Squires Garden Centres. JM responded that TALK had successfully applied for such opportunities in the past. JM commented that TALK would welcome nominations from members/volunteers in the community for any such schemes.

Lesley H thanked TALK for the activity packs that were sent out during the groups closure period in the pandemic, reporting that it made a difference to her husband. SS said that it very much kept members engaged and reminded people that all activities are available on the website.



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Heather Waugh, Consort of the Elmbridge Mayor commented that there was more public awareness of aphasia at the moment and that this was a good thing.

Susan Doran (Mayor of Spelthorne) congratulated TALK for doing so well during the pandemic and supporting the members' mental health as well.

Colin Page's wife said a huge thank you to TALK, commenting that her husband loves attending the group.

## **9. Date, time and place of next AGM**

Date for 2023 AGM to be agreed.

**The AGM closed at 12.40pm.**