

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Shropshire Disability Network on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at Haughmond View Medical Practice, Severn Fields Health Village, Sundorne Road, Shrewsbury SY1 4RQ commencing at 3:30pm.**

**Present** – 19 – See attached list. **Apologies** – 27 – See attached list.  
Sonia Roberts took the Chair.

← **Welcome**

Ruby Hartshorn briefed the attendees on fire safety and domestic arrangements; she said that Jim Hawkins as well as Peter Staples our newsletter editor would be taking photographs so if any one wished not to be on them to say.

← **Minutes**

Russell stated the minutes were presented to our members meeting of December 2013 and agreed as a true record. To get us in line with holding a separate AGM he was presenting them at this meeting for ratification. **Minutes of the last meeting were agreed with the addition of the location – Mears Shrewsbury. There were no matters arising.**

← **Shropshire Inclusive Dance did a short film & presentation**

Rachel and Ray directors of SID introduced themselves and explained how SID was set up and developed. Two dancers from SID then enthralled us with a very artistic dance presentation. This was followed by a Question and Answer session about it.

← **Chairpersons' Annual Report**

Sonia reflected on the work of SDN during the past 12 months. Sonia talked about the importance of social media and how well SDN had been doing with Twitter.

She paid tribute to Ruby and Fund-raising group for their hard work. Premier Inn realised how powerful we are as a result of Social Media. Sonia said while many other organisations had been involved in trying to get “one access for all” after negotiations they engaged with us, agreed to meet and via careful negotiations, Shropshire Council supported the application for a ramped access enabling everyone “equal access” and not be forced to use the an entrance round the back of the building.

She was excited to reveal that SDN had been awarded some funding to manage the communications part of a sports project -to reach communities of disabled people. Being a member of Shropshire Providers Consortium (SPC) had enabled us to be part of a joint bid “Reaching Communities” Part of this project includes the appointment of a Sports Inclusion Officer for Shropshire.

We are THE place for information for people with a disability in Shropshire & we do this via two prime tools -a website and our newsletter-”YourVoice”. It is important that we keep our website up to date, making changes as appropriate, enabling it to be “fit for purpose. This means periodically refreshing it.

We refreshed the web site but couldn't do that without professional help, so we are thankful to Paul Nash for his expertise & guidance. It is looking good now, but we are thinking of a further refresh to make it even more flexible to users.

Membership is growing, but our customer management system is still not where we want it to be, so we apologise for this. It is hard work to keep records & we are looking at better ways of managing it, we are lucky to have Philip Kent doing a good job as Membership Secretary.

Ian Roberts is Outreach Officer for Telford & is leading the awareness days at the Princess Royal hospital and Morrison’s collection at Wellington as well as attending many meetings in that area that needs SDN representation. Ian was thanked for all He is doing for us.

At Oswestry the same applies, we accept it's difficult for people with a disability to come to us so we try to take our meetings to them. We trialled Craven Arms & recognise the need to grow South of the county.

The line up of speakers has been fantastic not only today -SID amazing but also Sue Bott is here.

Russell has done a super job organising & contacting speakers. David Rees “Why Do You Pretend to Be Normal” was very enlightening and

gave us lots to think about. Lizzie Evans from Headway Shropshire talked about the problems with a hidden brain injury.

Dr Sal Riding came along & talked about dementia awareness. 31 people at that meeting became Dementia Friends.

Lin Stapley came along with her Guide Dog "Woody" & She talked of the challenge a blind person faces as well as the training guide dogs and prospective owners take before having a guide dog.

We were delighted to welcome Nick Beighton who is currently competing in the Invictus games, he talked about his life in the Army, and the accident that caused him to lose both legs when he stepped on an IDU in Afghanistan & life since that dreadful day. Many of you will recall we had been trying to get Nick along to a meeting for 2 years but training & then being chosen for the Paralympics 2012 had prevented him from coming. Now he has 3 gold medals to his name and has completed the Beeline Britain challenge.

Ben Rowling from Newport Shropshire brought along his wheelchair racer & told about his life, and why he wanted to be a wheelchair racer. Now he is looking forward to achieving his goal of going as a competitor to Rio Paralympics in 2016.

SDN member, Tony Lawrence did a talk & practical session on Tai Chi. This can be beneficial for people with arthritis.

Russell was thanked for his work. So the bar is set very high with so many exceptional speakers and we will have many more next year.

← **Agree Annual Accounts & Treasurer's Report**

Ruby went through each item on the accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2014. She noted donations were down but also fund-raising was down, we are having collections at stores again. All "designated funding" had been used as allocated for by "Awards For All" funding & She had received confirmation that the grant was now signed off. Advertising on web site is a new way of raising funds & going well.

"Your Voice" cost was slightly down due to a blip as only 10 copies were posted to those with no IT access as opposed to 11. However we bought a stock of postage stamps before the price increase.

Quarterly meeting costs all have to be met. We have had some venues for free. We also have a laser printer to maintain, promotion materials to purchase. The main equipment purchased this year was the projector.

Ruby said, She was sure the more we raise awareness of SDN, the easier it will be for us to get the necessary funding to operate. She was looking & willing to do presentations about the work of SDN to any organisations looking for a speaker. She has given herself a target of 6 talks next year.

Ruby explained that these accounts had been prepared in accordance with regulations for an Unincorporated Charity (ie registered charities who are not registered with Companies House) with gross income of less than £250,000 Having taken advise instead of Whittingham Riddell Charity department, instead of 7 sheets we have just 3 sheets of paper detailing the financial records as per reporting requirements of charity. Proposed by Marian Youens seconded Russell Price that we adopt the accounts as presented & accepted by the Management Committee.

## **6 Election of Officers**

Sonia spoke about challenges faced by the board, we have lost two members, we are all volunteers in a very small team & we are looking to beef up board. Ideally by engaging with some younger people.

Sonia had informed the Board of her intention, due to family commitments to stand down as chairperson but no one had come forward. Ruby asked that She do another year. Sonia will stand down in September 2015, this means we need to appoint a Vice Deputy Chairperson asp. It was seconded by Marian Youens that Sonia stays for a further 12 months.

## **7 Tea/coffee break**

- i. **Sue Bott guest speaker** gave a witty and insight about life around Westminster. Copies are available from our secretary on request & via our website.

Her speech is attached.

**i. Chair closing remarks**

Sonia thanked SID & said we need to look at expanding our work in the arts and dance, may be we should go for funding as we done with sports.

We continue our Aims to support people with disabilities, have inspiring speakers and via peer groups keep people informed. Looking forward to it.

**The refreshments & raffle raised £34.50.** Thank you to those who donated prizes.

A vote of thanks was given by Board Member, June Jones. She thanked Sonia for all her hard work, for being an excellent leader, driver with inspirational ideas. It is not easy leading a group & Sonia does this so well, we are fortunate to have her. This vote was formally endorsed by those at the meeting.

**The next meeting is on:**

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at a venue to be decided,** agenda to be circulated nearer the date.

..... Approved

.....Prepared by

