

MINUTES OF VALERIE TAYLOR TRUST (VTT) ANNUAL MEETING
SATURDAY 12TH MAY 2018

The meeting was held at St. Paul's Church Centre, Rossmore Road, London, NW1 6NJ

Trustees Present:

Ben Clackson (Chairman), Mokhtar Hossain, Bryan Whitty, Janet Ivin, Jahangir Alam

Valerie Taylor, Brian Woodgate (Administrator) and 41 members and supporters were also present. 19 apologies were received.

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all present and thanked the speakers for coming a long way to speak; Karen Heaslip from Ireland, Glen McGhee from Glasgow and Jan and Roger Varney from Cornwall, and of course, Valerie herself from Bangladesh.

He also thanked Anwar and Kokhon and all their helpers for the delicious curry lunch that was served.

The Chairman said that there had been two very sad deaths this year, Firstly in February Nick Lack (a former Secretary) died after a long illness. Secondly, in March our Chairman, Bertie Woolnough died very suddenly. Several people attended the funerals for Nick and Bertie.

TRIBUTE TO BERTIE WOOLNOUGH

Bertie's untimely death was a huge shock to all at VTT, particularly to the Trustees, whose meetings Bertie has chaired since VTT began.

A short time of silence then took place for people to remember Bertie, and for them to give thanks.

The Chairman acknowledged the huge input of both Bertie and his wife, Daphne to fundraising for VTT in their village of Coombe Bissett, providing the perfect platform for Valerie's talks and presentations on her fund-raising tours.

Bertie's experience of Fundraising led him to make production of an attractive Spring Newsletter a major priority.

Bertie chaired the AGM and Trustee's meetings for ten years, and was always on time and well prepared, and was committed to the best interests of CRP and the people it served.

At this point in the meeting a specially commissioned painting was presented to Daphne in recognition of Bertie's long-term commitment to VTT and CRP. Additionally the picture is a mark of our sadness at Bertie's death, and our sympathy with Daphne and her family for their loss. The artist was a mouth painter, Al-Amin, a former patient at CRP

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman had already spoken about the importance of the Spring Newsletter, and at the time of his death, Bertie had already made arrangements for its printing.

Although now living in New York, Helen Mortimer is now the editor and thanks were expressed for her input to it, eliciting the contributions and putting the Newsletter together.

Bertie had also guided the Trustees through two intricate administrative matters during this past year. One was preparation for the data protection regulations that come into force

later this month. Special thanks were given to Brian Woodgate who did all the preparatory work of finding out about the regulations and preparing an audit of the information that the VTT currently holds about their supporters, and documenting how we use it.

The other difficult matter was about Safeguarding Policies. In view of adverse publicity about a few employees of other charities abusing vulnerable children and adults while serving overseas, this led to the Charity Commission asking charities like VTT whether they had adequate policies in place.

However, the Charity Commission later clarified their view of organisations like VTT that do not work directly with vulnerable groups, but fund other organisations that do, i.e. CRP in our case. A check had to be made to satisfy VTT that CRP has adequate safeguarding policies and procedures, and following a check with Shafiq, the CEO of CRP, he sent a copy of their Protection Policy for Children, which has been in operation for three years. Shafiq also agreed that a policy would be developed for the protection of vulnerable adults.

The Chairman concluded his report by thanking those who give to VTT regularly through Standing Orders, and stated that this regular giving is really the foundation for everything we do.

A certificate was presented in recognition of amazing fundraising totalling £45,000 by the United Reformed Church in Daventry. Likewise, a Certificate was presented to Liz Timms for all her hard work in producing two books outlining the work and history of CRP, namely, "Journeys" and the newly published book "Reaching Higher."

ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION

In the absence of Stuart Jefferys, the current Treasurer, the Chairman presented the report prepared by Stuart.

2017/18 had been a very good year for VTT financially.

The total income was £269,000 and with costs of just £3,000 there was a net income of £266,000. This is in line with income levels immediately following the Rana Plaza disaster. The difference was that 58% of funds raised in 2017/18 were raised directly by CRP from corporate donors who sent the funds via VTT. Although such funds passed through VTT accounts, and are included in results, they were not actually "raised" by VTT. Excluding these funds, the income levels matched those of two years ago, and were in fact a little higher than last year.

£272,000 was sent to CRP in the year and a further transfer will be made in June.

A gentle reminder was made about Restricted Funds. CRP has agreed to use all unrestricted funds sent by VTT for the poorest Spinal Cord injury patients, Prosthetics and Orthotics, the mother and child unit, and the inclusive school. Where possible, VTT sends funds unrestricted so that CRP (who are the experts on the ground) can choose which of those needs is greatest. Although there may occasionally be good reasons to restrict large donations, it creates extra obligations for the organisations, and restricts CRP's choices. A request was made to the meeting that if possible, please make donations unrestricted.

The Chairman concluded by expressing thanks to Stuart for his efficient work as Treasurer. Due to work and family commitments he needs to step down from this role. Despite a number of people being approached to take on this role, at present a successor has not been found. An appeal was made to the meeting for someone to take over,

Copies of the Draft Annual Report to the Charity Commission were available for those attending the AGM. The report highlighted the continuing contributions of Primark for the

development of the Prosthetics and Orthotics courses being offered by CRP. Despite the adverse publicity that Primark received at the time of the Rana Plaza Disaster, five years later they are still financially helping CRP, using VTT as a conduit for their funds.

ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

The Constitution of VTT states that each year one third of the elected Trustees must stand down, although they are then eligible for re-election. Currently we only have seven elected Trustees, and one third of seven rounds down to two, so Kokhon and Philomena Commons are standing down, but are willing to re re-elected. In addition Janet Ivin and Jahangir Alam are willing to be re-elected, having previously been co-opted. Janet is already acting as Secretary and therefore actually needs to be an elected Trustee. This will take the number of elected Trustees to nine again. As no other nominations had been received, it was declared that these four people were elected. An appeal was made for anyone to express an interest in acting as a Trustee.

SPEAKERS

JAN AND ROGER VARNEY

Jan and Roger have been visiting CRP for many years; Jan is a trained nurse and Roger has a background in running day centres for people with learning difficulties.

They reported on their 2018 visit to CRP, the purpose of which was primarily to supervise the laying of poly-flooring in the Operating Theatres. The flooring had been laid by a Bangladeshi company and Jan and Roger were suitably impressed by the quality of the work. It was partly paid for by a NATO grant. Jan reported that they had applied for a NATO grant last year; these grants are awarded to small charities. They said that the form filling was very difficult but that Bertie had been most helpful with this task. They were thrilled when the news came to say that a grant for 9,000 euros had been granted. They went to Brussels to collect the cheque just a week prior to their visit to CRP this year.

They are now applying for a Global Rotary grant to replace four pieces of equipment, so together with the Neuro-surgeon at CRP an audit was carried out to determine the most essential equipment currently needed. This was decided to be an operating light specific to spinal surgery, an anaesthetic machine including a ventilator, vaporiser and patient monitor, an operating table with spinal and orthopaedic attachments and an autoclave.

Jan also worked with Sunil who keeps monthly records regarding infections in the Operating Theatre, i.e., how many operations had been carried out and how many infections and organisms had been identified.

This information will provide evidence on equipment replacement priorities, which are likely to be financed by a Rotary US Grant.

There were a total of 324 patients admitted to CRP from January to December 2017, 138 patients were admitted with pressure ulcers, which is 42.6% of the total patients admitted. The total number of patients admitted to CRP with pressure ulcers from Government Hospitals was 58, and the total number of patients admitted to CRP with pressure ulcers from private hospitals was 45. Re-admission of ex-CRP patients with pressure ulcers was 23, and out of country patients admitted with pressure ulcers were 12.

These pressure ulcers can take 18 months to 2 years to heal at CRP before proper treatment can begin. This places an additional heavy workload on the nursing staff at CRP.

To address this concern a pressure ulcer awareness month was held at CRP during March this year.

Before returning home Jan suggested a conference next February to encourage government hospitals to adopt better procedures. This will probably be known as the “Stop the pressure campaign.”

Roger then talked about SCIDAB (Spinal Cord Injury Development Association, Bangladesh), expressing particular concern that toilets in the community and villages are not accessible to wheelchair users, and SCIDAB will raise this with Water Aid (who has funded the construction of the toilets).

KAREN HEASLIP

Karen, an Occupational Therapist working in Mental Health, has been visiting CRP since 2010. It was in 2013 that she discovered, and was appalled, that the occupational therapists were not really interested in mental health, but since then interest has started to grow, and the aim was made to have a day centre where patients could go.

In March this year she returned to help establish a mental Health Clinic at CRP as in December 2017 a grant was obtained from the Kadoorie Charitable Foundation to open up a Day Centre for three years, and this has now been established at Gonokhbari. She reported that the Centre is flourishing and the patients made a poster for World Mental Health Day, about giving hope to patients. Karen also mentioned how good the new accommodation for volunteers at Savar now is.

GLEN MCGHEE

Glen has been working in the field of Orthotics and Prosthetics for more than 40 years. He began by explaining the distinction between prosthetics and Orthotics; Prosthetics is the making of a part of the body (e.g., a leg or an arm), whereas Orthotics is the support of a body part with splints and braces.

Glen first went to Bangladesh in 1985 with the Director of ARTHAG to the Farmgate site for two weeks to look to see if it was possible to set up a small training in appropriate Orthotic and Prosthetic course.

He returned to Bangladesh in 1987 to set up a course through CRP (as there was insufficient space in the Farmgate site to set up training). This course was for one year for eight people from seven organisations throughout Bangladesh. This course was completed in 1989. Glen visited the CRP site in Savar at the end of 1990.

Glen did not manage to get out to CRP again until 2009/2010 when he visited and worked for five months with the Orthotic and Prosthetic department, which at that time was very small. Four trained people had just returned from being trained in India, and there were also three technicians in the department.

During his visit in 2009 he found that Prosthetics and Orthotics had started developing, but he explained to us that it is a huge step anywhere to start a course due to the shortage of qualified international teachers.

Further visits were made in 2012 and 2014 to support and help with the development of the P&O department.

Following the Rana Plaza disaster in 2013 Primark has been funding a course at CRP and bringing in overseas teachers. The first three-year diploma course started in 2014 with ten students; these students qualified in January 2018, and are now employed as staff at CRP, either in Savar, Mirpur or Chittagong.

In the next two years 20 more trained graduates will have completed the course.

Glen explained that prosthetic and orthotics is not a one-off treatment. Those receiving the treatment are mainly young amputees and therefore will need long-term monitoring through life.

Glen concluded by saying that he is always grateful to go out to Bangladesh to see the development over the years and hopes to return later this year/early next year. He thanks Valerie and CRP for allowing him to do what he wants to do.

VALERIE TAYLOR

Valerie began by saying how lovely it is to be back and thanked everyone for coming to the AGM, appreciating the long journeys that many had made to be there.

She extended her thoughts to Daphne and family, thanking them for their support over the years. The funds raised are testament to Bertie's commitment. She said that the decision had been made at CRP to name the newly renovated gardening area after Bertie.

Valerie said she appreciated Ben Clackson taking over as Chairman

She also acknowledged the services of Nick Lack, David Newell and John Lanzer, all now sadly deceased.

Valerie thanked Liz Timms for recording the history of CRP in the newly published book "Reaching Higher" and said that this has been dedicated to the memory of David Newell. She felt it had been beautifully written and put together.

Valerie outlined CRP's connection with the Rohingya refugee crisis, saying that CRP are involved in supplying wheelchairs and prosthetics and orthotics. Due to very strict security in operation at present, only eight people can attend at any one time at CRP Chittagong. Two new donor groups have come forward to meet the costs incurred by CRP for providing these rehabilitation services.

Valerie acknowledged the generosity of Bangladeshis in feeding and caring for the huge number of Rohingya refugees that have now arrived.

A Bangladeshi lady was asked how Bangladesh could take so many refugees when it has such a huge population itself. Her response was: "when we have a population of 160 million people, 1 million more is no problem!" A new problem that has arisen for the refugees in Bangladesh is that their camp is situated on the wild elephants "migration" route, and sadly there have been some casualties.

Valerie reported that she has been discussing with David and Mike from the Rotary Club in Rochdale the exciting possibility of trying out a new material they have developed for making grow-bags. This material can draw in evaporated (and therefore salt-free) seawater. The aim is to try these grow-bags in Bangladesh close to the coast, and if successful, these grow-bags could be a source of income for rehabilitated patients.

During her recent visit to Melbourne, Valerie was pleased to meet up again with three former members of CRP staff who are doing their doctorates in Australia. Although there is little chance that they will return to CRP she was encouraged that they still want to be involved with CRP. These therapists had arranged a fundraising occasion for 30 people, and a Bangladeshi GP who has worked for 40 years in Melbourne said he would like to see a much bigger group of Bangladeshis at the next fund raising meeting.

A fairly new cause of tetraplegia in Bangladesh is that young girls get their ornas (scarves) caught in rickshaws.

This has opened up the opportunity for Shoyeb a very experienced Physiotherapist on CRP's SCI unit to go to Dublin to present his research paper on this type of accident;

Shoyeb gave a poster presentation at the International Society for Spinal Cord Injuries (ISCoS) conference in Dublin last autumn.

This also gave him the opportunity to hear from other spinal cord injury specialists at the Conference.

Rotary International has helped with the funding of a new six-storey building at the Savar Centre, and this is now nearing completion. The bottom two floors house the children's hostel.

A Bangladeshi lady who wanted to do something to help elderly people has funded the fifth floor. She had saved money regularly, and decided to give this to fund the fifth floor. Money was raised in the United States by a dentist and his wife to complete the sixth floor. They have links with Helen Mortimer, a former volunteer and VTT Trustee, now living in New York. It was a pleasant surprise to find Helen Mortimer and her husband attending the fund raising meeting held in New York last summer.

There is a new SAARC building housing their international students, and the sixth floor of that building is for international volunteer accommodation.

A team of 20 wheelchair users has been invited to join a basketball competition in Bali, and ICRC has funded their participation. Valerie reported that, sadly, the problems that disqualify Bangladesh from sending wheelchair athletes to international paralympic games still remain.

Valerie concluded by conveying her warmest thanks to all for supporting the work of CRP. She reminded the meeting how when disaster strikes, it affects other family members, and gave thanks for helping to support the poorest patients at CRP.

AOB

Roger Varney posed the question: "What can young people offer re publicity for CRP?"

Liz Timms suggested that they need a Project, and Valerie mentioned that Carol Bennett's daughter has raised money for projects with children at CRP through "Crowd Funding" which is something that is likely to attract young people.

The afternoon concluded with further refreshments for members and supporters. The next Annual meeting will be held on Saturday 4th May 2019.

Janet Ivin