

MINUTES OF VTT ANNUAL MEETING SATURDAY 4th May, 2019

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

Trustees Present:

Ben Clackson, Mokhtar Hossain (Khokon), Margaret Hakim, M.A. Rashid, Jahangir Alam, and Sayadul Khaled

Valerie Taylor, Brian Woodgate (Administrator) and 35 members and supporters were also present.

Welcome

Ben Clackson thanked Khokon and Anwar and their helpers for a terrific curry lunch. He then welcomed supporters to the meeting, and said how pleased everyone was that Valerie Taylor was well enough to be at the meeting, following her recent fall in Seattle.

He particularly welcomed Carolyn Scott, President of Friends of CRP- Canada, and thanked her for all she had done to help Valerie in the preceding 6 weeks. Carolyn and her husband had driven down from Vancouver to Seattle to help Valerie in hospital, and then, when Valerie was discharged, Carolyn went down again to bring Val to her own home in Vancouver to recuperate. And finally she flew across the Atlantic with her to enable her to come to our annual meeting.

He also welcomed Beth Richan, who had also just flown in from Canada, noting that Beth had a long history of involvement with CRP, particularly as Project Manager of the AHEAD project from 2012 to 2017.

Mokhtar Hossein and Margaret Hakim then welcomed British Bangladeshi supporters and guests in their mother tongue.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman thanked Helen Mortimer for her excellent editing of the recently issued Spring Newsletter, and Errol Doobay for bringing copies of the CRP Annual Report for 2017-2018 from Bangladesh. He noted that much effort had gone into producing it and recommended supporters to take a copy away with them. Apart from that, Errol had made a huge contribution both to the IT network at CRP and also to the equipping of the VTI courses on Computer Applications.

He also thanked Valerie for CRP's help in enabling him to get the most out of his visit in January.

Turning to VTT's activities in the UK, he thanked Brian Woodgate, the VTT Administrator, for the largely unsung work that he does efficiently and cheerfully for VTT throughout the year; and all those who by their regular giving enable VTT to subsidise the poorest CRP patients.

Finally he explained the current situation on the Ambulance and Hospital bills incurred by Valerie in Seattle in March. She did not have medical or travel insurance for the United States, but her bills are being managed initially by Hosneara, who is head of the American Friends of CRP, which was hosting Valerie's visit. VTT's information about the situation comes indirectly via Shafiq at CRP. In an email on Wednesday 1 May Shafiq said that she reckons that it will be a few more months before the bills are finalised, and that all the bills can probably be paid by the American Friends of CRP with the help of \$4000 already raised by a GoFundMe website in Australia. If that's the case, obviously there's no need for any contribution from the UK, but Shafiq reckoned we should plan for a possible requirement of £5000 or so from the UK. If such a requirement did materialise, there would be two

ways of fulfilling it. One would be to pay it out of VTT funds already raised for CRP. This was a possibility, but both Stuart Jeffreys, the Treasurer, and Ben Clackson felt that we should keep that method as a last resort, because VTT's object is to help with the rehabilitation of people with disabilities in Bangladesh. It could be argued that in this case paying hospital bills in Seattle contributed to that object, but he said that they would prefer to raise any money required by a separate appeal on a crowdfunding website, with a specified target sum, once it was known how much money was required.

Several supporters had indicated that they would be willing to contribute if the need arose, so he thanked them for their concern, and promised that they would be informed as soon as VTT heard how much money, if any, was required.

Treasurer's Report

The Report stated that 2018/19 had been a very good year for VTT financially.

Total income was £366k, with costs of only £3k and hence net income of £363k. This was VTT's highest ever income.

The key difference in 2018/9 was the inclusion of a legacy of £200k. Without this, income would have been broadly in line with previous years (give or take the fluctuations in international donations raised by CRP directly, but channelled through VTT).

£164k was sent to CRP in the year. On 30th April CRP had got permission to receive more money from VTT, so a further transfer of at least £200k would be made soon.

Annual Report to the Charity Commission

The Draft Report, which included figures from the Draft Accounts for 2018/9, highlighted an issue of Governance: the Protection Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults. Action had been agreed with CRP in January to strengthen the implementation of CRP's Policy.

Election of Trustees

Ben Clackson reminded supporters that VTT had been looking for someone to take over the role of Treasurer from Stuart Jeffreys. He was delighted to announce that we now have Sayadul Khaled who is willing to take this on. He is eminently well qualified professionally for this role, and he has visited CRP Savar before, most recently earlier this year.

The Constitution states that each year one third of the elected Trustees, i.e. this year 3 Trustees, must stand down at the Annual Meeting, though they are then eligible for re-election. Phil Commons was standing down and didn't want to be re-elected now because family commitments made it difficult for her to come to Trustees meetings. Stuart Jeffreys was standing down, and didn't want to be re-elected if we elected Sayadul Khaled as the new Treasurer. Mohamed Rashid was also standing down, but had agreed to be re-elected, and two other nominations had been received, from Peter Donnelly, who has raised funds for the CRP-Moulvi Bazaar Centre, and has also said that he is willing to advise people who are thinking of going out to CRP as Volunteers, and from Glen McGhee, an orthotist just back from two months at CRP. In the absence of any other nominations, those 4 were declared elected.

The Chairman then thanked Stuart for the huge contribution that he had made as a hard-working and meticulous Treasurer, and congratulated and thanked Sayadul on his new role with us.

Valerie Taylor

Valerie thanked supporters for all their messages of support after her fall, and spoke of some recent news at CRP. A team including Iris, Khokon's niece, who is an OT on CRP's staff, had successfully developed a battery powered wheelchair, which can run for 100km on one charge. This will be manufactured by CRP itself, and it is hoped that it can be operated by foot instead of hand, making it suitable for people like Poppy who can only use their feet, and who despite difficulty in walking have surprisingly good movement in just their feet.

She also mentioned the success of the women's and men's wheelchair basketball teams, who participated in international competitions held in Kathmandu two years ago, Bali last year, and Bangkok this year. Many of these wheelchair athletes had never had an opportunity to go abroad before, so this was a wonderful opportunity for them.

Seeing Michael and Patience Vince, who had worked as Mental Health nurses at the Pabna Mental hospital more than 40 years ago, she spoke of the Mental Health clinic at Gonokhbari, which is now helping patients who are brought to and from Dhaka by bus each day, and seems to be working well.

Finally on behalf of the poorest patients Valerie thanked all those who raise funds in the UK to subsidise their treatment: ranging from the sale of cards from her own photographs by Carol Bennett to the proceeds of a production of "As You Like It" by Elizabeth Marden.

Carolyn Scott

Carolyn spoke of her disappointment that the number of volunteers going to CRP from Canada is much lower than it was because of the negative, and in her view largely unjustified, perceptions of Governments and Universities about the security situation in Bangladesh.

She was pleased to see friends at the meeting whom she recognised from her visit to CRP earlier this year and also Peter Donnelly, who had been a guest at her home in Vancouver 7 years ago.

Roger and Jan Varney

One area of involvement has been the Operating Theatre. \$77k has been raised by Rotary organisation in UK and Dhaka to replace four crucial items of equipment which are expected to be installed in 2 months' time: a steriliser, an anaesthetic machine, an Operating Theatre table, and an Operating Theatre bed. Given improvements already made to the floor, that will raise the Operating Theatre to acceptable standards, but a projected air conditioning system will have to wait till later.

Currently a container is being filled with items procured in the UK for shipping to Chittagong. This will include grass protection matting to enable wheelchair users to access grassed areas adjacent to garden areas at various levels without damaging the grass during the rainy season. Also included will be 120 pressure relieving mattresses with pumps obtained at no cost from the NPAC (National Police Aid Convoys).

Jan reported that participation by 116 senior nurses from Government hospitals in a Conference in February which she helped CRP to organise had been very enthusiastic: it was a great success.

Ben Clackson

Ben showed and commented on photographs taken on his recent visit, focussing particularly on the two CRP sub-centres at Chittagong and Rajshahi and on some Rehabilitation Outcomes for patients with disabilities, rather than on the treatment and training they were given along the way.