

MINUTES FOR VTT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY 16th May, 2015

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

Trustees Present:

Bertie Woolnough (Chairman), Stuart Jeffreys (Treasurer), Michael Woodley, Wendy Best, Margaret Hakim, Philomena Commons, Mokhtar Hossain, Bryan Whitty, Ben Clackson

Valerie Taylor, Jan and Roger Varney, Karen Gipps, Brian Woodgate (Administrator) and 58 members and supporters were also present.

Apologies:

Helen Mortimer, Nick Lack and 12 others

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DETAIL/DISCUSSION</u>
1	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed all present and thanked Kokhon and Anwar and all who had helped to prepare and serve the curry that had been enjoyed before the start of the meeting. He noted apologies particularly from Colin Imray and Nick Lack.</p>
2	<p>Chairman's Report</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Wendy Best for her long and faithful service. She had been the administrator of FCRP but had also been one of the founders of VTT when it took over the task of supporting CRP. Since then she had helped many volunteers before they travelled to Bangladesh.</p> <p>He also thanked Michael Woodley, who had acted as Treasurer since the inception of VTT and whose workload had increased after the Rana Plaza disaster, when several organisations channeled their support for CRP through VTT.</p> <p>He congratulated Helen Mortimer on the excellent Spring Newsletter she had produced, but warned that she would not be able to do the same job next year so another editor would need to be found.</p> <p>He also thanked Area Co-ordinators for distributing the newsletters and organising events, Brian Woodgate for his work as Administrator, and St Paul's Church for the use of its Hall.</p> <p>He explained that it continues to be our policy that money that is not Restricted goes to subsidise those with Spinal Cord Injuries (SCI). He also noted the valuable help given to SCI patients and others by the Social Welfare Fund.</p> <p>He pointed out that the article in the Spring Newsletter about the developing use of telemedicine locally, within Bangladesh, was complementary to, not in any way a replacement for, the International telemedicine pioneered by the Swinfen Trust.</p>

3	<p>Treasurer's Report</p> <p>Stuart Jefferies explained that 2014-15 had been a successful year financially, with Income of £270,000, which was nearly as much as the record year before.</p> <p>One potential issue however was that the proportion of Restricted Funds was rather high – nearly 50% - and he felt it was important that where possible supporters gave unrestricted donations so that these could be used for our core work of helping to pay for the less well-off Spinal Cord Injury patients.</p>
4	<p>Election of Trustees</p> <p>Three Trustees stood down and were re-elected: Ben Clackson, Philomena Commons and Mokhtar Hussain.</p> <p>At the subsequent meeting of the Management Committee Bertie Woolnough was re-elected as Chairman, and Janet Ivin and Karen Gipps were appointed co-opted members.</p>
5	<p>Presentation by Jan and Roger Varney</p> <p>Roger and Jan Varney spoke of their work in the course of a 3½ week visit to CRP in February. Roger had designed a garden with a sand floor within a building modified for the new School of Prosthetics and Orthotics, and was delighted with the co-operation and skill of the engineers who had now made his design a reality. He had also been involved in re-tiling the floor in the washing room and installing hand-washing sinks. He and Jan had also identified hygiene issue in the Operating Theatre. Some of these have already been remedied, but others need extra money which the Varneys hope to raise next month.</p> <p>Jan had used her nursing experience in several ways. She felt the UK target of zero pressure sores could also be a realistic target in the Bangladesh environment, but indicated that it would require extra monitoring and reporting by nurses each time an SCI patient was turned. She felt that during her visit there had been a developing commitment amongst the staff to this extra effort.</p> <p>Jan spoke of the sad case of Lipi, who had been the most recent of several young women whose scarves had got caught in the wheel of the baby taxi in which they were travelling. Lipi was 7 months pregnant at the time and her neck was broken in the accident, but amazingly the baby was unharmed and Jan had become involved in the decision to move her to Dhaka Medical College for a successful birth by cesarean section.</p> <p>She also explained a technique for using granulated sugar to help heal wounds (by extracting water and dead tissue) which has been identified by research in UK and Bangladesh. She had tried this on a badly burned man and felt that the results after 14-15 days compared favourably with the much more expensive alternative of using Manuka Honey dressings for the same purpose.</p>
6	<p>Presentation by Karen Gipps</p> <p>Karen Gipps explained that she and her partner Chris had prepared for their visit this year by raising money before they went. This had enabled her to take Occupational Therapy equipment not obtainable in Bangladesh, and she showed slides of the children using it</p>

	<p>enthusiastically. Given her background in social work in the UK, she had been impressed to see the very different way in which an adoption had been arranged for Lipi's baby since Lipi was unable to keep him as a result of her injury. Overall Karen spoke of CRP as being a place of much joy, despite the tears, and she praised the helpfulness of Parvati in the Peer Support Office.</p> <p>Chris had taken a particular interest in the Electronics training and was raising money for toolsets to be given to trainees when they returned home.</p>
7	<p>Address by Valerie Taylor</p> <p>Valerie welcomed the supporters and pointed out Poppy, who is accompanying her to the Bader International Study Centre at Herstmonceux Castle, along with Kokhon and his wife. Poppy now works for 20 hours a week at CRP as a Peer support assistant, and will be giving a presentation at the Centre to students from Canada.</p> <p>She thanked Nick Lick for arranging her tour last year, and Bertie Woolnough for his work as Chairman of the Trust, and Michael Woodley both for his long service as Treasurer and for his support, with Sally, at several fund-raising events. She praised Bryan Whitty's initiative setting up the Essential Gifts Scheme, enabling people to make a gift here which would translate to a sewing machine or a goat for a patient at CRP. She also explained how useful the Restricted Fund set up by Carol Bennett (RF 62) had been in enabling CRP to provide appropriate support to young people with disabilities when they leave the William and Marie Taylor Inclusive School, for instance enabling a boy with cerebral palsy to live together with his mother by enabling them to have a shop.</p> <p>She had brought with her the first copies of an inspiring book "Journeys" by Liz Timms, published by CRP, which told the stories of 23 people with spinal cord injuries.</p> <p>She described some of the problems associated with the "hartals" (general strikes) which in effect prevent all road traffic on the days they operate. This of course makes attendance at CRP's clinics for outpatients (including mothers and children) very difficult. But also arson attacks on trucks and buses presumed to be breaking the strike have led to 100 deaths and many cases of terrible burns. CRP's occupational therapists have sometimes helped out with these cases at Dhaka Medical College because of the paucity of occupational therapists in Government Hospitals. Two of CRP's own vehicles have sustained costly damage, thankfully without loss of life. However fortunately none of the "hartals" took place during the successful ASCON conference, "Living life to the full with a spinal injury", which was hosted this year at CRP.</p> <p>Valerie reported that a team was to be sent to work in Nepal following a request from the small Spinal Injury Unit outside Kathmandu following the earthquakes there. It is estimated that between 300 and 400 of the survivors have spinal injuries.</p> <p>In response to a question about accidents due to scarves, Valerie agreed that there was a strong case for an advertisement about the dangers, following on from the earlier road safety campaign. Experience in India had shown that the "orna" would not be so dangerous if it was worn differently, but more research was needed to establish what exactly it was in the design of baby taxis and rickshaws that enabled these accidents.</p>
	<p>The afternoon ended with further refreshments for members and supporters. The next Annual meeting will be on Saturday, 15th May, 2016, at St Paul's Church Centre, Rossmore Road.</p>