

## **Valerie Taylor Trust – AGM Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

### **Minutes of Meeting**

**Present:** Valerie Taylor OBE, VTT Trustees, VTT members

#### **Introduction by the Secretary of VTT**

Zahirul Haque provided an introduction and welcome message in Bengali / English and emphasised the real desire to ensure greater engagement with and involvement with the British Bangladeshi community. Zahirul shared his own experiences from being the Secretary of VTT since September 2021 and was inspired by the dedication of the VTT team, as well as all the CRP staff and patients in Bangladesh.

#### **Chairs Report**

The last Annual Meeting was in September 2021 but we have now switched back to May as it used to be before the pandemic.

Since last September our initial 6-month project with Farhan Masud has helped us to raise the profile of both VTT and CRP in the British Bangladeshi community, and also enabled us to develop promotional materials: a new more eye-catching version of the old VTT leaflet with a new Logo, more pictures and less text, and a 2 minute fund-raising video that will be shown later today.

VTT has also developed a challenge to go with the logo: “Enable Hope”. When an adult is severely injured by an accident or an illness, it is they themselves who need hope that they can somehow manage to recover sufficient capability to make life worth living, and our donations enable CRP to provide services which will support that. But for a child with a disability, it is often the mother who needs hope, which is why CRP organises mother and child groups so that therapists can show mothers how to make the most of their children’s abilities.

The Chair thanked the British Bangladeshi community for the welcome the Organisation has received in the course of the awareness-raising project. The chair felt really honoured as a non-Muslim to be invited to an Iftar meal at the Impression Events Venue in London, where the owner had made his Venue available to VTT at minimal cost and the guests showed generosity to VTT on a scale that was really humbling. The Chair wanted to thank Farhan for the time and effort and fund-raising expertise that he has given the Organisation, and Mokhtar Hussain for his patience and persistence managing this complex project along with other trustees who provided their core support and guidance. The Chair also thanked all of VTT’s supporters, particularly those who give regularly and for continuing to give to VTT despite the rising cost of living.

We are also very grateful to Helen Mortimer for again editing the Spring Newsletter so well, to our Secretary Zahirul Haque for his clear and incisive minutes of Trustees Meetings, to our Treasurer Sayadul Khaled for his painstaking work on our Accounts, and to Brian Woodgate for all his calm and efficient administration work.

#### **Treasurers Report**

The Treasurer emphasised the life changing work performed by CRP especially younger people where CRP had helped to build and achieve their hopes and dreams

A summary of the financial review was provided. Total income was £155,735 which consisted of donations and subscriptions of £71,377. Donations were sourced from a range of small and large donors and includes receipt of Gift Aid (of £5,889) which is the tax reclaimable from donors who have confirmed they are UK taxpayers. 55% of income is made up of restricted funds as these were for specific CRP centres and projects.

Corporate donations included £64,290 from Primark– these are “Restricted” funds for specific CRP projects. A further donation of £2k from Scott Bader Company was Unrestricted.

Expenditure has increased in the period from 0.9% of total income to 8.2% for the year ending 31 March 2022 principally due to the costs of the ongoing awareness programme and related consultancy fees.

The Treasurer passed on his deepest gratitude for the help and support received from Trustees as well as friends of CRP in neighbouring European countries and around the World. A new auditor (independent examiner) has been appointed with effect from April 2022.

### **Mokhtar Hussain**

Mokhtar expressed gratitude for all of those who had provided help and support for the AGM including the food preparation by Anwar xx [tbc] and the family and friends of our trustees.

Mokhtar spoke about how he has visited the CRP in Bangladesh over the many years of his involvement with VTT and very much encouraged those present to visit the CRP centres with their friends and families. This would help provide insight into the truly inspirational work being conducted by CRP in Bangladesh through wonderful life changing rehabilitation work. A strong message of encouragement for all members and supporters to provide whatever contribution they can make and to stay engaged with the work of the CRP and the efforts of VTT in the UK, especially the younger people who are such formidable and integral parts of the British / Bangladeshi community.

Mokhtar reiterated the importance of the ongoing awareness programme and appreciated the significant contribution this has made in recent months and once again thanked Farhan Masud for his expertise and commitment to helping the growth of VTT’s profile and fundraising capabilities within the UK.

### **Trustees’ election / appointments**

#### **Election of Trustees**

The Chair highlighted that the Constitution requires that a third of the trustees stand down each year. This year Khokon (Mokhtar Hussain), Glen McGhee and Sayadul Khaled are standing down but happily they are all standing for re-election. Since no other nominations had been received the Chair declared that those three are elected.

Constitution enables us to co-opt up to 3 three Trustees for a year so new trustees are very much welcome.

### **Chief Guest speaker: Valerie Taylor**

A very warm welcome to everyone and appreciation for all the supporters who had made long journeys to get the AGM meeting, from Glasgow; Dumfries and Galloway; Sheffield; Cornwall (St Austell); and, from the South Coast, Mirja and Tan, whom Valerie last met 30 years ago.

A special tribute was made to Patience Holt [a supporter in Northern Ireland], who died on 19<sup>th</sup> April this year, at the age of nearly 94.

Valerie expressed a warm and grateful thanks from the CRP patients (in-patients and out-patients), staff members, numbering in total 1,333, who serve the main Centre in Savar and 12 Sub-Centres across Bangladesh, the 7 Trustees, Volunteers both from Bangladesh and abroad, and donors, present at the AGM and from around the world, where in Bangladesh, Germany, Sweden, USA, Canada and UK groups of Friends of CRP have been established, often as a result of a volunteer from one of these countries setting up such a fund-raising group following a visit to CRP.

CRP recently received some extraordinary voluntary service – for instance from Dr Sayeed who heads the Medical Service Wing of CRP and is our regular spinal surgeon. He was anxious about Nupur, a young girl who was admitted after falling onto a brick-making machine, when her clothes got caught in the machine. Dr Sayeed decided to contact Dr Luis Garcia, a Spanish spinal volunteer surgeon from Corunna in North-West Spain, who, when he saw Nupur's X-ray, advised Dr Sayeed that he would come as soon as possible. Within one week, Dr Luis was with the CRP and the surgery he and Dr Sayeed performed together took 7½ hours and within 2 weeks Nupur was walking with a better recovery than had seemed possible.

Other examples of voluntary service taking place in this country to support CRP:

1. The service of the VTT trustees under the guidance of their Chairman, Ben Clackson, and the VTT Administrator, Brian Woodgate. Valerie expressed deepest gratitude to Ben, Brian and the fellow Trustees for all their hard work and support.
2. Margaret Hakim – goes on many fund-raising events.
3. Helen Mortimer – works in the background, each year producing the VTT Spring Newsletter even when she and her husband relocated to the USA for a few years.
4. Elizabeth Timms is now preparing her 5<sup>th</sup> book, this time following some of the survivors of the Rana Plaza disaster.
5. Errol Doobay, an electronics engineer from London, has made repeated visits to CRP to develop our IT department. In April 2022 Errol transported 30 computers that he had worked on, giving them a new lease of life.
6. Mokhtar and Aysha Hossain who have continued to take a session about CRP for the Global Health students from Canada who come to join a course held at Herstmonceux Castle in Hailsham, East Sussex. This castle was purchased by a Canadian benefactor and then donated to Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.
7. Farhan Masud – CRP/VTT's fundraiser: Valerie thanked him for the energy brought to the work of fundraising for VTT to enable CRP to run and get new projects off the ground and was excited about the future prospects.
8. Funds for "Dry food distribution" to those with a disability who were struggling to feed their families were supplied by American Friends of CRP to over 500 people from 9 different centres across the country, and the food included donations from Scott Bader, a UK-based company.

Valerie shared news of new projects:

1. Aquaponics. Setup on the roof of CRP's main building by Babul, paraplegic ex-patient of CRP. No soil is required to plant vegetables: instead, fish, fish-food and water are the main ingredients.
2. Next to the CRP compound is another piece of land where plans have been drawn up to build a 6-storey building, which will be fully accessible for 12 People with disabilities to live. The idea is, depending on their means, that the parents of children with disabilities will donate funds towards the construction costs of this new building so that their children will have a secure future when they themselves are no longer alive.
3. 21<sup>st</sup> ASCON (Asian Spinal Cord Network) conference, at the end of November 2022.
4. After a visit from Dr Anis Ahmed to CRP, we have been invited to join a conference of the Royal College of Psychiatrists to be held in UK on 14 October 2022.
5. Recognising the successful running of the Mental Health Day Centre that CRP has been providing in Ganakhbari, the Kadoorie Charitable Foundation, based in Hong Kong, has agreed to extend its financial support for that and a new Day Centre for another 3 years.
6. News of CRP's sub-centres. All have been set on pieces of land that have been donated and they are at different stages in their construction. There are 12 of them, with CRP Savar as the main Centre.

Two new buildings have been completed, both multi-storeyed and both a few minutes walk away from the main Centre: a hostel for male students, and mandatory Nursing College accommodation for nursing students on upper floors.

CRP's staff aim to bring a special dimension to the services provided by implementing its core values, which are: Sensitivity, Compassion, Respect, Collaboration, Commitment to Excellence, Cleanliness.

A special short story with which to end: This year the World Health Organisation (WHO) held its 3<sup>rd</sup> film competition covering various areas of health. CRP opted for the "Rehabilitation" area and Mukta, our CRP photographer and film maker (trained many years ago by Kirstie Waldie), who is a wheelchair user because of polio, which she had when she was very young, chose Urmi's story for her film subject. CRP received news that Mukta's video film, called "Urmi's success story" had made Mukta a "potential finalist" of the WHO "Health For All" film festival, which was shown online last evening.

The challenge ahead is that in the last 2 years CRP staff have not been given an increase in salary. Our fear is that we shall not be able to retain good staff. Efforts are being made to reduce CRP's expenditure and increase its income generation. Special appreciation again for all the financial support given to CRP which enables amputees like Urmi and young girls with severe dislocation of the spine like Nupur to receive subsidised treatment, rehabilitation, prostheses and a wheelchair where necessary and to "Enable Hope"!