

Valerie Taylor Trust – AGM Meeting 13th May 2023

Minutes of Meeting

Present: Valerie Taylor OBE, VTT Trustees, members and supporters: 48 in all.

Chair's Report

After last year's Annual meeting, Trustees decided to embark on a second phase of the Awareness Raising Project, running from June last year to June this year. The Chair (Ben Clackson) referred to the Draft Annual Report which mentioned some of the events that have been held with Farhan Masud's help, and many of these events had helped raise the profile of VTT as well as encouraging donations.

Draft Accounts suggested that our income, net of expenses, had risen by 19% this financial year, and this project was probably the main reason for that increase. The Chair thanked Farhan for all the drive and persistence he had put into the project, for his work following up on pledged donations and his patience with the time it has often taken us as a Trust to make decisions. The success of the project had been achieved in what had been a very challenging year for fundraising because of the effect of higher energy prices on household incomes and business incomes.

He thanked all the Trustees who had helped to make the project a success, particularly Khokon, Margaret Hakim, and Zahir for helping to manage the project. As always VTT was greatly indebted to Brian Woodgate for the calm efficiency of his Administration work and to Helen Mortimer for the Spring Newsletter and maintaining Facebook.

It had been a great privilege to serve as Chair of the Trustees for the last 5 years, but the time had come to step down as Chair. He was delighted to announce that Trustees have elected Mokhtar Hussain, (Khokon), as the new Chair. Khokon was one of the founder members of this Trust in 2007, and has been a Trustee ever since. He has a very wide circle of contacts, which is a big advantage for the Chair of a fundraising organisation. He has played a major part in initiating and managing the awareness-raising project with Farhan. And this year he has visited several CRP Centres in Bangladesh, so he is in a very good position to act as the Trust's link with CRP management. The outgoing Chair asked all of the supporters to welcome Khokon as the new Chair of VTT.

Election of Trustees

There were currently 10 elected Trustees, and VTT's Constitution required that one third of these, that is three Trustees, stand down at the Annual Meeting. Mohammed Rashid had decided to retire as a Trustee and the Chair had written to thank him for all that he and his wife had done for the Trust since he was first elected in 2016. Margaret Hakim and Ben Clackson were both standing down but were willing to stand for re-election. A valid nomination had been received for Aysha Lucky Akther proposed by Mokhtar Hussain, seconded by Ben Clackson.

No other valid nominations had been received, so Ben, Margaret and Aysha were duly elected. Aysha organised two meetings in London last year with Valerie and others.

Treasurers Report

The Treasurer (Sayadul Khaled) provided a summary of the financial review. Total income was £195k which consisted of donations and subscriptions of £110k. Donations were sourced from a range of small and large donors and includes receipt of Gift Aid (of £9k including £4k from Just giving) which is the tax reclaimable from donors who have confirmed they are UK taxpayers and have been treated as

unrestricted. 43% of income is made up of restricted funds as these were collected for specific CRP centres and projects. Sales also includes cards, calendars, books and DVDs

Corporate donations included £68k from Primark and a further £6k from Tesco and other "Restricted" funds of £4k in relation to Moulvibazaar Centre and £5k in relation to Zakat funds.

Unrestricted funds included £4k from MAITS, £3k from Mrs Sylvia Stops, £5k from Jancis Page and £6k from Mr Albert Mehr.

Expenditure has increased in the period from 8.2% of total income to 11.8% for the year ending 31 March 2023 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. The auditor (independent examiner) who was appointed in April 2022 continues to be in place with an annual remuneration of £350.

Guest speaker: Supporters - Janet and John

Janet described the initial experience of being a volunteer for 6 months in 2000 - working as a Children's occupational therapist helping to develop the Occupational Therapy (OT) work for the newly established mother and child unit. Janet returned recently in 2023 and was pleased to see the developments of APT (Appropriate Paper based Technology) which was now incorporated into the special seating unit which employs 4 people (2 with disabilities including Shathi who also attended the special needs school at CRP). The therapy equipment and toys that they make are sold to outside NGO's and to other CRP centres and patients.

John went to CRP in 2002 with the specific task of making therapy equipment. The 2023 visit was focused around delivery of a training course at the Vocational Training Institute now based at Manikganj. The 18 trainees were keen to learn APT as an additional income-generating project focusing on smaller items due to their disabilities. They received vocational training in electronics, mobile phone repairs, and needlework.

Overall they felt welcome by the people at CRP and felt great satisfaction from the staff including Fahmida who described John and Janet as great "encouragers".

Chief Guest speaker: Valerie Taylor

She welcomed everyone and thanked all those who had joined the Annual meeting especially knowing that the rail strikes had caused difficulties for many.

She firstly wanted to convey the warm thanks and gratitude of each inpatient, outpatient, staff member, student, volunteer and Trustee of CRP for the crucial role of supporters to enable CRP to run smoothly. This assistance is given in 3 main areas: the support of the prayers of supporters; voluntary service in the UK and in Bangladesh; and the supply of financial help particularly at a time when costs of food and fuel have risen in seemingly all countries of the world.

The general public in Bangladesh continue to be most generous in their giving and CRP has never needed to purchase a plot of land as consistently these have been donated by their owners, resulting

in the creation of 11 small sub-centres across the country. There is now a need to approach individuals and corporate bodies in an effort to finance the construction of each new treatment centre on the donated plot of land, as follows:

1. Khulna – land donated by the Akij group
2. Sylhet – CRP presently rents a property in the city
3. Gobindapur (Kulaura) – expansion/modernisation of 4 bungalows on the site
4. Chattogram – AK Khan Foundation
5. Mymensingh – Bangladesh Agricultural University
6. Manikganj – land donated by Raihana Ahmad
7. Moulvibazar – Afsarul and Aktarul Haque Centre
8. Pabna – also requires funds for further floors to be added
9. Barisal – Dr Maksudur Rahman has donated several floors
10. Rajshahi:
 - a. Small plot in the Court area was donated
 - b. Recently 5 acres of prime land given by mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation for Regional Centre

A new phenomenon was now experienced where members of the audience spontaneously committed funds for the new Centre amounting to Tk 1 crore (10 million). Receiving this amazing sum makes CRP feel very heartened for the future.

A new idea has come from a demand by parents of young people with disabilities, that their offspring need safe accommodation where their children can be looked after when their parents are no longer alive. Plans are afoot to build a 6-storied building, with two persons with disabilities on each floor, in the CRP-Savar compound. Donations from different ministries of the Government of Bangladesh have supported CRP in the past along with the very generous Embassy of Japan, enabling new construction.

She thanked all of the Trustees and Supporters of the Valerie Taylor Trust including:

- Ben Clackson, retiring in his role of Chair - sincere appreciation for all that Ben has done for the Trust and in turn for CRP and his contribution as chair will be sorely missed.
- Brian Woodgate for all his help as the Administrator
- Sayadul Khaled for all his help as Treasurer
- Helen Mortimer for editing the Spring Newsletter
- Margaret Hakim for supporting many fundraising meetings throughout the year
- Mokhtar Hussain (Khokon) for all his work and also transporting Valerie around the UK
- Janet Ivin and John Carter for their APT contribution at CRP
- Glen McGhee, both as a Trustee and with the Prosthetics and Orthotics Department at CRP
- Jill Fisher, the senior physiotherapist teaching Bobath courses
- Elizabeth Timms for her new book Journeys 4 about the Rana Plaza survivors

There have been some notable examples of financial help:

- WaterAid have helped CRP to harvest rainwater
- The legacy from Carol Eggen, a Canadian physiotherapist, will enable CRP among other things to fund an awareness-raising film on Cerebral Palsy for television in Bangladesh. Elspeth Waldie is presently writing the script for translation into Bengali.

She emphasised that no matter how big or how small the donation, this was instrumental to the continued work of CRP and makes a massive difference to people's lives. For instance In Sheffield there is a donor who gives £12 per month through VTT to support education costs for the daughter of an ex-patient of CRP.

She also referred to another special donation who is paraplegic wheelchair user who has a piece of land that he farms and recently he came to CRP with his wife to donate 15kg of home-grown garlic, which is the third time the individual has made such a donation to CRP.

Special thanks to those who prepared the delicious meal, under the guidance of Anwar. And to Roger and Jan Varney, who like Janet Ivin and John Carter have made countless visits to CRP to assist CRP's nursing staff.

She again extended deepest gratitude to all the supporters of VTT.

Mokhtar Hussain

He felt it was a great privilege to be appointed as the new Chair and expressed his intention to continue the good work of his predecessor Ben Clackson and was very much looking forward to working with the VTT trustees to make further developments to the organisation and engage with all supporter groups. He expressed gratitude to Ben who had tirelessly worked as chair of VTT and provided help and support for the AGM including the food prep by Anwar Hussain and the family and friends of VTT's trustees.

He has visited the CRP in Bangladesh extensively over the last year and was constantly reminded of the fantastic work and the impact on the lives of the patients at the CRP. The recent visit also included a series of interviews with patients – these have been captured on video, with permission from the patients, in both Bangla and English translation. MH was deeply grateful on a personal note to his family who have been very understanding and supportive of the work he has carried out over the years.

The expansion of the number of clinics continues including most recently with the development work at Manikganj, which is taking place on land donated very generously to CRP around 15 years ago.

He paid special thanks to the continued contributions of Valerie – who is a brilliant ambassador for the organisation and he was personally very proud of her achievements through the work at CRP.

He reiterated the importance of the ongoing awareness programme and appreciated the significant contribution this has made in recent months.