



## **Minutes of HIP Annual General Meeting**

**11.35hrs on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**The Queen Hotel, City Road, Chester.**

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Interim Chair of HIP in Cheshire, Beth Fisher (BF), welcomed everyone to the HIP AGM meeting and introduced herself, the trustees (Nick, Ian, Ross and Deirdre) present and HIP employees (Andrea and Ceri). An attendance sheet was completed by the 29 meeting attendees.

BF also extended a warm welcome to the guest speaker, Sara Crosland, HIP member and author of *Sickbed to Summits – (The Story of Triumph Over Adversity)*.

### **2. Apologies**

Apologies received from Ben Thexton (trustee).

### **3. Guest Speaker: Presentation: Sara Crosland – Sickbed to Summits (The Story of Triumph Over Adversity).**

Sara Crosland then addressed the meeting, speaking about her own experience of living with an acquired brain injury and the journey she has been on since. The presentation was supported by a PowerPoint presentation and a short film. Sara has also written a book about her experience.

At the conclusion, the audience warmly applauded Sara and BF once again thanked Sara for her contribution to the meeting.

### **4. Chairperson's Report**

BF then provided the Chairperson's report, explaining that she was the interim chair following the resignation of our previous Chair, Crawford Thomas, due to health issues. Steps were being taken to find a suitable replacement.

BF referred to the significant challenges that the Covid 19 pandemic had created for HIP over the past two years, compounded by the loss of our two staff members (Edie and Lisa) who had taken the decision to pursue other professional paths. This made it very difficult to achieve our objective of *'no brain injury survivor or their family feeling alone and isolated'* as all face to face activities had to be cancelled. However during this period, mainly due to the efforts of trustee Ian Skaife and staff member Andrea Royles, we were able to provide regular virtual coffee mornings, a Christmas meal and quiz events via on-line media. While not ideal these did help keep members in touch with one another and were well supported.

The HIP office has also moved from Stanlaw Business Centre, Ellesmere Port, to the ABI Unit Acorn offices at the Countess of Chester Hospital. This was a financial decision, to provide an improved working environment for staff and in anticipation of being able to provide an improved service to HIP members from this location alongside ABI Unit staff. The Crewe coffee morning meeting venue has also changed due to the unavailability of previous host locations. A new venue at Wistaston Memorial Hall, Crewe has been identified and a first meeting there a few weeks ago met with members' approval. It is also hoped to re-start the Macclesfield group in the near future. The Ellesmere Port group have returned to Trinity Church.

BF provided an overview of the work undertaken by trustees to try and recruit new staff over the past 18 months, and thanked Nick Ankers and Ross Sibson for their support in the recruitment and interview process. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful. However with the support of our trustee, Deirdre Healy, HIP has secured a 2-year grant from Irwin Mitchell to go towards salaries. BF thanked Irwin Mitchell for this invaluable support. This has enabled our most recent strategy of recruiting from part time members of NHS staff and in this regard, we have been successful in recruiting Andrea Royles to a one day a week administration position. Andrea stepped into the role and volunteered to help ensure that our Ellesmere Port Coffee group could restart. Ceri Highton has started work on 5 hours a week as an activities co-ordinator. Ceri is a qualified Occupational Therapist, and she will be working hard to ensure coffee mornings get back up and running on a regular basis. Ceri has also started an online virtual group for new members to meet an existing HIP coffee group member so that going to their first face to face event is just that little bit less daunting and there will be a familiar face to welcome them. BF introduced both Andrea and Ceri to the meeting and thanked them for taking on these roles.

BF updated members on recent developments to improve our website by Then Media, supported by Ian Skaife.

Fundraising has also continued and BF thanked the following; Widows and Sons motorbike group, Victoria Friel, OT with the acquired brain injury team who ran the Cheshire Marathon for HIP, Laurie March, a founder member who on his 80<sup>TH</sup> birthday raised a fantastic amount, an anonymous donor who very generously gave HIP £2000.00 and throughout Covid, Chatwins, the Co- Op and NISA Local in Ellesmere Port who continued to have our collection cans.

While circumstances have required us to reduce our programme of activities we aim to build back the structure of regular face to coffee mornings, phone reminders, volunteer roles recommencing, virtual meetings and quiz, bimonthly newsletter and increase funding opportunities where possible. Finally BF asked members to look out for details of the Christmas Meal.

BF's report was warmly applauded.

BF then invited Nick Ankers (NA) to present the Secretary's report.

## 5. Secretary's Report

Nick Ankers (NA) then presented the Secretary's report by summarising the role and responsibilities of the trustees as required by rules set out by the Charities Commission for the governance of all charities. NA pointed out that the trustees' role is to lead our charity and make decisions about how it is run on a day to day basis and developed into the future. Trustees were from a variety of medical, legal, academic and financial backgrounds, with experience of management within these areas. Trustees' priority is to help and support our members; survivors of brain injury, family, carers and to deliver on our objective that nobody should feel alone or isolated and do what we can to improve on members overall well-being and quality of life. All trustees are unpaid volunteers.

Since our last AGM in March 2019 trustees have held 22 trustee meetings, mainly 'virtually', which were spaced at regular intervals (approximately every 2 x months). Each of the meetings has been well attended by trustees and all the meetings were fully quorate. In addition a Trustees' Strategy Planning and Development Day was held in June 2021.

During the year one of our trustees (Dr Crawford Thomas) resigned, however 2 x new trustees joined our board, Ross Sibson (carer and medical / academic background) and Ben Thexton (member and accountant). The board of trustees continue to review the make-up of the trust board with a view to keeping it fit for purpose into the future as we move forwards. We will be considering how many trustees are required, the skills and experiences that are needed on the board and the need for balanced representation of our membership.

The Strategic / Business Plan was reviewed in June 2021 and provides us with the direction for the longer-term development of HIP. The Strategic Plan provides the foundation for the work of trustees as we work to support members via our coffee morning support groups, recreational and skills activities and to advance understanding of all aspects of brain injury and prevention. Circumstances have changed so much, mainly due to Covid, and we have been forced to balance what we'd like to do and what we can do in the circumstances. Other small charities have not survived, but we can be proud that we have.

Trustees' responsibilities include;

- Strategic direction and achievement of core objectives,
- Day to day operational activities in line with our strategy
- Finance – Can we pay for everything and raise new funds? This is a core part of trustees' responsibilities and our Treasurer will be giving a more detailed update on this area.

- Staffing Requirements – Recruiting and training staff in appropriate roles (operational management and organisational development, activities coordination, fundraising, supporting volunteers, contacting members, administration / operational support).
- Volunteers - Also recognise the essential role of our volunteers who support us in providing our services and the need to increase the numbers of volunteers.
- Communication – Working to improve the way we communicate with our members, families, carers, our sponsors / partners and the wider public Emails, website and newsletters.
- Compliance with Policies and procedures the set out how we operate:
  - Safeguarding – are we a safe organisation for our members? Is this documented, who is responsible? How can we improve?
  - Health and Safety .... Members, cares / family, staff, volunteers, wider public.
  - Data Management – GDPR..... how do we comply with the standards set for personal information by data protection rules (GDPR) and investing the systems and resources necessary to achieve the required standards?
  - Others include; Recruitment, Risk Management , Incident Reporting and review,
- Accommodation – Our move to our new office in NHS Building ABI Unit , early 2022 an important step in HIP as an organisation.
- Performance – Monitor how well we are doing in areas of finance, membership, services provided to members and communication.
- Risk Management –we review these regularly in order to protect HIP’s interests. Recently reviewed and improved our approach to this in line with Charities Commission guidance. Key aspects include; loss of key staff, finance, Governance, compliance, pandemic, members well-being.

NA concluded by reflecting on the last HIP coffee morning at Ellesmere Port, where members shared their thoughts on why HIP had been a significant positive influence on their lives post brain injury. The value of HIP as a charity to members was evident and this was the reason why trustees are committed to taking our charity forwards into the future.

The secretary’s report was warmly received and there were no follow up questions from members.

BF thanked NA for preparing and presenting the report.

She then invited the Treasurer, Ian Skaife, to present his report.

## **6. Treasurer's report**

Ian Skaife (IS) then provided a detailed overview of the past years finances, 2018 – 2021, plus a summary of our current accounts in 2022. This was supported by an on-screen presentation and paper copies of the financial report handed out to meeting attendees.

IS explained the details behind the income and expenditure figures, referring to the relevant sections of the financial report. IS also explained how the Covid pandemic had impacted on both fundraising and expenditure.

IS summarised that HIP's finances are well placed to see the charity through the next year. IS also thanked our fundraisers, members financial contributions through various sponsored activities and donations, and Irwin Mitchell and the Postcode Lottery Fund for their support.

**Meeting Resolution:** Deidre Healy then proposed a resolution that the accounts presented by IS be formally approved by the members at the AGM by a show hands.

***The resolution was unanimously approved. There were no abstentions.***

IS also thanked Ben Thexton for taking over the role as Treasurer moving forwards.

BF again thanked IS for all of his hard work during the past year as HIP Treasurer and for his presentation to the meeting. Those at the meeting also showed their appreciation.

## **7. Consideration of Notices of Motion received (if any)**

BF than asked if there were any additional Notices of Motion for the AGM meeting to consider? There were none proposed.

## **8. AOB**

BF then asked if there was any other business for the AGM meeting to consider. There was no other business.

## **9. Closure**

BF then thanked everyone for their attendance, invited attendees to stay for a light buffet lunch and formally closed the AGM at 12.50 hrs.