



**Reading Advice Network (RAN)
Minutes of the Second Annual General Meeting
Monday 1st October 2017
The Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Reading Borough Council, Bridge
Street, Reading**

Attendees;

Richard Harrison, RAN Chair
Hazel Wright, RAN Vice-Chair
Francesca Yates, RAN Trustee
Mike Allen, RAN Trustee
Rob Walker, RAN Treasurer
Margaret Osborne, RAN Business Development Manager
Anna Aprea, RAN web consultant
Fiona Price, Age UK Berkshire
Matt Taylor, Age UK Reading
Dragana Wright, British Red Cross
David Harper, Citizens Advice Reading
Sue Richards, Citizens Advice Reading
Catherine Mcleod, Dingley's Promise
Brigid Dos Santos, East Midlands Carers' Trust
Trish Thomas, Reading Community Welfare Rights Unit
Leslie Macdonald, Reading Mencap
Nick Harborne, Reading Refugee Support Group
Deborah Wilson Earley Charity
Christine Borgars, QVIF
Sophia Bowlby, Readibus
Clare Muir, Reading Borough Council
Janette Searle, Reading Borough Council
Sarah del Tufo, Reading Community Learning Centre
Herjeet Randhawa, Reading Voluntary Action

Apologies

Mandeep Kaur Sira, Healthwatch
Ian Caren, Launchpad
Kate Long, Earley Crescent Centre
Helen Garforth, Just Ideas
Ben Cross, RCVYS

The AGM commenced at 09:25.

1. Welcome

Richard Harrison, RAN Chair, opened the meeting, welcomed all those present, and introduced the guest speaker, Peter Sloman, Reading Borough Council's new Chief Executive.

2. Guest Speaker: Peter Sloman, CEO Reading Borough Council

Peter Sloman gave a wide-ranging talk in which he shared his experience of working in partnership with the voluntary sector in London and Oxford, described how the responsibilities placed on local authorities had changed during his career, highlighted some of the key challenges now facing Reading Borough Council, restated the Council's and his personal commitment to working in partnership with RAN and the voluntary sector generally and, in response to questions, suggested a number of ways in which mutual understanding between the Council and the voluntary sector could be strengthened.

Richard thanked Peter for his presentation. RBC had given RAN critical support over the past couple of years and he hoped that, under Peter's leadership, the relationship would grow steadily stronger.

3. RAN 2016 AGM Minutes

Richard introduced the RAN 2016 AGM minutes. One amendment was proposed from the floor, to record that David Harper had been present, and was accepted. Mike Allen proposed that the minutes be approved. The proposal was seconded by Fran Yates and approved by all the member organisations present.

4. RAN Report and Accounts for 2016-2017

Richard then moved on to the RAN Report and Accounts for 2016-2017, which had been approved by the RAN Trustee Board and by the Independent Examiner. He invited questions from the floor but none were forthcoming. Hazel Wright proposed that the Report and Accounts be approved by the AGM. The proposal was seconded by David Harper and approved by all the member organisations present.

5. Election of Trustees

Richard explained that the RAN constitution provided for up to nine trustees, and there were currently six trustees. He asked the trustees to stand and introduce themselves. Under the constitution one third of the trustees had to retire each year but could stand for re-election. Fran Yates and Trish Thomas

were retiring - Fran was standing for re-election, Trish had decided not to stand again. Fran was re-elected to the board unanimously.

Richard said that Leslie Macdonald had also stood down as a trustee during the year and he thanked both Trish and Leslie for the key contribution they had each made to establishing and developing RAN over the past couple of years. There was now space for four more trustees and RAN would be seeking to recruit new trustees over the next few months. He asked all those present to think about whether they were willing to become a trustee.

6. Quality Standard certificate awards

Richard explained the three-stage process which had been developed for assessment against the RAN Quality Standard - self-assessment by the member organisation, a conversation with the assessors to clarify any questions about the requirements of the Standard, and the assessment visit. He thanked the assessors, Sarah del Tufo and Mike Ansell, for piloting the Standard and for the way they had been working with members on the assessments. He also thanked Rachel Spencer from RVA for securing the money from RBC to fund the assessment process.

Three organizations had been awarded the RAN Quality Standard: Citizens Advice Reading, Comunicare and Dingley's Promise. Richard presented certificates to the three CEOs - David Harper, Fran Yates and Catherine McLeod.

7. Closing remarks

Richard concluded the AGM by briefly reviewing RAN's activities over the last six months and looking ahead to its plans for the rest of the year.

He highlighted the following developments in the past six months:

- Good progress had been made with the Quality Standard
- RAN had published a business plan for the next three years
- It had started to develop its collective voice to help shape service provision. A report on the First Advice Forum, setting out the key social policy issues arising in RAN members' work, had gone to RBC and had led to a constructive meeting with Graham Wilkin, the Interim Director of Health and Adult Social Care. A joint Healthwatch/RAN report on the Second Advice Forum, on working with service users with mental health needs, had been presented to the Clinical Commissioning Groups and RBC, and would be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board later in the year.

Looking forward:

- RAN's first training event on 'What does it mean to be a quality organization?' would take place on 21 November and would be free to both members and non-members.
- The Third Advice Forum on 1 November would focus on partnerships and networking. After an opening presentation by Fran Yates on 'Making partnerships work' there would be 3 min slots available for organizations to explain who they were and what they did. There would then be time for participants to have extended conversations with those organisations of particular interest to them
- The RAN website would be revamped by the end of November to make it more useful both to members and the general public
- The programme of Quality Standard assessments would continue, with the aim of ensuring that all members had achieved the Standard by summer 2018.
- A Fourth Advice Forum would be held in February or March
- Work would continue to bring other organisations into membership

He thanked the trustees for their support, the two consultants for their work, and all those - members and non-members - who had come and contributed to the Advice Forums.

The AGM concluded at 10:40.