



## **Reading Advice Network (RAN) Minutes of the Eighth Annual General Meeting Friday 24th November 2023**

### **Attendees;**

Richard Harrison, RAN Chair  
Hazel Wright, RAN Trustee and Graft  
Peter Kayes, RAN Treasurer  
Janice Haynes, RAN Independent Assessor  
Katherine Shepherd, The Mustard Tree  
Nick Harborne, Refugee Support Group (Reading)  
Victoria Latchford, Citizens Advice Reading  
Fiona Price, Age UK Berkshire  
Phil Cook, PACT  
William Crossley, Autism Berkshire  
Su Hamblyn, Launchpad  
Ruth Pearse, Parenting Special Children  
Mike Edwards, ABC To Read  
Clare Lowe, RSUAS  
Matt Taylor, Age UK Reading  
Alyson Wylding, No 5  
Lorna McArdle, SupportU  
Catherine Wade, British Red Cross  
Alison Peyton, Readifood  
Mark Redfearn, Reading Borough Council

### **Apologies**

Tina Stevenson, Citizens Advice Reading  
Natausha van Vliet, PACT  
Catherine McLeod, Dingley's Promise  
Jane Stanford-Beale, Autism Berkshire  
Andy Dickens, Faith Christian Group  
Sandra Weldon, Coroner's Court Support Service

The AGM commenced at 09.35.

### **Welcome and Award of Certificates**

Richard Harrison, RAN Chair, welcomed everyone to RAN's 8th Annual General Meeting, and extended a particular welcome to Mike Edwards of ABC To Read, one of RAN's most recent member organisations. Richard then began

the AGM by presenting the CEOs of two of RAN's founder members - Fiona Price of Age UK Berkshire and Hazel Wright of Graft Thames Valley - with certificates confirming the extension of their award of RAN's Quality Standard for a further four years, following their reassessment by RAN's Independent Assessor, Janice Haynes.

### **RAN 2022 AGM Minutes**

Moving on to the main business of the AGM, Richard introduced the RAN 2022 AGM minutes. The motion that the minutes be approved as an accurate record of the proceedings of the AGM was proposed by Hazel Wright, seconded by Phil Cook, and carried unanimously.

### **RAN Report and Accounts for 2022-2023**

Peter Kayes introduced the RAN Report and Accounts for 2022-2023. He explained that our reserves had reduced by £101 over the year, but were still over £8000, which at our current level of expenditure would enable RAN to continue for the foreseeable future. Our items of expenditure were relatively small - refreshments for Advice Forums, postage for the Booklet for Councilors which we produced every May, and the production of the Booklet itself, for example - and those were essentially covered by the annual membership fees, which now brought in around £600 a year. The main cost of running RAN was our independent assessor, and she was funded by Reading Borough Council through a contract with Reading Voluntary Action.

There were no questions. The motion that the Report and Accounts be approved was proposed by Nick Harborne, seconded by Katherine Shepherd, and carried unanimously.

### **4 Election of Trustees**

Richard said that there were no new nominations, but he reminded those present that under the RAN Constitution one third of the Trustee Board had to retire each year but could stand for re-election. This year Francesca Yates and Hazel Wright had to retire but wished to stand for re-election. The motion that both be re-elected was proposed by Fiona Price, seconded by Matt Taylor, and carried unanimously.

### **5 Proposals for Developing RAN**

Richard reminded members that the Trustee Board had met in October to consider how we might best develop RAN over the next couple of years. That discussion had considered a range of suggestions from members following a consultation over the summer, and had concluded with a number of proposals which he had circulated at the beginning of November.

These were that the Board would issue a calendar of events - Advice Forums, CEOs' Group, and HR Group - for the year ahead so that members could put them in their diaries and make it easier to ensure that they were able to attend. Beyond that, they would try to strengthen the links between member organisations, so that they were better able to learn from and support each other, by:

- Holding at least one networking Advice Forum each year, where members could talk about the services they were currently providing
- Asking members to identify their areas of particular expertise and create and share 'crib sheets' on these, along the lines of the 'Benefits' crib sheet produced by Francesca Yates at Communicare
- Asking members to open training sessions, where appropriate and practicable, to staff and volunteers from other member organisations
- Seeing if we could create a group of staff and volunteers from member organisations who would volunteer to be a RAN-wide support group for each other
- Encouraging CEOs to identify peer mentors through the CEOs' Group.

Members present endorsed these proposals as a sensible way forward.

## **6 Close**

Before closing the AGM he thanked his Trustee Board colleagues - Andrea West, Francesca Yates, Hazel Wright and Peter Kayes - for their hard work and support over the past year which had been, as always, invaluable and much appreciated. The members present applauded them, and Richard, for their work over the year.

The AGM concluded at 09.50.