



Reading Advice Network (RAN) Minutes of the Ninth Annual General Meeting Wednesday 6th November 2024

Attendees:

Richard Harrison, RAN Chair
Hazel Wright, RAN Deputy Chair and Graft
Peter Kayes, RAN Treasurer
Rachel Eden, RAN Trustee
Francesca Yates, RAN Trustee and CommuniCare
Katherine Shepherd, The Mustard Tree
Nick Harborne, Refugee Support Group (Reading)
Victoria Latchford, Citizens Advice Reading
Su Hamblyn, Launchpad
Ruth Pearse, Parenting Special Children
Jane Stanford-Beale, Autism Berkshire
Matt Harrison, Reading Welfare Rights
Louise White, Dingley's Promise
Sally Utting, Reading Mencap
Mark Redfearn, Reading Borough Council

Apologies:

Rachel Spencer, Reading Voluntary Action
Alix Simpson, BWA
Natausha van Vliet, PACT
Matt Taylor, Age UK Reading
George Mathew, Acre
Janice Haynes, RAN Independent Assessor
Sarah del Tufo, RCLC

The AGM commenced at 9.30. Richard Harrison, RAN Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular welcomed the Mayor of Reading, Councillor Glenn Dennis, who would be awarding RAN Quality Standard Certificates to two member organisations at the end of the meeting.

RAN 2023 AGM Minutes

Richard then moved to the main business of the AGM, by introducing the RAN 2023 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 Nick Harborne, and carried unanimously.

RAN Report and Accounts for 2023-2024

Peter Kayes introduced the RAN Report and Accounts for 2023-2024. He explained that the additional income in the accounts was provided by Reading Borough Council through a contract with Reading Voluntary Action to fund our Independent Assessor. Over the year our other expenditure had remained just below our income from membership fees, so we continued to have around £8000 in the bank, which was a healthy financial position. As RAN had no staff and was just run by its volunteer trustees it was a very cost-effective operation. The Accounts had been signed off by our Independent Examiner, and our budget for the coming year anticipated similar levels of expenditure.

There were no questions. The motion that the Report and Accounts be approved was proposed by Matt Harrison, seconded by Vic Latchford, and carried unanimously.

Election of Trustees

Richard said that there were two new nominations, Andrea Ekpenyong and Rachel Eden. He also 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 he and Peter Kayes had to retire but both wished to stand for re-election. However, as he was standing for re-election he handed the chair to the RAN Deputy Chair, Hazel Wright.

With the meeting's agreement, Hazel proposed that all four nominees be elected, and this was carried unanimously.

Award of Certificates

Richard then resumed the Chair and introduced the Mayor of Reading, Councillor Glenn Dennis. He explained that Glenn had grown up in London and had moved to Reading in 2010. He had twice served as Deputy Mayor and had become Mayor earlier this year. The Mayor then gave the following speech.

“ It is a pleasure and an honour to join you today at the Reading Advice Network's Annual General Meeting. As Mayor of Reading, I am proud to be part of this event and to witness firsthand the incredible work that the Reading Advice Network (RAN) does to improve the quality of information and advice services in our town.

Since its establishment as an independent charity in 2016, RAN has played a vital role in ensuring that the people of Reading can access the advice and support they need. By setting and upholding a high-quality standard for member organisations, RAN guarantees that those seeking help receive accurate, effective, and compassionate guidance.

Today, we recognise two outstanding member organisations—Launchpad and Reading Mencap—for renewing their commitment to these high standards. Both

organisations have been re-assessed by independent assessors and have once again achieved RAN's Quality Standard for another four years. This is a testament to their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to making a difference in the lives of people in our community.

Launchpad continues to be a beacon of hope for those experiencing homelessness, helping vulnerable individuals rebuild their lives. Reading Mencap, on the other hand, provides invaluable support to people with learning disabilities and their families, empowering them to lead full and rewarding lives. Both organisations exemplify what it means to be customer-focused, to provide excellent training and supervision for their teams, and to maintain high standards in delivering their services.

In addition to celebrating these achievements, we must acknowledge the role RAN plays in bringing together organisations, facilitating discussions, and helping shape the future of advice and support services in Reading. The work you do is vital to the fabric of our community, and I encourage you to continue pushing for excellence and collaboration.

It is with great pleasure that I now present these certificates to Launchpad and Reading Mencap, recognising their continued dedication to our town. Thank you for all that you do. “

He then presented Launchpad's certificate to Su Hamblyn and Reading Mencap's certificate to Sally Utting.

Close

Richard thanked the Mayor for coming to the AGM and for his kind words about RAN and its member organisations. Before closing the AGM he also thanked his Trustee Board colleagues - Andrea Ekpenyong, Francesca Yates, Hazel Wright, Peter Kayes and Rachel Eden - for their help 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 09.55