

# Minutes of Annual General Meeting 8th November 2023



Michael from the Salvation Army opened the meeting with housekeeping information

## **Welcome and introduction - Nicki Fowler, Chair**

We would like to welcome everybody to our AGM. It is lovely to see so many of you here today to hear about our work over the last year and to celebrate with us

Thank you to everybody for coming and to the Salvation Army for letting us hold our AGM here today. We're also very happy to have the Deputy Mayor of London Borough of Bexley, Councillor Nigel Betts with us today. He would like to say a few words to start

## **Deputy Mayor Nigel Betts**

Wanted to listen to the AGM and say a few words at the end but noted what a great building the Salvation Army have as he remembers it being a Victorian building and how it has been rebuilt to an amazing building. He shared that one of our members had said how much they enjoyed the last AGM & wishes that it could happen weekly.

## **Nikki Fowler**

Before we start there are a few points in our AGM where we need to ask our voting members to agree things. If you are a voting member you will have a sticker saying 'voting member'. If you would like to propose or second a point, please raise your hand and keep it up until we see each of you.

## **Apologies for absence**

Jattinder Rai, Carol Penny, Vikki Wilkinson, Patrick Gray, Avril Hocking, Kevin Brown, Sam Smith, Aaron Lundy, Lotta Hackett, Claire Wright, Teresa Styles

## **Minutes of the AGM held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022**

Copies were shared on our AGM website page and on the day. Proposer and seconder to approve the minutes was requested:

Proposer : Stacey Y

Secunder: Chris F

## **Matters Arising**

None

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### Highlights of the Year - Update from our Chief Executive, Kara

Firstly, I'd like to start by welcoming everybody here today. Thank you for coming to support us and celebrate the last year with us.

I'm going to share some of the high points and fantastic achievements from the last year with you, but I'll keep it short as we have some great presentations coming up to give you more information.

I will be talking about the work that we have done between April 2022 and March 2023.

This year we have been working hard to make sure that more people know about Bexley Mencap and that we run the activities and services that members want and need. I've got a few numbers for you:

- We are very happy to have welcomed 13 new members to our activities and services.
- If we think about all of the activities that we run, we have held over 400 sessions for people to attend
- We have delivered over 2,200 hours of 1:1 support
- Carried out almost 250 social care assessments and annual reviews through Pathways
- Supported 71 families with 1:1 support

I hope that you'll agree that we've had a busy and successful year!

Last year we did a lot of work on improving and expanding our support service to make sure it was the best it could be. Scott has been working hard with our team to support more people and to launch our exciting new Hub. The Hub runs twice a week and is a small group for people who want to learn new skills, make new friends and become more independent. It's been so successful that we're looking at whether we can add more days for more people. Thank you to the team who have worked so hard to get it up and running

It has still been important for us to work on improving access to healthcare for people with learning disabilities. You'll hear a little bit more about how we've done this through the Access to Health Project shortly, but we are delighted that for the first time this year Bexley hit the national target of 75% of people having their annual health check. This is something that lots of people have worked on for a long time and we're very happy that our project could help us hit this important target. We've also supported people at 69 health appointments to help make sure that they get good healthcare and delivered sessions to members about how to be healthy.

Respect in Bexley have carried on doing some fantastic work this year like working with our local hospital to help design a quiet room in the A&E department. They've also continued their partnership with the University of Greenwich to provide training to student nurses. The biggest highlight of the year for Respect in Bexley

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though is that they have been celebrating 30 years of hard work this year! It's a fantastic achievement and I'd like to thank all of the members who have dedicated so much time to making things better for people with a learning disability. The group can tell you about their work much better than I can though, so they'll be coming up soon.

We are proud to be working in partnership with London Borough of Bexley's Adults Safeguarding Board and charity Ambient on the exciting new Quality Checkers project. Quality Checkers are people with learning disabilities who are employed to visit local care and support services, speaking with the people that use them to find out about their experiences. The Quality Checkers complete a report with recommendations of how local services could improve to better support people with learning disabilities. We are delighted that we have been able to help to get this project started so that people with learning disabilities are involved in checking the quality of local services to give their unique views. We have 3 Quality Checkers who visited 15 local services last year and will be visiting more this year.

We've also been working in partnership with Bexley Council and 7 other charities on an important project called Pathways. Our teams are working with members and carers to complete their social care assessments and annual reviews, helping members to get vital services and support in a way that works best for them. This is a very important project as it shows that as a charity, we're able to support our members to get the right support to live their lives the way they want to.

Finally, it remains an important part of our work to support families and carers too and we have carried on providing 1:1 support for carers on a range of topics when they have needed us. We have also been involved in some big projects which we hope will make things easier for all carers in Bexley. We were part of the steering group to plan and run the Carers Thank You event in Carers Week, we helped to launch the Carers Emergency Plan for Bexley and we are very pleased to have led on developing the new Carers Website for Bexley. This will be a place where carers can find information about different important things such as welfare and benefits, where to get support locally and how to get a break from caring.

I'm sure you'll agree that it has been a very busy, but very good year, and we're looking forward to next year and the exciting things to come. A little bit later in the AGM we'll be giving you a little more information about our new Big Plan and what we hope to do next year.

Before I finish though I would like to say a very big thank you to all of our team and our volunteers. Without them, and their passion and commitment, we couldn't do any of the things that you'll hear about today.

I'll finish with some feedback that we received recently from a healthcare professional that we've been working with when supporting one of our members: "I would like to add what a privilege it has been to have worked with you. You really do go far and beyond your remit as a support worker. You have been

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invaluable to our client and also to us and you show that you really care about your clients. You are a complete star.”

## Finance Report – Presented by our Treasurer, Clair

Now I’m going to talk to you about our accounts from April 2022 until March this year. Accounts tell us how much money came in and how much we spent and also where we get our money from and what we spend it on.

As a charity, each year we have to write a big report with information about the things that we’ve done in the year and with all of our accounts and finance information in it.

Unfortunately, our annual accounts have to be written in the way that the Government tell us to so it isn’t Easy Read, but I will talk through some of the important points with you.

### Income

We had £320,000 coming in this year which is a little less money coming in than last year

The biggest reason is because we got lots of grants for work to support people during the Covid pandemic the year before which we didn’t get this year.

### Money we’ve spent

Our Trustees agreed that for this year we could use some of our savings, known as our reserves, to help us make sure that we could continue to grow and improve our services.

This means that we spent more money this year than we got in and used £47,000 of our savings.

The biggest thing that we spent money on again this year is wages and costs for our staff team. 85% of our money this year was spent on staff costs.

We also spent quite a lot of money on our utilities and bills as well as on IT because we got a grant for running digital projects.

### Summary

Because demand for joining our activities and services is still very high it is important for us to keep working on growing our services and providing the support that people need. Because of this we have planned to use some of our savings again over the next year to make sure we have what we need to keep running our activities and help more people.

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### Adoption of Accounts

A proposer and seconder who agreed to accept our annual accounts was requested:

Proposer: Janis B

Secunder: Etty T

### Appointment of Independent Examiner

This year we used our accountants, CA Plus again. We would like to use them next year because they have been so helpful to us and made sure that we are managing our money well. A proposer and seconder to use CA Plus as our independent examiner requested:

Proposer: Chris F

Secondary: Janis B

### Nomination of Trustees – Kara, CEO

As a charity we have to have a board of Trustees to make decisions about the charity and make sure that we're spending our money properly. They also make that we do good work for people with a learning disability and families.

Firstly, our Chair of Trustees Nicki is going to be stepping down and retiring from the board after more than 10 years. We would like to thank her for all of her dedication and hard work supporting us and our members. We'll still see her when she volunteers with us but wish her well for the next exciting project that she does.

We also have some fantastic new trustees who would like to join the board and some of our other trustees who would like to carry on for another year. The people who would like to be Trustees for the next year are:

- Chair – in favour of Nando Caicedo
- Vice Chair - in favour of Peter Walker
- Hon. Sec. – in favour of Amelie Busch
- Treasurer - in favour of Clair Grayston

• and for the Trustee board:

- Stacey Yusuf
- Mick Vincent
- Nicki Cochrane
- Joanne Dyson

A proposer and a seconder for those trustees to be appointed was requested:

Proposer: Jean A

Secunder: Janis B

### End of formal AGM

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### Informal Celebration

I'm sure you'll all be glad to hear that it is the end of me talking and the end of the formal part of our AGM so now we can move on to the best parts!

### Highlights of the Year - video

We want to share some of our highlights from the year with you so have put together a short video

### Digital Health Update - Kara

I hope you all enjoyed seeing some of the things that we have done this year. I'm going to briefly let you know about some of the work that we've done on our digital health project.

### Respect in Bexley turns 30 - group

As I mentioned earlier we are celebrating a big milestone this year because Respect in Bexley are celebrating 30 years of working to make things better for people with learning disabilities. They have done some fantastic work over the years so here they are to let us know a little more.

Respect gave an overview about their work on:

Access to Health Project

Sneak preview of equality

Respect did presentation looking back on achievements from last 30years

### Our Big Plan - Kara

I'd like to say a big thank you to Respect for that fantastic presentation and for all of their achievements over the years.

Finally I'd like to let you know about our new big plan which we're going to be working on for the next 3 years. We're very excited to launch our big plan – you can find some copies here and we also have it on our website if you would like to look later on.

Our big plan will run until March 2026 and we will be working on 4 main areas:

- ➔ Be locally recognised as a leading learning disability provider in Bexley to better influence positive change in our community.
- ➔ Deliver a personalised and high-quality service, which caters to the needs of members and the people who care about them.
- ➔ Work towards becoming a sustainable organisation with a long future

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- Create a vibrant, creative, multipurpose location that is accessible for all the people we support.

In the coming year some of the things that we aim to do are:

- Increase and improve member involvement in service development and governance
- Offer increased opportunities for people to make creative use of their direct payments and personal budgets
- Launch our new newsletter and improve how we use social media

We'll make sure to keep you updated about our big plan at next year's AGM

### Close

That brings us to the end of our AGM this year. We hope that you found it interesting and have enjoyed it

We'd like to say a big thank you to everybody for coming and to all of our staff and members for their hard work into putting everything together

You're all welcome to join us for refreshments and a light lunch downstairs

### Final words from the Deputy Mayor

Firstly, thank you for inviting us & for sharing with us to learn more about Bexley Mencap - empowering work. Well done to everyone & thank you again