

Romsey Opportunity Group AGM for 2021-2022
Held on Tuesday 7th March at 12.30pm, at the Appletree Centre

Attendance: -

Trustees – Helen Rogers (Chair)
Dick Hewett (Treasurer)
Sue Fisher
Ruth Martin
Caroline Wheatley

Staff – Janine Hollands
Carol West
May Sherwood

Friends and Volunteers – Cllr Mark Cooper and Sue Tippet (Patrons)
Liz Bailey
Anne Hewett
Kate Ward
Mavis Watts
Angela Brentnall
Sarah Yates
Suzanne Dare
Emma Dale (Standing for election as a Trustee).

Apologies from - Cllr Neil Gwynne, Cllr Alan Dowden, Cllr Karen Dunleavy, Cllr Janet Burnage, Anna Baker, Georgina Burrows, Claire Topp, Maggie Johnston

Welcome

Helen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of 2022 AGM

The minutes from last year's AGM were agreed. No Matters Arising were identified.

Chairman's Report (Helen Rogers)

“Romsey Opportunity Group (ROG) has been in existence for over 40 years, in that time it has faced many challenges. The last few years have brought their own challenges. These have been the Covid pandemic, staff and organisational changes and financial constraints. The problems have been resolved and overcome through the commitment of everyone involved in the group.

During Covid the group continued to meet via social media with many and with various creative and supportive activities, we kept in touch with our children and families.

Mavis indicated before Covid that she was going to retire. The trustees met to discuss and organise the recruitment processes to replace her. This process was put on hold three times due to covid restrictions. When the process was

eventually completed Janine was appointed.

Shortly afterwards Lyn, the manager of ROG, became ill and had to take extended sick leave. During her absence the trustees and staff took on extra responsibilities to cover. After meeting and discussion with the trustees Lyn offered her resignation writing "I sadly feel the appropriate outcome for me is to resign from my post as manager of ROG with immediate effect". The trustees with sadness accepted Lyn's resignation. The trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank Lyn for her commitment to the group and to wish her all that is good for the future.

After a period of review the trustees decided to make some organisational changes and we are delighted to announce that Janine has been appointed as manager of ROG. Carol will continue as administrator. The work previously undertaken by three staff (Lyn, Mavis and Carol, prior to Janine's arrival) has been shared by the two of them since the beginning of 2022 with the support of trustees. There is no plan to recruit any further staff.

We are grateful to Janine and Carol for their enthusiasm and determination to take ROG forward into a new era. May is to be thanked for the work that she quietly and concisely does at each session.

During Covid there were no opportunities for our loyal supporters to fundraise which impacted on the group financially. During the last year they have restarted their fundraising activities and we are very grateful for their continuing support their names are highlighted in the financial report. Children in Need have again given us a grant. I would like to thank Sue for all the work she does to help us secure this funding.

I would like to say a special thank you to our volunteers. They are not only committed to the sessions where they ensure that the children have a range of experiences. The group sessions are a joy, there are happy active children. The volunteers also give their time to engage in training sessions such as Makaton and Safeguarding.

To the future we are optimistic and look forward to continuing our current good practice and possibly finding new ways for supporting our children and families. A big thank you to everyone involved in the group".

Manager's Report (Janine Hollands)

"I would like to start off by saying a huge thank you for coming, and especially our patrons, Cllr Mark Cooper and Sue Tippett, for whose continued support and interest in ROG we are very appreciative.

It is a great time to reflect on how grateful we are to our volunteers and trustees who generously give up their time to support our cause. Also, to Carol and May who help make sure the group runs smoothly.

This year has been challenging as Lyn Bird has been on long term sick leave, due to illness. We miss her and understand how hard it must have been, for her to resign, from Romsey Opportunity Group which she loved.

The Group has changed somewhat and we have adapted to an influx of children and families needing our support. From 2022 we have 10 more families joining us at group and another 3 on our waiting list. We have instances of parents even knocking on the window asking for help, which we cannot refuse. This means our group structure has evolved.

On Tuesdays we have 6 children attending with a 1:1 or 1:2 volunteer and 2 mums that stay with their children (Stay and play part of group). On a Thursday we have 7 children with a 1:1 or 1:2 volunteer and 1 or 2 mums with their children. After Easter we shall be opening a further session for families to attend as a stay and play, this way we are eradicating our waiting list and helping those who need help quickly, providing families with the support they need".

Treasurer's Report (Dick Hewett)

Dick presented ROG's accounts for the financial year to 31 July 2022, showing the following figures: -

- Income: £20,229.73
- Expenditure: £19,512.63
- Surplus: £717.10

Highlights of the year's income included £10,000 from Children in Need, £2,000 from Hampshire County Council including £1,500 from Cllr Mark Cooper during his term in office as Mayor of Test Valley. Donations included £1267 from Romsey Hearing Group, £500 from Romsey Ukelele Group, £528 from The Original Factory Shop in Romsey and £1,000 from Dutton Gregory Solicitors.

Expenditure highlights include £750 for Makaton Training, £2,700 on a new accessible train for the playground and £489 for Romsey Mens Shed' labour installing the new train.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Sue Fisher, seconded by Ruth Martin, and accepted unanimously. (Copy attached to these minutes).

Election of Officers

- Helen Rogers (Chair), Dick Hewett (Treasurer), Sue Fisher (Trustee), Ruth Martin (Trustee) and Caroline Wheatley (Trustee) were all proposed for re-election for the next year by Liz Bailey and this was seconded by Mavis Watts. All were elected unanimously.
- Emma Dale was nominated by Helen Rogers and seconded by Dick Hewett for stand for election as a Trustee. This was unanimously approved.

Calendar of events

- Tues 21st Mar & Thurs 23rd March – Wear odd socks to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day
- Mon 3rd Apr – Fri 14th Apr – Easter holidays
- Tues 18th & Thurs 20th Apr – Wear blue to belatedly celebrate World Autism Day (2nd April)
- Tues 16th - Mayor Making - Council Chamber - Romsey Town Hall
- Mon 29th May – Fri 2nd June – Half term
- Sun 2nd July – Romsey Mayors Picnic
- Tues 18th & Thurs 20th July – Leavers & End of term celebrations
- Mon 24th July – Fri 1st Sept – Summer holidays
- Sat 18th Nov – Romsey Charities Fair at Crosfield Hall

Any Other Business

Helen closed the AGM at 1:00pm