

**ROG AGM 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**  
**Appletree Centre at 12:30**

**Present** – Helen Rogers, Dick Hewett, Ruth Martin, Sue Fisher, Caroline Wheatley, Emma Dale, Janine Hollands, Carol West, Mavis Watts, May Sherwood, Maggie Johnston, Sarah Yates, Angela Brentnall, Kate Ward, Liz Bailey, Anna Baker, Mark Cooper, Susan Tippett, Anne Hewett, and Sue Davel.

**Apologies** – Test Valley Mayor and Mayoress

The Minutes from last year's AGM were agreed and there were no matters arising.

**Chair's Report** (Helen Rogers)

In the annual calendar of the Romsey Opportunity Group there are a number of year beginnings and year ends – the academic year (September to July), the normal calendar (January to December), the Financial Year (August to July), and the year that starts and ends with the AGM. This meeting marks another year of ROG supporting children with special needs and their families. We have been doing this important work since 1971, and over the years there have been challenges. The year 2022-2023 has been no exception, but we come together today to celebrate the achievements of the group. It is a time for reflection and a time for looking forward. The Trustees meet regularly throughout the year and met recently to discuss the successes of the past year and to highlight areas for development.

There are ongoing challenges – Ofsted, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Training, Maintenance, raising funds and of course technology. All of these are monitored and strategies are in place to address any issues identified. But as we look back on the year, there is much to celebrate – the growth and achievements of our children, the support given to our families, and the continued team spirit within the group and the commitment of everyone involved.

The group would not and could not exist without our wonderful volunteers. They work and play with the children, and they attend training, giving their time so generously. We thank them for everything

they do for us. Our staff too work hard – organising and maintaining the curriculum, resources, and environment, again thank you.

We are also grateful to the wider community who support us in so many ways. As a charity, we are completely dependent on our own fund raising, grants and donations. In particular I would like to thank the following - Children in Need, Dutton Gregory, The Original Factory Shop, Quakers, Hampshire Business, Romsey Round Table, Romsey Ukelele Group, Romsey Men's Shed, HCC (via Mark Cooper), Waitrose, TK Maxx, Caroline Wheatley and Linda Robinson. Unfortunately our recent bid for a Children in Need grant was not successful, so we therefore hope that the wider community will continue to support us wherever and whenever they can. A number of fund raising events are already in the calendar, and we will make a further application to Children in Need this year.

Thank you for coming today and for continuing to support The Romsey Opportunity group, a special place for special children.

### **Manager's Report** (Janine Hollands, contributed after the meeting)

#### Fundraising:

We have had a successful year with regards to Fundraising. As you are aware there are some companies, organisations and individuals who regularly donate money in support of ROG. We are incredibly lucky to receive those donations but always appreciate each one without relying on them. Thanks particularly to Jon Whettingsteel and those at Dutton Gregorys, The Original Factory Shop, Romsey Rotary Club, Romsey Ukulele Band, Romsey Lions, Romsey & Chandlers Ford Round Table and Men's Shed. We have also been made the Nominated Charity at Abbotswood Day Nursey. They have held BBQs, Bakes sales, Donated teddies and Walked 26 miles on the Test way Walk to help raise funds for us. Amazing! The Charities Christmas Fair and Mayors Picnic do not always bring in lots of money but are both great opportunities to get our name out there in the community and to make connections with other local charities.

#### Volunteers and Trustees:

This year we have gained two more Volunteers, Sue Dare and Jenny Knowles, and another Trustee, Emma Dale. They have already made

a positive impact in the group, and we look forward to them being part of the ROG team for many years, fingers crossed. We had another lovely Volunteer, Rhianon, who we knew would only be with us a year as she wanted some work experience with friends with additional needs. She has gone to work full time in a new special needs school over in Dibden and we wish her the best of luck.

#### Training:

As part of our continuous provision and development, our Staff, Volunteers and Trustees have participated in fitting training courses such as Safeguarding, Pediatric First Aid, British Sign Language, Fire Safety and Manual Handling. We are up to date with relevant training in conjunction to our Policies and Procedures and all the certificates are stored in our Staff and Volunteers file. We are always looking into who and what areas we may need additional training within the future. The Volunteers Welcome pack has also been updated and improved which has made huge difference to the induction process, thank you!

#### Families and Children:

We had 15 children on our register last year with a verity of needs. Some of the families attended our Stay and Play sessions to help eliminate the waiting list, or they would have been left waiting for a spot until September 2023. Now that 4 of our children have successfully started at local Mainstream schools we have been able to offer the stay and play children a 1:1 Volunteer. Currently we have 1 child on our waiting list who is set to start in November 2023. We have 2 new families brought to our attention via the Romsey Review. We shall make contact after the forthcoming Romsey Review meeting. We may need to review our criteria.

#### Outings:

With some of the money raised by Dutton Gregory we were able to pay for our children and their families to have some well needed respite, including a trip to see the Hilliers Light display, a day out at Paultons Park, and a session at the soft play area at The Romsey Rapids. All the feedback was incredibly positive and some of the parents went out of their way to let us know how much those trips meant.

### New Documentation:

With the help of Trustees, Carol and I have been extremely busy revising the Policies and Procedures and creating new forms to support our Volunteers and Children. Everyone has worked well and have adapted to the changes fantastically. Like anywhere Procedures need to be constantly reviewed and tweaked as well as new ones need to be created.

There have been pros and cons to the year but I am confident that we are moving forward in the right direction.

### **Treasurer's Report** (Dick Hewett)

Total income this year – £24,951 including grants and fund raising.

Total costs this year – £15,945.

Balance – £23,787 (very healthy but this doesn't mean we don't continue with our own fund raising). We will also be applying for another grant from Children in Need this year.

The accounts were approved.

### **Officers**

The ROG Trustees stood down but Mavis Watts nominated all of us to be re-elected for the coming year, and this was seconded by Maggie Johnson.

This means all the current trustees remain in post.

### **AOB**

Mark Cooper thanked all staff and volunteers for their hard work in keeping ROG flourishing.