



**HARROGATE & AREA COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE LIMITED  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Thursday 14 October 2021, 2pm**

**Hybrid meeting at Harrogate Community House and online via Zoom**

**1. WELCOME**

John Fox, HADCA Chair, welcomed all present to the AGM. John gave a special welcome to Civic Guest the Mayor of Knaresborough, Cllr Christine Willoughby, and guest speaker Wallace Sampson MBE, Chief Executive of Harrogate Borough Council, both joining via Zoom.

Frances Elliot, HADCA Chief Executive, confirmed the hybrid format of the meeting ensured that the meeting was quorate with the number of members in attendance in the room. Questions had been asked for in advance but any further questions or comments could be raised in the room or by using the Zoom chat function. The meeting would be recorded.

**Also Present**

**At Harrogate Community House**

Ian Bergel, HADCA Trustee (Washburn Heritage Centre); Helen Bourner, HADCA Trustee (individual member); Kevin Douglas, HADCA Trustee (Harrogate District Cycle Action); Frances Elliot, HADCA; John Fox, HADCA Trustee (Friends of Harrogate Hospital and Community Charity); Dr Phyl Hughes, Ripon Cathedral; James Plummer, The Avalon Group; Alistair Ratcliffe, Rotary Club of Harrogate; Theva Sandanam Thevarokiam, Dignity Through Education; David Shaftoe, Open Country; Jackie Snape, Disability Action Yorkshire & Harrogate Town AFC Community Foundation; Les Sudron, Happy Wanderers; Karen Weaver, HADCA; Anna Woollven, British Thyroid Foundation.

**Via Zoom:**

Alex Bird, Harrogate Dramatic Society; Ann Duncan, Harrogate Borough Council; Nanci Downey, Citizens Advice Craven & Harrogate districts; Angela Jones, HADCA; Liz Meade, Stronger Communities Delivery Manager for Harrogate District, North Yorkshire County Council; Kimberley Morgan, MS Society, Harrogate & district branch; Edward Pickering, Citizens Advice Craven & Harrogate districts; Victoria Pilkington; Paula Salt, Royal British Legion Lister House; Jennifer Sonley, HADCA; Andrew Wilkinson, Friends of Harrogate Hospital and Community Charity.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Cllr Trevor Chapman, The Mayor of Harrogate Borough; Cllr Eamon Parkin, The Mayor of Ripon; Cllr Pat Taylor, The Mayor of Boroughbridge; Belinda Goode, Harrogate District of

Sanctuary; Brian Quinn, North Yorkshire Humanists; Caroline Shead, HADCA trustee (Macmillan Cancer Support); Jeremy Odle, MS Society, Harrogate & district branch; Liz Milner, Nidderdale AONB; Maurice Bull, HADCA trustee (Rotary Club of Harrogate); Susie Hart, Artizan International; Veronica Ridsdale, JWP Creers.

### **3. MINUTES OF 2020 AGM**

The Minutes of the 2020 AGM held on 15 October 2020 were accepted as a true record, proposed by Kevin Douglas and seconded by Ian Bergel.

### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

### **5. TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2020/21**

HADCA Chief Executive, Frances Elliot and Chair of Finance Committee, Ian Bergel, presented the Report & Statements on behalf of the Board. The Impact Report, which had been shared before the meeting, summarised the charity's work and was available on the HADCA website along with the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements.

#### **Overall Purpose**

Frances explained that HADCA's service framework consisted of community action services and support for individuals. This was underpinned by a commitment to connecting and collaborating to support people to live active and fulfilling lives, whatever challenges they faced.

#### **Community Action work**

Key statistics from the reports gave a flavour of the work undertaken in line with HADCA's mission to support communities, charities and volunteers to make the Harrogate District a great place to live and work.

Supported by a strategic grant from Harrogate Borough Council and a smaller grant from Ripon City Council, HADCA's community action work was delivered by a small team based at Harrogate Community House, connecting and collaborating across the District.

The trusted local information service was very much at the heart of the charity, with regular e bulletins, newsletters, networks and promotion work extending reach and impact way beyond what might be expected from such a small team of staff.

The Where to Turn and Volunteering Directories had been kept up to date and the searchability adjusted to take account of the effect of COVID, so that adapted volunteering opportunities, services and activities could be quickly and easily found and shared.

Frances thanked Info and Comms Officer Angela Jones, who consistently provided a fantastic service. The work was all about making sure local VCS colleagues were informed and up to

date and could focus on their activities and services, as well as getting positive and accurate messages out about the vital role of the voluntary and community sector

Operating Community House during COVID had meant grappling with endless risk assessments and procedures to ensure all tenants could continue to provide their vital services, whether in the building or working remotely. The building was now back open and offices fully occupied. HADCA had recruited several new members (all part time) and all working really hard to ensure the building ran safely and provided a great place to work for staff, tenants and visitors.

A range of network meetings had moved online, with some improved attendance. In future a blended approach would be taken. Reducing travel across the District saved time and money, and was more environmentally friendly, although connecting and collaborating in person still had an important part to play, often bringing unexpected opportunities.

HADCA had continued to work closely with Harrogate Borough Council and Two Ridings Community Foundation (TRCF) to grow THE LOCAL FUND. During the first part of the year work on the FUND was paused to enable TRCF to mobilise their Coronavirus Community Fund, but in the second half of the year it was a big step forward to be able to give grants to enable groups to keep the lights on and to restart/adapt activities to take account of COVID.

A customer survey had been carried out during the summer. The team were really pleased with the feedback and Frances shared some quotes illustrating how people valued HADCA's support for community action.

HADCA services were all about people and whether in person outside, inside with masks or on zoom the team had worked really hard to support the wonderful local voluntary and community sector organisations and had learnt so much about being adaptable and resilient that would stand the charity in good stead going forwards.

Whilst national funding and large scale ideas suited some ideas and situations, in the past 12 months, local knowledge, an understanding of who can do what in each area and where those natural connections might be had proved that a local response could reach far further than a solution that was parachuted in.

### **HADCA's role as a Community Support Organisation**

Very early on in the pandemic, North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) came up with the model of Community Support Organisations across the county, using trusted partners in the voluntary and community sector. HADCA was asked to have this role for Harrogate Town, to be the place NYCC could send anyone from Harrogate and surrounding villages who came to them for practical help. This role came with some financial support and HADCA was very grateful to NYCC for this, as the task that faced the team in supporting the whole town was sizeable. HADCA worked closely with Liz Meade from Stronger Communities to ensure the

team was aware of the rapidly changing scenario, including access to emergency shopping funds. Liz and Frances worked closely with Ann Duncan from Harrogate Borough Council, who was able to help in lots of creative ways, for example using population data to identify areas where people may be particularly in need of support, and providing redeployed staff to leaflet those areas.

HADCA received just over 500 referrals from NYCC via this route but didn't assume that HADCA services were the best and only solution in each case. So many village and parish groups came together to support people in their community and HADCA connected the referrals from NYCC up with those groups where this was possible. HADCA tried to ensure that those groups had all the latest information and knew that they could get more support from the team if they came across people whose needs were greater than they were set up to respond to. An event to thank these groups was held in September where a plaque was presented in recognition of the community's response. HADCA looked forward to developing those relationships.

### **Practical Support**

2020/21 was the year when HADCA did things differently in all aspects of working with people in the community. 321 new volunteers came forward in the initial weeks of the pandemic to support people in both Harrogate and Ripon – three times the number of volunteers HADCA would normally have on the books at any one time. Ensuring they were set up to volunteer safely was key, which was a huge challenge, given that the charity had the same number of staff who would normally sign up a couple of volunteers each month.

Shopping had never been something that HADCA had done as there were other providers, but suddenly it was a huge need for a massive number of people. The team sorted out systems and processes to ensure everyone got the right things at the right time and so that we could speedily repay people for shopping and no-one was out of pocket. The team branched out and did some dog walking, meter top ups, prescription collections and linked in with emergency food support providers.

HADCA had to stop some activities and alter the way other things were done as staff and volunteers couldn't be inside people's homes or travel together in people's cars. Phone contact was so important to so many people who weren't digitally connected and those who used to visit people face to face were initially back to making regular phone calls, some having daily contact. As restrictions eased, plans were put in place to restart safely, providing training, PPE and cleaning materials for volunteer drivers who took people first to vaccinations and other essential appointments and as time went on, back to their usual destinations.

Volunteers were encouraged to do garden visits where both parties were comfortable with this, and eventually to move back indoors.

Friendships developed over shopping deliveries. People were also encouraged to share their hobbies and interests via the Small HELPIng magazine, another way to share information and to help people to feel connected and part of the community. These were hand delivered, often along with a little treat like a bunch of daffodils, to let people know the team were thinking of them.

HADCA worked together with 5 other local Community Support Organisations to provide volunteers for the vaccination centres run at the Showground and Racecourse by local GP practices. Those teams of volunteers made that experience, the first time out of the house for so many people, welcoming, reassuring and sometimes even enjoyable! The volunteers got a lot out of it too.

Frances shared slides with statistics and quotes to help summarise how HADCA had helped and connected people during the year.

### **Finance**

Chair of Finance Committee, Ian Bergel, presented the accounts, which had been approved by the Board of Trustees at their meeting on 14 September 2021.

The year showed a £94k increase in Income over 2020 with only a £4k increase in costs, turning a £52k deficit into a £38k surplus.

The trustees were therefore very pleased to be able to report a surplus for the year as further losses were not tenable.

At the previous AGM it had been mentioned that the re-organisation to balance the budget had been working, and this had proven to be the case.

However, there was a note in the current accounts that Covid19 unexpectedly brought a number of new funding sources and opportunities for growth of services. Even so HADCA's future funding environment remained quite uncertain and this small surplus would help support medium-term sustainability.

At the end of Quarter 1 for 2021/22 the situation was ahead of budget and that was also the current forecast the year.

Ian thanked HADCA's funders and supporters, including trusts and businesses, all of whom were acknowledged in the Impact Report.

There were no questions and The Report and Financial Statements were approved by members present.

On behalf of the trustees, The Chair proposed a vote of thanks to all HADCA staff and volunteers, especially Frances and Karen who had lead the charity during a difficult year. Frances was also congratulated on her MBE award in the Queen's birthday honours.

John recommended the weekly HADCA bulletins for keeping up to date and the Chief Officers' and Chairs' Group for bringing people together to share issues and ideas.

## **6. ELECTION OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The following trustees were nominated for election and were appointed:

Alistair Ratcliffe (nominated by David Hayes, Rotary Club of Harrogate)

James Plummer (nominated by Emma Williams, The Avalon Group)

Dr Phyl Hughes (nominated by John Dobson, Dean of Ripon, Ripon Cathedral)

Ann Allen (Individual member, nominated by John Fox, Friends of Harrogate Hospital)

Victoria Pilkington (individual member, nominated by Kevin Douglas, Harrogate District Cycle Action)

Trustees at their first meeting after the AGM were able to elect Honorary Officers.

The Chair thanked those trustees stepping down: Kevin Douglas, Maurice Bull and Bev Richardson.

Kevin and Maurice had both served their full 6 year term on the Board and Bev was stepping down after 3 years, having transferred over from Harrogate Community House Trust with the merger in 2018. Kevin had served as Vice Chair and was especially thanked for his work on the Community House merger and organisation re-structure.

## **7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR**

The existing Auditors J W P Creers were re-appointed, proposed by Ian Bergel and seconded by Helen Bourner.

## **8. CLOSE OF AGM**

### **The Year Ahead**

Frances explained that 2020 was due to be the start of a new 3 year strategic plan, but the effects of the pandemic and the changes that would bring to the local community were still developing. Local government reorganisation would also have an important impact and there was still much to be clarified. Plans were in place to March 2022 and HADCA would be working on a new strategy between now and then, whilst also looking forward to working with the new council.

Work would continue to support people to reconnect with their communities, with a focus on supporting them to get back out and doing things themselves once more. Conscious of the challenges ahead for people on low incomes, with fuel prices set to rise, there were plans to keep sharing the training the team had received about staying warm and well, and to continue to refer people to the service run by Citizen's Advice. HADCA would continue to be here to help people who didn't know where to turn and was keen to find out about very local issues affecting people in different parts of the area, tracking unmet needs and identifying who might be able to meet them.

Last year many funders had opened up streams of funding and supported huge numbers of local charities. Two Ridings Community Foundation made grants for running costs available to charities in the area at a crucial time, with fundraising increasingly challenging.

It would be a challenging year ahead for all members, partners and people in local communities. HADCA would work alongside members and partners, to ensure that people had access to the support they needed and to nurture the culture of volunteering and neighbourliness that had long existed in the District, but that had flourished so much during the year.

The Chair thanked attendees for supporting HADCA and the community, and thanked HADCA staff, Frances, Karen, Angela, Lizzie, Anna and Phil for their work in preparing for the meeting.

After the conclusion of the formal business, Wallace Sampson, Chief Executive of Harrogate Borough Council, gave a presentation and update on how the new local authority for North Yorkshire would be put in place by April 2023.

On behalf of HADCA, Frances thanked Harrogate Borough Council for their support for HADCA and the wider voluntary and community sector over many years. HADCA had always had really positive support from Ann Duncan and Fiona Friday, and had contributed to and benefitted from connections made at the My Neighbourhood network. The development of THE LOCAL LOTTO and THE LOCAL FUND in partnership with the council and Two Ridings Community Foundation meant that local support for local charities had been secured for years to come and hopefully in perpetuity. HADCA wished all staff at both Harrogate and North Yorkshire councils well for the future at a difficult time.

Signed .....  
(Chair)

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