

**4Sight Vision Support Annual General Meeting**  
**Friday 18 November 2022 at 11am.**  
**Via Virtual Zoom Video Conferencing**

**1. Welcome**

The meeting was opened via video link at 11am by the 4Sight Vision Support Chairman Dr Norman Boyland DL who welcomed everyone to this year's meeting.

**2. Attendees/Apologies for Absence**

All officers were present. There were 14 attendees in total with 5 in person at Victoria Drive Bognor, and 9 attendees via Zoom, which included volunteers, trustees, staff and the Auditor from Kreston Reeves.

**3. Minutes of the AGM held on Friday 3 December 2021.**

The Chairman presented these minutes, and they were accepted and will be signed as a true reflection of that meeting. There were no matters arising.

The minutes were proposed by NB, and unanimously agreed by all members present and 4 voting members who had notified us of their voting intention prior to the meeting.

**4. Report from 4SIGHT Chairman – Dr Norman Boyland DL.**

At this time of uncertainty, it is a sheer pleasure to be able to report a most successful year for 4Sight Vision support. Most notably, 2021/22 marks a year of transition from the difficult times experienced through the peak of the Covid pandemic to a new environment with a new set of challenges.

During the year Kirstie and her team have worked tirelessly, examining every aspect of the Charity's work, with focus on efficiency, effective delivery of 4Sight services and ensuring that fundraising efforts are completely congruent and supportive of these. On behalf of the whole Trustee Board, I wish to pay tribute to Kirstie's entire team for the way they have adapted and managed change not just during the last year but the whole way through the pandemic. At all times they have had the needs of our sight impaired members at the forefront, maintaining and improving services and with the volunteers,

ensuring there is always someone at 4Sight ready to help with problems and provide companionship when times are particularly difficult.

As we face up to the new challenges of rapid inflation and the resulting pressure on personal incomes, coupled with wider economic uncertainty, the work that I have just referred to, stands the Charity in the best possible position to weather the new environment. During the reporting period 4Sight has supported 2287 service users and in the current year the ambition is to maintain this and if possible, to find the resources to grow the numbers accessing our services and drawing on our support.

The following areas of recent and key activity contribute toward providing the confidence Trustees have that this will be achieved.

One of the very significant milestones achieved during the reporting period has been the formalising of the NHS contract with the University Hospitals Trust. This provides funding for the first time to provide a sight care advisor service in the Worthing (Southlands) and Chichester (St. Richards) hospitals eye clinics. Since commencing, the service has been heavily used and a case for increased capacity is being made as contract renewal is discussed. Additionally, interest has been received from the Queen Victoria hospital in East Grinstead for provision of a low vision clinic.

Having resources available is fundamental to maintaining and growing our services and the charity is immensely grateful to all the many organisations that have provided grants during the year. The efforts made by our fundraising team and the relationships they are building with funders, are key to the success being achieved. While income received from funders in the reporting period, has been lower than the previous year, it is recognised that there will be some annual variation and a number important bids for funding are presently submitted with significant success being achieved. There are also ongoing local fundraising activities and thanks for these go to staff and our 200 superb volunteers who selflessly support the efforts which contribute extremely important additional funds.

All these fundraising efforts are very much supported by the profile that 4SIGHT maintains in the community and in this context, it is appropriate that I should draw attention to the tremendous amount of work that goes on,

occupying much of Kirstie's time, in promoting our partnership working. This has remained a priority and linking with a growing range of organisations in the public, private and third sector, is being strengthened all the time. At national and regional level 4Sight continues an active role through membership of Visionary, joining with similar organisations in the sight loss sector to promote awareness and common interests. Kirstie has maintained links into local West Sussex Community and Voluntary Action groups and 4Sight remains a founder member of the Community Solutions Consortia, a consortium of County wide service providers that deliver preventative health and wellness services.

These points that I have highlighted are just a few of the many activities that provide the Board of Trustees with confidence that the Charity continues to carry a wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise, that allows it to continue to deliver our mission: 'To make a positive difference to blind and sight impaired people across West Sussex'.

During the year Trustees have expressed a wish to resume meetings in person and have met on four occasions. Additionally, the Finance and Audit Committee has met on a regular basis and has scrutinised the accounts and the proposed budget before presentation to the wider Board. Trustees have actively sought nominations to trusteeship during the year and to date have received limited interest. In the meantime, all existing trustees are prepared to continue in post and offer themselves for re-election. I am most grateful to them all for their insights and their ongoing contributions both to board discussion and more widely in their separate volunteering roles. I recommend them all to the Members.

## **5. Report from 4SIGHT Chief Executive – Kirstie Thomas**

I would like to thank Norman for his report and for his words which will mean a lot to the staff team and volunteers.

Working on the Annual report gave me a good opportunity to look back on the last year and I would like to thank the team for helping me gather statistics and data for the report that shows our impact during 2021/22 whilst still battling some Covid restrictions. The staff team have done tremendous work.

In 2021/22 we celebrated our 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, with 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events arranged by the fundraising team.

There has been lots of change and positive things to talk about. Turning 100 demonstrated how we are a trusted organisation, and it gave us a real opportunity to look towards the future, and what we do with our services moving forward.

We introduced a new strategy and service delivery in September 2021 which was the result of a significant amount of work carried out during the pandemic. I would like to thank the team and volunteers for the smooth transition into a new way of working which has been going from strength to strength, and for your support and continued incredible hard work.

We also received the incredible honour of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in the last financial year, an amazing achievement and testimony to the more than 200 volunteers who still continue to provide tireless support to 4Sight Vision Support and our service users. We are incredibly grateful for their ongoing input. It was a huge achievement to receive the award in what was our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year.

We saw huge growth in the number of referrals we receive, with an increase of over 200 referrals in the financial year and a total of 549 new clients registered.

Already this year we are seeing this figure will probably double, so are looking at a 55% increase on referrals in 2022/23 demonstrating that as an organisation we are reaching out, more accessible, more visible and in much higher demand.

The team are working tirelessly with limited resources, working hard to make sure that people that come through our doors and phone lines receive the support they need, when they need it.

For me it is a huge honour becoming Chief Executive and I would like to thank Norman and the Board of Trustees for giving me the opportunity, and to the staff team and volunteers for their support. I could not do it without you.

The organisation will continue to go from strength to strength thanks to the efforts of the service team, fundraising team, finance and admin team and all the volunteers, so thank you very much.

## **6. Report from 4SIGHT Hon. Treasurer – Arthur Mayson.**

The full statutory accounts as required by the Companies Act and Charity Commission regulations are available on the website and in hard copy format by request.

They do contain a considerable amount of detail and explanatory notes, but the Statement of Financial Activities provides an easy to follow summary.

The key figures are noted in the financial performance section of the Trustees report and briefly, we ended the year with a deficit of £59, 555. This should be viewed in the light of a surplus of £24,636 for the previous year against a budgeted deficit for the year of £24,794.

It should be noted that it is an obligation of the trustees to expend prudently the resources of the charity on its objectives after making appropriate reserves to cover future liabilities.

We are still suffering the after effects of Covid-19 which has restricted both fundraising and club activity and has also caused many funders to review their grant making policies

On the positive side in-house fundraising has been reorganised, and we have achieved success in securing service contracts, and efforts in this respect are ongoing.

The reorganisation of the fundraising team which I mentioned in last year's report has taken place, and although there have been one or two issues with staff turnover, this is now starting to bear fruit, and funding bids are being submitted in a timely and professional manner through the efforts of Julie and her team.

As ever, thanks are due to the finance team of Melanie and Sonia in achieving unqualified examination and to our Independent Examiners Kreston Reeves, for their advice and support throughout the year.

We continually face new challenges but I believe the charity is well placed to meet these in the future.

## **7. Report from Auditor – Kreston Reeves**

NB welcomed Sarah Eddis to the meeting. Kreston Reeves complete the independent examination of the accounts for 4Sight Vision Support.

As part of the independent examination, we are required to read the Trustee's Report and we would like to note that the report is a great reflection of the impact of the charity throughout the year and the fantastic work it has been doing. It is lovely to see external recognition of the charity's work via the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, a reflection of the 100 years of work the charity has been performing.

The auditors are happy that everything mentioned in the board report is consistent with the financials as presented.

In terms of results for the year, income in 2021/22 of £365k was down on last year (£423k), mainly because the grants received were less – there were some specific one off Covid grants in 2020/21 when other charities were giving out more money at the time.

There has been less income this year, but this has been compensated in part by improved fundraising and the situation is now improving along with more income from charitable activities.

In terms of expenditure, in 2021/22 this did increase up to £424k against £399k in 2020/21.

The main increase in expenditure this year relates to staff costs, mostly due to outreach services whereby you had a restricted fund brought forward available to spend.

Although you have a deficit of £59k, as Arthur has said, this reflects a budgeted deficit and the surplus from last year.

From the Balance Sheet, the key figure is the cash position which for 2021/22 was £240k against £288k in 2020/21. Cash has fallen year on year, mostly as a result of the deficit for the year – there has not been any significant capital expenditure. The Trustees have concluded they are happy that the reserves being held are sensible and reasonable for the plans of the charity going forward.

As we enter a further period of uncertainty, including a potential recession, pressures from inflation, alongside the pressures of finding the right staff to deliver the services you want to deliver, it is prudent to maintain robustness around the financial governance you have in place. The budget for 2022/23 may need to be revisited as costs change throughout the year due to external changes.

Norman thanked Sarah Eddis and Kreston Reeves for the help given to 4Sight Vision Support and for the cautionary note for preparation of the budget going forward.

## **8. Annual Trustee Report and Accounts for 2021/20212**

Norman Boyland then asked if there were any questions on the Annual Trustee Report and Accounts to which there were none. He therefore formally presented the report and accounts to members for adoption.

**The Annual Trustee Report and Financial Statements for the financial year 2020/2021 were proposed by Arthur Mayson, seconded by Maureen Jenkins and approved for adoption by all those present and by proxy by 4 voting members.**

## **9. Election of the existing Trustees**

Norman Boyland stated that the Trustees are elected each year to give members the option to vote. It was confirmed all the existing trustees planned to stand again for re-election this year and 'en bloc' vote for re-election will

follow assuming no queries or objections to any of the trustees standing again.  
No objections or queries were raised.

Trustees were nominated as follows :

#### Honorary Officers

- Chairman: Norman Boyland
- Vice-Chair: Robert Hayes
- Treasurer: Arthur Mayson

#### Elected Trustees

- Jan Penn
- Sheilagh Baker
- Heather Bell
- Maureen Jenkins
- Julia Kirkham

**Proposed by Jane Aston**

**Seconded by Proxy voters**

4 members voted in advance to allow existing trustees to stand for re-election 'en bloc'. There were no objections.

### **10. Questions from the Floor**

Norman Boyland invited questions from the floor to either himself, Arthur Mayson as Treasurer or to Kirstie Thomas as CEO.

**Q1.** Jane Aston asked how 4Sight Vision Support social clubs and activities are doing following a fall in number during Covid.

Kirstie confirmed although we have seen a decline in the more traditional social groups since Covid, the Walking groups are extremely successful, as are the online social groups. The number of groups remains around 10 post Covid.



## **11. Chairman's closing remarks**

Dr Norman Boyland thanked members and guests for attending.

He also thanked the Board of Trustees for their support and insight and Kirstie and her amazing staff team for their continued support.

In particular, Norman thanked the volunteers as their support is absolutely priceless and cements the gap with the staff team demonstrating we are a caring organisation that provide support to people who have sight loss and need our assistance.

4SVS would not be able to operate without their time and efforts for which we are very grateful.

The meeting closed at 11.36am.

Signed: .....

**Dr Norman Boyland DL.**

Date: .....