



Annual Report 2014

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 19th July 2014

Poppy Close Pilgrims Hatch Brentwood

LOOK ESSEX

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

YEAR ENDED

31 DECEMBER 2013

LOOK ESSEX

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2013

| <u>Receipts</u> | <u>£</u> | <u>Payments</u> | <u>£</u> |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Balance brought forward | 791.60 | Communications | 39.00 |
| Fees | 175.00 | Equipment | 1,873.92 |
| Fundraising | 321.87 | Fees | 2,754.13 |
| Grant | 4,000.00 | Fundraising | 85.60 |
| Internal donations | 30.00 | Helpline | 841.75 |
| External donations | 8,835.23 | Insurance | 875.24 |
| Online donations | 2.38 | Internet | 74.39 |
| Sponsorship | 2,763.56 | Mileage | 606.60 |
| Uncleared cheque | 53.80 | Postage | 160.00 |
| | | Stationery | 229.50 |
| | | Subsistence | 396.37 |
| | | Telephone | 136.95 |
| | | Transport | 1,635.57 |
| | | Balance carried forward | 7,264.42 |
| | <u>16,973.44</u> | | <u>16,973.44</u> |

Balance carried forward represented by:-

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Bank current account | 7,228.61 |
| 2. Bank deposit account | 0.02 |
| 3. Petty cash account | 34.30 |
| 4. Amazon refund due | 1.49 |
| | <u>7,264.42</u> |

We have examined the accounting records of Look Essex and certify that the above Receipts and Payments Account is in accordance therewith.

40-42 High Street
Maldon
Essex
CM9 5PN

June 2014



Maynard Heady LLP
Chartered Accountants

19th July 2014

Look Essex AGM

29 Poppy Close, Pilgrims Hatch, Brentwood, CM15 9QJ

AGENDA

- 10.00 Welcome from the Look Essex Chair**
- 10.05 Business meeting begins with Apologies**
 - Minutes from previous AGM July 2013**
 - Matters arising from previous AGM July 2013**
 - Annual Report 2014**
 - Vote of thanks for Accounts Examiner**
 - The Election of Officers**
 - Announcement of Guardians**
- 10.55 Result of ballot**
- 11.00 Any other business**
- 12.15 Close meeting**

Followed by Afternoon Tea & Teddy Bears Picnic

At

**Bishops Hall Park, Elizabeth Rd, Pilgrims Hatch,
Brentwood, Essex CM15 9NP**



AGM Minutes; Saturday 13th July 2013
9 Waylands Drive, Weeley, Essex

Apologies:

Julie Sewell, Mike Ball

Present:

John Hawker, Hazel Mason, Tracey Barnett, Carol Bannister,
Karen Hawker, Nicola Leach, Helen Flowers, George Harris,
Lucy Morris, Linus & Roxy Barnett

Meeting opened by John Hawker

Minutes of Previous meeting:

Minutes from Look Essex's AGM 2012 were agreed and signed as correct

Matters arising:

There were no matters arising from the previous AGM

John welcomed everybody and thanked Carol who has kindly hosted the meeting and donated the refreshments today. The focus of this year's AGM is on volunteers and the contribution they make. Look Essex is run by all volunteers and without them none of the services provided would happen.

Chairs Report:

John spoke about how important the volunteers of Look Essex are and continue to show their commitment year after year. Even throughout 2012 during a financially difficult time they remained motivated to provide services to people. He talked about the gift relationship between voluntary organisation and volunteer. Showing funders the outcomes of what we do such as activities is no longer enough as it is becoming increasingly important to show the time and effort a volunteer contributes. Look Essex will be introducing Social Auditing from August 2013 this will highlight

how much time people put in, this could be from attending a meeting for a couple of hours to the time spent completing a DLA form for a family. This is then offset against what it would cost if it was paid work.

Vice-Chair's Report:

James decided to reflect on his own personal reasons for becoming a volunteer and why he wanted to become involved with Look Essex and continues to volunteer. He noted the people he has met over the years and shared many significant experiences. James felt the best way to demonstrate what he has achieved with Look Essex by listing his top five moments. These included being asked to become Vice-chair, attending a Look Essex fun day when he had just started volunteering, creating an executive summary for the Future Sight research , The Future Sight launch and the activity weekend to East Grinstead.

Secretary Report:

Hazel continued to talk about the contributions that volunteers make and decided to look at the reasons why people volunteer and continue to do so. Before the AGM meeting she asked Trustees and volunteers of Look Essex to complete the sentence "I volunteer because". The answers were then read out during the meeting and included in the Annual Report. Responses varied from parents who had become involved originally because their child had just been diagnosed and they wanted to find other people who were in a similar situation to themselves, to those that have a visual impairment who wanted to find a group they could get involved with to share experiences and ideas to support other people. Hazel reflected on her own reasons for volunteering as her son has a visual impairment but now she enjoys seeing how the charity and other volunteers have developed. She also noted that in the time she has been involved with Look Essex many Volunteers have either come or gone, joined in on an ad hoc basis or come back after a few years absence. However the volunteers that have been retained are the ones that seem to have a personal experience of Visual impairment and this is what drives them to remain involved.

Financial Report:

Carol gave an overview of the final figures and also

acknowledged the time, commitment and hard work that fellow Trustees and volunteers contribute the work of Look Essex, she also stated that she felt well supported by Hazel, John and Karen who manage the day to day accounting.

John then proposed vote of thanks to Martin Cook who again has examined the books free of charge, he has also informed us that this will be his final year and has given us another contact with in the practice.

A short break for the purpose of counting the election of officers

Results of Ballot 2013:

Chairman, John Hawker was not up for election this year

Secretary, Hazel Mason was not up for election this year

Treasurer, Carol Bannister was not up for election this year

Vice Chair – James Harris re elected

Outreach/Befriending Co-ordinator - Helen Flowers re elected

Future Sight Co-ordinator - Nicola Leach re elected

Activity Co-ordinator - Karen Hawker re elected

Events Co-ordinator - Lucy Morris re elected

John congratulated & welcomed everyone as the 2013 Trustees

Newly elected Guardians:

Angela Woodward

Clive Lloyd

Julie Sewell

Mike Ball

Tracey Barnet

As voted and agreed at the Committee Meeting 23rd May 2013

Without any other business the meeting was then closed by John Hawker and lunch was served.

Chair's Report

Welcome to the Look Essex 2014 Annual Report, where we reflect upon the successes and lessons of 2013, yet more importantly look forward to the coming years and the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. It therefore seems a smart decision that the theme for this report and for 2014-2015 focusses upon self and organisational development. There are numerous factors that led us as a team of Trustees to reach this conclusion that will become apparent throughout the progress of this report; however the strategic view is where my personal focus will concentrate.

Look Essex has been an independent charity since July 2000 and in existence as an association prior to that. The road to independent charity status was a significant development that saw the influx of committed skilled, experienced and talented people, many with visual and other disabilities. These developments led to the formation of the Future Sight Project Movement in 2006, which further provided the opportunity for exponential development, encouraging innovation and a culture of learning that resulted in a principled, systematic and academic basis and approach to our organisation that continues to serves us well to this day.

During the 14 years of our charitable existence Look Essex has benefitted from sponsorship and support that has resulted in academic success, vocational and technical qualifications to provide a foundation for the continuing success of the organisation and those associated with it. The future is exciting as the organisation evolves to suit the changing social environment within the U.K., as we recognise the importance of changes to public service provision, the requirements and aspirations of those we aim to serve and represent. Our objective is to provide more opportunities for young people with disabilities to meet their potential through the provision of professionalised and accredited voluntary services and projects, including the embracement of the concept of public safety and safeguarding, to ensure that disability issues are fully recognised as an integral element that contributes the rich diversity of people and cultures within the U.K.

John Hawker, Chair, Look Essex

Vice chair's Report

My report this year will focus upon the importance of positive disabled role models. I will firstly explore an idea known as mirroring. Secondly, I will look at several interesting statistics about how adults relate to themselves as a person with a disability. Finally, I will present my assertion that each family with a disabled child should consider finding a positive disabled role model.

Before I explore these ideas in greater depth I feel a need to include a disclaimer. I am writing this report from a place of compassion, non-judgment and understanding. As a child and now an adult with a visual disability, I feel a degree of empathy with the challenges and rewards, which face those families with a visually impaired child.

In the 1960's Donald Winnicott presented the concept of mirroring (Winnicott 1965). Infants begin at an early age to define whom they are by how their mothers respond to them. For instance, if a mother responds to her baby in a way which is accepting and loving then the baby will grow up to be accepting and loving of themselves. If their mother sees her baby in a way, which is consistently anxious and non-accepting, then their child will relate to themselves in this manner also. The process of mirroring continues until approximately 10 years of age, at which point the child is able to distinguish their self from others; however a pattern of defining oneself in relation to others and environments does continue for the remainder of the person's life span.

For me, the concept of mirroring raises an important question when the child has a visual disability. If the child is the only one in their family who is partially sighted; they attend a mainstream school surrounded by peers of full vision and they may be the only child on their street with a visual condition; then how would they define themselves in relation to their own disability? Who does the child and/or their parents go to when they have questions about navigating the world as a person with a visual impairment? I am including this because it reflects my own experience of growing up with a visual disability.

In 2000 the Harvard medical school conducted a study of people with mobility problems and their perceptions of their disability (McCarthy, E.P., Davis, R.B., & Siebens, H., 2000). The study showed that 30% of the participants did not consider themselves to be disabled. Another study conducted by Lewis Harris in the 1980s reported that 50% of people with sensory, physical or mental health disabilities did not think of themselves as disabled. In considering these findings I believe that several factors are at play. Firstly, some participants did not consider themselves to be incapacitated enough to see themselves as disabled. Secondly, their disability was in relation to aging. Thirdly and most significantly, through negative prior experiences relating to their disability people can find it embarrassing to disclose. It is this final point which I would like to expand upon. For many disabled people the prospect of participating in higher education, securing employment and having a family of their own is a source of frustration as they have become limited and restricted by their negative past experiences. Without access to a positive disabled role model during their formative years and beyond, the person may grow to accept themselves as low contributors to society and feel the need to limit how they experience themselves as a person with a disability.

Considering the above theory, findings and my own reflections I feel that having positive disabled role models available to both children with a visual disability and their families is a vital resource. For the parents willing role models can provide a sense of comfort, reassurance and expectation management. Knowing that an adult with a visual impairment who contributes towards society through work, education, volunteering and families gives a positive reference point. For the child with a visual disability a positive role model can act as a guide, an advocate and someone to listen and understand when times are tough.

"Regardless of how many their families accept them, being a stranger without peers or a reference group can hinder the development of the disabled persons identity and sense of self... This may inhibit the development of a unified self-perception that acknowledges and includes the impairment." (Wilson 2003 p34)

When I consider who has had an influence upon my journey to be more accepting of my own visual impairment there are two people, which come to mind. The first is a man called W. Mitchal

who in 1971 suffered third degree burns to 65% of his body and lost the fingers on both hands after a tragic motorbike accident. In 1975 he was bound to a wheel chair as a result of damage to his spinal cord in a flying accident. However, he bravely faced these debilitating injuries and developed a multi-million pound business and delivers inspiring talks to people across the world (Lemley and Mitchal 1993). Another person who gave me pause to reflect upon how I see myself as a person with a disability is Tony Giles. Tony has been blind and partially deaf since birth. However, this did not prevent him from independently traveling around the world. I shall conclude with a quote from his autobiography, which sung to me. It provided me with a sense of hope. Hope because if a person with a similar condition to my own can relate to their disabled experience in this way then perhaps with patience, compassion, time and reflection I could re-define what my disability means to me?

“Towards the end of that trip recognition and self-awareness began to dawn. I was beginning to realize that my blindness was not a burden, which stopped me from accomplishing things, but an attribute, which opened more doors than it closed. I recognized that it was all about mental attitude. The positive responses which I gained from fellow travellers highlighted to me that it was my character, not my blindness, which was more noticeable”

(Giles 210 ch12).

- Giles T. (2010), Seeing the world my way; a totally blind and partially deaf guy's global adventures, Silver Wood.
- Harris L. (1986), ICD Survey of Disabled Americans: Bringing Disabled Americans into the Mainstream, International Centre for the Disabled
- McCarthy EP, Davis RB, Siebens H (2000), Mobility problems and perceptions of disability by self-respondents and proxy respondents., Harvard Medical School,
- Lemley B and Mitchal W. (1993), The Man Who Would Not Be Defeated, Wrs Pub, U.S.A
- Wilson, S (2003). Disability, counselling and psychotherapy; challenges and opportunities, Palgrave Macmillan, London
- Winnicott D. (1965). The Family and Individual Development, Tavistock, London

James Harris, Vice-chair, Look Essex

Joint Secretary Reports

As this year's AGM focuses upon development I decided to think about myself in the first instance. When I first became involved in 1994, I was a Nursery Nurse and Mother of two young children, one of them having visual impairment. I soon became actively involved and took on the role of Secretary. Over a twenty year period I have seen Look Essex develop and in parallel I have been developing my own career. My enrolment and completion of the International Association of Infant Massage Instructors course, whilst Nursery Nursing highlighted to me the benefits linked to sensory impairment, hence the 'Look Essex Infant Massage Service' that we offer today. My understanding of Community services has enabled planning into reconnecting with families where diagnosis may be relatively new, and created ideas on how to give families opportunities to meet with each other as well as meeting our positive role models within Look Essex.

In 2006 I completed my Registered Adult Nurse training, then in 2008 took a degree to become a Specialist Community Public Health Nurse Practitioner, I now have my dream job in a Specialist Health Visiting role, managing a small team supporting families who have children with disability or complex health needs. My experience gained through working with Look Essex was instrumental in my success in being selected for this position, and the posting now complements the service delivery of the Look Essex Family Support Service. During these twenty years my son has also developed, he was keen to leave home to live independently as his sighted friends were doing, so he moved to Cambridge where he achieved a Law Degree, but he too continued to follow his passion for the caring profession, increasing his experience working for St. John Ambulance, where he volunteered since he was ten years old. To date, he has recently qualified as a Registered Adult Nurse where he studied at Masters Level, and will be working in Cardiology at Kings College Hospital. Like many other young people who have enjoyed aspects of this organisation he has moved on and lives an independent fulfilling life.

Other young people who were involved in aspects of Look Essex as young children, like our Activity Programme, have returned as adults and are actively involved with Future Sight, involving themselves in research, and project management. Other young people feel they are too grown up for our Activity Programme now; this ensures that our organisers are challenged into being creative in planning activities that are welcoming for all ages. A recent survey suggests that our young people want activities that are challenging and they want things that may otherwise be difficult to access, Look Essex will continue to work to satisfying this need.

Our Future Sight team are all young visually impaired adults with first-hand experience of the challenges of living with sight loss and are mindful of the variance of how young people should be approached. A recent update of the Look Essex database has inspired them to focus upon reaching out to this cohort of families, similar to our experiences of twenty years ago, when I was new to the organisation. After almost twenty years in the position as Secretary, I am now stepping aside giving Nicola Leach the opportunity to further develop this role, putting her emphasis on the things that she is clearly passionate about. She will continue to be supported by the elected team and I have no doubt we will continue to see her develop as an individual too.

Surprisingly, I have put myself forward to be the Look Essex Treasurer, an area I never dreamed would be inviting to me as I have always had a confidence crisis when it comes to maths! However I have been supporting this role so closely in recent years, I feel that with my organisational skills and a calculator I will be able to successfully carry out the role as efficiently as I have been told I have as Secretary. I will now hand over to Nicola and wish her the best of luck in her new venture

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Hi I first became involved with Look Essex as a Millennium Volunteer, when I finished college and wasn't sure what I wanted to do, or what I was capable of; therefore I did some volunteering and found Look Essex. In the early days I attended some events and Committee Meetings and found it all a bit daunting at first. However everybody was welcoming and made me feel included, when I realised that my ideas and

opinions were taken seriously I grew in confidence and become more involved. When I first arrived Future Sight was just being launched and I have played an integral part in building this group and making contact with those who fall into this age group. I have also been actively involved in managing projects, where I have been out into the community raising the awareness of visual impairment and promoting Look Essex services, as well as supporting fundraising events. I have particularly enjoyed being involved in the project group that have organised and managed activities for children to enjoy respite weekends such as East Grinstead and West Mersea that were aimed towards younger visually impaired children. I feel that these activities have helped me to develop my own skills in organisation and team building, but I have also observed how they have brought the Trustees and Volunteers together too, helping to develop a strong culture of peer support throughout the team that makes Look Essex. I have also enjoyed seeing other young visually impaired adults grow in confidence and taken on new responsibilities and challenges, since becoming involved with us.

During this time I myself have gained permanent employment, beginning with a voluntary role for just a few hours per week for my local council, which led to a part time temporary post in the public relations team. It has now developed into a permanent position as a Public Relations Assistant. In this role I have been able to develop numerous communications skills; skills that are transferable to benefit the work I do with Look Essex.

As the Future Sight Co-ordinator I have been undertaking the administrative tasks such as co-ordinating meetings and producing agendas and minutes and I am confident that these skills and the knowledge built over the past few years, will equip me for my new role as Secretary and I am looking forward to being involved in developing new initiatives and projects that we are exploring for the future. Lastly I would like to thank all of the Trustees for their support and encouraging me to take on such an important role as the Look Essex Secretary.

Hazel Mason, & Nicola Leach

Secretaries outgoing & Elect, Look Essex

Treasurer's Report

I would just like to say thank you to those who proposed that I stand as Treasurer for Look Essex, I will do my best to keep the accounting clear, transparent, simplistic and accurate.

I have met our new accountant, Dean, who has kindly examined the 2013 accounts, free of charge and has advised us that he wanted to continue to support us in the same way Martin has over the previous years. We have thanked him in the time-honoured manner to which we are accustomed, with a bottle of something nice! However I would like to take this opportunity to give the vote of thanks to Dean for his contribution and kind offer to continue into the future.

Hazel Mason

Treasurer Elect