

## Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, MS Therapy Centre Lothian on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014 in the MS Therapy Centre, 40c Swanfield, Edinburgh

**Present:-** Carole Macartney (Chair); Nancy Campbell; Sheila West; Yvonne Rafferty; Janice Thomson; Ben Moran; Paul Bartlett; Neil Lucas and Cathal Cunningham

The Meeting opened with a presentation from Joanna Cole-Hamilton, Co-ordinator of KICC Active Lothian (KAL). This was followed by discussion and thanks to Joanna for all her efforts in taking this project forward and to NC & JT for their ongoing support.

1. **Apologies for Absence.** Apologies for absence were received from Ian Smith.
2. **Register of Interests.** No changes require to be made.
3. **Delegated authority/recording decisions.** CM reported that as the Board of Trustees meetings were now being held quarterly, some decisions may require to be made between these meetings in order to progress matters. After some discussion it was decided that, for a trial period, these decisions would be delegated to the Office Bearers (ie CM, CC, SW and YR) and NC. For future meetings, the Chair's report would include a section on decisions reached to ensure that these were ratified by the Board as appropriate. **ACTION: CM to include in Chair's report for the next meeting in April. This process will also be reviewed at this meeting.**
4. **Budget & key projects for 2014.** The Committee considered the draft Budget. CC explained that the Centre was very dependent on the Mad Hatters Tea Party being a huge success (hopefully raising £40,000) and that the Anniversary Dinner would hopefully raise £10,000 on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2014. CC explained that any budget could only ever be a plan and that he had made limited provision for some contingencies within it. As in previous years, any salary review for 2014 would take into account NHS agreement usually confirmed around March/April. CC suggested that we monitor the split between Oxygen Therapy and Physiotherapy. It was agreed by all that more be set aside in the Budget for Staff and Volunteer Training. **Action: CC.** CM expressed our thanks to CC and Heather Hartman.
5. **MSNTC update:** This item was scheduled on the agenda at item 11 however there has been a lot of activity around some aspects of MSNTC contracts which require decisions by the Board that it was decided to take this item earlier and devote more time to it. IS is a trustee of MSNTC representing the interests of MSTCL and other Scottish centres and had provided a paper regarding recent negotiations relating to the Oxygen Advice Service. Although IS was not at the meeting, he had spoken to the Chair immediately prior to the meeting to discuss ongoing challenges in this regard. Basically, MSNTC has been in discussion with the National Coordinator for the OAS with regard to the contract to provide this service. The contract set up in 2008 was due for review in December 2013 although existing service provision had been extended until 31.3.14. MSNTC had identified a number of areas where changes/improvements were necessary and that as with any commercial contract, an appropriate level of professionalism is essential. Unfortunately as at the meeting date, these negotiations had not been successful. HBOTT based at Castle Craig had put forward an alternative model. At the recent Open Meeting of MSNTC, approaches had been agreed to attempt further negotiations and to examine the alternative model. What was clear was the solidarity from Centres across the UK in seeking a consistent service which meets agreed standards.

The Board discussed the paper from IS and the attendant issues at length and agreed as follows: a) to support MSNTC's position in negotiating on our behalf and to stand behind their attempts to improve the service provision and b) that in respect of O2T, if we encounter a condition with which we are not sufficiently comfortable to make a decision based on the professional experience/information available within our Centre, then we do not seek advice from the OAS. We have to decline to provide O2T in the meantime until some of the questions have been resolved. This is in line with the approach being taken by other Centres. The Board thanked IS for the paper and for his work in representing our interests nationally. **ACTION: CM to confirm decisions to IS and MSNTC.**

6. **Matters Arising & Minutes from Meeting on 18.11.13.** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013 were approved by all. **ACTION: CM to sign.**
- New lighting for the Centre is to be included in the Budget for next year. **ACTION: NC to get quotes**
  - JT suggested that KAL participants should give us some feedback. **ACTION: JT & NC to design form.**
7. **Manager's Report.** The Board considered the Manager's Report and discussed items as set out below.
- It was agreed by all that one member of staff be trained specifically in Hyperbaric Oxygen given the earlier discussion at item 5. A suitable qualification had been sourced at a cost of £950. **ACTION: NC.**
  - It was noted that the staff member employed through CJS funding finishes his term with us in April. NC stated that we will need someone to carry on that position. It was suggested that we advertise in the Edinburgh Volunteer Centre for volunteer receptionists. **ACTION: NC.**
  - Website – it was suggested by NC that we put on the website that, if you are travelling from abroad to use the O2T, we can arrange accommodation. This was in response to a recent client who had been paying excessively for accommodation. SW also stated that we review the wording, as had previously been agreed, in relation to charging. This needs to highlight that we do not charge for therapies. At the same time we need to highlight the need for fundraising/donations. This obviously needs to be in line with gift aid rules. **ACTION: NC.**
  - It was agreed that, as there had been an increase in the Physiotherapy staff and salaries, the Trustees should see the outcome measures of the increased Department. **ACTION: NC to monitor return as compared to increase in salaries.**
  - Explore the possibility of a roadshow round the Lothians in view of our 30<sup>th</sup> year, possibly in conjunction with MS Society Lothian branch. **ACTION: NC to investigate.**
8. **Finance Report:** The Committee considered the Finance Report which provided the outturn for the financial year.
- CC explained that as the KAL income is for two years the actual end of year position overall is a small deficit of £4,000 for the year. This is a significant improvement on the deficit of 2012. The expenditure is well maintained. He expressed his thanks to NC and other members of staff. .
  - CM suggested changing the Reserve Policy wording. **Action: CM & CC.**
  - JT suggested separating the KAL funding in the Restricted Funds. **Action: CC to discuss with Heather Hartman**
  - CM expressed her thanks to CC and Heather Hartman.
9. **Chair's Report:** The Committee considered the points outlined in the Chair's Report.
- 5<sup>th</sup> February is the inaugural meeting of the Cross Party Parliamentary Group on MS.
  - The Leith Rotary Club is coming to the Centre for the official presentation of the oxygen analyser
  - 6<sup>th</sup> February, CM is speaking at South Leith Parish Church
  - At the beginning of March, CM is speaking at Greenbank Church Guild.
10. **Workforce Report:** The Committee discussed the Workforce Report. Staffing had been relatively stable since the last meeting. CM spoke regarding service development of physiotherapy team. It was agreed that the Trustees require to know how many contacts and referrals have materialised in order to make the decision easier in six months time when GR's current contract comes to an end. **ACTION: NC to liaise with GR.** It was also noted that 2 long standing volunteers had left the Centre. Thanks were expressed for the commitment of Marjory and Derek Whigham- they are still going to help with collecting stamps etc which is very welcome.
11. **Centre Service Users Group Update.** At the moment, there is little happening with the Centre Service Users Group. It was agreed by all that we do need to have this group active. SW said that there was nothing to report. **ACTION: SW/NC to discuss ideas for reinvigorating this group.**
12. **AOB & Date of Next Meeting.**
- NC asked that all Trustees spread the word regarding the Mad Hatters Tea Party and try to get as many people as possible to host an event. **ACTION: ALL**
  - NC advised that an advert re O2T was to be placed in Scrum Magazine the following week.
  - NC told us that our partnership with Scottish Gas had ended and that they had raised a total of £1,700 during 2013. Their logo would be removed from all paperwork/website etc. **ACTION: NC.**
  - JT raised the question of external contacts and how we as trustees link to external organisations. She is the liaison with the MS Society. NL is connected to the Lothian Centre for Independent Living (LCIL). **ACTION: other trustees to consider their respective contacts and information to be collated.**
  - The question of Trustee training this year was raised. This increases Trustees' knowledge and there is a need to ensure we keep up to date with any relevant changes etc. **ACTION: NC/CM to explore further.**

The next Committee Meeting will be held on 28 April 2014 at the MS Therapy Centre starting at 6pm. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9pm.

Signed .....  
Chair

Date .....

**POST MEETING NOTES: Following the meeting, the Operations Manager pointed out that some aspects of Item 7 (Annex 3) relating to funding for staff training and development had not been concluded at the Board meeting. In view of timescales, decisions on these could not wait until the next Board meeting at the end of April. The Chair therefore sent an email communication on these matters to all trustees and the outcomes are listed below.**

**'Extract from Annex 3 of Item 6: Manager's Report - Funding for staff training and Development.**

Engagement in the BIG Give fundraising event was designed to raise funds to help with the cost of building a new compliant entrance ramp, and although this has been a somewhat convoluted process, we estimate that at the end of the activity we will have raised approximately £4000. **I would like to 'ring fence'/ allocate the funds to the following:**

Ramp – Materials estimated at £750 (including new hand rails). The Builder (George Herkes) has offered to complete the job at the cost of materials only - free labour.

HBO Training - £1,500 (includes Travel & Accommodation), Chris Liddell

Therapeutic Creative Writing Development – contribution towards course costs £1,000 – Louise Liddell

FES Machine – Liz completed the course at the end of last year, cost of new machine £750

Agreement of the Staff/Volunteer Training (CPD) Budget for 2014 increase from £1,000 to £2,000 (I received £1,000 from the Hugh Fraser Foundation specifically for Staff Training and Development).

Agreement on the continuation of the position of part-time project worker at the end of Jonas Peters CJS contract (18<sup>th</sup> April).

Agreement to review and assess Chris' time allocation to the Financial Management process at the end of February'

**DECISIONS:** Further to the various emails, the majority of trustees have responded and the decisions are summarised below.

1. **BIG GIVE MONEY-** We have majority agreement to prioritise the use of the Big Give money for the ramp as per the original plan. Should there be sufficient money from the Big Give, the next priority would be the lighting. After that if there is still money left over, we use this for purchasing a FES machine. **ACTION- CC/NC**
2. **STAFF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT-** we agreed at the meeting that we need to invest in our own in-house expertise on O2T. Therefore the training & development budget needs to reflect the costs of sending a member of staff on the course previously referred to. The total cost for this including travel and subsistence would be £1500. Given the situation with the national oxygen advice service at the moment as discussed at the meeting, we need to prioritise staff training in this area. It also needs to be increased as outlined by NC by £1000 to ensure we have sufficient available for the year ahead. Re funding for creative writing- if we have made a bid to fund a project relating to this, then this matter should be discussed further in the light of the outcome from that. **ACTION- NC**
3. **STAFFING-** we are in agreement that the time involved in financial processing/management needs to be monitored and reviewed at the end of February. **ACTION- NC/CL.** This will also help in assessing other possible staffing requirements. General consensus would be that the employment of a part time general support worker once CJS funding has expired should be discussed fully and in a meeting. **ACTION- CM to organise a meeting date in March.**