

WINSLOW BIG SOCIETY GROUP(WBSG)

Notes of AGM held on Thursday 14th November 2019

Bowls Club, Winslow

Attendees 48 people attended, including committee members, Town and County Councillors and volunteers.

Apologies it was decided not to list those who had given their apologies but Vron asked the meeting to remember Margaret Bull, a huge partaker of and contributor to WBSG, who had died recently.

Notes of 2018 AGM these were taken as a true record.

Matters arising

- The summer play schemes have not been extended to the Easter holidays because they would have to be held indoors, with the difficulty of finding venues to fit the equipment. However the film shows for families are now going to run during the winter and will almost certainly be extended to the Easter holidays.
- We are still looking for an ambassador to increase the role of the Young Citizen of the Year.
- The wheelchair vehicle now has logos on both sides thanks to a grant from Cllr. John Chilver, and grants will be applied for ongoing expenses such as insurance.
- Ideas for a group for partially sighted and tea dances were not taken forward. WBSG feel the present groups need to be consolidated.
- The possibility of nursery aged children going to Swan House was raised. The Combined School are looking into this possibility.

Chairman's report Vron read her report and welcomed Laura, the 100th volunteer. She also thanked Graham, who is stepping down after 7 years on the committee. Diana thanked Bill, who is finishing helping with the Car Drivers Scheme that he had helped to set up.

Treasurer's report there were no questions on the financial report. Zoe made the following points:

- She was grateful to Shirley Knight for taking on the role of auditor.
- The healthy balance showing for the Car Scheme was because most of the drivers did not claim their petrol expenses. £500 would be moved to the wheelchair vehicle account for it to have a working balance.

Update on committee there are now 7 committee members and another is needed. Vron urged everyone to think about joining. New blood with new ideas was needed.

Reports from groups following reports from all the group's activities, the following points were made.

- The wheelchair car can be used by a spouse once they were on the insurance. It can therefore be used throughout the week, weekends and evenings.

- Angela thanked Jane Rennie for playing the piano at the Singing for Pleasure group.
- Marilyn, who co-ordinates the training and support of Telephone Befrienders, was thanked for her work.
- Zoe explained that the exercise classes are run as a business under WBSG who do the advertising. This is working very well and our instructor is extremely good, but it does mean that if she has to give up for whatever reason WBSG would still be able to make sure that the classes would run with a replacement instructor.
- The Monday Drop-in session is running with more mums than before and it would be helpful to have a volunteer who could fill in the odd Monday.

Role of volunteers Paul Hodson, Clerk to Buckingham Town Council, gave a short talk.

Other ideas and feedback

- Richard thanked WBSG for the benefits obtained by the residents of Swan House when they come to the many groups available to them.
- The new RUG had been well received and valued by the community. Vron thanked Sue who had worked tirelessly editing it, and the Town Council for the map.

Any other business None.



Annual Report.

The work of the Winslow Big Society continues to grow, as we learn and understand more about the community we live in. Our focus on loneliness and social isolation continues, but also across other groups as well as the elderly. Our recent use of the team that are managing our new film shows demonstrates this, as we ran 2 for children in the summer. We need to continue to focus on where the real need is, and not just have opinions on what we need to do. Customers continue to tell us how our work changes their lives, and it is important that they understand that volunteers' lives are changed for the richer by them too.

Our work as a networked organisation with the NHS, Community Impact Bucks, Winslow Town Council and Bucks County Council are now strong and embedded. So the use of BCC to enable us to do our own DBS checks as well as providing support for our Wednesday walks, the advice and financial support from Winslow Town Council, the advice from Community Impact Bucks and the ongoing befriending and locality work with the NHS, are really important to our success. When I talk about our model to others, and this now is nationally as well as locally, I stress this networking as being part of our strength. Thank you to all our partner organisations.

However our volunteers are our most important strength, and I am pleased to announce that we have last month enrolled our 100th volunteer, and she is with us today. I hope she and all those who continue to volunteer get as much pleasure out of it as we do. Our dedicated Committee is also a vital part of our success, and I cannot thank them enough for all they do. However we have talked about the need to refresh and to look at succession planning as the Committee has not really changed in 7 years, so I am asking you today and over the next year to think about whether you might like to join us, or know someone who might. The work is more about ideas and planning than about being out shifting chairs etc, though we do have to do some of that too. We need new people to help take the work forward. No, we are not all about to go, but we do need to think about keeping our work fresh. So please think hard about this. It's a great job, as you can see no one leaves! However Graham is standing down this year and I thank him for his ongoing contribution to our work. Also sincere thanks to Bill Dobson, who helped set up and coordinated the Car Scheme for its first year, and has continued to help in many ways since, and is stepping out of the limelight.

We are grateful to others in the town who help us in so many ways including Chris the manager at the Library and Philip at the Bell, neither of whom could we do without. Venues are a real problem in the town, and they help solve this challenge for us as well as providing unbelievable hospitality. Also sincere thanks to Winslow Lions with whom we are now partnering our film shows.

The reports speak for themselves about what we have done this year. Our challenge has been to keep the numbers up for some of them, as well as dealing with increasing infirmity amongst some customers. We are pleased with the real success of the new Parkinson's Group this year, as well as the dramatic increase in use of our wheelchair vehicle. Please keep your ideas coming, so we ensure we meet need.

There are always jobs that need doing, and this year we have been fortunate in finding people to do one off or specific parts of jobs for us, rather than necessarily ongoing volunteering, for example the technical support by Lions for our film shows. So if you can ever help with admin, writing rotas, filling in for a job for one occasion, please let one of us know.

This year has been about embedding our current projects and reviewing what needs changing, but we have other ideas still in formation. But without such a wonderful community as Winslow, we could not do any of this, so thank you all for your support in whatever way you give it.

Vron Corben

WBSG Annual reports from projects.

Winslow Community Car Scheme – daytime weekdays.

We are now in the 6th year of operation of this service to the community.

We operate with just over 20 drivers, some of whom have been with us since the beginning, some have just started. All are prepared to go the extra 'mile' be it literally on the road or in terms of added assistance. Journeys each month are averaging over 90 and associated mileage over 400 miles (maximum 599)

There are over 80 registered passengers including some who started with the scheme others just stay with us while they are temporarily disabled. For those permanently immobile, we now have passengers migrating to using the wheelchair car, notably for the large WBSG events. This is a really exciting extension to the scheme.

The co-ordinating team take it in fortnightly turns to match requests to journeys, an interesting and at times complex puzzle to solve. They, together with the monthly returns administrator and Treasurer, form the Organising Committee. We welcome new passengers and we need more drivers and we could use another co-ordinator!

Wheelchair vehicle – 7 days a week.

The year got off to a slow start with the use of our new wheelchair vehicle. However since the summer, the use has increased significantly from theatre trips and family occasions to podiatry appointments, and is now used for many of our own events. In October 20 trips were taken. Our thanks to John Chilver whose fund supported the signage on it and makes it look even smarter! Its use is for villages from Whitchurch to Adstock and across from Newton Longville to Waddesdon, in line with the Local Area Forum area, who provided the initial grant.

Hard of Hearing Group - 1st Thursday monthly 2.30-4pm, Winslow Library.

In our 2nd year of getting together, a regular band meet up to learn from each other, listen to speakers and plan ways of reaching and helping the hard of hearing people of Winslow.

Outside speakers have covered topics as diverse as lip reading, Hearing Dogs for the Deaf and the work of Action for Hearing Loss (RNID). More are planned. Anyone with a hearing issue or is simply interested is welcome to any meeting be it on an occasional or regular basis. More attendees have had their loop facilities on their hearing aids activated so they can make use of the portable loop kindly loaned by the Town Council. Plans are afoot to launch a 2 prong Hearing Loop initiative a) to review what we need in which Winslow venues for our activities and b) (Based on the 'Lets Loop' movement) chasing up local businesses and organisers to fit fixed loops for individual interactions e.g. as operating in Lloyds chemist and the One Stop.

The group has drafted a guide for leaders of other groups who might have members who are hard of hearing. It isn't always appreciated by those who have no hearing problems how difficult it is to attend a group session if you do.

Motto: We are Deaf not Daft!

Singing for Pleasure – 4th Thursday, 2.30-4pm, St Laurence Room.

The Singing Group has continued monthly, with between 15 and 25 attending. This includes a small number of Swan House/Court residents who come with a Carer. Numbers have remained fairly static this year with a hard core of regular attenders who seem to greatly enjoy the sessions. Jane Rennie, to whom we are most grateful, is our excellent accompanist in spite of some of the songs being new to her.

Currently we are mainly repeating previous programmes from a year or more ago, substituting a couple of new or requested songs each time. The tea and biscuits are served by two people from a rota run by Vron, who also prints 30 copies of new songs as needed. The participants like the large print paper copies we use, they are easy for them to follow, but they are something of a logistical problem not least re storage and sorting (required before and after each session). However it may be time to review the range of songs and the arrangements for presentation in the future.

Memories - 3rd Monday & Wednesday, Winslow Library

Our monthly Memories sessions have now been running for six years and attended by 12 regulars, who still enjoy the wide range of subjects we discuss. We try to ring the changes with quizzes, photos, books and personal mementoes. The participation of everyone makes the session nostalgic and fun for everyone who attends. My thanks to Angela and Graham Bowe, plus Bill and Bet Dobson who step in and help when I am on holiday, or transporting attendees.

The dementia friendly Memories group is going well, with about 10 participants at each session., Activities include quizzes, structured discussion, reading poetry, listening to music and even dancing! Our thanks, as always, to the Community Library, who prepare books as well as giving us the use of the venue, and our tea people.

Parkinson's Support Group - 1st Tuesday, Winslow Library.

Our Parkinson's group started in February and we now have up to 20 people including those with Parkinson's, plus some partners, who meet in the Library. Everyone agrees talking about and sharing experiences has been very useful as we learn to understand that Parkinson's effects people in so many different ways.

We have been fortunate to have visits from Sue Gunter – physiotherapist, Sue Thorn – neurophysio, Noel Ratcliffe – Surgery Practice Manager, and Lisa Clarke – Home Visiting Advisor from CAB and these have all proved very interesting and informative. Occasionally we split into two groups, those with Parkinson's and those who are partners, and this has proved helpful, as each group has very different needs and allows everyone to open up to any problems they may have.

Lunches – 2nd Tuesday, 12-1.30pm, The Bell.

We are grateful to The Bell who accommodate us in their back room conveniently adjacent to disabled conveniences. Each month they provide a menu with a meat and vegetarian option and a choice of a naughty pudding or healthy fresh fruit. We usually have about 50 diners with a mixture of singles and couples enjoying the food and the conversation. Thank you to our volunteer hosts and the Winslow Car Scheme who make this possible.

Afternoon Tea - 4th Tuesday, The Bell.

The Afternoon Tea is progressing well, proving a more intimate event than the lunches. Numbers are much the same as last year between 10 and 14 on average. The tea is well presented by the staff at the Bell and the ladies serving are always very pleasant and helpful.

We were very sorry to lose Margaret Bull, who regularly attended the Tea and will be sadly missed by all.

Gentle exercise classes- Various days and times.

These continue to be well supported and attended. There is a core of very loyal attendees, particularly at the Friday classes and I know that new friendships have been forged as a result. Exercise notes are offered for those who want to practice at home. Improvements in movement and fitness are felt by those who come and visible to me as group instructor. The atmosphere at all classes is buoyant, positive and inclusive and I encourage members to make the class theirs by giving requests and feedback.

Advertising brings a slow but steady stream of new people. We would like to see more gentlemen coming along! The Stand Up for Keep Fit on Monday is the least stable class in terms of attendance and I am experimenting slightly with the format to make it more of a "circuit" style class which seems to have been well received. I am hoping that less emphasis on coordination will make it more attractive!

Session charges remain the same in spite of a small increase in hall hire costs.

Gentle Walks – 10 -11 am every Wednesday, starting at St Laurence Room.

Weekly walks continue, enjoyed by all who come. The social aspect is as important as the walking itself for most. Our numbers have been down recently, with poor health, change in circumstances etc, despite significant advertising. We are now working more closely with the Patient Support Team based at Norden House and hope that this will produce some more walkers. Do tell people who either have health issues or who new to Winslow to come and join us. We have reduced our walk leaders to 2 per walk whilst numbers are low. Our annual outing to Campbell Park on the Community Bus was successful, and have another one planned in April, to coincide with our 6th anniversary.

Cards & Games – 1st Monday, Winslow Bowls Club

We have a steady core of participants who thoroughly enjoy the afternoon, but numbers are low and more would be welcome, so please tell all your friends about this event. Games tend to centre around Scrabble, Rummikub, and Beetle, but other games are available, and you are always welcome to bring your own games along.

Telephone Befriending Service

This is a virtually unique service which operates across the whole of North Bucks including Buckingham, and in which we work in partnership with the NHS. We currently have 23 active befrienders , 31 befriendees and 1 on a waiting list.

We desperately need more volunteers. If you know anyone who is good at listening, please let us know. It can be done from any phone, and your number is always protected. We have recently started a Facebook campaign to surgeries to promote the volunteer befriender role. It's a very rewarding role, and very positively received by people who are isolated for whatever reason.

Film shows – Winslow Bowls Club.

This was a new venture, and following 2 successful winter films, we then held 2 summer shows for children, all free. Ann Abraham has now taken the lead on this and we have 3 dates for this winter/spring. The first is The King and I with Yul Brynner, on 21 November. We are very grateful to Winslow Lions for providing the technical support.

Drop-in for parents and carers.

This year has seen the drop-in grow in numbers, and this is partly due to personal recommendations by users, as well as social media. We fill the space in the Library now most weeks with about 8 happy parents/carers and their children. Users also join the Library and use the time to change their books, so everyone benefits from the service. Thanks to our helpers who do such a great job playing with the children and keeping parents going with coffee, as well as listening to their everyday challenges.

Summer Playschemes.

We held 2 very successful play schemes again this year, with about 70 children attending each. Parents love them too, especially if they are unable to have a summer holiday away, and also as they have chance to chat and are served with free refreshments! Thanks to Tree House Nursery for their help.

Really Useful Guide.

This has recently been launched and 2100 copies are currently being delivered to each household in Winslow. They contain useful data on health & social activities for all ages, as well as emergency and reference information. Our thanks to a great team of volunteers who edited, collated and are delivering it. Thanks also to Winslow Town Council for helping with publishing costs. We were delighted to be able to help them by delivering the new town map and a council leaflet with the Guide. They will also be delivered to new houses as they are built.

Young Citizen of the Year.

We sponsor this award, and were very pleased for this to be awarded to Matthew Streeter this year. We are also promoting the role within the town more this year, and he will be laying a wreath on Remembrance Day on behalf of the young people of the town, as well as switching the Christmas lights on with the Mayor. Please think about anyone under 25 you know who deserves such an award for 2020. Entries close in February.

Financial Report for year ending 31.8.19

The financial statement for year ending 31st August 2019 is attached with the Agenda papers. If anyone has any questions please ask. The accounts have been reviewed by Shirley Knight and the Committee thanks Shirley for her time and help.

We generated a surplus on the Winslow Community Car Scheme of £856.84, this is mainly due to the fact that not all our volunteer drivers claim their mileage costs back, and we also receive some additional donations from grateful passengers. The surplus on the new Community Vehicle which is being used for wheelchair passengers is mainly due to the Local Area Funding grant funding that covered all our costs last year.

We have received some a range of donations including some from users of our services, to all of whom we are most grateful.

The film afternoons have been a great success and donations from our members who watched the films were far greater than we expected. The costs of setting up the film afternoons were met from grant funding. With all the other Big Society Projects the biggest loss is on the Friendship Lunch where at Christmas the Big Society funds the cost of a drink for everyone as well as thank you presents for the staff at the Bell.

Publicity and printing expenditure relates to the professional printing of all leaflets, and the costs of printing by WBSG members. Other expenses include costs associated with the Volunteer social Thank You event and the AGM.