



(Draft until approved by the 2023 Annual General Meeting)

Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2022

Held online by Teams at 3 pm on 19 November 2022

Present:

Felicity Amswych, Philippa Batting, Andrew Clark, Ben Clark, Freya Clark, Katie Court, Kim Eldridge, Ann Hedges, Cary Hobbs, Liz Hobbs, Diane Hockley, June Johnson, Allison Milligan, Roberta Silva, Ben Stykuc, Robert Swann

Guests:

Angie Bamford, Simone Curran, Janneke Elford, Clayton Nodoro, Sue Samson

Apologies:

Robert Hobbs, Petra Shuttlewood, Mumtaz Suleman, Juliet Wilson

Welcome

1. Andrew Clark welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Trustees to the meeting.

Trustees' Report

2. Andrew Clark presented the Trustees' Report for 2022 on behalf of the Board.
3. It had been a year of success against the odds for the charity. BuDS entered 2022 with the loss of Covid-19 related funding, prompting the charity to move from pandemic funding to long-term funding.
4. 2022 saw BuDS running with slightly less volunteers than 2021, but far more hours worked. 145 volunteers worked over 48,000 hours in the year, the equivalent of 24 full time members of staff.
5. In 2021, Andrew Clark was confident that 2022 would be the year BuDS was bigger, bolder, and better. BuDS' success over 2022 showed the charity was resilient against sudden shocks, and was still doing a lot of good within the community.

2021 in Statistics:

6. The following statistics were shared:
 - 135 regular volunteers, giving 31,100 hours of their time
 - 10 Trustees, giving 13,000 hours of their time
 - 48,100 hours total worked by volunteers – the equivalent to 24 full time staff. This was up by 46% from 2021
 - Income had decreased by nearly from £221,015.41 to £82,578.83
 - 11 staff members were employed during 2022
 - 100,000's of people had been helped

7. It was noted that multiple grants were in progress to rebuild funds.

BuDS' New Structure

8. To take account of the charity's expansion and development, a new internal structure was adopted in 2021 by the Trustees. This divided the charity's projects into four groups: Disability Services, Fair4All, Reach4Work, and Housekeeping. Each group contained a number of related projects which were led by volunteers with the support of staff.

Disability Services

9. The Disability Services group of projects were those directly helping disabled people in Buckinghamshire and beyond.

Benefits Information, Advice, and Guidance

10. The Benefits IAG project provided information, advice and guidance to disabled people in Buckinghamshire and beyond about disability benefits, e.g. PIP, ESA, DLA and Universal Credit.
11. The Benefits IAG project had been suspended in 2021, but became more active in 2022. This led to a waiting list of people seeking benefits advice from BuDS.
12. It was noted that there was an urgent need for volunteers within the project.
13. BuDS had received funding to help disabled people qualify as benefits advisors, helping them to get jobs within the advice sector. This offer was opened up to members of the AGM.

BuDDies

14. BuDDies remained the only fully safeguarded, professionally managed befriending service for disabled people in Buckinghamshire.
15. The project was previously funded by pandemic grants. There was enough money to keep the project running during 2022, but not enough to expand it.
16. Thanks were given to the BuDDies team for their hard work, and being a lifeline to the lonely people they support.

Covid-19 Information, Advice, and Guidance

17. It was noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had not gone away, and that most people, including the Government, were choosing to ignore it. The pandemic remained a serious public health problem.
18. Vaccines had significantly reduced the number of deaths; however the longer-term effects of Covid-19 were becoming clearer.
19. The project was no longer funded, and was instead run by some dedicated volunteers.
20. BuDS had succeeded in obtaining mask discounts for disabled people.
21. There was no intention of stopping the project, moving into 2023.

Enquiries

22. BuDS had always been committed to helping disabled people with questions, and tended to get the hard questions. BuDS had advised on topics relating to care services, housing, accessibility, problems with neighbours, and more.
23. The BuDS Enquiries Service was formally launched in 2022.
24. There was funding in place to train disabled people to become qualified advisors.

25. Thanks were given to the volunteers involved. Attendees were invited to join the project as volunteers.

Fair4All

F4A Attitudes and Hate Crime

26. This project was one of BuDS' big successes in 2022. Thanks were expressed to all volunteers in the project.
27. BuDS had secured funding for the project, and was working with partners Buckinghamshire Council and Thames Valley Police.
28. There would be a new disability hate crime service launched in January 2023. This would be supported by a member of staff, and volunteer team. The service would operate in three parts. There would be a new support service for disabled people who are the victims of hate crime, a new 'third party reporting service' supporting victims of disability hate crime to report incidents to the police, and a campaigning and awareness team to target abusers, and prevent abuse happening at all.
29. Andrew Clark appealed for volunteers to join the project, in a variety of different roles.

Fair4All Card Scheme

30. This project was another success for BuDS over 2022.
31. There had been many applications, and businesses and services recognising the card.
32. It was announced that BuDS was through to the second round of a National Lottery Grant to expand the Fair4All Card Scheme to thousands of card holders.
33. Thanks were given to the small team of volunteers and the Project Coordinators, Freya Clark, and Cary Hobbs.
34. The Chair asked for specialist volunteers to join the team, to help in the expansion.

Fair4All Education

35. The project was launched in 2021, to support disabled children in education, and their parents and carers.
36. A large three-year grant had been secured from the Rothschild Foundation to launch a new SEND transitions service. This service would look at how well SEND children are supported when moving from one school to another, for example from primary school to secondary school, or from secondary school to college.
37. There was an aim announced to expand BuDS' Reach4Work services for disabled young people looking to move into work or further education.
38. Attendees were once again asked to consider volunteering with the project.

Fair4All Events

39. 2022 saw the return of the Fair4All Events project.
40. There was a continued emphasis on helping disabled people to enjoy events in a more Covid-safe way.
41. Thanks were given to Tesco Community Matters, and other funders for their generous support. New funds enabled the project to replace and refurbish event equipment, and buy new safety gear.
42. BuDS had attended two big events during 2022: WhizzFizzFest, and Towersey Festival.

43. There was one event coming up in the calendar: the Chiltern Open Air Museum Christmas Weekend, on the 3rd and 4th of December. It was noted that volunteers were still needed for this event.
44. A complaint against BuDS mask policy was lodged by Robert Swann. This was dealt with after the meeting.

Fair4All Public Spaces

45. There had been a huge amount of work behind the scenes in this project.
46. The project had done a lot of good work, but hadn't burst into life like some other BuDS projects.
47. It was noted that it was difficult to attract funding for this project.
48. There was an urgent appeal for specialist volunteers, with an interest in accessibility to volunteer.

Fair4All Services

49. Fair4All Services had been relaunched in 2022, and was a massive success. The project was run as an entirely voluntary project.
50. The project was building a strong volunteer team, under the leadership of Ann Hedges.
51. There was a new Neurodiversity and Learning Disability stream to the project.

Fair4All Visitor

52. A new project in partnership with Visit Bucks and Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF). BBF had received funding from the Government to boost local businesses, with BBF focusing to prioritise helping visitor attractions and tourist destinations to be more accessible and inclusive for disabled people.
53. BuDS provided specialist advice and information for businesses, and created a thorough accessibility resource website for businesses.
54. The project was supported by Mik Scarlett, a giant in the accessibility world.
55. BuDS had supported over 40 business to improve their accessibility, including taking groups of disabled people on BuDDy Tours to Chiltern Open Air Museum, Waddesdon Manor, and National Paralympic Heritage Trust.
56. The funding for Fair4All Visitor had ended, so the project was being kept alive through the Fair4All Card Scheme.

Reach4Work

BucksWorkability:

57. BucksWorkability was a joint partnership between BuDS and 39 other organisations.
58. The project had prospered under the leadership of Ben Stykuc, and made excellent progress on websites, thanks to the Reach4Work Digital Team.
59. Disability employment was a top issue for Buckinghamshire's employment agenda, with business realising the importance of employing disabled people.
60. BuDS took over BucksWorkability in 2016, along with TalkBack, NHS community head injuries service and the DWP employment service.

Reach4Work:

61. Created in 2018, the Reach4Work project supports disabled people into work. The project had been funded since 2019, however funding ran out in 2022.
62. The project had continued on a voluntary basis, supporting many volunteers into, or closer to work.
63. BuDS is applying for new funding, to expand the scheme again.
64. It was noted that volunteers were needed for this project, particularly those who want to help young people in their work journey.

Reach4Work Digital:

65. A hidden gem within BuDS. A small team of dedicated volunteers learning and working together on digital projects, such as websites and phone apps. The project helped disabled people gain skills and experience to get jobs in digital sector. The team used agile methodology, which was used in the digital sector.
66. A key success of the project was creating the BucksWorkability website, as well as working on the development version of the Reach4Work website.

“Legal project”:

67. BuDS offered summer work experience for a second year for disabled law students.
68. There was less capability to have as large a team as previously. Three law students were selected to work on disability hate crime issues in partnership with BuDS’ lawyers BP Collins LLP.
69. The students work would be published in 2023, as part of the launch of the new disability hate crime service.

Housekeeping

Comms, Website and Creative:

70. BuDS had four websites and eleven social media channels to communicate with the public, it’s supporters and disabled people across Buckinghamshire.
71. BuDS had a strong voice on social media, so communications and social media were an important tool. The comms team managed and coordinated all websites and social media channels. Produced logos and graphics, and made sure all communications fit the ‘BuDS Brand’.
72. Another important role of the comms team was ensuring that all media output is accessible.
73. Andrew Clark asked for volunteers to join the busy comms team, to help with growing pressure.

Charity Governance:

74. BuDS was run by its Trustees, who worked to keep the charity running professionally and complying with the law.
75. The Full Trustee Board met quarterly to review strategy, the Trustees met monthly to review progress and make key decisions. The senior management team of Trustees and staff met weekly.
76. Thanks were given to Liz Hobbs for her work behind the scenes. Liz Hobbs thanked Andrew Clark for his work.

Finance:

77. This project was a quiet success for BuDS.

78. Modern accounting systems had been implemented to meet the needs of funders, and enable Trustees to make informed decisions for the charity.
79. Thanks were given to Mumtaz Suleman for all her hard work in the background.

Grants:

80. Juliet Wilson, the grants officer, had done an amazing job in 2022, securing £54,000 in project grants, with a further £62,600 to come in 2023 and 2024, and £16,500 in general grants, totalling £133,100.
81. There were grant applications totalling £250,000 pending.
82. It was noted that Juliet Wilson had sadly left BuDS, and BuDS had welcomed Naran Bahra in her place.

Fundraising:

83. There was very little fundraising from individuals in 2022. BuDS had received £1,303.78 in donations, mostly through event donations, Give As You Live, and Amazon Smile.
84. The biggest donor was Microsoft, who donated over £25,000 in software licences.
85. The aim for 2023 was to increase the number of sponsored events and donations, to raise funds for BuDS.

HR:

86. BuDS wanted to be a good employer, especially for disabled people, and was very fortunate to have Janneke Elford as a professional HR manager.
87. Despite the drop in income, BuDS had managed to retain seven posts from the start to the end of the year, with 11 individual staff being employed over 2022.
88. It was expected that there would be 8+ posts in 2023.

Safeguarding:

89. Safeguarding was really important to BuDS in 2021, and is taken more seriously than most other charities. BuDS was one of the few charities to require enhanced DBS checks from all volunteers and staff, as well as having a professional safeguarding in place. This was done to ensure everyone working in and with BuDS was safe.
90. There were very tight procedures in place; everyone received safeguarding training. Microsoft Teams was also closely monitored for any suspicious activity.
91. The BuDS safeguarding team was led by Ann Hedges, along with Andrew Clark and Liz Hobbs. Safeguarding work was strictly confidential.

Volunteer Coordination:

92. BuDS was run by volunteer Trustees, and the projects were run by volunteers. Paid staff were there to support the volunteers, not the other way around. 72 volunteers had been inducted in 2022, nearly double 2021's total.
93. Highlighted that nearly a third of BuDS' volunteers were young people under 25.
94. BuDS was fortunate to be supported during 2021 by a volunteer coordinator: Simone Curran.

BuDS is its People:

95. BuDS is a working community of disabled people working together to change the world, and make it better for disabled people.

96. Thanks were given to everyone who had contributed to BuDS in any capacity.

Bring on 2023:

97. It was noted that if anyone had comments on slogans, or wanted to propose a slogan, to post it in the chat.

98. It was **agreed** to accept the Trustees' Report for 2021.

Comfort Break

Strategy for 2022 and 2023

Strategic Outcomes 2022

99. Andrew Clark explained the strategic objectives for 2022 with the meeting, and whether they had been met.
- By the end of 2021/22, secure a strategic 'core cost' grant income of £150,000 pa for 3-5 years. This had not been achieved.
 - By the end of 2021/22, have identified and made grant applications to maintain and/or expand each individual project or service for the next 3-5 years. This had been partly achieved.
 - In 2022, specifically recruit non-project volunteers to support housekeeping functions. This had been partly achieved.
 - In 2022, appoint a lead Trustee for BuDS Include and recruit a volunteer team to develop suitable social and community projects. This had not been achieved.
 - In 2022, fill all Trustee Board vacancies including recruiting/appointing a new Chair and Deputy Chair with effect from November 2022. This had partly been achieved

Strategic Objectives 2023

100. Andrew Clark explained the strategy for 2023 to the meeting, which was that BuDS would:
- By the end of 2023, increase annual income to £150,000.
 - During 2023, maintain all existing BuDS projects and take advantage of all opportunities to expand them.
 - By the end of 2023, have raised £20,000 in unrestricted donations and fundraising (included in the £150,000)
 - By the end of 2023, have successfully recruited/appointed at least two vice-chairs and a prospective chair to take office in November 2023.
 - In 2023, appoint a Lead Trustee for BuDS Include and recruit a volunteer team to develop suitable social and community projects.
101. Andrew Clark announced that would be standing down as Chair. The Trustee Board had asked him to continue for a further year to handover to the new vice-chairs, and the new Chair.
102. The meeting was asked to comment and give feedback on the strategy. There were no comments.
103. The meeting **agreed** the strategy.

Minutes of the 2021 AGM

104. The minutes of the 2021 AGM held on 21 November 2021 were agreed.

Election of Trustees and Officers

Elections for the Trustee Board were held.

The following Executive Trustees were re-elected:

- Andrew Clark
- Ann Hedges
- Cary Hobbs
- Liz Hobbs
- Ben Stykuc
- Mumtaz Suleman

The following Non-Executive Trustees were re-elected:

- Michael Anderson
- Philippa Batting
- Sue Sansom
- Roberta Silva

One new Trustee was elected at the meeting. This was:

- Clayton Ngoro

The following were elected or re-elected as the charity's officers:

- Andrew Clark – Chair of Trustees
- Liz Hobbs – Charity Secretary
- Mumtaz Suleman – Treasurer

The following were noted as prospective Trustees:

- Freya Clark
- Michaela Green
- Abi Parry
- Petra Shuttlewood

105. Liz Hobbs gave some background on the prospective Trustees.

106. The election and re-election of Trustees, and the appointment of officers, was proposed as one motion and was agreed by 16 votes to nil. There were no objections.

107. Andrew Clark thanked the meeting for their confidence in the Trustee Board, and welcomed Clayton Ngoro to the Trustee Board.

Reminder of BuDS Values

108. Andrew Clark reminded the meeting of BuDS' Values, agreed at the 2021 AGM.

109. Andrew Clark asked the meeting and members to hold BuDS accountable to these values in the future.

Financial Report

110. The audited accounts were in preparation at the time of the AGM.

111. It was noted that there had been a significant drop in income over the 2021/2022 financial year, from £221,015.14 to £82,578.83.
112. BuDS had spent nearly twice its income in the financial year. However, despite this BuDS had managed to end the financial year with nearly as much in the bank account as when the financial year started.
113. Financial headlines were shared with the meeting as follows:
- a. BuDS income in 2021-2022 was £82,578.83 (down from £221,015.41)
 - b. Income was made up of restricted grants (£62,777.27), unrestricted grants (£18,497.78), and donations (£1,303.78)
 - c. Expenditure was £132,554.87, (down from £201,768.70)
 - d. Balance carried forward into 2021-2022 was £78,373.05
 - e. Balance carried forward into 2022-2023 was £28,397.01
 - f. As of 27th October 2022, BuDS balance was £26,702.46 (not including reserves)
114. No questions were asked.
115. Andrew Clark proposed that the draft annual accounts for 2020-2021 were noted and that the meeting agreed that they should be presented to the Charity Commission after completion of audit. This was agreed nem com.

Question and Answers

116. No comments or questions were raised.
117. Freya Clark was thanked for her work preparing the AGM presentation.
118. Andrew Clark thanked everyone for coming.
- 119. The meeting closed at 4.10pm.**