



Sway Welfare Aid Group

Registered Charity No. 261220

Minutes of SWAG General Meeting held on 22 May 2019 at 2:30 p.m.

Attendees: Pat Fleat (Trustee); David Golby (Organiser); Jeremy Stevens (Treasurer); Jon Hartley (Chair); Vanessa Edwards (Secretary); Mike Green (Driver coordinator); Clive Potter (SRISF); Mary Llewellyn (Over 60s Club); Ted Fleat; S. Young; Emily James; Barry Rickman (SPC); Trevor Astbury

SPC: Sway Parish Council

SRISF: Sway Relief in Sickness Fund

1) Apologies for absence: Jane Pitts; Deborah & Rick Walker; Colin Denman; Ian Burnham; Peter Mann, Ian Chislett-Bruce.

2) Organiser's Report

The Chair invited David Golby to present his report on the charity's activities and achievements since the previous meeting; this is reproduced in full below.

This has been a relatively quiet period for the charity. We have virtually completed the final process and outstanding control elements ensuring that we are fully compliant with the new General Data protection regulations (GDPR) that were introduced last year. As previously reported, this has been a herculean effort, but I am pleased to report that our efforts have been recognised by the Good Neighbours Network (GNN) as not only outstanding but way ahead of most other organisations within their Hampshire network. Both Jeremy & Vanessa deserve exceptional thanks for their diligent work in this complex area. We have also continued to nurture closer relationships with other charitable organisations who help and support the residents of Sway. We have had particularly beneficial series of meetings with both Citizens Advice and New Forest Disability to share experiences and to better understand where we can help each other in the support of mutual clients who live in Sway. Of particular note were both meetings and presentations we attended concerning the introduction and seemingly constant changes to the new Universal Credit benefit system. Whilst conceptually these changes in the benefit system should, in the longer term, be beneficial, the implementation process is complex, requires a high degree of computer/social media literacy by the applicant and can, in the short term lead to a reduction in benefit payments. This is not an area where untrained people, including ourselves, can offer practical support and we have agreed a referral methodology with Citizens Advice who now have a government contract to provide support over the next 12 months.

We have also continued our “conversation” with the “Care Navigator”, based at the surgery, to ensure that the local medical practitioners and support workers are fully aware of both the support and services that SWAG can offer to the local community.

We continue to discuss and investigate opportunities for your charity to expand its service offering into other areas and have held constructive meetings with other groups in the New Forest who offer other forms of social and community support under the generic umbrella of “Befriending”. This is a complex area and the service offering provided by other organisations varies from social support such as shopping and outings to a personal “one on one” befriending relationship. Discussions deciding which, if any, of these areas should be pursued is on-going.

This year the Sway Parish Council decided by unanimous vote to open up its Annual Awards scheme to groups, in addition to individuals, who are nominated by residents of the village for their outstanding contribution to the village. I am very proud to report that SWAG were the inaugural winners of this group award. The citation read by Stephen Tarling, the Chairman of the Sway Parish Council, was as follows:

“As SWAG will be celebrating their 50th anniversary next year hopefully this award will “Kick Start” a series of events to mark this amazing milestone. From humble beginnings in 1970 delivering bags of coal and providing “meals on wheels” to the elderly, they have developed and expanded over the years to provide a critically needed medical transport services to hospital and doctors’ appointments, heating and other financial grants to families of all ages in our village and a renowned twice month luncheon club. SWAG embodies the essence of what village life should be about in helping others in our community. They now have 100 local volunteers who all offer their services free of charge in both the running of the charity and the provision of the various services they offer to the residents of Sway”

Fund Raising

Our funding remains in a healthy state thanks to the many ongoing donations from grateful transport clients and individual donations, many of which include gift aid which we are able to claim back from the government. This said, the results of our Christmas appeal were disappointing and continue the downward trend we have seen over the last couple of years. Jeremy, in his report will give you more details on our income, including the yield from our investments.

Charitable Activities

We made Christmas Heating Grant Payments to 15 clients totalling £4,050 and Easter Heating Grants Payments to 13 clients totalling £3,510. Two clients after the Christmas payment have, by mutual agreement, been removed from the list. This compares with 16 heating grant clients at the same time last year. Whilst it is gratifying that with our early intervention family situations have been stabilised enabling grants to be discontinued it is disappointing that other families in similar financial difficulties, whom we are sure exist, have not been identified or come forward seeking help.

We continue to provide urgent financial support to individuals and young families in difficulty and have helped five clients with financial grants during the last 6 months totalling £4,533. Last year we helped four clients during the same period.

Additionally, we have also helped three organisations with financial grants totalling £3,140 with support and to fund projects that directly help people from Sway. These grants include a joint initiative with SRISF to substantially fund the purchase and installation of a new stair-lift at the Village Hall providing much needed access for disabled members of the community. During the same period last year we also funded three local organisations to a lower value of £1,716.

Our Lunch Club continues to offer a much loved and excellent value for money lunch on a twice monthly basis. You will hear more on this from Jon later on behalf of Deborah & Jane who cannot be with us today.

Our Transport service continues to provide an essential service to many of our local residents getting them to their surgery and hospital appointments. Mike Green is with us today but has delegated the reporting to me so I will give you some consistently impressive statistics covering the last 6 months, together with comparable numbers for the same period last year, on behalf of Mike and his fellow coordinators:

We have undertaken 208 journeys compared with 232 over the same period last year. Actual miles driven were 4,362, a slight reduction against 4,721 last year. However, we transported 69 clients compared with 59 in the same period last year using 54 different drivers, an increase of 4. Whilst having stabilised from the very dramatic increase we have seen over the last 18 months, I'm sure that you will agree that these are amazing figures.

None of the above, be it grants, lunch club or transport could have been possible without the dedication and support of our volunteers and the generosity of our donors. A very big thank you to all of them.

The Future

We continue to remain well placed, as a small local charity, to help those who are most vulnerable in our community. Our expanded transport service enables so many people in our village who would otherwise be unable to attend, without considerable additional stress and expense, their medical appointments.

We have reported in the past that the demographic changes in Sway constantly requires us to rethink and reposition not only our activities and services but also our ways of operating in an ever-changing world. Part of this evolving process is an on-going review of the ways we communicate with, support, and attract not only clients but volunteers and donors. Whilst people of my generation have, reluctantly on occasions, moved from pen and ink to email and other simpler forms of internet communications not many of us have progressed to being active users of Social Media. However, you only need to look around to see the apparent dependency that now exists on applications such as Google, Facebook and Twitter to gather, share and market information in our complex society. In a moment of crisis, people these days, are more likely to pick up their tablet or cell phone to look for help rather than a paper, pamphlet or magazine. We need to adopt this social change rather than being fearful of it. I'm sure that you will hear more from us on this subject at our annual meeting.

As mentioned earlier in my report, the citation from Sway Parish Council correctly reported that SWAG will be celebrating its 50th anniversary next year. Should this be a moment to actually celebrate and, if so, how, what, where and when? Or should it just be a moment of

quiet reflection before renewing our efforts to help the most vulnerable people in our village of Sway? Please let us have your views as to what you would prefer us to do.

Finally, I must pay tribute to my fellow Trustees who have put in so much work, often unreported, in not only the day to day running of SWAG but its development and evolution going forward.

David Golby
Organiser

3) Treasurer's Report

Jeremy Stevens presented the following report, which covers the first seven and a half months of SWAG's financial year from 1st October 2018 to 17th May 2019.

Charitable expenditure was £16,318 in total, whereas income totalled £12,675. Our income came as usual two thirds from donations and one third from our investments.

Expenditure exceeded income in the first period and this is to be expected because of the high cost of the annual heating grants, which all fall in this period. This year we had to carry the full cost of the heating grants as the local charitable trust that has sponsored these grants for the last few years withdrew its support, since they felt that we now had sufficient reserves without their help. This reduced our income this year by £3000.

Expenditure in the second period of the year is normally much lower as the only major component is the annual payments to drivers, which will be around half the cost of the heating grants.

The charity still has a healthy reserves position and should have no problems in meeting its commitments for the remainder of the year.

The full income and expenditure report for the period is appended to these minutes.

4) Lunch Club report

As neither Deborah Walker nor Jane Pitts was able to attend the meeting, the Chair read out their report on the Lunch Club's activities since the previous meeting, which is reproduced here in full:

This month we set a precedent inviting a couple to join lunch club. We were alerted to this couple by a neighbour who felt that as they are unable to get out of the house without assistance, they would benefit by the social interaction with our members as well as enjoying a tasty lunch. The couple were brought to the church rooms by Swag transport and thoroughly enjoyed their lunch chatting to new and old friends. They decided to sit on different tables as the gentleman preferred to sit with the men and the lady was very happy to enjoy a table of ladies.

The criterion of lunch club has always been to invite folks who live alone and this will remain our main mantra. However, we felt that in certain situations there was no reason to refuse the request of the neighbour.

At the lunch club just before Easter, all our members went home with a large egg, a treat we have been giving for a few years now. It is certainly well received by them all.

The numbers attending lunch club are averaging about 25, although we have 32 on our register. A couple of our members have recently left their own homes, as coping living alone was becoming too much for them. We still however, invite them to attend lunch club, should they wish. We feel that there must be many lonely folks living in Sway who would benefit from lunch club and this is where we ask those of you in our village to let us know of neighbours, family or friends who we could invite. Please do call us.

Jane and I also would like to thank all our volunteer helpers who prepare, cook and serve the lunch club food. Without this wonderful team of fabulous ladies and our two super men there wouldn't be a lunch club.

We will be preparing our 2020 rota of helpers in October and would love to have some new faces on our team. If you feel that you could spare a few hours once, twice or more a year, then do let us know. We'd love to hear from you.

The Chair thanked Deborah and Jane for their hard and much appreciated work over the last ten years.

6) Sway Relief in Sickness Fund Report

Clive Potter for SRISF noted that it had been a quiet period for SRISF. The charity had made grants to the Village Hall for the installation of a stair lift to the WI room and a ramp for the front door. Clive attended the Good Neighbours' Network meeting at the Balmer Lawn Hotel in March. He also attended the Sway Annual Parish Assembly where he reported on SRISF. SRISF had held its annual general meeting of its trustees on 22 May.

The Chair thanked Clive for his report and invited any further contributions from the membership.

7) Any other matters

Mary Llewellyn suggested putting the Christmas appeal leaflets out around SWAG's October anniversary as a way of raising awareness of the anniversary. The Trustees welcomed the suggestion and proposed that drivers could be involved in the distribution.

Trevor Astbury raised the more general question of communications in light of the definite shift away from hard copies towards use of the internet. He suggested that SWAG might be able to benefit from using the Lymington Rumour Control website for raising awareness. The Organiser noted that SWAG's geographic remit might preclude that option. The Chair mentioned Sway Hearsay for the same purpose. Trevor also suggested talking to teachers at local schools and informing them about SWAG. The Chair indicated that the Trustees would discuss.

With reference to SWAG's 50th anniversary in October 2020, Clive Potter suggested that a celebration could be combined with Sway Carnival. Barry Rickman suggested an anniversary

theme of what Sway was like 50 years ago, which could link in with music, drama and other local clubs.

The Chair mentioned that the Day-Lewis pharmacy in Sway was planning a charity day on 7 June and was hoping to raise funds for SWAG.

There being no other agenda items for the Public Meeting, the Chair thanked members for attending and declared the meeting closed at 3.30 p.m.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1st OCTOBER 2018 TO 17th MAY 2019

Expenditure on Charitable Activities £16,318

This was made up as follows:

- Heating Grants to individuals: £7560 (13 people at £540, 2 at £270)
- Special hardship grants: £4533 (5 families)
- Lunch Club: £2116
- Less Lunch Club Subscriptions: -£1394
- Room hire for Over Sixties Club: £240
- Sway Village Hall Stairlift: £2000
- Brockenhurst & Sway Day Centre: £800 (replacement armchairs)
- Postage: £63
- Medical Transport Service: £401 (includes telephone costs)

Income from Donations £8046

This was made up as follows:

- Christmas Appeal: £2539 See separate analysis
- Transport Clients: £2544
- Individual donations: £1155
- Gift Aid claimed: £1268
- Open House Coffee Mornings: £260
- Sway Carnival Committee: £250 (to Lunch Club)
- Sway Drama Group: £30 (to Lunch Club)

Other Income £4629

This breaks down as follows:

- Dividends on Investments: £4302
- Fixed Interest Fund: £359
- Bank Interest less Bank Charges: -£33

Situation at 18th May 2018 – Available: £26,597

Cash, Bank & un-presented Cheques:	£862
Deposit Account:	£8177
Fixed Interest Fund:	£17,058
Lunch Club Fund:	£500

J R Stevens
Treasurer

SWAG Christmas Appeal 2018

	This Yr	Last Yr	
Appeal Raised:	£2539	£3839	-34%
Gift Aid added:	£510	£877	-42%
Bringing Total for Appeal to:	£3049	£4716	-35%

The Christmas Appeal this year disappointed. We did not put out the collecting boxes this year but the income from them has been falling year by year and last year was only £87.

22 people donated (21 last year). £419 was donated through charity accounts and so already had Gift Aid included. This reduced the Gift Aid that we could claim.

The main reason for the reduction was a single special donation of £1000 received last year but not repeated this year. Discounting this the reduction would have been 11%.