



Christian action on homelessness

www.routestoroots.org

Charity No 1093689

Minutes of Routes to Roots Annual General Meeting

5th July 2010

St Peter's Church, Church Road, Parkstone

1. Attendance

Present:

Chris Beale	Paul Gooden	Kate Mellor
Margaret Blyth	Jim Goss	Peter Newman
Karen Bozeat	Fr Barry Hallett	Sarah Percy
Dot Cuff	Jennifer Harrisson	Paul Richards
Dick Dyke	Jackie Horton	Gabi Sanger-Stevens
Jan Davies	Ben Lucas	Revd Pat Southgate
Helen Ellis	Bob Jacob	Curt Southgate
Angela Evans	Fr Joseph	Rosemary St John
Stephen Finch	Alan Knapp	Terry St John
Cherry Fisher	Peter Marshall	Doreen Storey
Rob Fish	Maureen McCabe	Jackie Williams
Lynn Foster	Michael McCabe	Ray Williams
Doreen Goldswain	Richard McLester	

Apologies:

Nigel Benning	Jane Winter
Angela Bulteel	Peter Winter
Chris Bulteel	
Brian Burdon	
Carol Burden	
Gill Cook	
Jenny Kirk	
Arthur Moseley	
Barry O'Brien	
Annette Palmer	
Jan Thurgood	
Mary Rickaby	
Jeff Williams	

2. Opening Prayer

The Revd Pat Southgate, Chair of R2R, opened the meeting with a reading from the gospel of John, Ch 15 v1-9 and with prayer.

3. Welcome

The Chair gave a warm welcome to everyone and thanks for the opportunity to share and reflect on the work of Routes to Roots. Pat commented on the reading she had chosen and advised the meeting that the Routes to Roots committee had taken time in the past year to reflect on its purposes and actions, to ensure that it does meet the needs of those it seeks to help, abiding in God's love.

Pat introduced Sarah Percy, Treasurer and Gabi Sanger-Stevens, Secretary and indicated that other Executive Committee members would make themselves known during the course of the meeting.

4. Minutes of the Previous AGM

The Minutes of the AGM held on 8th June 2009 were reviewed, agreed as a true copy by the meeting and signed by the Secretary.

5. Chair's Report

Pat reported to the meeting elaborating on the Trustees' Report which had been issued prior to the meeting and giving a slide presentation.

Pat drew particular attention to the outreach work that Routes to Roots undertake, providing the opportunities for building relationships, safe places for outreach workers to engage with clients and the operation of the evening drop-ins. Pat expressed thanks to Dick for his co-ordination of the rotas for those drop-ins. Pat also mentioned closer relations with the soup-runs and how Routes to Roots had started from these. She mentioned that both the soup runs and the drop-ins were now even more important as the outreach ministry provided by St Joseph's convent was coming to an end.

Pat elaborated on the working together that has been established with the soup-runs regarding their relocation whilst transportation services carry out work on the bridge over Vanguard Road. The various churches involved in the

soup run delivery have welcome the assistance from Routes to Roots in co-ordinating the responses and submission to transportation services so that the provision of soup-runs will in future be fully authorised.

Pat also commented on the BCHA partnership in the provision of the Poole Outreach Service Team, including a number of early morning volunteers as well as our own new Outreach Worker, Liz Bailey. This has been a learning curve for all concerned and Routes to Roots, along with BCHA, have received an outstanding result from the Poole Supporting People Review.

Much work has also been undertaken on prevention and social inclusion. Routes to Roots were able to promote Rob Fish to the position of Support Manager and he continues to work with those who are newly housed as well as providing line management to Liz. Routes to Roots have continued with the afternoon projects and have just started another project on Brownsea Island with Amanda from the Dorset Wildlife Trust. The Befriending Team Pilot Project has been excellent and Routes to Roots has been successful in a funding bid to continue with its own Befriending Project for another year.

Fund raising continues and Routes to Roots have successfully bid for £5,000. ASDA have adopted Routes to Roots as one of their main charities and Routes to Roots are working with them on various fund raising proposals. Pat thanked Bob for all his work on putting together funding bids. Pat also mentioned that Jeff Williams had put on concerts; Rob, Liz and Pat had made various visits to schools and churches to talk about Routes to Roots resulting in further donations or fund raising opportunities and Terry St John had recently completed a pilgrimage - the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, also known in English as The Way of St James. He covered 1,463 miles and raised £700 for Routes to Roots. Routes to Roots work with Bournemouth University students this past year has been well received and a second year social work student is due to start with Routes to Roots this Autumn for an 80 day placement – these placements whilst providing excellent opportunities for the students, also provide some funding for Routes to Roots.

Pat concluded by saying that she is very happy to continue as Chair of Routes to Roots if so voted by the meeting for another year but that she felt that thereafter it was time to allow someone fresh to come forward and lead the charity. Pat would then be able to concentrate her efforts in the role of Chaplain to the Homeless.

6. Treasurer's Report

Referring to the information included in the AGM pack, Sarah advised that the unaudited Receipts and Payments Account and Statement of Assets and Liabilities for Routes to Roots for the year ended 31 March 2010, showed a £12,021 excess of receipts over payments. The accounts have now been audited by Mike Bilson and no problems were found. The accounts will be lodged with the Charities Commission as part of our Annual Return by January 2011.

Income

General donations income has continued to increase with several significant donations from schools, churches and individuals. Significant amounts include:

- £750 from M Linton in October
- £700 from Loyal Oddfellows in December
- £600 from M Sleeman in January
- £2,000 from St Mary's Longfleet in February

We also received two substantial donations from individuals for storage and to fund the new role of Support Manager. Many churches and schools have also raised funds for us, as well as our own fund raising activity of a sponsored sleep out. Sarah thanked everyone involved. Fundraising included:

- £260 from CHBC Quiz
- £92.17 from Hillbourne School
- £691 from Holy Angels Concert
- £173 from St Paul's carol sing
- £300 from R Rye for Esthers
- £237.55 from CHBC
- £350 from sponsored sleepout

Subscription income has dramatically increased from last year due to the increased fees, but mainly due to the increase in membership. Sarah hoped those present would renew their membership and she encouraged everyone to take up Gabi's challenge to find one more person to join.

Grant income included the residual funding from Borough of Poole/Faithworks under the Homelessness Project (£9000) as well as successful bids for funding from Grassroots Community Foundation which has been allocated to funding the afternoon drop-ins (£5,000) and from McDougall Trust [and £250 for a specific client].

We were successful in our joint bid with BCHA for the contract with Borough of Poole for the Provision of an Outreach Service for Homeless, Rough Sleepers and Vulnerable People in Poole. This contract started in October 2009 and secures funding for a full time outreach worker for a further 2 years.

Bank interest was earned on accumulated funds held in the deposit account during the year. Gift Aid was claimed on relevant donations and membership subscriptions.

Payments

Although Routes to Roots income increased, the cost of providing Routes to Roots service also increased, though some of this is due to the increased provision of afternoon drop-ins and in taking on a new employee and promoting Rob.

This year's costs include one quarter's rent from last year as well as the 4 quarters for this year, and a small cost of renting the hall for training. Food costs have increased and more people have asked to be reimbursed due to the credit crunch. As well as the evening drop-ins, we have also provided two afternoon drop-ins a week during term-time for preventative, motivational work. Expenses include rent of the hall, some food and various miscellaneous expenses.

Thanks to generous donations, and the ability to store goods, we have not needed to buy any clothing, toiletries, furniture or tools for the homeless.

General office expenses include several large one-off items including:

- £600 on the dishwasher
- £706 on storage, from the £1,000 donation for this purpose
- £6,005 investigating the purchase of a building, which can be reclaimed from Quaker Housing Trust

Expenditure on publicity and publications was mainly around Christmas and Easter, keeping churches and members in touch with our work, and generated both donations and volunteers. Our insurance costs increased due to both our increased activities and our increased staff costs. A Crisis Loan was held over from last year for designated client to fund employment retraining program.

Sarah advised that Routes to Roots are in a strong position to continue current operations next year at a budgeted cost of over £61,000, but will need to find additional sources of funding to be able to continue all our work in the future, particularly to fund the new Support Manager post. Sarah thanked Bob Jacob for all his hard work during the year in applying for and securing additional funding. Sarah asked that if anyone were aware of any potential new benefactors, please let her or one of the other members of the Executive Committee have details.

Sarah also put on record her appreciation for all of the hard work undertaken by Lynn Foster both in helping her to get to grips with the role of Treasurer and in maintaining the books for Routes to Roots. The volume of transactions is substantial and Lynn maintains the records perfectly.

Sarah proposed that the meeting formally adopt the accounts as issued with the notification of the AGM – this was proposed by Peter Newman and seconded by Liz Bailey, unanimously agreed by the members, none against and no abstentions.

7. Secretary's Report

Gabi advised that she had this year issued her report along with the AGM pack information.

Membership

Gabi confirmed that membership had increased by 67% over the previous year but that this was still only a small number. Gabi urged everyone to try to sign up just one more person as a member of Routes to Roots.

Management Consultancy and Organisational Structure for Routes to Roots

This review had provided valuable insight into the way that Routes to Roots does operate and to the weaknesses of that operation. Taking into account the recommendations of the management consultants, the committee have decided to re-organise so that it has both a board for strategic decision making and governance and then operational areas of responsibility headed up by committee members – Gabi presented the format on a slide show. Terms of office for committee members would be increased to two or three years. Consideration would be given to adopting Charitable Incorporated Organisation status when this became available.

CIO status would provide a legal identity for the charity and was of particular importance as Routes to Roots now employ a number of staff, have contractual obligations with other organisations and may want to purchase or lease property in the future. CIO status might not become available until 2011.

Gabi asked the meeting if they would give a mandate to the Trustees and committee members to change the status of Routes to Roots as was deemed most appropriate when all information becomes available. The motion was proposed by Pat and seconded by Sarah, unanimously agreed by the members present.

8. Executive Committee Elections

8.1. Election of Honorary members:

- 8.1.1. **Chair** - Pat Southgate - proposed by Gabi Sanger-Stevens, seconded by Jennifer Harrison
- 8.1.2. **Secretary** - Gabi Sanger-Stevens - proposed by Paul Richards, seconded by Dick Dyke
- 8.1.3. **Treasurer** – Sarah Pecz - proposed by Gabi Sanger-Stevens, seconded by Jennifer Harrison

8.2. Election of Trustees / Executive members:

- 8.2.1. Richard Dyke - proposed by Gabi Sanger-Stevens, seconded by Jennifer Harrison
- 8.2.2. Jennifer Harrison - proposed by Gabi Sanger-Stevens, seconded by Sarah Percy
- 8.2.3. Bob Jacob - proposed by Dick Dyke, seconded by Gabi Sanger-Stevens
- 8.2.4. Peter Marshall – proposed by Pat Southgate, seconded by Gabi Sanger-Stevens
- 8.2.5. Kate Mellor – proposed by Pat Southgate, seconded by Gabi Sanger-Stevens
- 8.2.6. Paul Richards - proposed by Jennifer Harrison, seconded by Dick Dyke
- 8.2.7. Jeff Williams – proposed by Pat Southgate, seconded by Gabi Sanger-Stevens

There being no other nominations, all were unanimously elected. There were no dissensions, nor abstentions.

9. **Date of Annual General Meeting 2011**

The date for the next AGM was set as Monday, 13th June 2011 in the evening again at St Peter's Church unless otherwise notified.

10. **Support Manager's Report**

Rob spoke to the meeting about his new role as Support Manager and the way his work is developing:

January 2010 I started my new role as Support Manager. Mid December had seen the new Outreach Worker Liz Bailey coming on board, the first few weeks were spent making sure Liz settled in ok. The new outreach project Poole Outreach Support Team (POST) started last October, it is a shared project between R2R and Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA), funded by Poole Borough Council. Prior to that in October the (BCHA) Outreach Worker and I had continued the good work already achieved by R2R until Liz took up the post in December. The project is managed overall by (BCHA) but by me managing the outreach worker, we are kept involved in any decisions and issues that arise. I meet regularly with the BCHA manager to discuss the project and so we are kept updated at all times.

My new role with Routes to Roots delivers housing related support to assist individuals and households who need support to sustain or take up the offer of new accommodation. It aims to assist households who are not managing in their housing and are at risk of losing their accommodation. It was born out of our observations that individuals still relied on us for support after being housed because they trust us and we have a strong relationship in place. Other support from outside agencies has often not worked out for various reasons but primarily because they prefer working with us because we have the basic relationship and trust in place. Something we see a lot of even today at the drop ins as they continue to seek our help when problems arise.

A lot of what I do is the practical stuff but what I am trying to do is much the same as what the befriending concept is all about, which is getting along side them, spending time with them, listening to them and trying to motivate them. It isn't easy, often 1 step forward and 2 steps back but we must keep on and in prayer step out in Faith and know that he can and will bring His work to completion.

The role of Routes to Roots has always been to meet the needs of the homeless and though, our first concerns are that the needs of those who are homeless and rough sleeping in Poole are met we have also always stretched out our arms further to those who are at risk of becoming homeless. We work with ex-offenders, ex-Service personnel, people with drug and alcohol issues, young people, individuals with learning disabilities and people with mental health problems.

It has always been our remit to make a real and sustainable difference to the lives of people who are socially excluded, disadvantaged and or homeless.

Storage

I have spent a lot of time over the last 3 years maintaining good relationships with local landlords, moving clients into flats and helping them furnish their new homes with donated furniture etc. This is still part of my work! We had difficulty with storage last year for large items and so we had to manage our supply and demand. However this year we are happy to say that we now have a small store unit at Fleetsbridge which is only costing R2R £10 per month. This money was donated to us after last years AGM I would like to say a big thankyou on behalf of R2R for this generosity. This is helping considerably and keeps the cost of buying from Dorset Reclaim to a minimum.

Day time project

The afternoon project at Skinner St URC is still actively engaging with individuals who are known to R2R. The project plays a big part in my work and is a very important part of our prevention work, seeking to give people opportunities to get involved in activities or simply just to sit and talk. We recognise the boredom and lack of

motivation faced by many of our clients – both in homes and on the streets, it is a major problem for them. We are always learning and reviewing the project and constantly meeting the challenges each week.

Our motivational and prevention work is something that also leans over into the befriending service - again helping to prevent the recycling of homelessness.

Also again as part of the whole motivational / prevention package, I am taking a group of 10 clients (male and female) to Brownsea Island for 6 days over a 6 week block this summer. Volunteering with the Dorset Wildlife Trust cutting down and clearing parts of the Islands rhododendron bushes. Something we are all very excited about as it was well received last year.

Dialogue

Around October last year myself and a local Hamworthy Police constable got involved in HMP Dorchester Prison 'Dialogue'. Dialogue is a group discussion zone within the prison to help inmates bring their issues thoughts and feelings to the group, the strap line is 'everybody learns but nobody teaches'. The intention for us was to bring the concept into the community called, 'community dialogue'. We started it in Skinner St. URC but now run it at the drug and alcohol offices opposite the Civic Centre every Wednesday. It has been very well received and acknowledged by Poole Services and we have had a number of other agencies get involved. Dialogue is still small but we know it is only a matter of time before it becomes well known and used as a help group by those we are seeking to support and encourage. Again it is all aimed towards relapse prevention and motivation, filling empty time with more positive time.

Finally, it has been another challenging year, but R2R are still out there, seeking to support and love individuals whose lives have become unmanageable. We are continually trying to bring HOPE to those who see their lives as hopeless.

11. Outreach Worker's Report

Liz Bailey Routes to Roots new Outreach Worker gave the meeting a synopsis of her first six months:

Diary/Outlook entry

17th December 2009 – 6am – Start work for Routes to Roots!

Early Morning Outreach Induction

Walking Boots, Warm jacket, gloves, hat, personal alarm, torch, phone & coffee. Very, very dark, very, very cold and so, so early. Day one Rob introduced me to checking the multi storey car parks of Poole. Up the steps one side, across the upper level, down the steps on the other side, all the while looking out for people sleeping overnight in the stairwell or tucked away in a lonely corner. Day two Rob led me from the top of Canford Cliffs right down to the prom and along to the beach huts, looking out for people sleeping in the doorways or behind the huts and then all the way back to the top of the cliffs again. I let Rob do all the talking as I had to concentrate on breathing!

Early morning outreach is an absolute privilege, meeting homeless people at the very start of the day. We give them coffee, strong and sweet, listen to their stories and advise how they can access support from Routes to Roots and Poole Outreach Support Team during the day.

Katrina Knight (Kat) is the Outreach Worker for BCHA and I am the Outreach Worker for R2R. Together we form the Poole Outreach Support Team (POST for short!) and work in the R2R office at the URC Skinner Street. We are both passionate about our work with and for homeless and vulnerable people.

The work is very relational and Kat and I have the privilege of hearing the life stories of many people day by day. Reflecting with them we seek to give choices which will enable them to move into independent or supported, safer, healthier living.

We liaise with so many excellent services across Poole to achieve this including the Borough of Poole, the Community Mental Health Team, Drug and Alcohol Services, Probation Service, the Big Issue, Salvation Army, Poole Food Bank, Police Community Support Officers, Poole General Hospital, Bridging Communities, Footprints and teams who offer Floating Support to vulnerable adults recently housed.

Our outreach work is always supported and complemented by the dedication and compassion of the Routes to Roots volunteers, soup run volunteers, R2R committee and trustees who offer their gifts and skills throughout the week in work that is both seen and unseen and very much appreciated.

In the last six months fifteen homeless people have moved into accommodation many with additional support to enable them to keep their tenancies or to begin addressing drug or alcohol issues. Twelve others have left the service for reasons such as moving on from the area or returning to a family home.

We are currently engaging with twelve more homeless people; four are 'sofa surfing' five street sleeping and three 'camping'.

The last six months have been challenging and rewarding. I have met so many interesting, lovely people and look forward to the coming months as we continue praying for the vision for Routes to Roots.

12. Befriending Projects

Kate Mellor spoke to the meeting regarding the Befriending Projects which was launched 18 months ago as a joint project between Routes to Roots and Quaker Homeless Action of which Kate is a director. The teams have been operating for 14 months and have another four months to go. QHA were approached by Housing Justice to run a pilot to determine the befriending team model. Kate through her association with Poole knew of Routes to Roots and approached the charity as a partner.

All in all, the project has been extremely successful, providing valuable learning for future projects. Once all the reports have been received and the project written up, Quaker Homeless Action will be taking this nationwide with a starter pack for other groups who might want to set up similar schemes – the Home Office have also expressed interest.

In Poole the befriending teams will continue as funding for this has been secured by Bob Jacob for the next two years. Peter Marshall will be managing the work involved on behalf of the Executive committee and will be working very closely with Rob to support individuals.

Kate thanked all those involved saying that it has been a wonderful project, the befriending team members have been so inspirational and amazing and it has been a privilege to work alongside them.

13. Fund Raising & Student Placements

Bob Jacob spoke to the meeting regarding the fund raising efforts that have taken place over the last year. He gave sincere thanks to Poole CVS for their work in supporting Routes to Roots with funding bids which have secured the immediate future of the afternoon projects and the befriending teams. Bob also thanked all the volunteers on the afternoon projects for an interesting year and a lot of fun. More work will go ahead to encourage partnership working and raise more funding.

Bob also spoke about the five first year social studies university students who spent a 20 day practice period with Routes to Roots. They reported back that their time with the charity had been a great placement and they have indeed proved to be great advocates for Routes to Roots. As a result, Routes to Roots have been offered a second year student for an 80 day practice placement which moves Routes to Roots forward as being seen as a supportive organisation in Poole.

Bob also thanked Paul Gooden for all his support and assistance with the work involved.

14. Business Plan

Jennifer Harrison spoke to the meeting regarding the work that is ongoing in developing a business plan for Routes to Roots. The reason for such a plan is to ensure that all our accounting practices, our record keeping and our general work is done in a reputable fashion with clarity, direction and focus.

Jennifer explained that as Routes to Roots continues to grow it is necessary to formalise some of the working practices and to be clear for all concerned on the strategic direction and development of the charity. Initial work has been completed on preparing a Business Plan document and the committee will share this with the membership when it is finally approved.

15. Any Other Business

No other business had been notified prior to the meeting and no matters were raised at this time.

16. Close

Pat read a final passage from the gospel of St John Ch 15 v16-17. The meeting joined together in the saying of the grace.

Gabi Sanger-Stevens
(Hon Secretary)

DRAFT