



The King's Award  
for Voluntary Service



"Supporting Lives, Strengthening Communities"

## Minutes of the Blackdown Support Group AGM held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at Dunkeswell Village Hall

**Present:** Gillian Girling (Chair), Elizabeth McNabb (Manager), Lisa Martin (Treasurer), David Major (Vice-Chair), Heather Stallard (Trustee), Martin Saxton (Trustee), Nicki Dowson (Trustee), Bill Morris (Trustee), George Roffe-Silvester (Trustee), Mark Roberts (Trustee), Barry Simmonds (Trustee), Lucy Ball (Trustee), Sarah Folland, (Trustee), The Vice Lord Lieutenant of Devon, Rear Admiral Chris Snow CBE DL, Rob Cadwallader (Examiner), Ros Channon, Victoria Rayson, Phyllis Pengelly, Julie Bullett, Christine Meads, Mike Visked, Martin Dear, Marie Dear, Ursula Robertson, Phil Mumby, Stephen Ward, Tim Barton, Lesley Barton, Sally Cartledge, Tim Lowe, Peta Dayus-Jones, Judy Law, Richard Ford MP, Steph Trelawny- Soley, Mary Beard, Anne Sworn, Margaret Stocks, Bob Hawkes, Bill Salisbury, Tricia Salisbury, Sandra Groves, Stuart Groves, John Barrow (Parish Councillor), Kim Atkinson (Parish Councillor), Jo Maunder, Pauline Brown, Nick Stevens, Heather Stevens, Mary Pile, Glyn Mannion-Butler, Barbara Long, John Long, Peter Girling, Ruth Tartaglia, Heather Procter, John Vinnels, Karen Button (Blackdown Practice).

**Introduction:** Gillian Girling welcomed attendees to the meeting.

- 1. Apologies:** Caroline Roberts, Zoe Flockhart, Alice Hodges, Judith Ward, Tony Butler, Naomi Higgins, Bob Higgins, Linda Knowles, Brian Strandring, Jennifer Paterson, Sally Clist, David Ball, Ed Hopkins, Hilda Cligg, Mike Travers, Roger Lambert, Sue Lambert, Pam Goss, Nick Engert, Trish Comrie, Gillian Hawkes, Linda Holway, Elaine Walker, Jane Vassalli, Jean Dyke, Paul Steed, Julie Steed, Peter Jenkinson, Janet Boothby, Brenda Northam, Kay Smith, Shirley Dracott, Chris Dracott, Vicky Norton, Anne Barker. 2 proxy forms were received from \*\*\*\*\*.
- 2. Confirmation of Gillian as Chair:** Gillian reappointed at Chair, Proposed by George Roffe-Silvester, seconded by Mary Beard.
- 3. Resignation of Trustees:** All trustees resigned (as required by the Constitution).
- 4. Re-appointment of Trustees:** Martin Saxton, Gillian Girling, Heather Stallard, Sarah Folland, Bill Morris, David Major, Nicki Dowson, George Roffe-Silvester, Lisa Martin. **Appointment of new Trustees:** Barry Simmonds and Mark Roberts. All proposed by Lucy Ball, Seconded John Barrow. All in favour. Lucy Ball stood down as a Trustee as she is moving out off area. Gillian presented Lucy with a thank you gift for all her hard work.
- 5. Appointment of Honorary Treasurer:** Lisa Martin was appointed. Proposed by Gillian Girling, Seconded by Heather Stallard.
- 6. Manager's Report:** Elizabeth McNabb presented the Manager's report to the meeting. Summary below:

### Welcome:

- Warm welcome extended to volunteers, supporters, honoured guests, and colleagues.

### **About the Organisation:**

- Local charity operating for over 30 years.
- Mission: Combat isolation, improve wellbeing, and connect people to communities and essential services.
- Services available to all ages across the Blackdown Hills area.

### **Key Services:**

- Community transport (including accessible vehicle), social groups, bereavement and volunteer support.
- Additional services: wheelchair loans, prescription deliveries, shopping support, toenail cutting, and form-filling.

### **Team Structure:**

- Operated by 80+ volunteers, 4 staff members, and 12 active volunteer trustees.

### **Highlights from the Past Year:**

- **Major milestones:**
  - Received the **King's Award for Voluntary Service**.
  - Transitioned legal structure.
  - Moved into **first permanent premises** in 30 years.

### **Service Statistics:**

- 2,491 transport journeys for 313 people (13% increase).
- 162 people attended social groups, supported by 24 volunteers.
- 85 people accessed bereavement, sitting, befriending, footcare, and form-filling services.
- 110 individuals received guidance and signposting for care-related challenges.

### **Financial & Social Impact:**

- BSG transport offers substantial savings to local residents (e.g., £6.50 vs. £60 for a 9-mile return journey with wait time).
- Estimated total savings to community over £133,000 annually.
- Emphasis on the **personal impact** of volunteer support, with moving testimonials from service users.

### **Looking Ahead:**

- **Premises:** Fundraising continues for office conversion and future community workspace.
- **New Initiatives:** Planning pilot project to connect local people with trusted care professionals (Microproviders).
- **Staff Growth:** Welcoming new Office Administrator, expanding team to 5.
- **Fundraising:**
  - Encouragement to support **BSG Big Bash** in September.
  - Recognition of **Lee Worthington's Everest Base Camp trek** in October in aid of BSG.

### **Closing Note:**

- Appreciation expressed to all volunteers and supporters.
- Looking forward to continued growth and community impact in the year ahead.

Elizabeth McNabb

28<sup>th</sup> July 2025

- 7. Finance Report & Annual Accounts:** Lisa Martin presented the Financial Statements for year ended 31 March 2025 to the meeting. Copy attached.

Question from Pauline Brown – What investments do BSG hold? Lisa explained that BSG have an investment manager and hold a diverse portfolio of stock, shares and bonds.

Question from Martin Dear – Why there was accountancy fees this year? Lisa explains that for many years Rob Cadwallader has completed audits free of charge, now BSG has become a CIO it was necessary to pay for the audit. Rob Cadwallader explained there was more work involved and more risk. Martin Dear asked if this was a reoccurring cost. and Lisa confirmed this was likely.

The accounts were approved. Proposed Martin Saxon, Seconded Bill Morris. All in favour.

- 8. Trustees report given by Chair:** Gillian Girling presented the report. Summary below:

### Key Developments Over the Past Year:

**1. Governance:**

- BSG has successfully transitioned into a **Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)**.
- This new structure strengthens governance, allows property ownership, formal employment of staff, and eligibility for larger grants.

**2. New Premises:**

- In **November 2024**, BSG completed the purchase of **Newland**, a bungalow next to Hemyock Surgery.
- Newland serves as BSG's **office and meeting space**, with limited current use for service user appointments and volunteer training.
- Full public access awaits completion of work required under building regulations.
- Future plans include income generation from letting out available space.

**3. King's Award for Voluntary Service:**

- BSG was honoured with the **King's Award for Voluntary Service** in November 2024.
- Celebrations included a volunteer reception in January and representation at a **Buckingham Palace Garden Party** in May.
- The **Vice Lord Lieutenant of Devon** is attending this evening to officially present the award.

### Organisational Growth:

- Staff expansion includes the appointment of a **new admin assistant** in September.
- **Victoria Rayson**, Marketing & Projects Coordinator, has enhanced BSG's digital presence, updated branding (new logo), and led increased fundraising efforts.
- Ongoing rise in service demand being managed by staff team: Ros, Sandra, and Elizabeth.

### Trustee & Governance Updates:

- Trustee changes:
  - **Doreen Perrott** retired.
  - **Neil Howe** resigned.
  - **Barry Simonds** and **Mark Roberts** co-opted.
- Creation of new **sub-committees** to improve governance efficiency:
  - Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Workforce, Property, Fundraising, and Marketing & Communications.

- Sub-committees meet regularly to streamline **bi-monthly Board meetings**.

#### **Looking Ahead:**

- Further development of the **Care Connections matching service**.
- Expansion of existing services.
- Plans to let out **shared and dedicated space** at Newland for income generation.

#### **Acknowledgements:**

- Thanks to all trustees for their dedicated input, particularly:
  - **David Major** (Vice Chair) – policy review and consolidation.
  - **Lisa** (Treasurer) – financial oversight.
  - **Martin Saxton** (former Chair) – guidance during transition.
- Special thanks to **Elizabeth McNabb**, Manager, for her leadership through a period of significant change.
- Deep appreciation expressed to **all volunteers**, whose contributions—large or small—make a meaningful impact.

#### **9. Any Other Business:** No other business.

**Presentation of the The King's Award for Voluntary Services:** The Vice Lord Lieutenant of Devon, Rear Admiral Chris Snow CBE DL. presented the King's Award to the Blackdown Support Group and thanked the Blackdown Support group for their ongoing work.

The meeting was closed by the Chair who thanked everyone for attending and invited them to join the Trustees for cheese and wine.

**Ros Channon**  
**9<sup>th</sup> August 2025**

BLACKDOWN SUPPORT GROUP AGM