



The King's Award
for Voluntary Service



"Supporting Lives, Strengthening Communities"

**Minutes of the Blackdown Support Group AGM held on Tuesday 28th July 2026 at
Culmstock Village Hall, Culmstock, EX15 3JW**

Present: Gillian Girling (Chair), Elizabeth McNabb (Manager), Lisa Martin (Treasurer), David Major (Vice-Chair), Heather Stallard (Trustee), Martin Saxton (Trustee), Nicki Dowson (Trustee), George Roffe-Silvester (Trustee), Mark Roberts (Trustee), Sarah Folland (Trustee), Ros Channon, Victoria Rayson, Sandra Groves, Nikki Venn, Ruth Tartaglia, Heather Procter, Peter Girling, Doreen Perrott, Phyllis Pengelly, Phil Mumby, Shirley Dracott, Sally Cartledge, Ruth Tartaglia, Anne Sworn, Brenda Northam.

Introduction: Gillian Girling welcomed attendees to the meeting.

- 1. Apologies:** Sara Pes, Richard Stokes, Di Cooper, Mike Cooper, Peta Dayus-Jones, Clare Sibley, Mike Visked, Elaine Walker, Naomi Higgins, Bob Higgins, Bill Morris, Sally Hilton, Rene Pym, Wendy Grabham, Stuart Groves, Charlotte Roffe-Silvester, Roger Lambert, Marie Johns.
2 proxy forms were received from Michael Cooper and Robert & Naomi Higgins.

- 2. Confirmation of Gillian as Chair:** Gillian reappointed as Chair of the meeting.

Decisions

- Proposed by David Major, seconded by Nicki Dowson.

- 3. Minutes of the 2025 AGM:** The members reviewed the minutes of the AGM held on 28 July 2025 and approved them as an accurate record.

Decisions

- Proposed by Sarah Folland, seconded by Peter Girling. The minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

- 4. Annual Accounts:** Lisa Martin presented the Financial Statements for year ended 31 March 2026 to the meeting.

- Total income of **£146,000**, compared with **£108,000** in the previous year.
- Increased income largely due to restricted grant funding, including grants from the National Landscapes programme and the National Lottery, supporting refurbishment works at Newlands.
- Donations and legacies decreased by approximately **£10,000**, and dividend income reduced by approximately **£14,000** compared with the previous year.
- Total expenditure of **£165,000**, reflecting refurbishment investment at Newlands.
- Operating deficit of approximately **£19,000**.

- Investment gains of approximately **£14,000**, resulting in a net deficit of approximately **£5,500**.
- Fixed assets valued at **£384,382**, primarily reflecting the Newlands premises.
- Cash balance of **£13,000** at year end, compared with **£18,000** in the previous year.
- Investment portfolio value of **£171,000**, managed by Hawksmoor.
- Restricted funds included the Care Connections grant and Medlock funding, with approximately **£20,000** carried forward in restricted reserves.

The Treasurer reported that independent examiners Bachelors completed their review and identified no issues regarding accounting records or governance.

Decisions

- The resolution to receive and approve the Annual Accounts, including the Balance Sheet and Income & Expenditure Report for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, was proposed by George Roffe-Silvester, seconded by Sally Cartledge and **approved unanimously**.

5. Chairs Report:

The Chair presented a report covering governance, organisational development, and sustainability.

Key updates included:

- Successful completion of the transition from an unincorporated charity to a **Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)**.
- Continued governance oversight through trustee committees covering safeguarding, finance, fundraising, workforce, risk management, health and safety, communications, and impact evaluation.
- Significant refurbishment and development work completed at the Newlands premises, including:
 - Accessibility improvements
 - Disabled toilet installation
 - Electrical upgrades
 - Internal and external refurbishment
 - Parking improvements
 - Enhanced fire safety measures
- Newlands is expected to become a community-focused facility supporting future service growth and income generation.
- Successful grant funding secured for both the Newlands refurbishment project and the new Care Connections initiative.
- Recruitment of:
 - Nikki Venn, Office Administrator
 - Donna Pavey, Care Connections Coordinator

The Chair thanked trustees, staff, volunteers, supporters, donors, and partner organisations for their contributions. **No Questions to the Chair.**

6. Managers Report: Elizabeth McNabb presented the Manager's report to the meeting.

Summary below:

Elizabeth highlighted the impact of services delivered during the year.

Key achievements included:

Transport Service

- Over **2,200 journeys** completed.
- Nearly **300 service users** supported across **21 parishes**.
- Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) completed **102 journeys** for **22 passengers**.
- Survey results showed **90%** of WAV users considered the service essential or very important.

Community and Wellbeing Services

- **140 people** attended **79 lunch club and social group sessions**.
- Supported by **26 volunteers**.
- Continued provision of:
 - Bereavement support
 - Foot care clinics
 - Information and advice services
 - Practical support for navigating health and social care systems

Care Connections Service

- Successful launch of the new Care Connections service to help people access trusted care and support.

Volunteers

- **88 volunteers** contributed during the year.
- Volunteer feedback highlighted strong satisfaction, purpose, support, and community connection.

Questions Raised

A question was asked regarding unmet transport requests. Management noted that only a small number of journeys are unfulfilled, typically three to four per quarter, mainly due to urgent same-day referrals from healthcare services.

Risks / Issues

- Growing demand for same-day transport requests.
- Ongoing need to recruit and retain volunteer drivers.

7. Election of Trustees:

In accordance with the Constitution, one-third of trustees retired by rotation.

Retiring Trustees:

- Sarah Folland
- Heather Stallard
- Bill Morris
- Martin Saxton

Candidates:

- Heather Stallard (re-election)
- Bill Morris (re-election)
- Martin Saxton (re-election)
- Sally Hilton (election as new trustee)

Sarah Folland confirmed she was standing down as a trustee for personal reasons.

Decisions

Heather Stallard, Bill Morris, Martin Saxton, and Sally Hilton were proposed by Gillain Girling, seconded by Nicki Downson and elected unanimously.

8. Any Other Business:

Sarah Folland expressed appreciation for the work of the Chair, Manager, staff, trustees, volunteers, and supporters.

Special thanks were given to:

- Heather Stallard for providing refreshments.
- Gillian Girling and Elizabeth for their leadership and commitment.

Next Meeting / Follow-Up

- Formal opening of the Newlands premises planned for **October 2026**.
- Next AGM to be held in accordance with the organisation's Constitution.

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