



Charity No 1208925

AGM 2026 Trustees report given by Chair

The manager will report a very busy year building and developing our services as well as continuing the refurbishment of the new BSG Premises. She will demonstrate the significant impact the BSG has made on improving the lives of people living the Blackdown Hills.

BSG is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The Charity Commission accepted the dissolution of the previous Unincorporated Charitable Association in March 2026. We continue to be a volunteer charity with a Board made up of twelve Trustees. Lucy Ball, a long-time volunteer and Trustee moved out of the area and did not stand for re-election last year and we have had eleven Trustees for most of the last year.

In accordance with the CIO constitution one third of the Trustees are required to resign at each year's AGM. Trustees resigning under this provision are eligible to stand for re-election to the Board. Three of the four people concerned have signified they are willing to stand again: Heather Stallard, Bill Morris and Martin Saxton. Sarah Folland will be standing down as a Trustee for the time being due to family commitments but will remain with us as a volunteer. In addition, a new Trustee, Sally Hilton, was co-opted to the Board earlier this year and I am pleased that she is standing for election to the Board of Trustees at this AGM, bringing us to eleven Trustees on the Board for the coming year.

We meet as a full Board quarterly and in between Board meetings we have a number of sub-committee meetings to discuss specific topics in more detail, each chaired by a different Trustee. (Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Workforce, Property, Fundraising, Finance, Marketing & Communications, Evaluation & Impact and Risk Management).

We have worked hard to obtain grant funding for much of the work for the office conversion and have completed the car park, door widening, disabled access toilet, electrics and decorating, and are completing the final works on the front entrance and fire safety measures. As soon as the work is completed, we will arrange a grand opening later in the year. Newland is already proving a good base for the staff team to operate

from and the space is well used - we do have some spare office space which we plan to let out, to help with our income.

We are working hard on our marketing via local magazines and on social media to ensure people know about our services and to support our fundraising. Our Big Bash event last September raised over £6000 but we need to continually fundraise to support the services we run. The Transport service, so vital to many people in the Blackdown Hills, runs at a loss and this has been exacerbated by the increased in fuel costs due to the global situation.

Our new Office Administrator Nikki Venn joined in September and is making great strides in supporting office procedures and developing systems. We launched our Care Connections service in April as a 2-year pilot project, funded by Somerset Communities, and appointed Donna Pavey in January to set up and coordinate the service which has been warmly received to date.

Thanks to my fellow Trustees for their magnificent input – each and every one contributes a huge amount of time and skill to the benefit of the BSG.

The office team, led by Elizabeth McNabb as Manager, do a fantastic job coping with diverse demands from service users and volunteers, as well as raising our profile in the minds of funders and keeping abreast of relevant charity, NHS and social care sector developments, continually dealing with grant applications and ensuring the BSG takes advantage of the best free training and resources.

And finally, to all the volunteers, without whom the BSG could not exist. Thank you all everything you do is making a difference to the people of the Blackdown Hills - supporting lives and strengthening communities.

Thank you.

Gillian Girling

July 2026