

**HOME-START DACORUM (LTD)**

**MINUTES OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON**

**FRIDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2008 - 12:30 P.M.**

**AT THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD**

**Present:** Adrian Whye - Chairman  
Helen Mutio - Vice-Chairman  
Heather Allen - Director  
Kirsty Saunders - Director  
Ginnie Abubakar - Director  
Lara Parker - Company Secretary  
Vedya Reddy - Acting Treasurer  
Cllr. Carol Green - Mayor of Dacorum  
Members of Home-Start Dacorum (Ltd)

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Adrian Whye welcomed everyone to the 4th AGM of Home-Start Dacorum, a company limited by guarantee. . Adrian then invited the Worshipful Mayor, Cllr. Carol Green to say a few words.

2. Welcome from the Worshipful Mayor - Cllr. Carol Green

Cllr. Carol Green thanked Home-Start Dacorum for inviting her to our 4<sup>th</sup> AGM. She went on to say that our strap-line 'support and friendship for families' sums up what we are about. Our aims to help children have the best start possible in life are laudable. At certain times in our lives we feel under pressure, that we cannot cope and that everything is going wrong. This is the time that parents need extra support. By helping these parents in their family roles with young children, we help them gain confidence, which in turn helps the children and the family as a whole. Our willing band of volunteers make this possible, visiting families in their own homes. It is these volunteers, the face of Home-Start Dacorum, who go out into the community, visiting families and providing such wonderful support. Cllr. Carol Green wanted to praise our volunteers for their dedicated commitment to try and ensure that young children receive the best possible start in life.

3. Apologies for Absence

14 apologies had been received.

4. Previous Minutes

The chairman asked all members present to accept the minutes of the AGM held Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2006. An amendment was made to the minutes recording that Cllr. David Collins was the Deputy Mayor of Berkhamsted. Minutes were accepted unanimously as a true record.

#### 5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

#### 6. Treasurers Report

Vedya ran through the important figures in the accounts. The actual income received during the FY 2007/08 was £124,662, which was up from £114,044 mainly due to a full year of income from the Big Lottery and the PCT. Expenditure during the year increased from £106,360 to £111,766, giving a net surplus for the year of £12,896.

Unrestricted funds increased from £59,121 to £68,081. Designated funds, primarily representing the redundancy provision, increased from £11,396 to £12,356, and restricted funds (those subject to a restriction imposed by the donor) increased from £7,066 to £10,042. Vedya reported that on the face of it, our unrestricted funds look very healthy.

Vedya gave thanks to Lara Parker and the Management team for keeping within budget and together with the volunteers makes 2007/08 another successful year.

Before moving on to resolutions, Vedya invited any questions. There were none.

On behalf of the Directors, Vedya thanked Harts Chartered Accountants and the manager and staff at National Westminster Bank, Berkhamsted. She then proposed that the accounts, as reported, be adopted.

**Resolution 1** – To receive unaudited but independently examined accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008

By a show of hands, members unanimously approved the resolution. The accounts were formally adopted.

**Resolution 2** – To appoint Harts Chartered Accountants as auditor (and if no audit is required to be appointed as independent examiners of the accounts) from the conclusion of this meeting until the conclusion of the next general meeting at which accounts are laid before the members and that the Directors be hereby authorised to determine the remuneration

By a show of hands, members unanimously approved the resolution.

#### 7. Retirement and Election of Officers

Adrian reported that Georgina Tregoning will be standing down as a Director due to work and family commitments. He thanked her for the support she had given to the scheme during her tenure.

**Resolution 3 – To re-elect Heather Allen**

Heather was a director of the unincorporated Home-Start Dacorum and transferred across on incorporation. She is the Manager at the Volunteer Centre.

By a show of hands, members unanimously approved the resolution.

**Resolution 4 – To re-elect Helen Mutio**

Helen was also a director of the unincorporated charity and transferred across. She is the Assistant Chief Executive of Community Action Dacorum.

By a show of hands, members unanimously approved the resolution.

**Resolution 5 – To elect Vedyamala Reddy as a Director**

Vedya has just joined us as a Director. She has agreed to assist the new Treasurer, once appointed.

By a show of hands, members unanimously approved the resolution.

**8. Speaker – Jane Petrie – Families in Focus**

Jane explained that both she and Lara have been working together on a project at the Mount Prison where there are 800 male prisoners, some of whom are Category A. They work with fathers, for 7 weeks, 5 days a week. The men work on a portfolio, which was originally developed by prisoners in Wandsworth Prison, with the intention of breaking the offending cycle. They look at fathers as role models, using a theoretical approach. It can be a very difficult time for the fathers on the inside, but equally difficult for the families on the outside. The fathers have very restricted contact with the children – they are not allowed to stand up from the table during visits for example, so physical contact is very limited. Fathers really miss out on their children's lives – missing their day to day development. They may not appreciate the stresses of life on the outside where the lone parent has to cope with the children and the stigma of having a partner in prison. Prison involves painful separation, and the men can sometimes think that it is only them that feel this pain, but the sentence is for the whole family.

The programme covers areas such as:

- Understanding the value of play
- Helping to facilitate play
- Playing safely
- What helps / hinders play
- Understanding the pressures of the partner at home
- Creative work

The prisoners are provided with flat pack cardboard boxes and craft materials to decorate them. This can provide challenges to Jane and Lara – scissors are strictly forbidden and any materials that may have staples are also not allowed.

Once the memory boxes are put together they present them to their families inside the prison. Children take the boxes home and are encouraged to put small items inside – i.e. shells from the beach, flowers from the garden etc. which provides them with things to talk about to involve the fathers in their lives on the outside.

Jane acknowledged that dads parent very differently to mums and felt that this should be celebrated. It is important to help dads feel positive about this. Every child needs a dad – a good, safe dad.

Jane then went on to talk about Families in Focus, which runs parenting programmes and a local parent / toddler group based in Highfield, called the Knee High Club. They are due to open for a second session on Thursdays between 1.30 and 2.45 p.m. and will be based on chatter, helping to develop language through stories, songs, rhyme time etc. Places are strictly limited. Families in Focus also run parenting courses and are active in Dacorum, Watford and Three Rivers, Hertsmere, and St. Albans. If anyone knows of any parent interested in any courses in these areas, Jane would be happy to pass information on.

#### 9. Vote of Thanks

Cllr. Carol Green thanked Jane for her very interesting talk and explained that she had been a volunteer prison visitor for 20 years and realised how difficult prison was for the whole family. The child may not always know where dad is or may be on the receiving end of some negative remarks from others who did, mum may be struggling as a single parent and neighbours could sometimes be challenging as they inevitably knew where dad was!!!

She also thanked the volunteers for making Home–Start what it is.

#### 10. Chairman’s Closing Remarks

The chairman’s closing remarks are reproduced below: –

“This year has been a challenging year for Home–Start Dacorum with fears of funding shortfalls that would have resulted in the inevitable reduction of staffing and services to families. Thankfully this was averted through the hard work of Lara and her team and fortunately we managed to secure funding finishing the year with a slight surplus.

With the ending of the lottery fund the coming year provides even greater financial challenges and is a time for prudence and for us to work hard in identifying additional funding opportunities if we are to secure our service level to families in Dacorum. There are encouraging signs but we have a challenging year ahead.

We have managed to secure our Herts funding and will be supporting families at the Children’s Centre in Leverstock Green. Under the leadership of our director Ginny we have established a volunteer fundraising team who are planning a number of exciting fundraising events and ask you to support them in whatever way you can; one way is come to Riverside on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December and make a donation to Home–Start Dacorum for them to wrap your Christmas presents.

We have some new faces in the office. Our new director Vedyamala has provided invaluable support on our finances and we are delighted to now have the support of Cherry Leroy our Home-Start consultant. With new arrivals there are inevitably departures and sadly Georgina Tregoning resigned her position as director due to family commitments. We are indebted to her for her help on the finances with Vedy.

As the new chair it has been my privilege to work with Home-Start Dacorum. We have exceptional volunteers supported by exceptional staff that translates into the delivery of service excellence to families in Dacorum. This is demonstrated when I receive personal letters from families praising our work and it was my pleasure to see first hand the great work of Lara's team when I visited Family Group.

Our volunteers and staff always go the extra yard not only in their support of families but also of each other. This is exemplified by a wonderful evening I enjoyed at the Independence Day BBQ for all involved in Home-Start that was wholly organised by our volunteers; Lyn and Pete Moore in their home.

Our achievements have been formally recognised when our successful Investors In People review came with the recommendation to apply for Ambassador Status. Additionally we have received a number of other awards recognising our achievements all of which serve to remind us of the privilege we all have of making THE differences in the lives of families in Dacorum

I would like to thank all the directors, Lara, Roberta, Diane, Debbie and Cath for their hard work, Heather Allen for her advice and counsel to the chair. But the biggest thank you must go to our volunteers who make Home-Start Dacorum what it is today by positively impacting the lives of not only the families they support but also of us all.

Finally thanks to you; for your attention; taking the time to join us at our AGM; and in anticipation of your continued future support"

## 11. Long Service Awards

5 years - Alice Parker  
Liz Bellamy  
Tracy Holden  
Caroline Freer  
Erica Godman  
Tracy Nicholls

Unfortunately Tracy Holden, Caroline and Erica were unable to attend the meeting.

10 years - Madeleine Harris

15 years - Pete Moore

20 years - Lyn Moore

Lara Parker reported that between them Lyn and Pete, along with Tracy Nicholls had as a family 40 years of service volunteering for Home-Start Dacorum. They were presented with a voucher for a family portrait.

Grace Duckworth was presented with flowers and chocolates as she is retiring as a volunteer after being with the scheme for over 12 years. She has supported many families and helped with fundraising during this time.

Before Adrian officially declared the meeting closed and thanked everyone for coming, Maureen Flint wanted to thank Home-Start Dacorum and stated that we were the icing on the cake for Gadebridge Community Centre and that they have really appreciated having us there for our Family Group on a Tuesday morning.

Signed by: .....  
Helen Mutio, Acting Chairman

Date: .....