

Date: 21 September 2017
Meeting: Norfolk Deaf Association APM
Notetaker: Belinda Sewell

Please note this record is not verbatim

Tony Innes: Good evening and thanks for coming.

Before I go further I would draw to your attention Belinda who is the taker of electronic notes.

Apologies

- Richard Jewson our patron isn't able to attend.
- The Bishop of Norwich
- Clive Lewis, MP
- Chief Executives of NNUH and James Paget Hospital
- Ian Mawson, our auditor
- Judy Leggett, Trustee
- Norman Lamb, MP

There are many others (27 in total) but I will not read them all.

Governance

In accordance with our governing document the Trustees (who are the only members with voting rights) have held their AGM on the 20th July 2017 at which election/re-election of Trustees was carried out, as well as the approval of annual accounts and the re-appointment of auditors.

However, in the spirit of openness and accountability I will take a few minutes to inform those present of the decisions reached.

1) Trustees' election – as per provisions with our governing document 2 trustees had to stand down but were eligible for re-election for a further 3-years term. Those were John Hirst and Robert Chalmers. Both have decided to put their names for re-election and have been duly elected by the board. Also, Peter Prinsley has been nominated to join the board of directors/trustees and has been unanimously elected to the board.

2) The following Trustees have been elected as officers of the NDA:

Tony Innes – Chairman (Peter Prinsley taking over from the 21st September)
Cym Cant – Vice-Chair
Christopher Doggett - Treasurer

We are looking to appoint additional trustees and would like someone with knowledge of law, P.R. and hearing loss and we find people that are on the board have insight into hearing loss and anyone interested please let us know. We have some first class volunteers and if you feel you could contribute to the board you are very welcome so please speak to staff and we would welcome you to the board.

At the AGM we also scrutinised and the adopted the annual accounts, which are independently examined by M+A LLP. A full set of accounts are available from the office and there is an insert in the Annual Review which you all have.

At this point I will invite Chris Doggett to present the accounts.

Accounts

Chris: Good evening and I'm Chris Doggett, the Treasurer and here to provide an overview of the association's financial health for this year.

Tony said there is information in the full set of accounts which is available and will be filed shortly with our regulatory bodies.

Thank you to Tracey for her hard work in keeping the books in order with gift aid and records. Thanks to Ian Mawson, our independent examiner, who can't attend tonight.

The financial summary: delighted to report we have a surplus of £15 474 and you see the comparisons to 2015 and 2016 accounts on the slide, which demonstrates that we have been in surplus in the last 3 financial years. Income is higher, as well as an overall increase in our expenditure as we invested in staff provision and IT computer systems during the 2016/17 financial year. It's good to see this trend and on this slide you can see our total incoming funds of £233,000 in more detail.

Funds are made up of our assets to £7K and our investment portfolio and cash balance as on screen.

Under charity accounting rules funds are divided into restricted, given to us for a set purpose and unrestricted funds which are equivalent to 8.5 months of expenditure. See slide.

Income: This chart shows the key sources we received our income from - 19% from the big lottery fund, as the last payment of our 3 years grant, £36K from CCG and £19 from the NNUH for running their clinics on our premises instead of visiting the hospital. The balance includes income from grants from trusts, from legacies, Friends of NDA and fundraising events.

We spend £220K last year mainly on staff, which represents 55% of our cost with premises and associated costs about 16%. Our depreciation was quite high, but it resulted from us 'writing off' the new IT system as it is software rather than hardware based.

In conclusion I'm very pleased with our financial progress and would thank those here who helped raised funds. Going forward we will need to find ways to raise funds and enhance our service delivery. Thanks for listening.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have? I'm around at the end of the meeting if you want to speak to me.

Tony Innes: thank you Chris and going back to what we did at our AGM, the board recommended the re-appointment of our independent examiners and this was passed. Thank you to M + A partners, the office staff and treasurer for their input to the annual accounts.

Thank you to all the trustees for their hard work and from my perspective very amiable, supportive people making my life easier and thank you for their commitment to Norfolk Deaf Association.

Chairman's Reflection

This year has been interesting and eventful for the Norfolk Deaf Association and for myself. Most of you will know that we have been supported by the BLF for the last 3 years, and this funding enabled the delivery and improvement of our Hearing Support Service, as well as the replacement of the minibus, and you all know how important this is to the Norfolk Deaf Association.

We applied for more lottery funding but were pipped to the post by other charities in a competitive market place. Our bid was strong and commended and we got a lot of positive feedback.

So, disappointed but undaunted, the process begins again and our Chief Executive is working on applying to the fund again. There is still a bit of work to be done before submitting it but fingers crossed.

We were very grateful for the BLF and the NHS, and all the many people that supported us, and thank you to you for your support. Applying for funds is a full time job and our office team do this so well.

We look for new ways to raise funds and some of our staff and friends did a sponsored parachute jump, but not me. The weather was bad but they eventually got airborne and it was a great and emotional experience and my thanks to all who raised money.

This next event isn't in the financial year we are discussing here, but I can't go without thanking Michael Stewart for the Eaton Golf Day. I brought people from out of county so thank you for organising that.

Applause

Tony Innes: I began saying this year was memorable for me. I worked at NNUH since 1981 and our two boys left home and I retired in 2009 and it suited us well but more recently my wife and I have been drawn to Suffolk so we sold our house in Norwich and moved to Snape in Suffolk.

My memories of working life in Norwich are very happy and my 8 years with Norfolk Deaf Association were extremely fulfilling. The Norfolk Deaf Association has gone from strength to strength due to the expertise of Aliona and the supportive band of trustees, office staff and volunteers who make it possible.

I came to realise, and others may have too, that the Norfolk Deaf Association would benefit from a new Chairman, with new ideas. I got a great deal of pleasure from seeing the Norfolk Deaf Association flourishing but we now need new ideas. I gave this much thought and I'm delighted to say that Peter Prinsley has said he would become chair.

He has been an E.N.T. consultant in Norfolk for 21 years. Trained in Yorkshire and London with many great otologists over the whole of his career. He also works for the Royal College of Surgeons and has a long interest in surgical training. He enrolled as a mature MD student to study genetics of cholesteatoma under supervision. Peter is married to Marion who is an educational psychologist and has 3 children and 3 spaniels, all grown up, which I would question as spaniels never grow up, but the children are doing extremely well.

Apparently, poor soul, he is happiest on his tandem.

I think that is all you need to know for now but Peter should say more another day. So thank you for your interest in the NDA and I hope you will continue to support what I think is an extraordinary organisation. I'm delighted to take a back seat and leave the charity in Peter Prinsley's hands.

Applause.

Peter Prinsley

Peter Prinsley: Hello and I'm Peter Prinsley and I'm very pleased to be here and will do my best to do even as half as well as Tony Innes.

The speaker is James Rowe from Huntingdon and a big cheese in the R.N.I.D that is now called *Action on Hearing Loss (AoHL)*.

I wonder if we might change the name of our organisation? They changed their name 7 years ago and worked out they mostly helped people with hearing loss like us so we may think of a new name for our organisation.

James is one of 5 of executive directors and they look after residential homes and assist those with hearing issues, and he travels a lot, and is president of the local theatre, and we look forward to your talk.

Thank you for coming to Norwich this evening

Bio:

James Rowe joined Action on Hearing Loss in September 2015 having spent the majority of his career working with people who use Assistive Technology. Starting his career in the public sector, James worked as a Speech and Language Therapist, supporting people with complex acquired communication disabilities. Often selecting technology to augment absent or impaired speech, James has been a passionate advocate for Assistive Technology his whole career. More recently, James has held senior leadership positions in commercial organisations in the broader Assistive Technology industry.

The Commercial Services Directorate at Action on Hearing Loss operates three distinct business units. In the products business the team sells more than 750 products all designed to improve the lives of those living with hearing loss. In the communication support business a team coordinates more than 20,000 assignments each year connecting deaf people with sign language interpreters and other communication support professionals. In the professional solutions business we provide training consultancy hearing loop and work based assessment support to employers of all sizes.

James has a 1st class degree in speech and language therapy and an MBA from Warwick business School. He lives in Huntingdon with his wife Dana and plays squash and poker (reasonably competitively) and is passionate about the theatre and is also chair of the Commemoration Hall, Huntingdon, the town's only multi-purpose performing arts venue.

Assistive Technology Presentation

“The future of Assistive Technology for Deafness and hearing loss: How the robots really will take over!”

James: I think that might be the first time I've ever been introduced as a “big cheese”!

Thank you to Aliona and Tony, Norfolk Deaf Association, and Peter. In fact, though, the first contact made to me was by John, your local friendly audiologist. So remember to blame John if my talk is bad!

The Norfolk Deaf Association asked me to talk about Assistive Technology and that is what I will do for 20 Minutes. I am one of the Executive Director's at Action on Hearing Loss, and I run the commercial directorate. In this directorate, we do 3 things:

We sell Assistive Technology products – 80K shipped packages last year.

We run an interpreting agency – something like 27k sign language assignments per year, including support at work, access to the GP and even those arrested at 3am and need someone to interpret at the police station. Deaf people are criminals too.

We also provide consultancy services for employers too where amongst other things, we provide lots of deaf awareness training and have our 'louder than words' charter mark, which is an accreditation similar to Investors in People. We generate £6.5M of income – about 15% of the AoHL overall income.

Our income is unrestricted and we can put our money to anything rather than it being earmarked.

I started my career as a speech and language therapist and have always been fascinated by communication. I think it's a miracle that I can generate a thought that comes out of my mouth that your brain receives and understands just like that and you reply. That is a miracle.

I have always worked with Assistive Technology and specialised in augmentative communication and worked with people that could not naturally use their voice again i.e. Parkinson's, motor neurons or a stroke and I found technology for their communication.

Steven Hawking's device is the same sort of technology and I spent 12 years in companies making those devices.

So coming to this was excellent and I now work with people that struggle to hear. Communication out and now communication in.

So the future of Assistive Technology for deafness and hearing loss and how the robots will take over...

I can remember watching Tomorrow's world as a child, and seeing a robot on wheels that was delivering tea on a tray. I always imagined that in the future, it would be those kind of robots that would be supporting us in our daily life, but of course, that hasn't quite happened. What has happened though, are lots of robots that look nothing like the one on Tomorrow's World, that are here today and hard at work for people living with hearing loss now.

We will start with Assistive Technology over the years.

Question for you – how many of you wear a hearing aid as Assistive Technology or cochlea implant? About half of you;

4M people in the UK have a hearing aid at some point and some of you regularly wear them – 2 M

When do you think the first Assistive Technology for hearing loss was invented?

Comment: 1780s?

James: Any earlier than that?

Comment: An ear trumpet

James: There is evidence of humans carving out bones in the 1200s, and then more formally manufactured ear trumpets in the 1700's. Thomas Edison invented the first hearing aid in the early 1900s and when he invented the telephone used carbon as a conductor and would pack it tightly, and learned if you have multiple carbon boxes the sound is amplified. The earliest hearing aids which were large boxes were tightly packed boxes of carbon – usually 4.

You may not have seen these but some of you may have relatives that used vacuum hearing aids in the 1920-40s. Someone thought it easier to amplify the sound through vacuum glass which regularly smashed and were expensive. This was the first 2 piece hearing aid and one was in the ear and the other in the pocket.

Then the most recognisable and analogue hearing aid. Remember? Yes. They have come a long way.

Comment: I was teaching and the children's voices were high and it was too much noise

James: not perfect and they were around for 35 years.

Technology moved on to digital hearing aids and I'm sure you will be wearing those today, which came about in the 1980s and they haven't changed much since then.

This is probably the most contemporary hearing aids – Oticon Opn and this is a step change on how hearing aids can be used.

Back in the 1980s with more mainstream technology other units were developed.

This is a TV listener and we find people call us about two things. I wondered if David here finds the same thing. People want to do two things better. Listen to TV and one other?

Comment: Telephones

James: Yes telephones and TV people want to hear better.

The doorbell is one of the earliest devices in the 1980s and people would come in and listen to the 10 available and make a choice on which they heard best.

Fire alarms, mobile phones, Rodger pens for people that attend meetings and use Omni directional technology and the hearing aids listen in one direction but the pen listens out for people to speak and the microphones move and can pick up the sound and amplify it in a tailored direction.

This is a bellman receiver and connects to various devices in the home. Like a watch that vibrates when it get a signal like the baby alarm.

So, I should talk about the future and what we can look forward to. Three things; this is made by companies that specialise in hearing technology and one thing that is already changing is the requirements for niche companies to make these products will disappear and we will all be able to use much less expensive from the high street.

Then Artificial Intelligence and you may have heard the context outside hearing loss and I will speak on this.

Internet of Things – the list could go on and on but I think these three areas are the most fun and will happen faster.

Convergence of mainstream technology – who has a smartphone here – more people than those that use a hearing aid. By 2020 it will be 90%

How many times a day do you look at your smart phone?

Comment: Too many

James: 12? 50? If you are younger you look at it 200 times a day. Do you know Tinder, the dating application and it's a modern way to date. You upload a picture and biography, and others do too, and you can read it and see it on your phone. If

you like the person you swipe to the right, and if not you swipe to the left. If you both swipe to the right you are a match and tinder says “Hoorah”

Apparently the most popular place to swipe is where? This is terrifying – on the toilet. They are deciding on the toilet who they may like to date!

There is more computing power in a phone than in the rocket to the moon and applications that can do everything pretty much and will impact the future for those with a hearing loss.

This one will have a huge impact. The Federal Government in the USA removed a barrier to adopting hearing aid technology. In that country you had to see a practitioner before November to buy a hearing aid and they removed that barrier. That means that lots of mainstream companies are designing hearing aids that are like ear buds, like you use to listen to music.

Bose, the high end audio manufacturer, are developing high end hearing aids and I think we will see a big change on design, manufacture and sale, and in the future may be available from Dixons.

I will say more later.

This bit of technology is fantastic and is a real convergence of mainstream and Assistive Technology. This person is wearing “loop buds”. The manufacturer put a T-coil inside like your hearing aid and picks up the sound from the loop.

When I arrived today my videos would not play so I have to do this instead so bear with me.

I should be able to drag this over here. Right you will see 3 things.

You will listen to the presentation in this room without the sound through the hearing loop and will be familiar.

Then you will hear it through the loop buds and it isn't through a hearing aid but normal adapted headphones.

Then you see the magic that happens when those phones listen through the loop.

I don't have a hearing loss but my experience in a conference room is like that and those with T-coils have the advantage.

This is with it turned on.

So much clearer and the distorted noise goes and you pick up the sound through the ear buds.

This is where it gets clever; and the smartphone is connected to the loop buds and as if by magic what is happening is the phone is simultaneously transcribing and it's live subtitling the speaker.

If I learned anything, sub titles is a big bone of contention for those that need them. We finished a campaign to try to ensure any video on demand needed to be subtitled and is now in legislation.

In theory, if you had a hearing loop in your home, you could live subtitle anything from the TV, a conversation with the family, take it to the cinema and meetings and your subtitles would be on demand on your phone anywhere.

That convergence of mainstream technology and technology in the T-coil we will see more of.

Question How long does it stay on the phone?

James: Your choice on the application – it can just disappear or recorded to revisit and we would not want to replace Belinda but this is the technology that will replace the lovely Belinda!

We will sell this technology next month and it's available now essentially.

Comment: Can we get one

Comment: Text Hear

James: By Gmark and it has about 80% accuracy. This is OttoJoy and their application through a hearing loop and their tag is "If Ears Could Smile".

Their application has 99% accuracy and some of what you see happen here is clever context algorithm and it reads what it types and works out if it is right in context in real time

Comment: Is it server based and need good Wi-Fi?

James: Good question and the accuracy can drop and prefers 4G and a connection. But it will work offline

The manufacturer is independent, based in California and started off as a hearing loop installer which only existed in the USA in 2012 and then the law changed in New Jersey, who had to talk about the benefits of a T-Coil with patients which then spread through the county and 17 States state that practitioners must speak about hearing loops.

These guys loop music festivals. They employ only about 10 people but they are passionate.

Aliona: Are you on commission?

James: Not but I should ask!

If I press this button, like magic, and let's talk about Artificial Intelligence now.

Lots of you will have heard about Artificial Intelligence and how many of you use it in daily life? No? How are you using it?

Comment: I assume it must be there and there are cookies on the smartphone.

James: Predictive text is Artificial Intelligence and I use the keyboard from Google and so G-Board on an android phone and if I type a word it doesn't recognise I can show how I like to type and then it predicts for me and the more I use it, the more it learns and has Artificial Intelligence to know what I want to say. Scary but brilliant.

If I forget a word I can type the start of the sentence and Google tells me

Google Maps – used Artificial Intelligence to know the best route based on the number of times you took that journey and surrounding traffic and it learn to improve the information provided.

Lots of ways that business uses Artificial Intelligence without you knowing even.

I love this and Sign Language Interpreting is a real challenge and often the environment is impractical for an interpreter and even if you need one there isn't one available i.e. Cumbria.

If you live in London it's easier. One trend is to move Sign Language Interpreting online and there is a camera and you watch the interpreter. So I can go to Barclays and have the mortgage conversation with an interpreter online.

That is impractical too for say a train station and I won't dial up a video remote interpreter and just struggle to get the information I need at the station.

KinTrans are starting to use this and sign back the spoken word.

I will show you.

When travelling it's hard to find someone to communicate with for help. This is called KinTrans.

James: You can watch it all on YouTube. It is using Artificial Intelligence to appropriate signs. Everyone signs differently and this system can watch repeatedly to improve and 1000s of people sign into the box and so it improves.

Comment: How does it deal with regional dialect?

James: You can create little pockets and tell it where it is so it is trained. For British English the BBC has the biggest bank of signs and the videos are used to teach the system BSL. In the UK there are as many regional dialects as accents.

Comment: And we have four systems in Norfolk

James: Why make it easy!

Internet of Things

This is an internet connection into a physical device. For a modern kitchen example look at the Samsung Smart Fridge. Whilst shopping on your smartphone you can turn the fridge lights on and check if you have yoghurt left or need to buy some.

I can ask my Samsung phone questions and I can say in my kitchen for the application to put celery on my shopping list and tell the fridge to print out my shopping list. I like that idea.

Anything physical can be connected to the home network and could help those with a hearing loss.

The Opti hearing aids have Wi-Fi connectivity. Anyone wearing them

Comment: Too expensive.

James: Yes and the fridge is £4K and my wife said no and look inside the fridge yourself!

So the hearing aids connect to the home network and anything else like the doorbell and you are able to connect the doorbell to the network and then your hearing aid so the sound comes straight to the hearing aid like a hearing loop.

Anyone got Philips lightbulbs that are connected the home network and you can change the colours and if you want a romantic hue you can choose red one and if you are having a nice bath you can dim the lights to green.

You can use IFT and teach the lights if the doorbell rings then to flash on and off. There are lots of ways the Internet of Things will really improve home life for those with hearing loss.

Thank you and are there any questions?

Question: You said about hearing doorbells – do you need the loop on?

James: the magic happens by Wi-Fi and you don't need the loop

Comment: You didn't mention Bluetooth

James: Interesting and currently it connects calls to your car and is a "near field" solution and the two devices have to be close. With Wi-Fi I could be in Spain and know the doorbell at home was rung. Or I could turn the lights on at night to look as if I was at home.

Bluetooth is used in some applications but there is a shift to Wi-Fi.

I think John said that technology goes to the NHS about 4-5 years after launch – 2021?

Comment: My son bought some expensive headphones with Bluetooth

James: Fantastic so it is wireless sound and is great for Bluetooth as the two devices are close

Comment: It isn't sold for those with hearing loss but those for say cyclists.

James: We are about to sell Cue bugs that allows you to balance the sound outside the phone and, if I am running, I can have some background noise. In a noisy environment like a pub IqBuds can turn up speech but no environmental sound. Great solution and they are Bluetooth too.

Thank you

Applause

Chief Executive Presentation

Aliona: Thank you James and please put my slides back...you get my management style now don't you?!

Excellent and before you go there is a little present to say thank you and de-stress you later.

Two interesting things happened today – I discovered James was a speech and language therapist, so was I many moons ago and we both worked with neurological patients.

Then I had the vision of Mr Innes becoming a foreigner to Norfolk. More on the topic of 'foreigners' later though.

If you were here at our last years' APM you may remember that I described the year as 'interesting'. Tony, in his reflection, used the word "interesting" too and whilst the year we are discussing tonight has also been interesting, for very different reasons though, and challenging, we actually did very well. We secured the funds we needed, delivered good quality services and introduced new systems and activities.

Let's see what we actually achieved in more details.

Before I do that, I want to share with you some feedback that I received recently from a service user, who wrote a longish letter to me but the last comment was:

“NDA is many years old and like good wine, improves with age. Thank you!”

The gentleman is right, the NDA will be 120 years old in 2018.

We had a busy year, comparably still a small team of staff, a dedicated team of about 60 volunteers and eight trustees. I'm grateful to everyone for their hard work, professionalism and contribution to what has been achieved during the year.

If you attended this meeting last year you may remember this slide, where I shared our plans: we wanted to recruit more volunteers, wanted to ensure that we can support patients who have been issued with NHS hearing aids by any provider, wanted to develop a new case management system, and a few other things.

We did very well and achieved all that we planned. So, we can now support any patient from any Norfolk audiology provider.

This of course meant that our workload increased and inevitably, so did the administration of that work. But we are no longer turning people away and what's more, the North Norfolk CCG has supported us with additional funding which enables us to support patients from out of Norfolk who have NHS hearing aids. We are very proud to be able to look after everyone.

To look after all these people we had to change how we managed our service users' records, so we invested into a new case management system. The new system isn't something you can physically touch, it is hosted in the cloud and it has been built by Breakwater IT in line with our requirements. This is a screenshot of one of the pages...that is a made up name for the service users, for demonstration purpose only, so don't worry about me sharing personal data. As you can see we can

capture anything from their address, the type of hearing aid and tubes etc. to when we saw them, where and so on, in other word all the service activity related to a particular service user. That is great as we have to report back to every audiology provider on how we use their supplies and make sure that we don't make errors when using various tubes, domes, etc.

Initially using the new system was taking a bit longer, however we also started collecting more detailed information to help us provide a better support, but as we got used to using it is became easier for the administrators to use the system. The staff have been very patient and I am very grateful to them for that.

Now we are able to analyse the data much quicker, it takes minutes to generate a report rather than days as it did previously. I can go into the right page and generate a report on any period, by location, by services, etc, in other words we can report on the spot.

Breakwater IT were also very helpful, we designed the system from scratch, changed our minds frequently but they were patient and very professional with their advice and the work itself.

Now, how did we do in looking after people?

For the hearing support service, which has seen the biggest increase in numbers of people supported ever, I have created a demonstration of figures for two financial years. Blue represents the 2015/16 financial year and green is this year in question

Last year we supported 8,489 service users compared to the previous year of 5058.

New referrals – year before 1,633 and last year 2,271.

Home visits – this year 1,141, year before 692.

Community based clinics across Norfolk we reached 1709 in 15/16 and this year 2499, and the mobile clinic, where half of our service users are seen at 28 locations supported 4,405 last year and 2,614 in the year before.

Quite an increase in the number of people helped, but without substantial increase in staffing or funding. It was achieved with the resources we had but we made improvements on how we did it.

So that is our hearing support service.

More figures: You may know there has been a change in provision of batteries by the NNUH, whereby the patients in the past could collect batteries from their GP practices. However with so many additional audiology providers, the NNUH had no option but change their policy. The new policy makes the provision that patients who have NNUH dispensed hearing aids can receive their batteries from the NNUH or Norfolk Deaf Association only. As a result we distributed 42,518 pack of batteries, almost 100% increase from the previous year.

Good move as when people get their batteries from us, we can also assist them with the maintenance of their hearing aids.

In terms of support hours delivered by the service it amounted to about 9,000 without staff hours – just volunteers.

The Assistive Listening Technology Clinic has seen about 179 service users and we can now offer the service from Cromer Hospital. Thank you to John Fitzgerald, Head of Audiology at NNUH, for enabling that. David has written letters to GP practices and employers informing them of the expansion of our ALT clinics provision.

We do have group support for those with hearing aids for the first time and 59 people benefitted from that.

55 active members for the BSL practice group and 25 learners completed the BSL introductory level.

Befriending kept us busy with 30 cases of which 10 were BSL users. 14 new referrals were received during the year and we closed 6 cases.

I don't think new referrals will go down and currently we are exploring telephone support and skype befriending.

Tinnitus support group – an average about 20-25 people attend each group meeting and we had 11 meetings. We delivered a mixed bag lectures, therapy sessional and talks highlighting the latest research and techniques on managing tinnitus.

Hard of hearing group – a busy and vibrant group, with outings and talks during this year.

Hearing loss awareness training - we gave admin resource to ensure that we market and sell the course regularly and it p dividends, as we trained 155 people from various organisations. This is a good progress but there is always room for improvement.

Friends of Norfolk Deaf Association isn't a service, but we cherish it, as we want people to associate with what we do and support us. Currently we have 212 members who enjoyed a trip to the theatre, a lecture as well as helped us raise much needed funds.

We can't deliver all this work without our volunteers so my big thank you goes to every one of them.

During the 2016/17 we had 40 volunteers working in the hearing support service and 25 in befriending, we recruited 11 additional volunteers and sadly had to say good bye to 2 due to their ill health. In terms of retention this is very good and the team is doing well from that perspective

When you train volunteers for hearing support we talk about maintaining hearing aids but it does not take long for the volunteers to realise that the interaction, listening and encouraging the service users is as important, if not more, that undertaking the maintenance work. We had two volunteers reflecting on the importance of interaction by saying:

“I suppose it was the interaction with the service users I had not thought about when I first started as a volunteer at the NDA. I thought it would just be popping round to someone's house, servicing their hearing aids and that would be that, but it's a lot more.”

“We had talked about our interaction with our service users during the 3 day training sessions, but it's when you are with your first client that you realise how important this interaction can be.”

Every year we try to remember how long our volunteers have been with us and their achievements. 20 years with Norfolk Deaf Association – any staff or trustee who has been here for 20 years? No, but we have volunteers that have been, and those are Diane and Mary. Neither Diane nor Mary were able to join us tonight but we will make sure that we see them soon to pass on our recognition.

Some volunteers achieved 5 years of service - Liz and Sylvia, who is here tonight and we have something for you to say thank you from all of us

On an ongoing basis we ask our service users to feedback on the service and support they receive from us and the results are very good. I want to mention to you 3 comments I received, all without any solicitation:

“I am writing today to thank the NDA for the support you give us regularly. I am disabled and it is nice to see a friendly face [our volunteer] and know that my hearing aids are so well looked after in my own home. Your service is excellent and I want you to know how much I appreciate it.”

“After my first meeting, which my GP suggested, I felt I understood tinnitus more and the speaker was very helpful and answered all my questions”. “I feel supported from others in the group and also feel I can support others too with my experiences.”

“I have really enjoyed learning basic BSL, I can't thank Susan enough for her patience, and I highly recommend this course to anyone who wants to learn BSL.”

I have so many letters I could write pages, but I hope that the above feedback give an indication that people think we are doing a good job, many individuals give us money to deliver the work and to make a positive difference to people who have hearing loss.

I would like to thank our various funders, corporate supporters, charitable trusts, the CCGs, the big lottery and many, many individuals. Also the NNUH who continue working very closely with us, run their clinics from our premises and we provided support to 1,300 of NNUH patients. Thank you very much everyone.

What next?

We are doing well but there is always room for improvement. The numbers of service users continues to go up, in September we already have 10,200 on our

database, so we need to what other improvements we can make to enable us run our services at our current staffing and financial capacity, but still delivered at high quality and reliable.

We are working on the Big Lottery Fund application and other grant making bodies, and like in all the previous years we don't like to keep all our eggs in one basket and therefore need to generate the income from many sources. With this in mind we would like you to attend our Charity Gig on the 28th October as well as the Friends lecture on the 5th October. There are fliers with more details for you to collect before you go.

In addition, as I mentioned earlier the Norfolk Deaf Association would be 120 year old next year and we are planning a series of fundraising events, which is likely to include another charity golf day, a music event and maybe a parachute jump so, when you receive the information please spread the word and encourage your families and friends to support us.

We are looking for additional volunteers and David, our ALT advisor, will be focusing on reaching the corporate world.

Peter Prinsley is talking about changing the Norfolk Deaf Association name, if we decide on it that will keep us busy. Also we have this idea of providing an aural care service or, in lay person's language, a wax removal service.

You can read more about our achievements in the Annual Review, which you would have found on your seats. Do you enjoy reading our publications, such as the NDA News and the Annual Review? Not sure if you realise it, but we produce the editorial in-house and only going to a professional printing company for the graphic design and printing. So, it may not be as professional as one would expect but we are very proud to be able to pull it together with the input of all our staff.

The way it work is that after all staff, myself, Tony and more recently volunteers, have written their article I then do the editorial and sent it to Tony to proof read it. That is where I will return to the comment I made at the beginning regarding 'foreigners'. I am sure that you all have noticed that English is not my first language. Tony and I worked nicely together on producing our publications as he is very good at letting me know when a word I used or sentence I constructed may not be strictly in line with English language and grammar. I am concerned now that Tony may start missing this task, now that he has resigned.

Tony Innes: There is a lot I will miss but your 'peculiar' language I will miss too.

Aliona: So, as a memory about us working together at NDA and carrying out all this creative writing, this is a little something from me to you, and you can think of me when you use it. I would like to thank you for all your support, Tony.

Tony Innes: I have enjoyed almost every minute of it with tremendous affection, and when I retired from the hospital, I said I would not do anything like this but I have enjoyed it and anything I contributed was as part of a team.

While I am here and have your attention I would like to ask a question.

I wanted to say that these figures, of which there are many, are impressive and I was staggered by what we do and the Norfolk Deaf Association does and the annual increase. I should not be surprised, as I attend the meetings, but I'm amazed how it has expanded with minimal staffing, and we are delivering much bigger services than before, you have shown us the numbers. It has taken an effort to set it all up but without too much effort we can now give anyone the data. Having said that; if I go to the Staffordshire Deaf Association, or the Devon Deaf association, for example, and request similar information can they give it to me. Are we one of many or one of a small number?

Aliona: Good question Tony! I have no answer though but James might...

James: We had a new Chair 6 months ago and did a review and there are 172 organisations with a name or hearing loss in their title. You are in the 10% with the sort of data and most do not have that.

Aliona: Thank you and I look forward to working with Peter and there are positive challenges ahead and I'm pretty confident that we will secure the required funds.

A very big thank you to all my staff present tonight and those that aren't here, and thank you to the board of Trustees who are great, and thank you for being who you are, and a very big thank you to our volunteers. Also to our supporters, funders and Friends and thank you to Belinda for coming in at 5 minutes notice.

Peter Prinsley: Thank you Aliona and I'm pleased to be here and hope to be some help. It will be hard to follow my predecessor and I look forward to future events and future development.