

# **Harrogate Neighbours Annual General Meeting**

## **Chairs Report**

Firstly, I want to give a huge thank you to the staff and volunteers for making 2020- 2021 yet another year of successes and achievement. I'm proud of what we have achieved this year and I'm sure my fellow trustees would echo and endorse the achievements that HNHA has made.

The backdrop to all HNHA activity this year, is of course, COVID. We set off the year with low expectations of being able to balance the budget due to rising costs related to the Covid pandemic, the possibility of more voids and the ability to offer services when staff and volunteers were sick due to covid. These are just some of demands and challenges that Covid has meant HNHA has had to deal with. The vaccine roll- out and the restrictions imposed, in an effort to keep everyone safe, has had a huge impact on staff, families and friends. The pandemic has cast a long shadow across not only those involved in HNHA but across the whole care sector. We know locally that similar organisations have not survived or thrived so I would like to give everyone a big pat on the back in making sure HNHA has emerged in a very sound position to face the future.

As I reflect on how HNHA has navigated the Covid environment, what stands out for me is our people. I'm struck by how staff and volunteers have stepped up and continued to deliver despite what is happening around them. In particular, I want to mention Sue and her senior team who have ensured we kept in line with all the Covid requirements and chased down funding to make sure we did not lose out. I think this response by the whole team of staff and volunteers is linked to the values of the organisation and in particular the principles of kindness, empathy, dignity, integrity and trust that are strong in what and how HNHA operates. It is these principles that spell out not what we want to do but how we want to do things. It sets the tone for the everyday business and interaction with clients, tenants and residents and I believe makes HNHA special in what we do.

Pandemic aside, the wheels of HNHA kept turning, especially those that got out the Meals on Wheels to not only people in Harrogate but further afield in Ripon. The 70 volunteers continue to do a sterling job with meals now going out on bank holidays too. During summer last year we received the Queens Award for Voluntary Service and two of our volunteers will be heading to the

Royal garden party to celebrate. The Cuttings, continues to have a waiting list of people wanting a place and Heath Lodge has also maintained its numbers over the last 12 months. We strengthened our governance by setting up the Audit and Risk committee to give a focus on the best use of our resources and keeping an eye on the many and various risks faced by the organisation. In June 2021, our Care services were inspected and I'm pleased to say received a good rating.

We all know the care sector is in a crisis and there are on-going challenges at both a local, regional, and national level, reflecting in the main, lack of funding in the system for years. One major challenge is recruitment of care and hospitality staff and what is now a very competitive market, with all the providers searching in the same pool of people. As a charity our aim is to be sustainable, producing a surplus which we invest back into the organisation. We are always reluctant to increase our fees and prices but with the unprecedented position in recruitment and the cost of living rises have and will make this inevitable.

As we look to the future, we are keen to improve our services provided at Heath Lodge and have been actively looking at options to do this in 2022. As HNHA continues to grow we are keen to strengthen our work in the local community. Quality is always important and in addition to maintaining our Customer Service Excellence we are looking to benchmark our services and ensure we give value for money.

In closing, I want to thank my fellow trustees for their support and input during the year and wish all of us the energy, enthusiasm and resolve to fulfil our ambitions for HNHA as it moves forward to new and exciting undertakings.

E A Jones

April 2022