



**THE MINUTES OF THE AXMINSTER CARE SERVICE  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HELD IN THE BRADSHAW ROOM, AXMINSTER HERITAGE CENTRE  
WEDNESDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2025 AT 2.30PM**

**1. Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed everyone and declared the meeting open.

**2. Apologies for Absence:** None received

**Trustees Present:** Chairman Dr James Vann, Vice Chair Mr Mervyn Symes, Secretary Mrs Jacqueline Symes, Treasurer Mrs Alison Hayward, Drivers Representative Mr Malcolm Laws, Mrs Thelma Collier, Coordinator Mrs Diane Bruce

**Committee Members Present:** Shop Manager Amanda Walker

**3. Approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

The Chairman asked if there were any questions regarding the previous Minutes which had been distributed. With no further comments the Minutes were signed.

**4. Appointment of Officers**

The current Officers acknowledged their agreement to continue for another year, with no other candidates declaring an interest. The Chairman welcomed Dianne as Trustee for the new financial year.

**5. Shop Manager's Report**

Amanda reported that she and Valerie had entered their third year managing the charity shop. Following Christmas, donations inward have been down, and it is believed that this may be due to more people selling their own items on social media platforms due to the cost-of-living crisis. Amanda requested everyone to put the word out for good quality donations and informed us of the low price in rag collection and that we are charged a fee for general waste being removed from the shop. On a brighter note, a large collection of Christmas items has been amassed, and the Christmas Cards have arrived. With the summer holidays now upon us, the children's section remains fully stocked with items to keep the children occupied, along with the craft section for other ideas. The Scarecrow Window proved popular this year, with next year's already in the planning stage. The Defibrillator has been accessed several times, although not actually used, and so proving its worth. Amanda thanked her shop volunteers for their dedication and flexibility.

The Vice Chair thanked Jenny Brown, shop volunteer, for her efforts with the jewellery section.

**6. Driver Coordinator's Report**

Malcolm thanked the Drivers for their continued support. It is much appreciated by all at ACS and clients. This is shown in the donations received, which covers most of the transport costs. This is only possible with the effort put in by our Telephone Team, which has been under some pressure

this year. The number of Drivers has grown from 18 to 20 this year, and we are providing a good service. Some people enquire about volunteer driving, but when they realise what is fully involved, they can sometimes change their minds. Malcolm asked us to continue to look out for potential new Drivers and send them his way.

A Volunteer Driver made an enquiry about hospital car parking permits. Malcolm explained that EDDC provide permits for volunteer drivers for parking at RD&E and that these are valid until December.

The Vice Chair enquired about the amount of money being received via the donation envelopes from transport clients. Malcolm reminded us that a trip to Exeter can cost £25, and sometimes the donation received for the journey may only be very small. However, donations overall often offset most of the mileage expenses. The committee has regular discussion on this topic but feels that no changes should be made at present.

An enquiry was made as to how many journeys were made this year and we were informed that on average 60 journeys were made each month.

Malcolm ended his report by reminding us that we are a very unusual / unique transport service by not charging for our services.

#### **7. Coordinator's Report:**

Dianne reported that we have struggled to maintain telephone volunteers this past year and had turned down some journey requests due to lack of volunteers. Dianne thanked volunteers of the Telephone Team.

The Vice Chair asked Dianne to explain how the transport booking system operated, and we were reminded that clients can phone in at any time to leave a message and that a volunteer will endeavour to return the call as soon as possible. The phone is manned between 9.30am and 10.30am Monday to Friday. Clients are asked if they can physically walk unaided, as Drivers are not trained carers. The Telephone Team try to get across how much the journeys cost to clients when they are on the phone to clients.

A volunteer of the Telephone Team enquired if we should open less days for taking calls when we are short of volunteers to man the phone, and it was agreed that this may need to happen should the shortage continues. It was also acknowledged that volunteers can do an afternoon shift on occasion to maintain some continuity of service.

A Shop Volunteer reported that she has several friends who have used the Transport Service and feels very proud of the service we offer.

Dianne thanked the volunteers of the telephone Team

#### **8. Treasurer's Report:**

Alison reported that the Shop had made a good profit this year, and that the Transport Service had made a small deficit. Interest received shows a large increase this year due to the increase in interest rates and better investments following the introduction of the Flagstone investment platform. Overall, the accounts show a small deficit. However, funds remain very healthy.

An enquiry was made as to the large donation figure for 2024 and the much smaller donation figure for 2025. Alison confirmed that a large donation had been received in the prior year.

An enquiry was made as to whether we ask for donations via will making. The Chairman reminded us that we have been very lucky in receiving large amounts in previous years. The Vice Chair recalled WBW Solicitors had previously made ACS a beneficiary of their 'Make a Will Month' in prior years.

An enquiry was made as to what will happen when the funds run down. The Chairman responded, informing us that the committee will change its thinking and plan accordingly. Regarding the Douglas Hull Dyslexia Fund, our intention is to use up to 10% of the fund per annum and look to carry out promotion to maintain the fund in the future.

An enquiry was made as to whether ACS had approached Scott Rowe and Milford & Dormor Solicitors about 'Make a Will Month'. The Vice Chair reminded us that there were other charities in the town who have benefited from these opportunities who are in more need of funds. We are very lucky in our financial position at present, but may look to do this in the future.

An enquiry was made as to whether the ACS shop uses Ebay to sell items. Amanda confirmed that this is something that she does not currently do as she would need a dedicated volunteer to administer the process, which she currently does not have.

An enquiry was made as to people who have goods to donate but can't get them to the shop premises. This is something that ACS don't currently do. It was noted that a Driver could be assigned to carry out collections, but it would be unfair to have one on standby and then not used. It was suggested that if a client using the transport service had items to donate the Driver could transport these and drop off at the shop.

The Vice Chair informed us that the Recycling Centre has offered to give some of their clothing for the ACS shop. Amanda will visit to go through the stock for suitable items for the shop soon.

#### **9. Closing remarks from the Chairman**

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming to the AGM. We continue to be one of the largest benefactors for projects in and around Axminster. During the last financial year, we supported 32 different projects with in excess of £55K. Within this we have given over £20K from the Douglas Hull Dyslexia Fund and to various local Primary and Secondary schools. This includes funds for extra computers and software; extra teaching time; Dyslexia friendly reading books, and spell checkers. A further £8K was given to support other school projects including support for children to go on school trips, extracurricular school clubs, and various pieces of equipment. Our General fund also supported many local and diverse projects including £5K for the church clock, swimming vouchers for the Flamingo Pool in the school summer holidays; equipment for the Community Shed; room hire for the Waffle House project team; repairs to Pippins building; support for Axminster Job Club; Operation Rudolph deliveries; Pippins Pantry; Equipment for Axe vale Netball Club and Chardstock Youth Club; support for more therapists for ARC, our local counselling service.

Our boundary has expanded following the alteration to the Axminster General Practice boundary after the closure of 2 GP surgeries in Chard. Our remit is to help and support people and projects within the Axminster GP practice area. You do not have to be a patient of the Practice but must live within its boundaries. Our postcodes now include some of Wambrook, Thorncombe, and Yarcombe.

Thanks were made to the Telephone and Transport teams in continuing to provide a comprehensive hospital car service. Thanks were also given to Amanda in continuing to run the charity shop with enthusiasm. Two shop volunteers, Anne Ross and June Loud, were presented with flowers, biscuits, and £25 Complete Meats Vouchers in recognition of their 30 plus years of service.

The Chairman stated that we are always in need of volunteers for the shop, telephone team, and transport team. Just a small number of hours can make a lot of difference and is a very rewarding way of giving something back to our community.

The committee spends a lot of time trying to ensure we support a wide spectrum of the community in as fair way as possible. We are dependent on the community coming forward with requests for support which is not available from other sources

#### 10. Q&A

- An enquiry was made as to how long the charity had been running, and the Chairman informed us that this was in excess of 35 years.
- Reverend Liesa Potter informed those present that in the ACS current financial year the Minster had benefitted from a £25K donation to support the refurbishment of the kitchen facilities and informed of the works taking place including the new toilets. Liesa thanked the committee for the donation, which will be of benefit to all those within the community. An invitation was extended to the committee and everyone present to attend the formal opening of the new kitchen area at the Minster on 28<sup>th</sup> September at 10.30am.

#### ADDENDUM

- Prior to the meeting Trish Warwick of Axe Vale Netball Club conveyed her thanks for the donation received to fund 120 new tracksuit bottoms with logo.
- Following the meeting apologies were received from Jane Rockett.

Signed .....

Dr James Vann  
Chairman

Signed.....

Mrs Jacqueline Symes  
Secretary

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