



Registered charity 1174004

www.malvernwelcomes.org

Minutes for AGM

Date: Tuesday, 1st July 2025

AGM at 7pm

Apologies: Sue Wolfendale; Fiona Carmichael, Sharon Baker, Richard

Present: Karen Argent, Jane Stockley, Ruth Forecast, Richard Beech, John Raine, Elaine Tilly, Alison, Helen, Jessica Pykett, Kate Macdonald, Vivian Fox, Harry, Philip, Bryony, David Kitcat, Laila Kasem

Welcomes and Introductions

Management Team Report (Jane Stockley)

Increase in number of families supported each year – 4 families directly supported through Community Sponsorship Scheme, and 8 other families in the area.

Three families now have British citizenship, supported financially by Malvern Welcomes. This has enabled them to travel overseas to see their extended families. Three family members are now attending university and others are at college, seeking apprenticeships, supported to apply for student finance. Some have successfully achieved drivers' licences.

Home Office Annual review – family members now in higher or further education and on track for professional training.

Worcester University have been supportive and are applying to become a University of Sanctuary. They support with additional English.

An Employment Group has been set up, supporting with CV writing and visiting local employers, identifying and helping to address barriers to employment.

ESOL report – tailor made learning programmes are delivered to families with a lot of 1:1 provision. With thanks to Sharon Baker. Thanks extended to Jan Watts at Eden Centre, who has for many years provided English tuition. This is now coming to an end, and she will be sadly missed. Malvern Welcomes seeking ways to fill this gap. Conversation Café has been successful but numbers diminishing as families got busier with education and employment. This was replaced with a monthly social session combined with an advice surgery.

Good contact with Citizens Advice Bureau including referrals, and a contact who shares advice on legal matters.

Ideas Day was attended by 17 members, with talks from City of Sanctuary, and Reset.

Facilitating regular annual events including Summer picnic in July. Third annual trip to Barry Island planned. Volunteers also helped at the Malvern Civic Society community event in Priory Park. Could be a way to engage new volunteers and local employers.

Financial support provided by Malvern Welcomes. Volunteers give their time for free.

- Public transport
- Grants towards uniforms
- Citizenship applications
- Social activities

Management Team also give talks to schools and groups on the wider perspective.

Some challenges around maintaining volunteers who have many other commitments including other volunteer roles. Acknowledged a need to recruit some younger volunteers to maintain.

Finance Report (Ruth Forecast, on behalf of Richard)

Richard extends a warm thanks to donors, members, management team, chair and trustees for all the support, particularly this year.

2024-25 deficit of c£2000 (to March 2025)

Wish to welcome 5th family through Community Sponsorship Scheme, but this was put on hold due to financial considerations – need for personnel, house, is a long-term commitment of concerted support in excess of 2 years for families to become established.

Being involved in supporting a new family is a key part of generating opportunities to apply for grants.

Election of Trustee Board

Current Trustee Board: David Kitcat, John Raine, Laila Kasem, Fiona Carmichael are all willing to stand again.

Trustees welcome new applications to be a trustees. Particularly looking for someone to take on a safeguarding role. Please get in touch if you know anyone interested in this role.

A reminder that Trustees are required to stand down after three years but can stand again.

Trustees were duly reappointed.

Discussion

Community Sponsorship Scheme has been the established route for Malvern Welcomes. Now getting approached through other routes, e.g. Home Office schemes, requests for family reunions.

This approach has been resource-led, but now is more demand-led – requests for help with employment, English lessons. This leads to following needs:

- More volunteers with a good training package, potentially there is scope for student placements. Need for ongoing support and retention of existing volunteers, teamwork and ensuring they feel valued.
- Increased use of CAB
- increased use of conversation café and ESOL
- Use of library for social activities
- A wellbeing lead – for both the families and volunteers
- Invite other Welcome groups to share ideas and practices
- Sustainable workforce for the future
- Working with other groups across Worcestershire, already highly valued
- Responsiveness to unpredictable situations

Question raised of potential shifts in the campaigning role of the organisation, now that MW is more established and has experiences and track record to share more publicly. This could be a working group within MW, given that the commitments and skills may be different. One example is the Lift the Ban cross-party national campaign, which is lobbying against the exclusion of asylum seekers from paid work. MW and family members visited employers to raise awareness and share the impact of this ban on their lives. Some people may want to be involved in education and awareness of legal status of individuals, some people prefer not to be overtly political. They are happy to talk to schools and universities and seek contacts to invite them to do so. Perhaps look again at the tone of the offer letter sent to schools and universities and align with curriculum priorities.