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**KAB Annual Review**

**For the Year ending 31 October 2023**

**Note from Chairman Roy Smith:** I am pleased to report that KAB has had another successful year. We were delighted to employ two VI Interns, part funded by TPT and RNIB. We recruited a new CEO and a Welfare officer and are recruiting an Outreach Team. Our transition to become a CIO, is now back on track. I am excited about the year ahead, that with the expanded staff team, the charity will make an even bigger impact on lives of Visually impaired people in our area.

**Why KAB was formed and is still needed**: KAB, Kingston Upon Thames Association for the Blind, was established back in 1966 and its mission is to empower people living with sight loss to lead independent and fulfilled lives in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. In the Kingston area there are an estimated c.5,000 residents living with some degree of sight loss, and our aim is to ensure we reach out to everyone who needs our support, so no-one is left struggling alone.

KAB receives referrals from the RBK Sight and Hearing team and the Kingston Eye Hospital. During the year 19 new members joined, bringing membership up to 248. All new members were offered ‘Living well with sight-loss’ courses to get useful information on how to adapt to life with little or no sight.

**Achievements in the past year**: Through its wide range of services and activities, KAB has been tackling social challenges such as Isolation, digital exclusion, the cost of living and health inequality. Thanks to the amazing commitment of our volunteers, we were able to deliver a wide range of services and activities for our members. This past year we had 58 volunteers supporting us.

KAB organised 29 social lunches. Our Welfare Officer contacted 147 members to help members apply for benefits and concessions they are entitled to and to get help with the cost of living.  KAB knows how technology can really help its members in all aspects of their lives. Regular sessions are now being held in the Kingston library with the support of the RNIB tech for life team.

Staying active is a big part of staying well and members have enjoyed physical activities like swimming, chair-based exercises, ten-pin bowling, indoor bowls, cycling, as well as regular football sessions on Saturdays for both juniors and adults in partnership with the Fulham football Foundation.

In September KAB commenced a membership survey asking everyone for their feedback on activities and services and what they would like KAB to offer in the future. As a result, KAB will be looking at reinstating the Macular group, and starting a book club and guided walks in the community and in local parks.

KAB has also been working to influence decision makers and raise awareness of the issues faced by residents living with sight loss. KAB is part of the RBK Disability Network and the Health and Wellbeing Forum and have been consulted on the design of new cycle routes, and members have been highlighting hazards around New Malden for pedestrians.

**Finances:** In the year ending 31 October 2023, there was a deficit of £33k, which resulted in reserves reducing to £153k.

**Comparing year ending 31 October 23 and year ending 31 October 22, the figures were:**

Total income for 22/23 was £94k, compared to £114k in 21/22. (*But the 22/23 income is net of a provision*

*for £8k to refund a donation which was received in 21/22 from a donor who we discovered was unwell when the donation was made. So, in effect, the income was £102k in 22/23 and £106k in 21/22.)* The final Vision Foundation, V.F, £30k unrestricted ‘Transitional’ grant was received in 21/22, but in 22/23 there was an increase in other grants of £29k which funded specific activities.

Total expenditure for 22/23 was £133k versus £102k in previous year. The growth was mainly due to recruiting two VI interns to give them experience and skills, and to the higher costs of services and activities, less lower equipment costs and legal costs as the CIO was on hold in 22/23.

In 21/22 there was an overall deficit of £4k, which increased to £33k in 22/23. The deficit in 22/23, included a gain in restricted funding of £9k, due to grants which must be spent on specific activities/ costs being received in advance of being spent, and a deficit of £42k for unrestricted funds which can be spent on whatever the charity needs them to be spent on. The increase in the unrestricted deficit was due to the final VF £30k Transitional grant being received in 21/22.

**Looking ahead:**

KAB faces the challenge of increasing its reach to a wider range of ages and minority groups. We were successful in obtaining funding from the City Bridge Trust and have commenced recruitment of an Outreach team to enable us to significantly extend our reach.

And the second challenge is to make KAB robust and effective for the future, through strengthening the Trustee board, replacing, and upgrading systems like the database and improving communications through the web, social media, written and audio means. KAB has recruited three new Trustees and are seeking funding to improve our infrastructure.

And the third challenge KAB faces is in terms of securing sufficient funding, especially for its core costs. As KAB receives no regular funding from government but relies on funding from grants, donors, and legacies. So, we are very grateful to all our funders such as RBK, Trust for London, Sport England and KNA, to the existing donors who give one off and regular donations to support the charity and to volunteers who donate their time which reduces the cost of running the charity and enables KAB to continue to make a significant difference to the lives of Visually Impaired people in our community.