OXTALK AUTUMN MEETING – 24 OCTOBER 2013

CHAIR’S REPORT TO THE AGM

Good evening and welcome to you all. Is it just me or has this been a ‘short’ year as it does not seem that long ago since we last met in this room??!!!

This last year has on balance been a steady year with a few highs and no challenging lows. There have been the usual new referrals to OXTALK, in the main from the County Council’s Visual Impairment Team. The VI Team have one of the Sound Orbs/USB players which they demonstrate to their clients, so by the time the potential new listener is referred to OXTALK they have had time to consider whether this is a service they wish to receive, so now very few people say ‘no’ when one of OXTALK’s trainers visits them. Thank you to the small band of trainers who make these home visits.

As happens each year some listeners have stopped receiving the weekly talking news for various reasons – mainly age related rather than ‘no longer interested’.

One of the highs during the year was a visit to the Ashmolean Museum for 12 listeners and 3 volunteers who had a touch tour, led by Jude Bartlett following on from last year’s Autumn Meeting when Jude was the Guest Speaker. 2 of the listeners who were members of the group are here this evening and they have said how much they enjoyed the visit to the Egyptian section, handling artefacts made some 3000 years or more ago and the tea and cakes provided afterwards!!! Amongst the audience tonight are the volunteer drivers who drove some of the listeners to and from the Ashmolean, once again a big ‘thank you’ to you. I have been asked by the some of the listeners to organise another visit, so I will be in touch with the listeners and OXTALK’s volunteers in the near future.

The Oxford Playhouse’s touch tours and audio-described performances are advertised by Anne Ambler during her editing week and from time to time I see some of our listeners at them.

Anne also ‘spreads the word’ by giving talks to local groups about OXTALK. Thank you Anne. If you know of a group just waiting to hear about OXTALK please put them in touch with Anne.

At the beginning of this month we had a stall at the UK Older People’s Day held in the Town Hall which helped to bring OXTALK to people’s attention. Thank you to those volunteers who attended on the day.

It is the time of year when I ask people to let me know their intentions for next year. We will be saying ‘good-bye and thank you’ to 3 Technical Officers; 1 Committee Member and 4 Readers/RRs. There is a new Technical Officer being trained and there have been new Readers joining during the year so there will be complete Reading Teams for next year as well as Reserve Readers. Part way through the year one of the Copying teams lost 2 of its members but because Copying now only needs 2 people to work each session I was able to fill the vacancy from within the current Teams. The rotas for 2014 will be sent out during November following the meeting with Mandy and Margaret C. Thank you. We are always pleased to hear from new volunteers.

As I reach the end of this year’s report I wish to express my thanks on behalf of OXTALK to Neil Stockton, Chair of Radio Cherwell, for agreeing to the continuing use of the recording studio on a Tuesday night, the main room on a Wednesday evening for the coping session and for joining us tonight. Thank you Neil, as usual Radio Cherwell’s support is very much appreciated.

Finally my thanks to Lesley for organising this evening’s meeting and for being the excellent Secretary she is through-out the year. To Geoff for making sure OXTALK remains in balance and to both Anne and Geoff for the time they spend applying for funds – if you go into ASDA at Wheatly you will see Anne smiling at you as she received a cheque on behalf of OXTALK! My thanks to the OXTALK Committee Members and to you for attending this meeting this evening.

Thank you.

Margaret A Simpson – CHAIR

22 October 2013.