



**The Brooklands Centre
Annual Report
2023**

**For the
Board of Trustees Annual General Meeting
Date: Thursday 12th October 2023 at 7.00pm
Venue: The Brooklands Centre Downstairs Room**

Current Trustees and Officers

Chairman - Sandy Payne

Vice-Chairman - Irene Henderson

Treasurer - Roger Hall

Minutes Secretary - Helen Taylor

Trustee - Catherine Hall

Trustee - Brian Sidebottom

Trustee - John Gordon

Trustee - David Dean

Trustee - David Hulance



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

Company registered in England No. 6376240 Registered Charity No: 1122577
Registered Office: The Brooklands Centre, Ousebank Street, Newport Pagnell, Bucks MK16 8AN

Brooklands Volunteers – Annual report for 2023 AGM

Volunteers are the life blood without whom Brooklands would not be the warm and welcoming place it is.

This year we have maintained our impressive number of 70 volunteers. While some long-standing volunteers retired after many years of devoted service, a few left us for personal reasons. We thank them all for their service.

We are fortunate that our Newport community values and supports the Centre. So I have had the pleasure of introducing and welcoming a number of new volunteers. They have fitted in well and are helping to maintain the high standard of care we aspire to provide.

Quite apart from their day-to-day work, our volunteers often go way beyond the call of duty, becoming involved in all sorts of extra-curricular activities. An outstanding example was creating the highly successful Ben Hur float - and processing with it - which won two prizes at the Newport Carnival. Activities like this are not only fun but also publicise Brooklands and raise funds that help support the services we provide.

Finally, I extend a big "thank you" to all our wonderful volunteers and trustees (who are also volunteers) for making good on our promise to offer "Food, Fun and Friendship" to the older residents of Newport Pagnell.

Irene Henderson, Brooklands Trustee with responsibility for Volunteers.

Brooklands Marketing – Annual report for 2023 AGM

Throughout the year, there have been a number of opportunities to promote the Centre and its activities, including:

- Karen Russell's retirement
- Pre-loved Fashion Shows (2022 and 2023)
- Beach day
- Hallowe'en activities
- Christmas lights switch-on
- Christmas party
- Christmas tree display (parish church)
- Jumble sale
- Volunteers' party
- Coronation celebrations
- Joan Pointer's 100th birthday
- Mike and Brenda Jenner's diamond wedding
- Janet and Richard Knight's retirement
- Heather Allan's wedding
- Vintage Day (cream teas, etc)
- Newport Pagnell Carnival
- Newport Pagnell Carnival awards
- Walking Group (regular)
- Book Club (regular)
- Saturday Lunch Club
- Carers' Group

Video. We created a short and colourful 'video' about Brooklands (in general), which we also used in volunteer recruitment.

Volunteer recruitment. We called out for new volunteers as and when necessary, and managed to attract a number of new helpers who have stayed with us.

Website. The biggest challenge of the year was rebuilding the website at short notice after the platform on which the old website was built announced that it was discontinuing the service. Although we managed to get a new site up and running quickly, it's not complete and more work needs to be done to complete the content. The new site is fresher, more colourful and includes lots of smiling faces!

Facebook. We've continued to use Facebook as one of the channels to get our news, updates and messages out to the local community. Newport Pagnell is fortunate to have some strong and well-subscribed groups, onto which our posts can be shared.

Photos. Our archive of photos has been maintained and updated throughout the year.

David Dean, Brooklands Trustee with responsibility for Marketing.

Brooklands Transport - Annual report for 2023 AGM

Vehicles

The Brooklands Centre operates two wheelchair-accessible minibuses. The larger of the two, a Citroen Relay 2.2 diesel affectionately known as "Daisy", was built in 2014, and can carry up to 12 passengers plus the driver. In normal configuration Daisy usually has one of the rear seats removed so that a wheelchair passenger can be carried without having to transfer to a seat. Wheelchair clamps are provided, together with lap and shoulder straps for the passenger, who can be transported in complete safety and comfort. Most passengers can manage to get on and off Daisy using the folding side step, but the tail lift can be used for less mobile passengers if required, as well as for wheelchair passengers.

Daisy's most recent service and MOT were carried out in May. Daisy has a "butterfly" wheelchair lift which should be serviced every 6 months. This service was last carried out in August this year.

"Baby bus" is the smaller of our two minibuses, a Citroen Dispatch 1.6 diesel built in 2018. "Baby" can carry up to 7 passengers plus the driver, though the admittedly uncomfortable rearmost seats and cosy middle front bench seat mean that we usually limit the numbers carried to less than this. A wheelchair passenger can be carried in the rear space by utilising a very neat winch system, which secures the front end of the wheelchair, while rearward clamps and passenger lap and shoulder straps complete the safety configuration.

We had a very expensive repair bill last December, where the entire "Adblu" system on Baby had to be replaced. Adblu is an additive which is automatically injected into the exhaust system to reduce toxic emissions, and the system is a requirement on all new diesel vehicles less than 6 years old. This system had totally failed on Baby bus and was no longer under warranty. Baby's next service and MOT are due soon, and should be carried out before this year's AGM. We are very much hoping for no further nasty surprises!

Vehicle insurance for both Brooklands minibuses is renewable in June each year, and the insurance is currently in place.

People

Brooklands is very fortunate in having a dedicated pool of around 10 drivers who selflessly give of their time to keep our minibuses rolling. A similar number of volunteers provide an essential role in escorting our members on and off the buses. The trustees recognise the importance of these wonderful people, and we would like to express our thanks and gratitude to all of those who have helped to keep the wheels rolling throughout the last year.

Usage

Brooklands minibuses are in regular use by all the daily groups where transport is required - Day clubs, Wednesday Bingo, Thursday exercise group, Friday Carers and the monthly Saturday lunch club. In addition, the Thursday afternoon walking group has started to use both buses so that their walks can take place further afield.

Within Brooklands groups, either or both of our buses may be used to take members on outings. The Thursday exercise group has made several trips out and about, usually to a garden centre or other local place of interest. The gardening club has also requested use of the buses to carry out trips to garden centres, and in one case, to visit the Open University gardens.

As part of the Brooklands engagement with the wider community, the committee has agreed that the minibuses can be used to take members of other groups to activities where the aims and objectives of that group are similar to our own. In June, Daisy took a group of visually impaired members of the Torch Trust to a national meeting in Market Harborough. And the Castlemead Care Home has benefitted from using Daisy to transport some of its wheelchair residents to go shopping in Milton Keynes. When considering any such requests, the committee ensures that Brooklands activities are not impacted and receive total priority. We always provide our own driver, and will never loan out our buses to external groups and organisations "for hire or reward", as this would immediately invalidate our vehicle insurance. However, we do suggest that a donation to the Brooklands Centre would be very much appreciated, and this has always been forthcoming.

John Gordon, Brooklands Trustee with responsibility for transport.

Brooklands Maintenance - Annual report for 2023 AGM

- Kitchen Lights renewed
- Toilet Lights and entrance lobby lights replaced
- Wooden Facia of building stripped and retreated
- Facia board lettering replaced.
- Batteries for Solar panels installed
- All internal doors adjusted and repaired as necessary
- Plastic and armchairs shampooed
- Large settlement crack on staircase repaired
- PAT Testing completed
- Legionnaires checks carried out in the kitchen

Brian Sidebottom, Brooklands Trustee with responsibility for Maintenance.

Brooklands Activities – Annual report for 2023 AGM

Report through the year September 2022 – September 2023

2022

September : On September 8th the Queen passed away Members were very upset. We had a very successful Fashion Show, with wine Prosecco and a lovely buffet. Our wonderful models walked the catwalk in true Brooklands style and Mollie was a hilarious Compère. We raised nearly £1000.

October : Sandra and I arranged a Halloween day for Day Club.

November : We had the Christmas Tree Exhibition at the Church, an unusual Christmas tree, decorated with gold and silver shoes, was of interest to many.

Newport Pagnell Lights switch on, we had a lot of stalls, craft stalls which were full of items sewn, and knitted by our lovely lady members, plus a lot of items from John Lewis, which Ann Dodds (a John Lewis Employee) donated, the donations allowed us to make a very good profit.

December : We had Christmas parties, with delicious Christmas Lunches, then entertained by our very own "Wednesday drama Group" a short Pantomime written by our own Mollie. Professional entertainment in the afternoon with a visit from Santa and the Snowmen.

2023

April : We had a Table top sale which raised funds. We also had a Mad Hatters Tea Party.

May : We celebrated Joan Pointers 100th birthday - such a lovely day, Joan really enjoyed herself but was shattered after a week of celebrations.

Jubilee Celebrations, the hall was decorated as if they were Street Parties.

May 6th was the Kings Coronation, which we celebrated.

May 23rd we had an initial meeting for Newport Pagnell Carnival.

June : Vintage Day, New pots were bought and filled with plants. A film show of Brooklands History was played and Loretta's Art Group held an exhibition

July : Newport Carnival was such a success. - volunteers formed our team dressed as Gladiators, the theme was Hollywood. Our mini bus was decorated by the Art Group as "Ben Hur" An old wheelchair was turned into a Chariot pulled by 2 stupendous horses. Inside the Chariot was a beautiful lady 🧚. We won 1st prize for Walking Group and 3rd prize for interpretation of the theme Hollywood.

In July we held a very successful Jumble Sale, which turned out to be a great Social day as well as a fund raiser.

September : Another very successful Fashion show, after weeks of collecting, ironing and pricing the clothes, our Models walked the red carpet, a fun evening visited by a wolf, gorilla and the Cheeky Girls. Lots of customers buying and trying on clothes. A lovely buffet with wine and Prosecco finished the evening.

Sandy Payne, Brooklands Trustee with responsibility for Activities.

Brooklands Training – Annual report for 2023 AGM

The training program has recently been added to my responsibilities and I'm very keen to ensure all volunteers have as much training as they required to enable them to maintain the very high quality care that the clients have been benefiting from in recent years.

We have recently held a couple of defibrillator courses run by Andy Graves which were highly appreciated. We are also going to be running a fire training exercise in November to ensure as many volunteers are aware what to do in case of fire, although we hope that never happens.

Hopefully in the future we will be running courses on Food and Hygiene, First Aid and Dementia awareness. Although a lot of volunteers are up to date with Food and Hygiene and First Aid, the Trustees believe that it is important to have the best coverage possible amongst the volunteers to enable us to continue with our high standards.

David Hulance, Brooklands Trustee with responsibility for Training.

Brooklands Day Clubs – Annual report for 2023 AGM

Monday Day Club - The Monday Day Club meets from 9.30am - 3pm. It's held in the main room downstairs. There are 27 members on the register with an average of 24 people attending each week. There are 7 volunteers (including 2 new volunteers who have recently joined) as well as 2 drivers and 2 escorts who use both buses to collect members who live within Newport Pagnell.

The purpose of the group is a lunch and social club. Numbers attending have increased. Everyone is very happy. Sadly, several people have passed away over the last year, although several new members have joined. The biggest challenge faced during the last year has been problems with the cookers!

Within the Monday Day Club, there is a Monday Exercise group some of whom stay for lunch afterwards.

Sandra Dorrill, Day Centre Manager.

Monday Exercise Group - The Monday Exercise group meets on a Monday from 10.30 - 1pm in the main area of the ground floor room. The session starts with coffee from 10.30 - 11am, followed by the Exercise class from 11 - 11.45, led by Kamal who is a Rehabilitation and Fitness Instructor, then lunch is available from 12noon - 1pm. There are 35 members on the register with an average attendance of 17, 10 or 12 of whom stay for lunch. There are 2 volunteers.

The purpose of the group is to socialise and take part in low level exercise. The members who attend have remained active and there is good continuity with the instructor. We have lost some members but have gained some new ones. It can be a challenge keeping up numbers given the ages and medical problems of members.

Bill and Sue Clewett

Tuesday Club - The Tuesday Day Club meets from 9.30am - 3pm. It starts upstairs in the meeting room, then for the rest of the day it's held in the main room downstairs. There are 35 members on the register with an average of 30 people attending each week. There are 8 volunteers as well as 2 drivers and 2 escorts who use both buses to collect members who live within Newport Pagnell.

The purpose of the group is social activities and lunch. Activities undertaken include interactive games, and occasionally entertainment, such as singers.

Numbers attending have increased and we have new volunteers. New members have joined the group, but increasingly more members are suffering from memory problems/dementia. We had no cooks for a while, but the problem has now been sorted out.

Sandra Dorrill, Day Centre Manager.

Wednesday Club - The Wednesday Day Club meets from 9.30am - 3pm in the main room downstairs. There are 33 members on the register with an average of 29 people attending each week. There are 10 volunteers as well as 2 drivers and 2 escorts who use both buses to collect members who live within Newport Pagnell.

The purpose of the group is social and lunch club. Activities undertaken include Bingo, Raffles, Quizzes and interactive games. The best thing in the last year has been a 100th birthday party for a lovely lady who attends the group.

The dynamics of the people attending have changed, there are a lot more couples attending, so support is provided for the carer as well as for the member with difficulties. There are no real challenges, but the group is now very diverse with many personalities, but all seem to be relating to each other.

Sandra Dorrill, Day Centre Manager.

Brooklands Pop-in and Tai Chi - Annual report for 2023 AGM

The Pop-in and Tai Chi run on a Tuesday morning from 9am - 12noon. Tai Chi takes place in the main downstairs room, with a beginners class from 9am - 10am of 12 to 13 people, followed by an intermediate class from 10am - 11am of between 9 to 14 people. Following the Tai Chi class members go to the upstairs reception room for tea, coffee and a chat, where they are also joined by members of the Tuesday Day Club. There is an average attendance of 30 - 35 people. Thank you to the 4 volunteers who are devoted and give their best.

Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese exercise involving deep breathing, relaxation and flowing movements led by a qualified instructor. We have welcomed new members to both Tai Chi groups this year and we hope to increase our numbers in the next year. The Pop-in provides friendship and refreshments, tea, coffee and cake.

Irene Henderson, Brooklands Trustee.

Brooklands Bingo and Social Club - Annual report for 2023 AGM

I am very happy to report that the Club is stronger now than for some years. It is a happy Club and the bonds of friendship remain strong within the Group which is not to be overlooked.

There is little to add except that the increased numbers have led to increased refreshment needs and the organisation of this may need to be addressed to share the load but that should not be difficult with the goodwill within the group.

Frank Lewis (on behalf of Norma Howard, Chair).

Brooklands Art Group - Annual report for 2023 AGM

The Brooklands Art Group meets on a Wednesday from 1.30pm - 3.30pm and on a Friday from 2pm - 4pm, in the upstairs art room. There are 22 members on the register with an average attendance of 16 people, led by one volunteer.

The purpose of the group is learning new skills, relaxation and social. Drawing and painting activities are undertaken. The best thing to happen in the last year was our art exhibition at Brooklands on the Vintage Day and the Newport carnival in July. In the last year we have had new people coming along and having a go.

Loretta Ramsay

Brooklands Thursday exercise group - 2023 AGM Annual report

The exercise group meets every Thursday morning, in the main hall downstairs, and combines the familiar Brooklands elements of "Food, Friendship and Fun" with gentle, mostly seated exercises led by professional osteopath and paramedic Andy Graves. The exercises are designed to promote flexibility and encourage movement, and last for around 40 minutes. The sessions end with a relaxation period where poems or a story are read, or members are taken on a gentle imaginative "walk through the woods" to relax the mind after exercising the body.

The session starts with tea or coffee at around 10:00, when the minibuses unload their cargoes, and independent members make their own way to the centre. Members are ushered to their seats for exercises which start at around 10:30, finishing around 11:15. There is then the opportunity for members to chat and relax for half an hour while the kitchen staff prepare lunch. We provide soup and sandwiches, followed by tea or coffee, prior to the buses loading up to take members home.

We have 32 members on our register, and regularly have 24-28 staying for lunch, with just two or three preferring to go home straight after the exercise.

Once they have joined, members very rarely want to leave this happy group, which is a good thing, though it has led to an increasing waiting list of those who would like to join the group.

We have to control the waiting list because of limits on space for doing the exercise, number of lunches we can provide, and the number of members we can collect in our buses. There are currently around 10 names on our waiting list, and we will invite them in strict "first come first served" order when space permits.

We have arranged several minibus outings for our members this year, usually to a garden centre or local place of interest. These are always very popular well attended.

We have a pool of up to 10 regular volunteers on a Thursday morning, preparing and serving lunch and teas, driving and escorting, and spending time chatting with any members who look as though they need a little company. We usually have enough capacity to manage the group, though occasionally need to call on volunteers from outside the group if we are short of helpers. On just one occasion this year we were required to cancel the exercise group session, because 8 out of those 10 volunteers were unavailable on the day. Thankfully this is a rare occurrence which hopefully will not be repeated.

In July, two of our members, Mike and Brenda Jenner, celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary. We helped them to celebrate their special day by providing balloons, special music from the 60s, bottles of bubbly and a special cake. We know that Mike and Brenda enjoyed a fun-filled day.

The contact points for this group are John Gordon and Brian Stone.

Brooklands Gardening Club – Annual report for 2023 AGM

Brooklands Gardening Club meets monthly from 10.30am – 11.45am on a Thursday. It is led by Jenny Shann.

Jim's Brooklands Singers – Annual report for 2023 AGM

We have been struggling for a while during the year but fortunately things have stabilised recently. Although the numbers remain below where I would like them to be we are now stronger in singing terms than for some time. However it remains difficult to reach new singers even on Facebook.

Alan Mitchell, our long serving accompanist had been struggling for some time, both with mobility and hearing but early this year he was clearly losing his dexterity. I managed to persuade him that it was perhaps time to retire and this he did in the early part of the year. The group presented him with a framed photograph and he was delighted to have it. It is an aside really but I have continued to visit him for a chat fortnightly and he is now content that his race, a long one, had been run. We have been fortunate to find a new accompanist, Freda Driver, and she has settled in quickly.

We are booked to perform at Brooklands on October 17th and I am trying to arrange dates with the care homes we sang for before Covid. Hopefully it is onwards and upwards.

Frank Lewis

Brooklands Walking Group - 2023 AGM Annual Report

The Brooklands walking group meets on the first and third Thursday each month from 2pm - 4pm, with an hours' walk, followed by refreshments back at Brooklands either on the balcony or in the upstairs function room, prepared in the upstairs kitchen. The walks are led by Helen Taylor, with Irene Henderson as tail walker. We now use both mini-buses to take and return people from Brooklands to the location of our walk, the buses are driven by Gerry Ramsey and Peter Bowles.

In the last year, 43 people have been on our walks, with 26 people currently regular recent walkers. We have an average of 16 people on each walk, our highest number being 22, and our lowest number 11.

The group not only promotes exercise through a gentle walk, but is also a social occasion to chat and make friends, as well as an opportunity to explore the local area, looking at local history and culture. We have walked along the Grand Union Canal and The Railway Walk, we have walked in Great Linford, Linford Wood, Stanton Low Park, Stonepit Field and Campbell Park. We have walked around Willen and Tongwell Lakes, and we have visited Bradwell Windmill, the Wolverton Secret Garden, Bancroft Roman Villa, The Tree Cathedral and The Redhouse Park Art Trail. The weather has been very kind to us, and we have continued our walks throughout the year, and have only been rained on once!

The participants of the group always enjoy each walk, and they really appreciate the opportunity to travel to and explore new areas just outside Newport.

Helen Taylor, Brooklands Trustee.

Brooklands Carers' Group - 2023 AGM Annual Report

The Carers' group at Brooklands has now been running for 25 years. The group meets every other Friday from 10am until 12noon in the main downstairs room.

There are currently 33 people on the register, with an average of 21 people attending each session. We have 11 couples, 3 mothers & daughters, and 6 people attend on their own as their spouse is either in a care home or has passed away. We have lost 6 members this year due to them moving to care homes or passing away, but have gained 10 new members. Transport is provided for some members who live in Newport Pagnell using the big mini-bus, although we have members from all over Milton Keynes.

The group is supported by eight volunteers, who are very involved in running of the group: Helen Taylor, Rita Galloway, Barbara O'Reilly, Cherie Read, Linda Glidewell, Sue Sweet and David Hulance (our mini-bus driver), plus Molly the dog! We have recently been joined by a new volunteer, Imti Farookhi.

The purpose of the group is to support carers of people with all forms of dementia. In the first hour, refreshments (prepared in the kitchen) are provided, whilst members chat and interact with each other, supported by volunteers and the Admiral Nurses. Some members have been attending the group for many years and can offer support to newer members. A raffle also takes place at this time. The second hour includes an activity: arts and craft activities, musical entertainment, games, bingo, beetle drives, seated exercise sessions, visiting speakers, quizzes and more. Throughout the morning the Admiral Nurses are on hand to offer one to one support to the carers, to listen, counsel, and provide advice, information and support. Sue Webb is our lead Admiral Nurse, initially supported by Debs Harper, but since August by Lorretta Peck.

The biggest change this year has been professional support from the Admiral Nurses (specialist dementia nurses) with Milton Keynes Council, who took over supporting the group when Karen Russell, Community Matron retired in September 2022. Rosie Parsons, a volunteer of over 20 years also retired from the group at Christmas 2022.

The group continues to thrive and provide invaluable support and friendship to carers of people with dementia and their loved one.

Helen Taylor, Brooklands Trustee.

Brooklands Book Club - Annual report for 2023 AGM

The Brooklands Book Club meets on a Friday every four - six weeks at 10am in the upstairs function room. There are 8 members on the register with an average attendance of 6 people, 2 of which are volunteers.

The purpose of the group is for reading, analysing and critiquing a book that has been chosen. We have read some great books (and a few rubbish ones for some of us). It is interesting and challenging and leads to some good discussions. It is a friendly and open group. Some people read paper versions, some read on Kindle, some use Audible books.

The biggest challenge is finding a date when we can all meet! We are all keen to meet together, so it's a challenge to fix the date, but we manage! In the past year we have grown a little, and perhaps become a more relaxed group. We laugh a lot!

Lynda Evans

Brooklands Saturday Lunch Club - Annual report for 2023 AGM

The Brooklands Saturday Lunch Club meets on the third Saturday of the month except for July and August. It's held on the ground floor at Brooklands and includes use of the kitchen to prepare lunch. There are 60 people on the register with an average attendance of 45 to 50 people, supported by over 10 volunteers.

The purpose of the group is to provide a meeting place where members can enjoy a freshly cooked dinner in the company of other people. We are aware that weekends can be a lonely time for people who live alone. The lunch club provides company as well as a meal. It is very popular. Both vehicles are used to call for members who require transport within Newport Pagnell.

The best thing in the last year has been the freedom to be able to open again, (although not as frequently as pre-Covid). Our biggest challenge has been that we haven't been able to meet each month due to circumstances beyond our control. We hope in 2024 we may be able to re-open on a regular basis.

Catherine Hall, Brooklands Trustee with responsibility for the lunch club.

External groups who use Brooklands - Annual Report for 2023 AGM

Brooklands is used by other groups throughout the year, some on a regular basis such as the Memory Club, NCT and Brownies, some on a more occasional basis like Mother's Union, and Newport Pagnell Parish Church.

National Childbirth Trust: NCT run regular Antenatal classes throughout the year at Brooklands sometimes using the 1st Floor Function Room, sometimes using the main room on the Ground Floor.

Memory Club: This is going well continuing on 2nd & 4th Thursday of each month, using the main room on the Ground Floor. It is a club for people living with the early stages of dementia and is run by Hazel Reynolds. They will be continuing in 2024.

Brownies: The Brownies use Brooklands on a Monday evening and will continue to do so in 2024.

Elaine Merry, Brooklands Administrator.