

# Manx Dyslexia Association

## Chairman's Report November 19th 2019

Website: [info@manxdyslexia.com](mailto:info@manxdyslexia.com)

Committee members: Sue Rutter, Chris Seaward, Chrissie Watson, Joanne Cannell. Co-opted; Hayley McVicar, Nikki McCarthy and Helen Newbery.

### **A summary of the MDA's work over the past year.**

The year started quietly with the main aim being to investigate improving the website by finding a new provider. Chris Seaward led the way and we had a meeting with Isle of Man Advertising. The meeting went well but it was clear that the cost was high. After unsuccessfully looking into options to obtain some funding and the cost of annual maintenance it was decided to look elsewhere. Chris contacted Chris Holland who had worked with us before for advice. She was recommended to contact Tom Gough, a young new web designer at Thomas Patrick web designers. Chris again met him and established what he could do and what he would charge. The committee then looked at samples of his work and agreed to use him. He gave a lower quote to set up the website and said there would be no annual maintenance. Work on this then went ahead and the new website was officially launched in July at the Henry Bloom Noble Library in Douglas. The site has been regularly used from June to November with interest peaking whenever the MDA has been in the media. Manx Tails published an article about the new website in their September edition.

Following on from the visit of Gavin Reed in September 2018, Dr Jenny Guise who regularly works with him agreed to visit the Island in April. She came for 6 nights as she wanted to explore the Island, do some training and private assessments. She began the visit with an interview on Manx Radio accompanied by Sue Rutter. The training session was at UCM and although quite well attended none of the Sencoes from the High Schools were present despite being invited. It was well received though and centred around working memory and exam techniques.

A drop-in session at the Henry Bloom Noble Library was very poorly attended but Dr Guise enjoyed her visit and would be happy to return in the future. She and some members of the committee went out for a meal.

There were no events planned for the summer but work continued on the website. Helen Newbery provided some information about apps to go on the website for which we are very grateful. She also keeps us updated with possible Education initiatives which we might want to be involved with. We have details of the Word Aware programme which is being looked at.

Whilst there weren't any events planned for Dyslexia Awareness week in October, packs from the BDA were sent out to some of the bigger businesses by Chris to promote awareness while Chrissie sent one to the college. Only two businesses responded with just one wanting a follow up. The college did not respond.

It was decided to set up a different Facebook page that we have control of as the Manx Dyslexia Forum page is run by Jooles Morrison. She was keen to continue this, so Jo has set up a Manx Dyslexia Official page which she manages and controls with the help of Chrissie.

During the year we have had some involvement from Nikki McCarthy and Alison Michie which is appreciated.

Sue continues to respond to emails along with Chrissie and these often result in follow up meetings and or basic assessments.

### **The Future**

This continues to be a concern as despite our best efforts any events are poorly attended. The website is our best way of communicating along with the Facebook page. We are looking to finding someone to come and talk about Study skills early next year which would be for students, parents and professionals. Barrington Stoke books are still available if requested by primary schools and Jan the librarian is looking into loaning some of their books to the local primary schools. We are hoping a Nessy trainer will be coming to do a session in the near future.

The real issue is getting some more people on the committee to take over for the future.

On a positive note a parent support group has been initiated by Julia Furner and the first meeting has taken place. The MDA has offered to support this as required.

### **In Conclusion**

We continue to strive to promote more awareness of the issues around dyslexia both for parents and students. Technology is now a big factor in removing many of the barriers and to this end the involvement of new younger members would be a big help. Jo Cannell has been a tremendous support and all the committee have given a lot of time during the year. Special thanks to Chris for all the time she put in to set up the new website and her continued work as treasurer.