**Queen’s Event (annotated)**

**[Her Majesty’s Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex, Mrs Susan Pyper]**

Every county has a Lord Lieutenant who is appointed by the Queen as her personal representative, and I say that because she herself is very heavily invested in the Queen’s Award for the Voluntary Service. Really, genuinely interested in the award and she has commanded her Lord Lieutenants to actually personally present them on her behalf.

So I am standing here today not as Susan but as the Queen today – as I say we have been waiting so long for it haven’t we for it. But you are a group of very special people and I have brought with me some special people too – who know your organisation better than many of you may think.

Peter Webb and Simon Knight are two Senior Deputy Lieutenants, because I have a team that work for me. When any organisation applies for a Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service the Lord Lieutenants sends in two snoopers – and these are the two snoopers.

And so they came in and found out all about Turning Tides and went into everything. Paperwork, safeguarding, finance, what you are doing and they get to know the organisation very very well.

So these two know exactly what your all about, as do I, but not in the detail that they do. Now, it can be quite a formidable experience, as John (Chief Executive) will say. And after that Simon and Peter came back to me and they write a long report. We chat about it and have a look. And then we decide what what my remarks to go up to London are going to be. And then I write a report based on all their work and off it goes to the Cabinet Office to the Awards Committee.

I give you that background because at this stage, you may still be thinking ‘oh well I done deal then’ – oh no it’s not. Because I do very many of these assessment in my time and very, very few actually get awarded the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service.

So this is a really prestigious award and you really have set the bar really high. Most people don’t get through that Awards Committee in London, but you did – quite rightly. But there is a couple of other people I should introduce you to, Our High Sheriff, Neil Hart, whose also a Deputy Lieutenant so he knows exactly what goes on in this.

And Paul Legrave, where’s Paul gone, Paul whose organised together with John all of today and I couldn’t be Lord Lieutenant with Paul, he looks after me and all the admin side and keeps the whole thing going.

So here we are and before we actually have the formal presentation, afterwards I can meet all of you and find out exactly what you do.

I think the one word I want to say is THANK YOU. You are a group, I know this is a bit hackneyed now, you hear a lot of people saying it. You are ordinary people doing extraordinary things, but in this case I really, really mean it.

I’ve just met the Minister at the back, and as he said, this is all part of the community, we want to build a community here. This hub is for everyone.

And many of those who use it and meet you and get your help are really not in the best place. They are really disadvantaged, their lonely and on top of everything else they have covid.

We had the Everyone In initiative but it is all of you that have got Littlehampton and the surrounding towns and villages. You have saved a lot of folk. You actually made a difference. And you can go as far, Minister I don’t know whether you would agree with me, as actually saying on some occasions – you’ve saved lives.

By being here, listening and doing. So thank you, thank you so much.

Now I am going to ask Peter, Peter this is your moment. Peter is going to read to you the citation which the Queen has given to your organisation. It’s a pretty formal document but it really emphasises the gravity and the seriousness and the prestige of this award, Peter.

**[Peter Webb – Senior Deputy Lieutenant]**

Elizabeth the Second By the grace of God, United Kingdom of Great, Britain and Northern Ireland, and our other Realms and Territories Queen Defender of the Faith, to Turning Tides, the community-led charity, putting local people at the heart of its mission to end homelessness, - Greetings.

We being cognisant of the said groups outstanding voluntary work in the community, and being desirous of showing Our Royal Favour do hereby confer upon it The Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service voluntary service by groups in the community 2020 for such period as the group continues to provide its current service and do hereby give permission for the authorised emblem of the said Award to be displayed on the group’s letterhead and public material.

Given at Our Court of Saint James’s under Our Royal Sign Manual this second day of June 2020 in the sixty ninth year of Our Reign. Thank you Peter. And it is signed by the Queen herself. And that would be for you, John are you receiving the Award?

The worst thing I will say is that this Award is jolly heavy [laughter] so we won’t mess around with shaking hands as well. But this is for everyone of you, everyone in this room

But John, to Turning Tides, and all your volunteers please tell them what I have said and congratulate those who can’t be here today.

But on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, I award you the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service. Congratulations! [applause]

**[John Holmstrom – Chief Executive]**

Firstly, can I thank you - because you have an incredibly busy schedule. Thank you for coming. It really feels like we have brought the Queen in our midst. Thank you for coming.

Paul for your organising and to our assessors. I kind of broke out in a little sweat because it is a rigorous process.

A really rigorous process, and we felt that, they were good questions, good questions of our volunteers, our staff and of our clients. And me, I nearly felt like, oh gosh it's like a job interview [laughter] - am I going to get to keep the job and obviously I think I have.

So it is an enormous honour, I can't describe the pick me up when we heard the news.

I was just so grateful to Ali and Amy and all the staff who were really actively involved in delivering this. But volunteers is not a bolt on of this charity.

It was built on the shoulders of volunteers and we have some founder volunteers here, going back. And the assets, when I joined 8 years ago, we had 150 volunteers including staff, we are now around 300.

The assets of the charity are built upon those shoulders and that continued. So Roffey Homes they become the solutions to some of our big problems. So we needed temporary accommodation 4 years ago and they offered a building for 35 homes free of charge for 5 years.

We could not have done that - that is our volunteers - the power of volunteering.

I think what struck you was the breadth of our volunteers, in age, background, Schools, families, Churches are really, really important.

It's that range, businesses, also range of skills because I think what we really were set out to do, is not just have set roles. If you've got a talent, come to us, let's have a think. But it's actually not easy to do that matching.

Because it requires our volunteers who are motivated and have something to offer. But also staff who say, 'welcome' because actually you add. It's not just this is a resource.

And it makes a difference and transforms lives and saves lives and I don't use that word lightly. What it does it creates a bridge between our community out there and our clients.

Because one of the things, and we have some of our clients here, they know what it feels like to be homeless. What it is to feel an outsider, stigmatised, discriminated against.

And the end of the journey is a community that receives you back. And how do we build those connections.

The volunteering that we do is completely at the heart of that. Our mission is to end local homelessness, putting our clients and our communities at its heart. So this afternoon is for you, and for all of you.

I'm really grateful for some honoured guests that have come as well, Councillor Amanda Jupp, who is the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health. We can't do this without political support. Volunteering plays its part and the fundraising. Really, really grateful.

I also want to thank Councillor Gunner, whose the Leader of Arun Council.

We started out as Worthing Churches Homeless Projects and about over half of our services are still there (Worthing) but we now work in Arun, it's our first area we worked outside of Worthing. And the Church hosted us here (Littlehampton Community Hub) and we now have three houses.

We work really closely with Stonepillow and it really mattered to us that we are not Worthing centric because we have got services in Horsham and Mid Sussex as well. Thank you so much and again for the support.

I just wanted to finish off with a couple of points around Covid.

This impacted the charity, but it brought the best out of us and our volunteers, we couldn't do a lot of in person work like we used to do.

We kept in touch, and what was beautiful, particularly around Christmas, we had a lot of clients in temporary accommodation so actually rough sleeping went down. But they were scattered all over West Sussex and Brighton but they were in places that didn’t have proper meals. So we actually delivered 967 cooked meals - cooked meals, which volunteers then took out and drove miles and miles. But it is the interactions that they had when they were there.

390 wellbeing packs, 144 emergency food parcels - so you became the resource for this - we couldn't have done this. Now with client befriending, 22 clients who are have been befriended - that's transforming lives. We have 43 clients who have been counselled.

I am just so, so grateful. Thank you for this highly prestigious Award.

Thank you so much for being such able ambassadors - you obviously wrote a damn good report. [laughter]

And thank you above all to our volunteers.

Absolutely well done.

This is for you. Thank you so much. [applause]