



Board of Trustees

10 June 2010
Town Room, Hampstead Town Hall, London

MINUTES

Paula Ridley (Chair)
Martin Meredith (Treasurer)
Freddie Gick
Helen Marcus
David Lovie
John Walker
Paul Myers (by Phone for Item 3)

Tony Burton (Director)
Ian Harvey (Co-ordinator)

1. Apologies and Minutes of meeting of 28 April 2010

Apologies were received from David Tittle and David Lovie was welcomed to his first meeting.

The Minutes were agreed and all the actions had been completed or were on the agenda.

Tony reminded the Board that the Minutes would be placed on the website as soon as possible after they had been circulated for comment after each meeting, providing they were agreed.

2. Directors report

Tony introduced his report highlighting work in five main areas: civic society recruitment and visits; funding; influencing the new Government; developing partnerships and administration of banking, employment and other arrangements.

There was a wide ranging discussion about the range of issues with which Civic Voice has to deal and the challenge of prioritisation. It was agreed that Civic Voice needs to establish itself on a sustainable financial footing as a priority and demonstrate its value to civic societies. This requires it to work on a number of different fronts simultaneously. The Board considered it important not to over commit or over promise on what can be delivered on slender resources within one year and it was suggested that the views of civic societies about Civic Voice should be monitored.

The history of the civic movement project was discussed and agreed to be important in helping build confidence and promote the value of civic societies.

The Board agreed it was important to spread the workload beyond the staff, recognising its own role and also the potential of other volunteer support in developing Civic Voice. As part of this it requested briefing on the key messages to be using in discussions with local groups. The Board also requested a discussion about the overall approach to strengthening and developing civic societies at its July meeting (**Action TB 17/10**).

The Board discussed and agreed proposals for Civic Voice's first AGM to be hosted by Peterborough Civic Society on 9 October, preceded by an afternoon and evening of tours and cultural activity.

The Board agreed proposals for insurance cover, including trustee and professional indemnity, for Civic Voice up to £300 (**Action TB 18/10**).

3. Civic Day

Tony introduced the proposals for a Civic Day in June 2011 drawing on the experience of civic societies to date and discussions with Freddie and Paul. Paul joined the Board by telephone and introduced his thinking about how Civic Day can best be developed as a grassroots initiative which helps stimulate activity and new thinking in local groups and reaches people not otherwise engaged with the civic movement.

The Board gave strong support to the proposals and the opportunities they presented. It agreed there would be merit in attracting celebrity support, locally and nationally, and recognised the importance of securing sponsorship and practical support to avoid undue workloads on staff.

It was agreed to publicise the proposals as soon as possible along the lines of the paper and to convene a group of civic volunteers to develop and take them forward. Freddie agreed to chair the group and Paul agreed to be a member. (**Action TB/FG 19/10**).

4. Risk management

The Board participated in an exercise identifying the main risks to achieving Civic Voice's purpose, agreeing their impact and likelihood (on a range of Low, Medium, High) and identifying some initial mitigating actions.

The risks identified and their initial impact/likelihood were:

- ☛ Core funding (H/M)
- ☛ Failure of initiatives (H/M)
- ☛ Civic society membership numbers (H/M)
- ☛ External reputation (M/L)
- ☛ Staff continuity (H/M)
- ☛ Data security (M/L)

📌 Governance (H/L)

It was agreed to circulate a summary for information and to discuss the risk framework again after the AGM (**Action TB 20/10**).

5. Funding and civic society recruitment

Tony introduced a paper which addressed a number of the key risks discussed in the previous item around funding and the level of civic society membership. He reported that an encouraging 226 civic societies had joined so far, with a combined individual membership in excess of 54,000, and that the rate of joining remained steady at 2 or 3 a day.

The Board agreed it was important to maintain the momentum of civic societies joining as a priority. As part of this they would individually approach a number of key societies as outlined in the paper and requested briefing (**Action IH 21/10**).

It was agreed that the recruitment of civic societies was the priority and that wherever possible staff should be seeking transitional support from a small number of sources, rather than diverting resources to preparing numerous small bids for funds. Tony informed the Board that there were no guarantees about funding commitments made by CLG before the General Election but he was optimistic that a strong relationship, with funding support, could be developed with the new Government.

There was discussion about other membership categories and the Board requested a summary of the different membership tariffs (**Action IH 22/10**). Freddie introduced the idea of establishing two panels for corporate and public sector members which might generate significant funds and strengthen relationships in these two core areas at relatively little commitment from Civic Voice. It was agreed to discuss this at the July meeting and Freddie offered to draft some proposals along with the staff (**Action FG/TB 23/10**).

6. Financial update

Martin introduced the initial Management Accounts which reported income of £53,000 before any expenditure and invited views on the format and presentation.

It was agreed that Martin would sign off expenses for the Board and Paula would sign off the Treasurer's expenses.

Martin reported he had approached three different potential auditors to undertake the independent examination of Civic Voice's accounts and, after discussion, agreed to consider the merits of a full audit if there was evidence this might be more appealing to potential funders.

7. Measuring success

It was agreed to postpone discussion of this item till the July meeting but the draft proposals could be used to support English Heritage's funding commitment to Civic Voice.

8. Civic Panel

Tony introduced the proposals to establish a Civic Panel of like minded national voluntary sector organisations who would be able to attend Civic Voice's General Meetings and, collectively, appoint a single trustee. This had been debated through the Civic Society Initiative and provision made in Civic Voice's constitution.

The Board discussed the benefits of a Civic Panel as a means of adding to the contribution of civic societies in achieving Civic Voice's charitable purpose for the whole civic movement. It was recognised it would help in garnering support from influential organisations and in providing a helpful, national and external perspective to its own considerations. The Board queried how the arrangement would work and how any trustee would relate to the different organisations. Tony confirmed the intention that any trustee would be appointed in their own right and not as a representative, acting in effect as a conscience for this strand of the civic movement. It was not expected the Panel would meet regularly.

The Board agreed to establish the Panel for an initial three years and encouraged it to bring forward a trustee nomination in time for its September meeting (**Action TB 24/10**).

9. AOB

Future meetings were agreed for Saturday 17 July (10.30- lunch) in Birmingham and Saturday 30 October as a full awayday in London. The proposed meeting on Saturday 30 November would be rescheduled for January 2011 and a date in early September for an afternoon meeting in London would be found.

Paula proposed and the Board agreed to the appointment of Griff Rhys Jones as Civic Voice's President.

John raised a query about what role there might be for encouraging assets being reorganised as a result of the changes to Regional Development Agencies to be put into community hands.