



April Board Minutes

1-4pm, Tuesday 16th April
Directory of Social Change
24 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2DP

Paula Ridley (Chair)
John Bothamley
Paul Clarke
John Kershaw
Helen Marcus
Martin Meredith
Neil Sinden
David Tittle
John Walker

Staff
Steve Graham
Ian Harvey

Minutes

1. Welcome, apologies and January meeting minutes

JK proposed the January board minutes as a true record of the meeting. No amendments made.

No apologies were recorded for the current meeting as all Trustees and staff were in attendance.

PR suggested that she write a letter on behalf of the Board to Sarah Spurrier to thank her for efforts with Civic Voice on Protect our Place. PR also reported to the Board that she would be joining a “leaving lunch” for Sarah in a few weeks’ time.

Action: Paula Ridley to write a thank you note to Sarah Spurrier

2. Private item – Cooption

PR and MM were asked to leave the room

Before leaving the room for an item on the Cooption to the Board, MM said that he would be prepared to serve until the AGM 2013 and maybe for another year if the Board approve. PR explained that she was intending to step down from the Chair at the Civic Voice AGM in October 2013.

PR and MM left the room.

It was agreed that JW would Chair the Private Item and that HM would record the “private minute”. JK moved for staff to withdraw from the private item. After a short discussion with DT, NS and JB opposing staff leaving the room for this particular private item, it was agreed that staff should leave the room.

Staff left the room.

PR and MM entered the room

It was agreed that Paula Ridley be co-opted on to the Civic Voice Board and in the position of Chair until 26th October 2013.

It was agreed that Martin Meredith be co-opted onto the Civic Voice Board and the position of Treasurer until 26th October 2013

It was agreed that Freddie Gick would be co-opted onto the Civic Voice Board until 26th October 2013 under clause 38.3.2 of the Articles of Association.

Staff entered the room

3. Minutes - follow-up to the discussion at the previous Board

A discussion was held around on the nature of Board minutes that are made available for public consumption via the newsletter and our website. JB explained that he was rather shocked about the procedure at the previous meeting about the process for putting minutes on the board. We should be “précis” minutes – should propose the full minutes to the website and that he was rather concerned about the transparency of the Board. JB stated that he could not understand why the Board would not share the full minutes with members – the people that put us in the position we are in.

A short discussion regarding the differing views was had by the board. HM said that minutes must be an accurate record of trustee discussions, particularly where concerns were raised. She felt that previously minutes had been too generalised. Concerns she had raised on specific points had not been minuted and she felt that this was because they were to be made public on the website. If individual trustees raised concerns they should be on the record whether they went on the website or not. It was agreed that if any Trustee wants a specific item added to the minutes, they always have the chance to do this once the draft minutes are circulated for comment.

JB moved to revoke the previous decision from the earlier board meeting. NS seconded. 6 were in favour of revoking the previous vote at the January Board meeting.

NS proposed the following motion

For all future meetings 1 set of minutes that are record of meeting picking up the tenor of the debate. The minutes will go on the website and are available for public consumption to hold trustees to account and to demonstrate we are inclusive and transparent. The document that will go on the website will be the same document that is discussed as the board and where specific views are expressed by Board members and they want that minuted, they have a responsibility to inform the minute taker to edit accordingly.

NS motion – JB seconded.
Favour 5 – 1 against 2 abstained

4. Officer update

Staff gave an update on current activities.

DT shared with the board an article that was recently published in Planning Magazine about how neighbourhood planning is helping to create a planning divide and that the future of neighbourhood planning seems to be with the “usual suspects” and deprived communities do not seem to be taking advantage of the new rights. The board had a discussion around the fact that the Government has never targeted specific areas but it was hoped that the new round of neighbourhood planning support that would be released on May 1st may help to address this. JW and SG told the board that following a meeting with the Labour Party, Roberta Blackman-Woods confirmed that Labour would continue with neighbourhood planning.

An update was provided on the current situation with Heritage Open Days and what arrangements will be in place going forward for the next

SG asked JK to introduce an update on an All Party Parliamentary Group meeting that they had both attended at the House of Commons hosted by CAMRA. PR raised the question that with limited resources is this something Civic Voice should focus on. The board held a discussion around Saving Pubs with CAMRA and that there is nothing wrong with us signposting members to CAMRA. However, as with campaigns led by other organisations, we have to carefully select which to support to ensure these campaigns and issues are central to the movement.

PR gave an update on the High Street X Fund and the process involved in judging. Final decisions have not been announced.

It was explained that our President Griff Rhys Jones would be appearing on Question Time on April 18. NS asked if a briefing would be made available GRJ and although it was agreed CV could not comment on certain issues, we would be briefing him around Civic Voice activities etc.

NS wanted to know what the development for Phase 2 of Protect our Place would be. SG explained that we are currently in informal discussion with English Heritage at the moment. We have been asked to develop a short outline paper for consideration outlining specific areas based on the Report recommendations. English Heritage will consider and ask us to develop to full proposals those elements that reflect their own priorities. The Board would be kept fully up to date if we are asked to progress a full bid application.

The Board noted the items on the paper.

5. Funding and Budgets Report including:

SG and MM gave an update on the financial figures which included a breakdown of the Heritage Lottery Fund project and its impact on Civic Voice's bottom line. NS queried HLF figures and MM explained the background about how costs have been attributed. It will be staff time. Total benefit for Civic Voice is C168k.

It was made clear that the HLF bid is part of a competitive situation with 41 other organisations submitting expressions of interest. We will know the outcome of our round one Bid in May. If successful we will then enter into a development stage working towards a second round Bid being submitted in September. This development stage will run from June to September and does attract support funding from HLF of 10k to CV. SG explained that if we are successful with a second round bid for the HLF project, we would be looking to commence delivery of the project in April 2014. We will not have the money in the bank until next year for project delivery.

PR asked when SG would expect in term of time some certainty about projects coming forward and monies into the bank. SG gave the following update

- ▶ HLF Catalyst Bid – we will know round 1 in May. Round 2 Oct
- ▶ HLF - War Memorials-2014
- ▶ Master Card – September with start next year Jan 2014. 6.5k would be the least we get coming into our central pot
- ▶ Protect our Place – We will be developing a short paper around local area heritage action plans. Outline paper to be submitted in the next few weeks and should know by early summer if English Heritage want us to deliver a full proposal.
- ▶ Local Lists-English Heritage outline bid – possibly 50k but we are waiting informal feedback from English Heritage so this number may change.
- ▶ Expanding Neighbourhood Plan evidence base will be put out to tender in May
- ▶ Network Rail – we will go back with a proposal that will help them extend their own community links. Outline paper over the next 6 weeks. Answer by the September. They want to increase their community links with community groups across the country. They are keen for us to work with them – a lot of land unused but are open to community use. Land for community – Community Land Trust.

- ☛ DCLG has not shut the door on a second proposal. As we are not included in the delivery of the Supporting Communities to Neighbourhood Planning we have an opportunity to seek support funding from DCLG. This could be based increasing and developing a network for instance and would be core funding.
- ☛ Model project around delivery of Community Infrastructure Levy. Interested in scoping out some examples. Linked by neighbourhood plan.

It was emphasised that all financial information is available to Trustees at any time, not just Board meetings.

The conversation moved onto the use of expenses within the organisation and breakdown of staff and trustee expenses were shared. It was acknowledged that staff expenses included paying deposits on meeting rooms, office equipment and generally costs to run the organisation. It was suggested that expense costs could be changed to present different analyses but MM said that it would not change the figures.

JB explained that if we were in United States people don't charge expenses but the Board emphasised that it is legitimate to pay expenses but the increase in trustee expenses are because of the need for additional sub-committees.

A short discussion developed around creating a small "portfolio" of successes-1 pagers-as a pack. SG said this would be invaluable in helping seeking funds, especially as he has used such before, and would supplement the Annual Report and "101 Ideas" left with potential funders.

Programmes and Activities:

Protect our Place

SG circulated the final Protect our Place report during the previous week. The Board agreed that we need to do everything we can with the report and to find any interesting pieces that may attract coverage from Heritage Journalists. We have done some really good work and we now need to push it out. English Heritage is looking to support this, as are members of the Sounding Group. SG will be circulating the Report to key supporters and potential funders (e.g. HLF). The Board accepted the Report.

SG suggested that it would be useful for the Board to have a discussion on the results and recommendations to help inform the way forward for Civic Voice. He will be using the Report to support funding applications.

It was agreed that Neil Sinden should work with staff in helping to promote the POP report. It was suggested that some copies of the report could be bound and sent to key partners. SG explained that there will be a Summary Report with photos etc on the website and copies sent to participants and funders etc.

Action: Neil Sinden to lead on POP report promotion with staff

APPG

SG gave a verbal update on the APPG meeting. The date of the meeting will be moved from 7th May to another date (**now confirmed as 13th May**). The discussion items for the APPG meeting will be Neighbourhood planning and localism and will feature the Planning Minister, Nick Boles MP, and Griff Rhys Jones-both confirmed ok with change of date. It is hoped that Don Foster will also be able to attend.

The Board held a discussion around the purpose of the meeting and who were the likely attendees. Different individuals gave their own experience about All Party Parliamentary Group meetings. All agree that it was a key networking opportunity for Civic Voice and gives us an opportunity to build on our policy and campaigning work. HM asked if Trustees could attend. SG explained that PR and JW had helped by drawing up suggestions. JW added that we would be inviting regional representatives to attend.

It was agreed that DT, MM, PR and JW would represent the Board at the APPG and that others may be invited to the Civic Day launch in June.

Action: SG to work with PR and JW in finalising the agenda.

Civic Day 2013

IH provided a verbal update on Civic Day 2013.

AGM

The AGM for 2013 is provisionally booked for Liverpool Town Hall on the 25th/26th October. Merseyside Civic Society as part of their 75th Anniversary Celebrations will host it. The Board were previously asked to consider between Guildford, Canterbury and Merseyside. However, both Canterbury and Guildford pulled out of the AGM for this year when they realised it was the 75th Anniversary of Merseyside Civic Society. Both groups have said they will bid for the AGM in 2014.

We anticipate a similar format to last year. There will be site visits, and a social event on the Friday afternoon and evening; the AGM on Saturday morning; and a wider session for participants on Saturday afternoon.

SG confirmed that he has notified Griff Rhys Jones and the office of the Sec of State of the change of date. **Griff has confirmed his attendance and it's in the Sec of States diary.**

Discussion from Board: We would welcome Board thoughts on the structure to the AGM and whether we should continue with same format or look for a different approach.

Action: IH to inform members about the date and to keep the Board updated on any important aspects to the AGM that need discussed.

6. Policy Development

IH and DT introduced a discussion about a "Civic Manifesto". It was felt that at times we are unsure about what the organisation stands for and by going through a "manifesto" process it could not only help shape our policy thinking, but could also give us a tool that could be used at a national level with influencing political parties and individual groups could use it to gain support from MPs looking for election.

SG mentioned that he had experience of developing a Manifesto.

It was made clear that it would not be a mandatory requirement for individual civic societies to sign up, although we would expect the majority to support it.

Open things out to invite lots of ideas between now and the AGM. Send in your ideas "new Government in 2015" – send in ideas and collate them and feedback to the next AGM.

It was agreed that a civic manifesto could be quite an intensive piece of work so we should ensure that we keep it as light touch as possible, while still having a document of substance. NS suggested maybe no more than 10 items and a few others suggested no more than 5. Each item could be described in a single page. JW suggested each page could have 3 key points Issue, Our View and commitment to a specific action.

It was agreed that we could take it to each of the party conferences and that we should look to have it adopted before the 2014 AGM. NS suggested we consider how we can link it in with a strategy for the All Party Parliamentary Group and Civic Panel.

The group supported the idea to launch at the AGM and DT suggested that no reason existed as to why we couldn't start encouraging "invitations for ideas" immediately and use the AGM as another "point" in the conversation.

The group agreed to DT leading with support from SG and IH on the project and putting forward a timetable that considered the conversation.

Action: David Tittle to lead with support from SG and IH.

7. Update on Constitution-verbal report

JK gave a verbal update on the work of the Constitution Subcommittee and explained that it has held a number of meetings. The aim of the constitution group is to try and make the Articles of Association more democratic. The sub-group will be bringing recommendations to the board for its June meeting on some proposed changes to the constitution. We would then go out to members with any potential amendments at the AGM in October 2013.

A short discussion was held around the requirement to get legal advice once we have reviewed the constitution. NS supported JB suggestions that it should go through some external Charitable Lawyers who are independent of the organisation. This would demonstrate that we are acting in the best interests of the organisation and can give us the assurance if we are asked this question at the AGM. It was agreed to defer the decision about seeking legal advice until the next meeting.

8. Panel Update:

Planning Panel deferred to next meeting

JK gave a verbal update on the Core Cities and that he has met with staff to talk about a way forward. JK felt as though the Core Cities could take advantage of the fact that the AGM is in Liverpool and SG felt that the Manifesto could have an item on "cities".

AOB

The Board were informed that Griff Rhys Jones would like to attend a future meeting, as previously requested.

Staff left the room and the meeting entered a private item