



Board of Trustees

19 January 2012
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, London

MINUTES

Paula Ridley (Chair)
Paul Clarke
Freddie Gick
David Lovie
Helen Marcus
Martin Meredith
Neil Sinden
David Tittle

Dave Chetwyn (Chair, Planning Panel, by invitation)

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

1. Apologies

There were apologies from John Walker.

2. Minutes of meeting of 8 November 2011

The November Minutes were signed and Board members were encouraged to feed back the result of their approaches to groups which have not yet joined Civic Voice as soon as possible.

3. Planning Panel

As Chair of the Planning Panel Dave Chetwyn reviewed its work during its formative first year and how it fitted alongside the wide range of different ways in which views from civic societies and volunteers were gathered on issues of public policy and debate. He stressed the importance of maintaining this wide network.

The Board reviewed the range of options for strengthening the approach to influencing consultation papers and inquiries without creating undue demands on staff and volunteer resources and supported (**Action 35/11 TB**):

- ☛ Reviewing Planning Panel membership to ensure it was as active as possible
- ☛ Increased discussion between Planning Panel member by email and occasional face to face meetings on issues of strategic importance

- Revising its terms of reference to recognise its role in advising the Board
- Informing Board members of draft responses
- Heightened visibility of the Planning Panel, including at the AGM

It was also recognised that Civic Voice should focus its resources where it can most make a difference and be as active as possible in shaping events rather than responding to others' consultation papers. This would be helped by the development of the shared prospectus as part of our common voice.

Dave Chetwyn was thanks for his contribution over the first year and left the meeting at this point.

4. Director's report

Tony introduced his report and emphasised the program of events being organised for civic societies (with increased external funding support); the continuing growth in interest in our work from DCLG; the opportunities now available under the Localism Act; imminent publication of the NPPF and response to the Portas Review and the influence we are having on future public engagement on HS2 north of Birmingham.

It was suggested that his appointment to DCLG's Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership Board was included in a future bulletin. The Board supported the decision not to pursue an interest in tendering for Green Flag awards.

There was a wide ranging discussion on the future campaigns on design awards and "civic shame" and it was agreed that these should continue to be debated with civic societies at the forthcoming network events. It was agreed to position the awards option differently with a focus on profiling local awards.

5. Membership renewals

The Board agreed to maintain the current approach to membership of Civic Voice (£1.50 levy, £500 cap, additional donations for life members) and to encourage groups to include donations. The renewals process would begin in late February supported by a letter from the Chair, invoice, civic society endorsements and summary of what has been achieved (**Action 36/11 IH**). Tony reported a positive picture in terms of securing the continuation of the package of additional advantages joining Civic Voice

Board members agreed to provide feedback on their approaches to groups which have not yet joined Civic Voice (**Action 37/11 All**).

6. AGM, national convention and Civic Europe proposal

Tony introduced and the Board agreed the proposed programme for the AGM and national convention in Coventry which would follow similar lines to previous years.

David Tittle introduced and the Board agreed to prepare a funding proposal to supplement to AGM and convention with a networking event which would bring together a number of local civic activists drawn from different countries across Europe. This would provide an interesting opportunity to broaden horizons and promote dialogue and shared experience (**Action 38/11 DT**).

7. Civic Day

Freddie reported verbally on the work of the Civic Day group and plans to seek county co-ordinators to promote the event with local groups. Plans were also being put in place to provide support on activities around photographic competitions, litter picking, awards and enhanced media coverage (**Action 39/11 FG/IH**).

8. Corporate support

Freddie introduced the approach proposed to securing financial support from a small number of corporates with a likely interest in Civic Voice's activities – especially from the construction, house building, architectural and professional sectors. It was recognised that a pragmatic approach should be taken and that the Board would need to develop a light touch framework with which to determine the suitability of different potential corporate supporters (**Action 40/11 FG/MM/JW/TB**)

9. Financial update

The Board noted the Management Accounts which included a significant increase in the projected income from projects and a reduced expectation of income from civic society memberships. It was agreed that a broad ranging discussion of options should be undertaken at the next meeting which would agree the budget (**Action 41/11 MM/TB**).

10. Membership report

The Board noted the membership report.

11. Success measures

The Board noted the success measures and Tony highlighted the challenge of securing media coverage. It was suggested that more opportunities to write to national newspapers might be taken and that there may be value in organising a media briefing for selected journalists.

12. AOB

Martin enquired about the constitution and all members of the Board were invited to feedback any evidence or examples of where it might benefit from being changed. This would allow a judgement to be made on the value of undertaking a review (**Action 42/11 All**). Tony provided an update on the history of the civic movement project.

The Board went into closed session.

The next meeting was scheduled for 26 April at the same venue.