



Board of Trustees

9 June 2011

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, London

MINUTES

Paula Ridley (Chair)
Carl Carrington
Freddie Gick
David Lovie
Helen Marcus
Martin Meredith
Neil Sinden
David Tittle
John Walker

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

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Minutes of meeting of 7 April 2011

The April Minutes were signed.

John, Freddie and Martin agreed to take forward some thinking on how best to develop our corporate relationships (**Action 10/11 JW/FG/MM**).

3. Director's report

Tony introduced his report and highlighted the progress on membership renewals and Civic Day and the success of our partnership proposals to take on responsibility for the national co-ordination of Heritage Open Days. He also highlighted our success in securing two amendments to the Localism Bill alongside wider concern about the growing emphasis on business.

The news on Heritage Open days was welcomed and it was agreed that we should focus on maintaining the existing quality and standard at a time of pressure on local authority and other budgets and other competing demands for people's time (especially in 2012). The value of local funding by English Heritage to support HODs programmes in some parts of the country was emphasised.

There was a wide ranging discussion of how best to engage the Board in a fast moving and diverse agenda of policy and campaigning issues. The availability of all our submissions and future consultations online was stressed (www.civicvoice.org.uk/resources/our-views & www.civicvoice.org.uk/get-involved/live-consultations). It was agreed it would be useful to record and summarise key views in the regular Director's report and provide a look ahead towards the key issues expected to arise before the next Board meeting (**Action 17/11 TB**).

4. Civic Survey 2011

Tony introduced the results of the first Civic Survey of both societies and volunteers and highlighted a number of the issues arising.

The Board welcomed the good response and confirmation that 76% of civic societies thought Civic Voice was doing a "good" or "very good" job.

The discussion focused on the implications of the results for our approach to strengthening and supporting civic societies. It was agreed that more should be done to encourage groups to organise projects and programmes which engage people directly rather than expecting them always to engage with the civic society and its committees. This would achieve a number of objectives simultaneously by providing attractive opportunities to volunteer, a focus for profile raising and opportunities to reach out and involve more people. It was agreed this would be a focus of discussion at the AGM and shape our work programme. There was particular interest in programmes which engage young people and also the potential of photography competitions and campaigns whilst recognising that the most successful initiatives are likely to be those which are shaped locally (**Action 18/11 TB/FG**).

Further suggestions included development of a simple health check for groups to assess whether they were getting stronger, encouraging Civic Voice champions in local groups and for it to be on the regular agenda for committees and more exchange visits between groups.

The Board also recognised the value of building more direct relationships with civic volunteers and not just relying on communications being cascaded through the movement.

Tony indicated that the key issues identified in the survey for the civic movement as a whole (heritage, civic pride, engaging people, local distinctiveness, planning) would be a focus for discussion and future workshops as part of the programme of work supporting development of our "common voice" (**Action 19/11 TB/IH**).

The Board agreed to the proposed targets for the success measures in 2011-12 and 2012-13 on member confidence in their group getting stronger and satisfaction levels with Civic Voice (**Action 20/11 TB**).

5. Board appointments

Tony summarised the proposed approach to filling the two vacancies on the Board at the 2011 AGM.

Helen volunteered to stand down in advance of the AGM which was also when Carl's appointment came to an end. It was stressed that both would be able to stand again. The Board agreed to seek nominations to fill the posts and to establish a Nominations Committee comprising an independent Chair Shaun Spiers (CPRE's Chief Executive), Paula and Peter Lee (Peterborough Civic Society). This would advise the Board on the best approach to electing trustees in September prior to the October AGM. It was agreed that the Board's decision was final in managing the process and that all nominations would come through this process.

The nominations process would request candidates to provide a summary of up to 350 words which would be made available to those voting, along with a link to any further information submitted.

The Board agreed to the approach outlined **(Action 21/11 TB)**.

It was agreed to consider our constitution in 2012 in the light of the experience of running Civic Voice **(Action 22/11 PR)**.

6. AGM and campaigns planning

Tony introduced the plans for the AGM to be hosted by Sheffield Civic Trust on October 14th and 15th. He informed the Board that Nick Clegg MP (Deputy Prime Minister) had agreed to speak at the Friday reception which was in his constituency.

Martin proposed and the Board agreed to the preparation of a short annual report with summary accounts to be prepared in advance of the AGM. This would also be useful in promoting Civic Voice. It would be complemented by the statutory accounts which would also be available to any member who wanted them.

The Board agreed the other proposals in the paper for discussions drawing on the civic survey and new research into volunteering for civic societies and for a Dragons Den style approach to selecting a 2012 campaign **(Action 23/11 TB/IH)**.

7. Membership report

The latest membership position was reported with 178 renewals and 25 new members only one month after the renewal date.

It was agreed that the rate of renewal was slower than ideal but only four groups had indicated they would not renew and when approached most responded very positively to a reminder. Board members agreed to contact civic societies who had not yet renewed directly and encourage them to do so.

The report provoked a wider discussion about the best approach to our membership fee and whether a reduction in the cost to civic societies would encourage a commensurate increase in the number joining which would generate at least as much income for Civic Voice. It was recognised any substantial growth would come from being more appealing to middling civic societies with c200 members and it was agreed to undertake some further investigation of the options in advance of the Board awayday in November **(Action 24/11 TB)** and to raise the issue at the AGM.

8. Financial update

The Management Accounts were introduced by Martin and noted by the Board. They showed a healthy financial position only a month before our first year end.

9. Civic Day

Freddie tabled a report which indicated that Civic Day would be the largest civic event yet held with over 180 groups participating and c300 activities. It was also expected to generate significant publicity.

The Board agreed it would be helpful to confirm the initiative would be going ahead in 2012 focused on the week beginning Saturday June 23rd.

10. Success measures

The success measures were noted and the deviances explained in terms of adjustments already made for future years or activity which would ensure the targets were met by the end of year.

11. AOB

It was agreed to explore options for the November awayday which would ensure sufficient time for Board business while taking advantage of being hosted by a local civic society (**Action 25/11 IH**).

The next meeting will be on 8 September at PWC's offices, Cornwall Street, Birmingham.