

2015
27th January 2016
11pm - 1pm
Bircham Dyson Bell

Freddie Gick (Chair)
Paul Bedwell
Joan Humble
John Kershaw
Martin Meredith
Neil Sinden
Roger Sutton
David Tittle

Staff

Ian Harvey

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Christine Furminger and Phil Douce

2. Draft minutes of November meetings.

- Subject to minor changes, the board approved the minutes from the board meeting in November (London)

3. Governance and Induction Process

The board was asked to assist in its continual development and ensure good governance of the organisation by considering a paper on “performance appraisal”.

As part of the Trustee’s code of practice (that all trustees were provided in November 2015) it was explained that a high performing board “*should regularly review and assess its own performance, that of individual trustees, and of sub-committees, standing groups and other bodies and use the results to inform positive change*”.

It was agreed that to successfully carry out its responsibilities, the governing board needs to agree some broad principles about the way it works and a paper was provided stating that a good starting point according to the NCVO were to consider the following questions for a board to start the process of self-review:

1. Do we have the right people round the table?
2. Do we all understand the role and responsibilities of the governing board and do we each share that vision?
3. Do we have good chairing and well-structured meetings?
4. Professional clerking to support the trustees?
5. Do we have good working relationships based on trust and respect?
6. Do we know the organisation – the data, the staff, the membership?
7. Are we committed to asking challenging questions?

Following a discussion, the board agreed that we should ensure that we have a good working relationship based on trust and respect and to look at the self-review in detail at the away day.

Action

- Agreed for IH to put self-review on the away day agenda

4. Risk Register

IH introduced an updated Civic Voice Risk Register and explained that charity trustees should regularly review and assess the risk faced by the charity in all areas of its work and plan for the management of those risks.

IH explained that following on feedback from the previous meeting, we have made the risk register a standing item on the board agenda and it has been changed to that is it is easier to see the key subjects of Governance, Finance, Legal and Staffing.

Neil Sinden stated that he welcomed receiving such a document and felt it was long needed for Civic Voice to meet our governance obligations and stated that he wanted to see the Risk Register as a high priority item on all future board meetings.

When asked about why Civic Day was not getting enough attention, IH explained that he would love to put more resources into Civic Day, but until we are in a position to take forward the APPG and War Memorial program, this would not be possible. IH explained that a decision was taken by the board in November to prioritise APPG and War Memorials and until this decision changed – whether financial or other – this would be the method until April.

On the subject of projects, IH gave a short update on Civic Design Awards and explained that Max Farrell is returning as the chair of the judges this year with Rob Cowan, Sophia de Sousa and Tracy Mellor all to follow suit in their respectful roles. It was important to have Max Farrell involved as he gives us additional gravitas and also ensured we got Sir Terry Farrell to deliver the lecture. It was explained though that funding is key if we want to keep the Civic Voice Design Awards going in future years. Paul Bedwell explained that he is looking at options.

IH also explained the importance of the APPG but also stated the risks associated with it. We are fortunate that both Craig Mackinlay MP and William Wragg MP (new APPG chair and vice chair) have both kindly agreed to support the APPG and access us rooms i.e. Attlee Suite, but if we don't demonstrate the value of this group, we may well lose their current interest. IH explained that having the APPG may be resources heavy but it is a key part of our long term development.

A discussion centred on the importance of managing risk and in particular looking at our key assets of key staff and that we should have a plan in place if Griff Rhys Jones ever decides to depart the organisation.

5. Succession Planning

Freddie introduced a paper setting out thoughts in relation to succession planning and the challenge that the organisation faces in the next 18 months with a number of trustees departing the board. he stated that it is the responsibility of the full board to manage the transition and to agree who the new Chair should be.

IH explained that we had previously requested feedback on job descriptions for trustees for position of Chair, Treasure and Trustee and the feedback was limited so we are in a difficult position to know what the board want from a Chair until this can be signed off.

Joan Humble that we shouldn't try and micros manage the approach and that the appointment of a strong deputy and treasurer is as important as the Chair and that we may not need a Chair to do the job in the same way as Freddie. It was pointed out that this was part of the reason we need individual trustees to agree time commitments as it will help with knowing what the role of a future Chair might look like.

Paul Bedwell stated that we should all start thinking about people we know that we believe would be suitable for the organisation.

IH asked the group if anyone around the board had an interest in becoming Chair because if someone who wants to be Chair is already present, this may help streamline the process in searching our external individuals. Joan Humble and John Kershaw both expressed an interest in standing as Chair.

It was agreed that as Phil Douce and Christine Furminger were not present, it would not be right to agree a process/make any decision that could impact them so to bring this item up at the next meeting.

After another discussion, it was agreed that bringing fresh blood into the organisation is always a positive thing so it was agreed to undertake an external advert to announce that we are looking for Trustees in place such as Heritage Update

It was agreed:

- Neil Sinden to take forward the process in advertising for new trustees
- For Freddie to provide an update to the next board on his regular activities so that the board have an understanding about what the role could look like

6. Chair's update

Freddie agreed to provide a short update on his current activities via email.

Noted:

- The Grade II project continues and we are on track for an April submission date
- Baroness Andrews has agreed to act as an advocate for Civic Voice in the House of Lords
- The All Party Parliamentary Group for Civic Societies has a busy program of work over the next few months and we need to consider that not every Trustee will need to attend or even be required to attend.
- Freddie stated that he would be attending the AGM of ASHTAV and the Historic Towns Forum as well as making visits to Cockermonth and Southgate for several days.
- Resources are tight as an organisation and we should ensure we make best use of all resources, whether financial or staffing as best required for the objectives of the organisations

7. Finance Update

Martin Meredith provided a financial update

8. Membership Committee Update

The membership sub-committee reported back and said they are planning another meeting. IH updated the group and said there were 31 out of 273 2014/15 meaning we have an 89% retention in membership and that we are currently finalising a membership A-Z leaflet as part of our membership renewals.

We are also finalising our latest insurance agreement with Lockton Insurance. IH explained that the sum total of individual civic societies taking out insurance came to £32,743.30 and that this is an increase from the previous year of £30,000. We will be looking during 2016-2017 to see if any options exist for a "bulk buy" in insurance as an extra benefit to all civic societies. This will be considered as part of a review.

9. Private Item

It was agreed to approve extensions subject to receiving additional confirmation from Historic England about how we can "roll over" our spending on war memorials.

Action for Martin Meredith to complete the War Memorial Claim and seek approval. Any decision to implement this would be taken by the finance committee.

Future meetings

All future meeting dates available via <http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/about/meetings/>

