

**9<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

1pm - 4pm  
CPRE, London

Freddie Gick (Chair)  
Paul Bedwell  
Roger Sutton  
John Kershaw  
Joan Humble  
John Walker  
David Tittle

**Staff**

Ian Harvey

The following was noted:

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Martin Meredith and Neil Sinden.

Paul Bedwell had informed the Chair he would be arriving late due to personal reasons.

**2. Draft minutes of July board meeting.**

- The board approved the minutes from the board meeting in July 2015  
FG proposed and approved by JH

**3. Chair's update**

The Chair gave an update on his current activities.

**Noted:**

- That, in the absence of the Treasurer due to illness, the Chair updated the board in order to seek approval to appoint a new bookkeeper in time for the AGM.
- That a meeting with the Regional Chairman had recently taken place which was very productive. The board wished the group well and thanked Tony Fooks for his efforts so far.
- That, with regard to the HLF Grade II programme, work continued towards a Stage One HLF for December 2015 with an outcome anticipated by April 2016 and the project commencement hopefully around 12 months later.
- That at a meeting held with the Localism Alliance, Freddie Gick chairing, it was agreed to submit an updated paper to DCLG on the role of the Alliance. The group also considered how to respond to the review of the Localism Act later this year and how the Localism Alliance could input to this.
- That the success of the Cheltenham Civic Society in recently having 24 Assets of Community Value listed be noted. The Chair reminded the board that our membership had voted at the AGM last year for this to be a campaign for 2015.

**Agreed:**

- That a bookkeeper, as recommended by the Treasurer and finance committee (and previously agreed in January 2015), be appointed.
- That the JURA report about the Grade II pilots be circulated to all Trustees to facilitate their greater understanding of the Grade II programme.
- That the Chair continue the Grade II project.

- That, building on the Assets of Community Value campaign, Civic Voice submit a response to the review of the Localism Act with the guidance of the expert panel.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer was absent due to illness.

#### **Agreed:**

- That in the light of the Treasurer not being available, to reduce further risk to the organisation, the finance committee formally meet one week before each board meeting.
- That, at that meeting, the finance committee collectively agree how to present the figures to the board.
- That finance reports be prepared up to the close of business for the previous month.

#### **5. Annual Report and Accounts**

The latest annual report and accounts previously circulated to all trustees were unanimously approved.

- John Walker proposing
- Joan Humble seconding

#### **6. Succession Planning**

The Chair introduced a paper on succession planning and explained that, in order to ensure a continually effective and diverse board, it is important to plan ahead. Looking to the next 2-3 years, a challenging period lies ahead on several fronts, one of which is that the terms of office of the current Chair, Deputy and Treasurer all end in 2016.

Governance has also never been more important in the not for profit sector. The recent challenges faced by Kids Company Charity and the media exposure generated has demonstrated the importance of charity trustees being aware of their responsibilities to the organisation.

#### **Noted:**

- That one of the big challenges that Civic Voice will always face is that, although a national organisation, our members have a local focus.
- That DT proposed we look outside the civic movement for additional trustees and consider the private and voluntary sector. JH supported this idea and the need to identify trustees with the right skills and background wherever they come from. JW said the example of Neil Sinden being from outside the movement was a clear demonstration of the benefit to Civic Voice of co-opted individuals.
- That contacts who want to support the organisation can do so without becoming Trustees in a similar way to the expert panel and PR panel.

The board held a discussion about whether they should accept collective responsibility for succession planning due to the fact that only some are elected by the membership.

#### **Agreed:**

- That board members have collective responsibility for *managing* the process of succession planning.
- That board members give their consideration to identifying external individuals who can be co-opted to the board in November.

#### **7. Risk Register**

As no risks were agreed by the board at its meeting in July, the latest draft of a strategic risk register for Civic Voice was introduced by FG.

If approved, the risk register will be included in all future board meetings and disseminated to staff as part of the ongoing development of Civic Voice's management processes.

IH explained that following no feedback on risks from trustees since the July board meeting, the Civic Voice team had held an away day and were putting forward the attached items for discussion as very much a way to stimulate discussion and that the draft risks should be no way seen as final.

A discussion about the draft risk management register followed.

**Noted**

That there had been difficulty in printing off the current version and a print friendly version be prepared.

**Agreed:**

- That the risk register be produced in a printer friendly format.
- That the risk register wording be phrased so that it is looking to the future.
- That all Trustees feedback on what they see as the risks.
- That the team make the risks more specific to Civic Voice.
- That the risks be allocated a grade of 1 – 5 based on likelihood and that likelihood and impact be split out.

**8. PR Panel**

The Chair introduced a paper and explained that Civic Voice has organised a roundtable discussion with a number of individuals who are members of local civic societies and have background experience in marketing and communications.

Civic Voice is a strong and growing organisation which supports, and leads, a huge range of activity around the country but there is a very significant gap in the way in which Civic Voice, as an organisation, and the movement, as an entity, present themselves. The aim is to develop a panel which will strategically address how to develop an integrated, cohesive and compelling public profile for Civic Voice and the movement as a whole.

A short discussion followed on who we are aiming our message at, what we are talking about and how we currently undertake our media. The board also noted that whilst many civic societies emphasise they lack media coverage, it was noted that many do not send out regular press releases or have an appointed communications person.

RS explained that most days of the week you see the National Trust in the media and it should be the same for Civic Voice. All agreed but recognised the challenges with resources in making this happen and that we need to be realistic about what can be achieved.

**Agreed:**

- That the group be given the best wishes of the Board and the Chair and Director proceed as necessary.

**9. Civic Voice Priorities**

IH explained to the board that he is worried about the number of projects and current demands on the team with many staff working more than the hours they are legally required. Whilst this may be necessary in the short term, it was now becoming an issue that he is concerned about. With funding not allowing for additional resource, priorities need to be agreed so we can consider how to take forward less pressing matters. It was clear that the available capacity restricts what it is possible to deliver.

It was agreed that, when we were established, our role would be to provide information, support and advice to civic societies; facilitate civic societies to network and cluster together, be a national lead and voice for the movement, provide inspiration, direction, lobby and raise its profile. It is now the right time to review this list of priorities.

A short discussion followed consideration of the main projects.

**Noted:**

- That without improving our membership service we are likely to lose members.
- That we have to look at the office structure to ensure members get the best service.
- That membership services constitute not solely picking up the phone, and that providing national leadership, delivering campaigns and raising awareness are all indirect membership benefits.
- That our priority should be to deliver what our membership can't which suggests that national leadership and direction should be our focus.

**Agreed:**

- That the structure of the office and current staffing be reviewed
- That a set of FAQs be developed and made available on the website.
- That names, roles and areas of responsibility of members of staff be made available on the website.

The board did not agree a list of priorities for the organisation.

**10. Annual Review**

The board noted the paper.

**11. Membership**

The membership sub-committee reported back on its current activities.

The board agreed items 1-7 of the Sub Committee minutes with the following recommendations:

- That a database of all civic societies based on the Civic Trust records showing current members, past members, potential members be established.
- That the database be able to generate invitations to join, reminder letters, thank you letters.
- That letters be used in preference to electronic communication unless otherwise requested.
- That responses to members' queries, emails and letters be improved.
- That this database be made available to trustees through an intranet or similar process.
- That the database be linked to other aspects of membership including payment records, participation in projects – war memorials, ACVs etc.
- That membership records be the responsibility of a single named person.
- That membership be placed high on the agenda of each Board meeting.

**Agreed:**

- That the membership sub-committee consult with the regions as part of future discussion.

**12. Civic Voice expert panel**

A verbal update was provided on the expert panel

The board approved the formal appointment of the panel and it will meet for the first time in October at the Civic Voice AGM. The members will be

Bruce Barnett, Colin Davis, Peter Cartwright, Dave Chetwyn, Elizabeth Motley, Frances Brill, Jon Rowland, Michael Bach, Mike Jenks and Charles Wagner.

**13. AOB**

No any other business

**14. Private Business**

Staff left the room and the board moved into a private item.

Future meetings

Away day, November 4<sup>th</sup>

Convention in Bristol

\_23rd/24th October 2015