



Board Meeting
The Coffin Works- 30th January 2018 1pm-4pm

Present:

Joan Humble (Chair)
Mary Ash
Paul Bedwell
Phil Douce
David Evans
Martin Gunson (Treasurer)
Gavin Orton
Chris Winter

Ian Harvey (Executive Director)

1. Welcome and introductions.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Board meeting.

2. Apologies.

No apologies as all present

3. Draft Minutes from December 2017 meeting

The minutes were approved pending changes to:

POINT 11. It should say 3.2 not 3.3

4. Matters arising

The minutes of the Finance committee need to be issued and a new meeting arranged.

5. Staff and Team update

A written update had been submitted from the team and was provided to the board on the current situation for Civic Voice. It was noted that: -

- We would issue a formal report ahead of each meeting instead of a verbal report to allow members to consider beforehand and that it will be structured in a way to provide an update on activities and to highlight key funding plans
- It was noted that we are moving forward in the strategy, but challenges remain due to the lack of resource we have, but, the team were confident of moving forward. A particular point was raised about the work of the membership committee in clarifying issues and ensuring the organisation had clear policy on what members / non-members now received.
- It was noted that some Civic Societies are folding due to an aging membership and a lack of volunteers for officer positions.

It was agreed:

- To circulate a paper ahead of the awayday to think about possible ideas for supporting Civic Voice members to grow and not fold

- To send trustees the list of societies that “could be at risk of closing”

6. Finance Update

An 8-month finance update was provided to the board on the current situation for Civic Voice. It was noted:

- Costs are being tightened where possible with specific reference to a reduction in salaries due to the restructuring of staff from Liverpool to Birmingham; rent costs and trustee expenses have been brought under control.
- It was noted that membership fees are at the same level as 2010 when we set up and that this is something that should be reviewed in time
- Risks are still associated with our current situation especially the long-term funding picture.
- The Board discussed increasing Membership further and that the team need to be given time to focus on fundraising and income generation

It was agreed:

- To circulate the finance minutes from the November Finance meeting and to circulate scenario options for the organisation to go forward in 2019

7. Committee Updates

An update on the actions and items agreed at each of the committee meetings that had met since the last meeting was reported. In order the following:

a) Governance Committee

All actions were agreed by the board to be taken forward as part of the Strategic Plan

- It was agreed to circulate all Regional Forum dates to the board for information
- It was agreed to circulate the latest list of MPs signed up to the APPG for Civic Societies

b) Fundraising committee

All actions agreed

- Following a discussion, it was agreed for Chris Winter to work on the next draft of the fundraising strategy and to circulate it ahead of the Civic Voice Awayday to fellow trustees

c) Membership Committee

- All actions were agreed by the board to be taken forward as part of the Strategic Plan

d) Regional forum

- All actions were agreed by the board to be taken forward as part of the Strategic Plan

8. Membership Fee 2018-2019

The Deputy Chair provided an update on the work that had taken place since the last board meeting on the membership fee.

It was noted that:

- The Membership, Governance and Fundraising committees were all recommending that any change to the membership fee should not take place until a consultation with the members had taken place during 2018
- There is no requirement to obtain the agreement of members, but the board agreed to consult members as this would demonstrate we are living our values

It was agreed

- It was agreed that for Civic Voice's long-term sustainability we should consider a change to the fee.
- For the Deputy Chair to lead a piece of work to undertake consultation with members on the 2019-2020 membership fee

9. Relationship of ACT within Civic Voice

David Evans introduced a paper that outlined how ACT might work within the strategy of Civic Voice

It was noted during a discussion that:

- Some trustees felt that mutual benefits exist, and a strengthened partnership could enhance and benefit both ACT and Civic Voice. Others disagreed.
- Some trustees felt that ACT did not fit in with the current strategic plan and overrode Civic Voice policy to work with Civic Voice members. Others disagreed.
- Some trustees believe that Act had organised itself as a separate organisation. Others disagreed.
- Some trustees felt that ACT was doing good work and perhaps would be constrained by being within the Civic Voice strategy as they wouldn't get the focus and attention they may wish. Others disagreed.

The Chair then called the discussion and recommended a vote on the question that "If we accepted the paper, it would undermine the work that Civic Voice had done to build a cohesive membership and strategic plan"

A vote supported the motion with 5 for and 3 against:

It was agreed:

- To not accept the terms and conditions as set out on the ACT paper
- To report this back to the ACT Committee and wish them well and that in time other discussions could take place
- For the avoidance of doubt to pay all expenses on ACT work to David Evans and Chris Winter that were outstanding

10. Constitution Review

A paper was introduced from the Governance Committee expressing a need to review the constitution during 2018.

It was noted:

- As recommended by the Charity Commission, it was a sensible thing to review the constitution periodically
- That no one wanted to do more work than was necessary, but it was important that the constitution was fit for purpose

- We should always be looking to follow best practice as recommended by the charity commission

It was agreed:

- Martin Gunson to consider speaking with a colleague about providing advice
- The Governance committee to manage this programme of work and not the staff team

11. Annual Convention 2018, Birmingham

Gavin Orton provided an update on the Annual Convention 2018: It was noted:

- A new dedicated website has been created to make it easier for people to find information out about the convention
- That the line-up of speakers was excellent and a credit to Civic Voice that we have been able to attract such high-level speakers
- That the board liked the general direction of travel that the convention was going in and that they were pleased we were so far ahead than we have been in previous years

It was agreed:

- For ticket fees to be priced approx. £250 for people to attend, but to have a reduced Civic Voice member ticket fee to demonstrate a membership benefits
- To delegate to the Membership committee the final decision on ticket fees
- To publish the final version of the convention website and to go live with bookings in March 2018 (after the next set of committee meetings)

12. Civic Voice Risk Register/ Civic Voice review: Update on action plan

An update was provided on the Civic Voice Risk register:

It was noted that:

- Lisa Crisp-Ullah will be working closely with the Executive Director on reviewing the Risk Register completely before April 2018, so all Trustees should expect communication to discuss various items from her.

**Chris Winter and David Evans left the meeting at this point.*

13. A.O.B

The Awayday is to take place in Manchester on February 24th and to start at 11 am.

14. End of Meeting Review

- Did everyone have the information they needed to participate? All in agreement
- Did everyone feel as though they had the chance to contribute All in agreement
- Were the appropriate decisions made? All in agreement
- How could we improve this meeting? All in agreement
- What do we want to do differently for the next meeting? It was explained that if papers could be printed out and sent to trustees ahead of meetings, that would be helpful

Actions confirmed

It was agreed:

- To circulate a paper ahead of the awayday to think about possible ideas for supporting Civic Voice members to grow and not fold
- To send trustees the list of societies that “could be at risk of closing”
- To circulate the finance minutes from the November Finance meeting and to circulate scenario options for the organisation to go forward in 2019
- It was agreed to circulate all Regional Forum dates to the board for information
- It was agreed to circulate the latest list of MPs signed up to the APPG for Civic Societies
- It was agreed that for Civic Voice’s long-term sustainability we should consider a change to the fee.
- For the Deputy Chair to lead a piece of work to undertake consultation with members on the 2019-2020 membership fee
- To not accept the terms and conditions as set out on the ACT paper
- To report this back to the ACT Committee and wish them well and that in time other discussions could take place
- For the avoidance of doubt to pay all expenses on ACT work to David Evans and Chris Winter that were outstanding
- For ticket fees to be priced approx. £250 for people to attend, but to have a reduced Civic Voice member ticket fee to demonstrate a membership benefits
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The meeting finished at 4pm.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on the 24th February as an Awayday in Manchester.

See all meetings here:

www.civicvoice.org.uk/about/meetings/