



Board of Trustees

Civic Voice Board Meeting
Tuesday, 10 December 2013, 1pm - 4pm
Location: NCVO

Draft Minutes

Attendance

Freddie Gick (Chair)
John Kershaw
Helen Marcus
Martin Meredith
Neil Sinden
David Tittle
John Walker

Staff

Ian Harvey

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Gill Roxborough.

2. Minutes of meetings of September 11th and October 26th

The minutes of the Board meetings on September 11th and October 26th were agreed unanimously as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising

Noted that:

- All actions other than the preparation of a paper on governance had been completed;
- particularly in the current economic climate, Civic Voice, like other charities, needs to maintain strict control of all expenses, including those of the Trustees.

Agreed that:

- **For the moment the production of a paper on governance is not a priority;**
- **the Chairman will prepare a paper for the next Board meeting on the entitlement of staff, volunteers and Trustees to claim expenses and the process for obtaining approval, noting that:**
 - **Board meetings will normally be located in London with a 1pm start time, avoiding the need for any Trustee to incur overnight expenses;**
 - **claims for expenditure on overnight stays will only be met if prior approval has been given formally by the Chairman;**
 - **to maintain a tight focus on core objectives, Trustees should attend meetings with external organisations in their capacity as a Trustee of Civic Voice only if agreed by the Chairman or Ian Harvey;**
 - **Gill Roxborough be asked to attend future Board meetings in the role of Minute Secretary.**

The Board noted and thanked Helen Marcus for her kind offer to provide overnight accommodation for anyone who needs to be in London on consecutive days.

3. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer gave a verbal update on the current financial position and explained that income and expenditure are generally on track to end November.

The Treasurer explained that, at the January Board, he will have completed the seasonalisation of the budget and then will be able to provide a comparison of budget against actual for six months, and also a forecast for the full year, as the three year business plan would be completed and fully costed for agreement at that Board.

Agreed that:

- **The Chair, Treasurer and staff would meet to discuss the format of future financial reports to be in place for the January board meeting, presenting the six month results;**
- **Board papers should be circulated 7 days before the board meeting;**
- **minutes from Board meetings should be circulated within 14 days after the meeting and all comments received within 7 days. The Chair then has final approval to publish the draft minutes to the website;**
- **all agenda items to be discussed at Board meetings should be submitted to either the Chair or staff 14 days before the Board meeting.**

4. Staff update

Staff gave an update on operational activities for the period covering September 2013 to December 2013.

Noted that:

- After the flurry of activity around the AGM and Convention, there is a continued need to focus on communicating with external partners and members that Civic Voice is still in a viable position operationally and is continuing to champion the voice of the civic society movement at senior government level;
- further updates were provided on parliamentary work, current consultations, funding opportunities and membership;
- membership now stands at 244 groups. This is almost identical to the same point last year, with the same groups needing to be chased. A reminder was issued to groups who have yet to pay when the Annual Review was sent out;
- Civic Voice should use the consultation on English Heritage as an opportunity to:
 - add value and focus on one or two key arguments that we can influence;
 - gather experiences on the regulatory side of English heritage;
 - seek feedback from members on their experience with regional offices;
 - consider the relationship with government and encourage more distance to be created between advisers and ministers.

Agreed that:

- **Staff will seek feedback from members on the future of English Heritage via civic update;**
- **staff will bring a briefing to the next Board meeting for discussion at length before submitting.**

5. Awayday

The Board placed on record thanks to GR for producing the Awayday notes so quickly to ensure all Board members had a record in time for this Board meeting.

The Chairman led the Board through a discussion on the notes and thanked all for attending and contributing to a positive discussion.

Agreed that:

- **Board members to submit to HM a list of possible patrons and vice-presidents who may be prepared to support the work of Civic Voice. HM to collate list and share at January Board meeting;**
- **JW should approach the Citizenship Foundation to discover potential synergies;**
- **FG and DT will take forward discussions on the future of the Planning Panel with Dave Chetwyn and consider how it links with the manifesto;**
- **the offer of in-kind support from Bircham Dyson Bell be unanimously approved and to allow IH to work up proposals that align with the manifesto process;**
- **NS and IH to take forward discussions on strategic communications with possible support from Bircham Dyson Bell;**
- **that JK will produce a policy document on how he thinks we should be relating to regions and cluster groups.**

The Board then had a discussion over responsibilities for different areas of work for the organisation.

Agreed that:

- **MM's involvement in projects would concern financial planning and budgeting;**
- **NS and MM would be the lead trustees on local listing;**
- **DT participate in activity on leadership course, manifesto and Planning Panel;**
- **HM will produce reports outlining meetings attended, purpose of meetings and contacts made for staff to follow up re networking/ potential useful contacts/ membership support;**
- **NS will contribute to communication and PR Strategy / local listing / history launch / Civic Panel.**

6. Funding updates

A report was provided on the current and future funding opportunities. These include charitable trusts, government and private sector opportunities.

Noted that we have an opportunity to submit another proposal to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, it being one of the few organisations that provide "core office support".

Agreed that:

- **Any funding bid should be focused on obtaining core office support funding;**
- **the funding proposal should emphasise the considerable impact that the organisation has achieved on a national level within the first three years and that we are now at a critical stage in order to take the organisation and civic movement to the next level;**
- **a small team consisting of FG, JW, MM and NS would lead the preparation of a proposal;**
- **in relation to corporate support, we would concentrate on specific "asks" in relation to events aligned with the manifesto, Civic Day, publications and a newsletter/directory;**
- **FG, JW, MM and NS to meet to discuss the Esmee bid and steps involved in submitting it.**

7. Manifesto

DT led the board through a paper and discussion on the Civic Manifesto process. He explained that members have been enthusiastic and supportive of Civic Voice taking this idea forward and have so far had a number of opportunities to input to Civic Voice's thinking on this issue.

Agreed that:

- **The following seven issues be the focus for the manifesto:**

**1. The Planning System 2. Priorities for Growth 3. Town & City Centres 4. Design Quality
5. Heritage 6. The Public Realm 7. Civic Pride & Civic Action ;**

- **staff invite Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green Party representatives to speak at the Civic Voice Convention;**
- **Civic Voice has representation and attendance at the 2014 political party conferences;**
- **Civic Voice encourage civic societies to run their own “manifesto” meetings;**
- **Civic Voice organise north and south network meetings in the Spring;**
- **Civic Voice organise a civic panel of partner organisations to share our manifesto thinking.**

DT and staff to work through the above actions and to continue the work on the manifesto. It was agreed the Chair and Deputy Chair will also participate.

8. Assets of Community Value

The Chairman outlined the work we have been undertaking around Assets of Community Value.

Agreed that:

The Chairman would lead on making a funding bid to DCLG in association with other voluntary organisations in relation to listing Assets of Community Value.

9. National Civic Design award

JW led a discussion about a “National Civic Design Award”. It was explained that via the voting procedure at the AGM, a national Civic Design Award that builds on the current “local design awards” had received the largest support from members.

Agreed that:

- **The Chairman and Deputy Chairman will lead a panel to look at logistics of implementing a national Civic Design Award;**
- **while both the Garden Check and Civicwatch initiatives are excellent and have worthy merit, due to limited availability, resource will not be invested in these programmes at this time but that they will be shared via civic update for local groups to pick up as they wish.**

10. Civic Day 2014

The Board discussed the importance of Civic Day becoming a central part of the civic society movement calendar and how we could add further value to it while trying to integrate it more with other projects we do.

Noted that, since Civic Day started as a national event in 2010, over 1,000 activities have been organised by civic society groups across the country.

Agreed that:

- **We should have a theme; “What We Value”, which encourages people to nominate local sites/buildings that they value and which can link to activity around local listing, assets of community value and war memorials. We would also encourage**

groups to consider issues around the manifesto. It was decided that this theme should be central to the Spring Network events;

- staff will speak with DCLG about using a minister to help launch Civic Day in Spring;
- staff to check availability of free rooms at Houses of Parliament, following on from JK's suggestion that there may be rooms in which food and refreshments may be brought in from outside.

11. Annual Convention

The Board discussed the format of future Conventions and how we can make the annual Convention more appealing to more members. It was considered that we should promote the annual gathering to other civic, community, heritage and environmental activists from organisations other than civic societies as a way of attracting them in and as part of the strategy for expanding our membership.

Agreed that:

- The AGM be held at 9am on Saturday morning so that we can ensure members who work during the week can still attend;
- JW will bring the cost of the AGM to the January board meeting and that GR will make a visit to Canterbury early in the New Year to review the venue;
- external organisations will again be invited to consider running workshops and holding stands during the event.

12. AOB

The Chair explained that for the avoidance of any doubt, all actions from the minutes are to be implemented in time to be updated at the January board meeting.

Agreed that:

- The question of naming individuals in making reports on meetings be considered at a future date;
- the September board meeting in 2014 will be in Manchester to align with the Labour Party Conference;
- at the request of the Chairman it be minuted that the Board should be prepared to invest extra financial resource to ensure that there is more support for the staff, demonstrating that the Board is forward looking and confident in its plans for building the organisation;
- the staff and treasurer to put a proposal to the board setting out our long term staffing needs in light of the programme of work/business plan being accepted;
- the words 'private business' be used on the agenda in future to denote matters for which staff members will not normally be present.

13. Private Business

Future meetings

January 28, March 25, May 27, July 22, September 23 (Manchester) November 25,

All Board meetings at CPRE unless specifically stated.

Convention in Canterbury

24th/25th October 2014

Awayday

4th November 2014