



Civic Voice Board of Trustees meeting.
The Coffin Works- 25th April 2018 1pm-4pm

Present:

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

Present: Ian Harvey (Executive Director)

1. Welcome and introductions.

As train problems meant Joan Humble was running late, the Deputy Chair welcomed everyone to the 45th Civic Voice Board of Trustees meeting.

2. Apologies.

Received from Mary Ash and Paul Bedwell

3. Draft Minutes from December 2017 meeting

The minutes were approved pending changes to:

- David Evans stayed until the end of the meeting and didn't leave with Chris Winter.
- To clarify wording on the "End of Review meeting items as not all were "All in agreement".

It was noted:

- Feedback from the Alliance of Cathedral Towns and Cities committee stated that they found the decision by the Civic Voice board difficult to understand in the context of what Civic Voice was trying to achieve.
- David Evans confirmed that the ACT committee planned to carry on with other alliances.

4. 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: -

- It had been a particularly busy period with the introduction of the draft National Planning Policy Framework and trying to organise a response, on top of our daily activities

It was agreed:

- **To undertake a cost benefit analysis of the costs talks that we do for Civic Voice.**

**Chris Winter and Joan Humble arrived at this point.
Joan Humble thanked Phil Douce for Chairing the meeting to this point.*

5. Individual Trustee Updates

David Evans provided an update on the Larger Societies meeting:

It was noted that:

- Civic Societies from Bewdley, Sid Vale, Oxford, Knowle, Bristol, Lytham St Annes, Bath, Winchester, Chester and Royal Tunbridge Wells all attended the meeting.

- Concerns about communication (in both directions) between societies and Civic Voice
- Pretty much universal hostility to any subscription increase
- Willingness to consider paying for courses and training
- Usual worries about ageing membership
- Wish to have autumn meeting separate from the Convention.
- Joan added that she had been asked to provide a copy of her presentation to those present.

Ian Harvey provided an update on behalf of Mary Ash. It was explained that Mary had been working behind the scenes to try and establish a network of civic societies in the East of England. Ian was pleased to report that the first meeting had taken place on April 21st and that the group had agreed to meet again on September 21st 2018 in Great Yarmouth.

Ian Harvey provided an update on behalf of Paul Bedwell: Paul had been supporting the Civic Voice team throughout the draft NPPF consultation and had spoken at a Parliamentary meeting for Civic Voice. He had also attended the Get Serious on Design debate and was absent from the board meeting today due to Civic Voice being invited to a summit hosted by the Secretary of State on housing.

It was agreed:

- To call future meetings of the APPG for Civic Societies “Parliamentary Meetings”. (Ian Harvey)
- For the Civic Voice team to issue the notes from the meeting to the attendees and other Larger Societies. (Ian Harvey)
- To arrange another meeting in the Autumn, before the annual conference. (David Evans)

6. Finance Update

An 11-month finance update was provided to the board on the current situation for Civic Voice. It was noted:

- Lots of organisations are in the same situation as Civic Voice with financial challenges. We need to continue to try to access other income streams. Thoughts around individual membership, charitable foundations and paid for activities were discussed as possible solutions, with the recognition that all have resource challenges around them,
- 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:

- Provisional finance meeting dates have been set for the next 12 months
- We are again reviewing the insurance policy on offer to Civic Voice and to our members to ensure we get the most comprehensive coverage
- We will be exploring gift aid to generate additional income via individuals

7. Annual Convention 2018, Birmingham

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

- 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 organisation would be putting itself at huge risk by proceeding with the contract.
- To mitigate this risk, can we negotiate the contract so that we sign a contract with a minimum payment for (150 people) recognizing that we will have more delegates, but this will reduce the risk on Civic Voice if we don't get those delegates
- Recognised that we can cancel without penalty before 15th June.
- The Chair explained that as Trustees we have a legal responsibility to safeguard and protect the organisations assets and future.

- The Executive Director wanted clarification as early as possible about the responsibilities of the office and clear roles defined for Trustees and members of Birmingham Civic Society to ensure we know who is doing what. The ED shared his concern based on his experience of previous years.
- That we should continue with a Plan B option as a safety net

It was agreed:

- Formal proposal from Martin Gunson to authorize Gavin Orton to sign a contract with Rep Theatre. 16th June is the sign off date. All trustees agreed. Chair Abstained.
- Delegate the contract to Gavin Orton to sign with the Rep Theater based on being able to sign a contract for a minimum of 150 minimum delegates
- Make enquiries about looking at Plan B and clarifying the role of staff, Trustees and Birmingham members.

8. Committee Updates

An update on the actions and items agreed at each of the committee meetings that had met since the last meeting was tabled and all actions were agreed from the sub committees.

9. 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.

10. National Planning Policy Framework

The Executive Director introduced a paper outlining Civic Voice's thoughts on the draft National Planning Policy Framework. It was noted

- On 6th March, the Prime Minister announced that the Government would be undertaking a consultation to review planning rules to make it easier build the homes that the nation needs.
- The consultation has now been released and is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-planning-policy-framework-and-developer-contribution-consultations>
- Civic Voice's have started to read though the draft new NPPF to spot matters of possible relevance to Civic Voice and local communities. In general, the feedback we are receiving is that the changes are good and some areas in which there has been doubt have been clarified and most of the previous policies are retained.
- Paul Bedwell has been working with the Civic Voice team throughout this period and was selected to represent the board at the APPG for Civic Societies meeting discussing the NPPF with RTPI and CPRE. We managed to arrange this meeting with 7 days of the draft NPPF being published.
- It was explained that we are keen to represent the views of the civic movement in our lobbying and welcome feedback on any of the live consultations below. This should be sent to info@civicvoice.org.uk by the date 8th May 2018.

11. Big Conservation Conversation

The Chair introduced the latest update on the Big Conservation Conversation and explained that we are having a meeting on May 8th to launch a new report and website. It was noted:

- That Phil Douce had been working with the team and representatives of the team on pulling together the Big Conservation Conversation campaign.

- The report summarises the Big Conservation Conversation and our subsequent research into the conservation areas and how they are being managed by local authorities across the country.
- By highlighting the real experiences of civic societies looking to protect their conversation area, the report aims to tell the story behind the statistics.
- The aim of the report is to clearly summarise and share experiences of some of the issues affecting conservation areas today. We use the report to highlight examples of what Civic Voice members view as innovative ways of working, what works, and what doesn't in managing conservation areas.
- We make recommendations on how conservation areas can be better protected and managed in the future.
- That Civic Voice had shared our findings and campaign calls with Historic England and National Trust who both welcomed the approach we were taking.

It was agreed:

- To focus the June 6th Parliamentary meeting on “How communities are championing conservation areas” and to use it as a call to action to participate in Civic Day 2018.

12. A.O.B

No other business other than the Chair wishing everyone a safe journey home following on from the earlier rail disruption.

13. 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 accepted the decisions being made.
- How could we improve this meeting? No comments
- What do we want to do differently for the next meeting? No comments.

The meeting finished at 4.05pm.

ACTIONS:

- **To undertake a cost benefit analysis of the costs talks that we do for Civic Voice.**
- To call future meetings of the APPG for Civic Societies “Parliamentary Meetings”. (Ian Harvey)
- For the Civic Voice team to issue the notes from the meeting to the attendees and other Larger Societies. (Ian Harvey)
- To arrange another meeting in the Autumn, before the annual conference. (David Evans)
- To explore gift aid to generate additional income via individuals
- Formal proposal from Martin Gunson to authorize Gavin Orton to sign a contract with Rep Theatre. 16th June is the sign off date. All trustees agreed. Chair Abstained.
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Next meeting dates

July 25th, 2018

September 19th, 2018

December 13th 2018

March 13th 2019