



Board of Trustees

DRAFT MINUTES 21st July 2015

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

Staff:

Ian Harvey

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from John Walker and Neil Sinden

2. Draft Minutes of July meeting and matters arising

A discussion was had around the late submission of papers and the lack of previous circulation of draft minutes.

It was agreed that:

- In future we would return to the previous agreement to circulate draft minutes one week after the meeting
- To submit board papers no later than the Friday before the meeting to allow people to review over the weekend.
- No corrections were made to the minutes and they were approved in full.

Matters arising

- It was noted that the All Party Parliamentary Group should have been registered by July 7th but that this unfortunately did not happen.
- IH has received advice from our political advisors, Bircham Dyson Bell that we need to take a five year approach to our campaigning so the priority should be appointing the right Chair as that will have longer term benefits.
- It was agreed to follow up with a meeting with Nigel Huddleston MP following on from his talk to West Midlands groups.
- JH made it clear that we should not dismiss the House of Lords as they can be effective in campaigning

- DT updated the board on the expert panel and explained we have 4 people signed up and 4 more names have been shared. The group is aimed to be in place for October's AGM

3. Chair's update

The Chair gave an update on activities

It was noted that

- A letter had been drafted to a number of national companies to discuss partnerships. This has led to meetings with United Utilities, Barratt Homes and Ecclesiastical Insurances:
- Meetings have continued with various Government departments including DCMS and DCLG
- The Chair had attended the DCLG Community Partnership Board which was attended by new Communities Minister, Marcus Jones MP. A letter has been sent to Marcus Jones seeking a meeting
- A meeting is in the diary to meet with Planning Minister, Brandon Lewis MP

The board were unanimous in thanking the Chair for his dedication to Civic Voice during a difficult period.

4. Treasurer and Finance Committee Report

MM circulated a financial report explaining the current situation and explained the process in getting our Annual Accounts signed off in line with Charity Commission rules.

A discussion was had about restricted and unrestricted funding. It was agreed that whilst we may have a surplus on various budget lines we are not currently paying our way without project support.

It was agreed that

- Review the income for the AGM in 2014 to clarify overall ticket sales (IH)
- FG to produce draft Trustees report by end July
- . (FG)
- MM will produce the full accounts to be sent to the Independent Examiner and their report will be presented to September Board.. (MM)

5. Programme Update

IH explained that as we have now introduced a bi-weekly report, the full programme update will now change. The update at board meeting will now consist only of items where a strategic decision impacting on operations is required. Otherwise, Trustees will be kept up to date on programme activities/meetings etc in the new bi-weekly report.

It was agreed

- To take forward the Civic Survey and announce results at AGM (IH)
- To take forward the Design Awards for a second year but to leave the operational details to the sub-group (JW/RS)

- To send a formal thanks to Ben Murray, Gill Roxborough and Sarah James for the work on the awards (IH)
- To ask JW and RS to lead on sponsorship for the Design Awards (JW/RS)
- All asked to feed to Ben Murray thoughts on how to improve for next year (ALL)

6. Civic Voice Priorities

IH introduced the discussion and asked the board to consider what they felt were the priorities for Civic Voice. The board were asked to consider:

1. What are the highest priorities in your view for Civic Voice:
 - a. Providing information, support and advice to civic societies
 - b. Facilitating civic societies to network and cluster together
 - c. Being a national lead and voice for the movement, providing inspiration direction, lobbying and raising its profile
2. Of these priorities, which do the each value the most?

It was noted:

- With many conflicting priorities and a small team to deliver our work, recent events have demonstrated that we need to give consideration to delivering a coherent strategic plan
- It is clear that everything that the civic movement called for when Civic Voice set up cannot be delivered with the level of resource we have so we need to give consideration to what we do not do
- The movement will not pay its way and this was the fundamental issue that the Civic Trust was never able to meet.

It was agreed:

- To introduce a membership drive to increase Civic Voice membership
- A sub-group to be established to lead and deliver such a membership drive.
- The sub-group would be Paul Bedwell, John Kershaw, Roger Sutton and Joan Humble
- It was agreed that Roger Sutton would develop an Aunt Sally to start the discussion (RS)

The board did not agree a set of priorities for Civic Voice.

7. Project proposal - Historic England support

FG introduced a paper that describes a project to receive final support from Historic England to allow Civic Voice to undertake a review of the past five years and to help us achieve greater sustainability over the next five years.

It was noted:

- The main problem for a lot of voluntary organisations in generating sustainable core income and that memberships rarely cover activities
- Fundraising should be given a greater focus within the project brief

- A fundamental review of the Articles of Association would not be something that is supported by the board although the scope of the review should not be constrained in any way"
- The quality of the consultant will be a major factor in how effective the project is and due consideration needs to be given to the appointment

It was agreed:

- To proceed with this project and to thank Historic England for the opportunity and to allow the Chair and Executive Director to continue conversations (FG/IH)
- The board agreed to contribute up to 25% if this was a requirement for the project to go ahead. This would need email approval if outside the dates of board meetings. (FG)
- Historic England should be offered a seat on the final interview panel (FG)

8. First Steps Contract

IH introduced a paper and asked for full board approval to sign the contract to confirm our role as a partner in the delivery of the First Steps contract for 2015-16. The project is being managed and administered by CDF (Community Development Foundation) on behalf of Locality.

The contract between Civic Voice and CDF primarily requires Civic Voice to provide a 'Relationship Manager' to provide direct support and advice to five community groups, who are taking their 'first steps' into community rights.

The five organisations/areas allocated to Civic Voice are:

- Whalley Rangers/Withington Road Shopping Area; Whalley Range/Moss Side, Manchester
- Trafford African and Caribbean Over 50s Club; Old Trafford, Manchester
- Hazlehurst Studios Old Town, Runcorn; Runcorn, Halton, Cheshire
- SEED Enterprises CIC/ Ellesmere Port; Ellesmere Port, Cheshire
- Stacksteads Countryside Park Group; Rossendale, Lancashire

The board held a discussion

- It was agreed that a strategy to grow Civic Voice membership should be focused on groups that are interested in "civic action" work (IH) This should tie in with the sub-group.
- It was felt that we should try to identify more areas next year so we can generate additional income for the organisation (IH)
- It was agreed to sign the contracts and proceed with the work (IH)

9. Membership Renewals

IH gave an update on membership renewals and explained that to date membership subscriptions have been received.

The board discussed the importance of membership and agreed that a strategy for growing membership should be at the heart of the organisation. It was agreed for a sub-group to take this idea forward. (IH)

10. Risk Management Register

IH introduced a paper and asked the Board to review the strategic risk register as identified at the Away day in November 2014.

It was noted

- Trustees agreed that this was an important subject and needs to be kept under review
- We need to consider the likelihood of each risk and the severity of the impact on the organisation.

It was agreed that

- All Trustees to feedback on risks they believe we face (ALL)
- The risk register will be updated and shared with Trustees at every meeting (IH)
- The risk register will be disseminated to staff as part of the ongoing development of Civic Voice's management processes. (IH)

11. Trustees and AGM Elections

IH introduced a paper that made proposals for the Civic Voice Board elections at the October AGM. The Board were asked to approve the approach to Board appointments.

It was noted that:

- We should look to recruit the maximum of three candidates
- Recognise that although member groups can vote for up to three candidates that also have the option to vote for one candidate.
- Trustees should talk to individuals that they know who have a strategic outlook and can see the "bigger civic society picture" and ask them to consider to stand

It was agreed that:

- Accept the paper and implement a recruitment process (IH)
- To change the Trustee role description to include "The roles of the Trustees are to "come on board and where needed undertake activities to support the executive of the organisation". (IH)

12. Heritage Lottery Fund Bid

FG summarised the Grade II HLF project

It was noted that:

- Change of emphasis from the previous bid is to make sure the 20000 buildings are surveyed – a flotilla of heritage volunteers – come forward who have become active heritage volunteers.
- The target will be to put together a new application in time for February. If successful this would open up funding for a Stage 2 bid.
- The whole project would be unlikely to be funded for 18 months' time.

It was agreed for the Chair to move forward this project on the above basis. (FG)

13. Private Item:

The Board moved into a private item.

14. AOB

Although recognising the challenges in finding a suitable date that does not clash with other events, the board agreed to consider options for a new date for Civic Day 2016 to avoid a clash with Armed Forces Day. It was noted Armed Forces Day (June 25th 2016) could be a considerable opportunity for promotion for the War Memorials Programme. (IH)