



Board of Trustees

22nd January 2015

1pm - 4pm
CPRE, London

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

Staff

Ian Harvey

The following was noted:

1. Apologies

No apologies received.

2. Matters arising

A short update was requested from Joan Humble on the Public Realm Campaign and the Street Design for All publication.

- The Chair explained that due to the manifesto being the priority for the next three months, Street Design for All will be pushed once the General Election and our manifesto campaigning have passed.
- The Chair used the moment to explain to Trustees that we are now getting to a situation whereby we are delivering several different projects that are all competing for staff resource. It was for this reason that some projects will not always be a priority when other things have a greater significance, especially projects where we have secured external funding. In addition to this, we also have to recognise that we are asking a lot from our members in regard to project participation.

It was agreed that with such a diverse set of campaigns/activities, rather than target the full membership with everything a better approach may be to target a smaller section of the membership with specific campaigns so as not to overawe people with different messages.

3. Draft minutes of away day and October board meeting.

- The board approved the minutes from the board meeting in October 2014 – FG proposed and approved by JH
- The board noted the minutes from the away day in Sheffield and accepted them as a true record of the meeting. DT proposed the minutes and JH seconded
- The board thanked Paul Bedwell and Sheffield Civic Trust for helping arrange the away day.

4. Chair update

The Chair gave an update on his current activities.

The following was noted:

- As our financial situation has changed dramatically over the past 6 months, not least due to the war memorials project, it now presents a “window” for Civic Voice. Core funding is still a challenge. We have a window over the next 3-4 years to develop alternative sustainable sources of income.
- A particular challenge is succession planning. If you look at Treasurer, Chair, DT, NS in 21 months’ time. Not just Trustees, but people who are prepared to take on the workload of such officer posts.
- Meeting with the Regional Chairman – very productive meeting and we wish the group well

A short discussion then followed

- A general feeling existed that there is a need to refresh the Civic Voice Planning Panel as we approach our fifth anniversary.
- JH raised an article about the Mayor of London who can overturn local planning decisions. If there are any civic societies in the local area, Civic Voice should approach them and to flag up the fact that we have a manifesto and ask them to utilise the contents of the manifesto.
- Picking up the point about succession planning, NS is to stand down at AGM raising the issue of how the board may want to fill the vacancy. It is good for Civic Voice to have someone from outside the civic society movement to continue to contribute to the thoughts of Civic Voice. NS happy to help FG and IH with the succession planning for his role.

It was agreed

- In principle to set up a “panel” and that, for the next meeting, we table a proposal setting out what the group will look like. DT to help pull this together. Agreed to give the group a working title “Expert Advisory Panel” and to have a new panel in place for the AGM. JW Action. Any thoughts to DT.
- JW would approach the journalist Rowan Moore to see if he was interested in attending the launch of the Civic Voice manifesto
- The Chair agreed with the board that his role will be dedicated to Public Relations, core funding and succession planning.

5. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported on the current financial situation. It was noted that:

- a funding announcement just before the meeting had significantly altered the situation from that shown in the written report.
- the approach in 2013/14 had focussed on acquiring income from short term projects including local heritage listing, war memorials and ACV listing projects. This has helped on several fronts as it stimulated activity within the movement, contributed to core costs and raised the campaigning profile.
- the organisations finances had become much more complex and now required further professional and policy input consistent with good governance.
- David Tittle expressed the view that there was a need to carry out a comprehensive review of our financial management.

It was agreed that:

- a review of our financial systems, procedures, policies and general management should be undertaken to ensure compliance with sound governance policies and practices.
- an appropriately qualified book keeper be appointed to undertake the basic accounting / financial transactions.

6. Funding updates

The Chair introduced a paper on the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation. It was noted that whilst Esmee Fairbairn are not prepared to support a bid focused on core funding, they are willing to consider an application that is project specific.

It was noted that:

- We should bid for a project focused on building Civic Day over the next 3-5 years
- To make Civic Day a national programme, comparable with Heritage Open Days (4 staff) it will require substantial development such as PR and social media investment
- We had to demonstrate the difference between the civic day philosophy and heritage. Much more about people and less about place.

It was agreed:

- To take forward an application to Esmee Fairbairn Foundation for a full time member of staff to act as a development officer for three years.
- To develop a story that states since we started three years ago, Civic Day has gone from strength to strength. Some places have shown what is possible, for example in Blackpool and Malvern, yet other areas have yet to get involved. We should celebrate what we have started, but accept that much more is possible.
- To confirm it would be a full time development officer post that would take forward Civic Day and would be a bridging fund until corporate support could sustain Civic Day in a way the Peoples Post Code is now supporting Heritage Open Days.

7. Community Rights and Assets

The Chair introduced a paper outlining a potential joint funding proposal with the Tenant Participation and Advisory Service. The following was noted:

- The project would involve Civic Voice and TPAS working together to promote “community rights” to an audience of “housing tenant” providers between now and April. The project would involve workshops and some intensive support in Birmingham and Bristol.
- The board held a short discussion about the pros and cons of the proposal and unanimously agreed to proceed.

It was agreed:

- The Director to develop a funding bid to DCLG with TPAS as required

8. War Memorials Project Update

The Director introduced a paper on the war memorials project. It was noted that:

- The workshops leading up to April are being used as “pilots and learning opportunities” although the individuals attending will indeed go through the full procedure to ensure they are fully trained to undertake a condition survey.
- The board considered a number of measures of success to ensure we are delivering our element of the project to budget and at cost.
- With the support of Ben Murray and Clayton Jack, Anna has put together the first round of workshops. Gill Roxborough has offered excellent oversight on these workshops to ensure they link in with the wider programme of work.

It was agreed:

- All trustees should attend a workshop on the war memorial project as soon as possible. The full list of events were available on the Civic Voice website.

9. Promoting Civic Voice Manifesto

Neil Sinden and Joan Humble introduced a paper outlining a strategy for “Localism for Real” noting that :

- The manifesto presents a fantastic opportunity for the civic movement to raise its profile, nationally, regionally and locally, in the run up to the General Election on 7 May 2015.
- It was emphasised that we have gained some early success with the manifesto and our intention now should be to build on this to ensure CV achieves maximum exposure of its agenda for the next Government over the next few months.
- The board queried the purpose in Civic Voice organising hustings from a national perspective as candidates will want to raise local issues and not will not necessarily achieve that at a Civic Voice event. It was agreed that it may be better placed for us to support local groups where they run sessions.

It was agreed:

- To promote Civic Voice representation at national and local events to promote Localism for Real.
- To leave any decision on organising hustings to a sub-group to be led by NS and JH.
- To organise a regular meeting of a manifesto sub-group to monitor and review activities.

10. Sandys Lecture and 5th Anniversary

The Director introduced a discussion on the Sandys Lecture (14th April)

It was noted that:

- Simon Thurley will be delivering the 2015 Annual Sandys Lecture.
- The venue is likely to be the Grade II restored Fitzrovia Chapel in London.
- Laura Sandys has agreed to chair the lecture each year and is delighted with the choice of Simon Thurley. Griff Rhys Jones has the date in his diary and will be attending.
- Invited guests will include policy makers, politicians, members of civic groups, supporters of Civic Voice and potential corporate supporters.

It was agreed:

- To consider a publication that helped celebrate “*the civic society movement today*”. It was agreed that this could be taken forward by the Chair and Director.
- We should celebrate reaching our 5th anniversary by giving consideration to a “publication” that helps celebrate the civic movement.
- All board members to put forward potential representatives from the Lords that we should invite.

11. AGM and Trustee Elections

- It was explained to the board that the convention will be held in Bristol in October and the team, led by Gill Roxborough, are now working on the program. Feedback from the board on agenda items would be welcome.

12. Membership

- A membership paper was introduced and it was agreed that we should defer this paper to the next meeting.

13. AOB

No any other business

14. Private Business

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

Future meetings

May 27, July 21, September 9

Convention in Bristol

23rd/24th October 2015