

CAS Board Meeting 26th November 2015

Attendance

Verinder Mander, Karin Woodley, Khosi Manaka, Beccy Allen, Jim Wintour, Mark Parker, Michael Bukola, Matthew Guest

Staff in attendance

Gordon McCullough

Apologies

Andrew Rice, Stuart Cox, Jacky Bourke-White

Summary of actions (03/09/15)

- GM will start the process of rebranding and developing position statements. The new name will be announced at the CAS AGM on 2nd December.

1. Welcome and apologies

VM welcomed all and in particular the new trustees.

2. Conflict of interests

KW stated there is a conflict in her position as landlord of CAS.

3. Introduction of new Trustees

KW and KM were officially co-opted on to the board of trustees.

4. Healthwatch Southwark Update

GM gave an update on HWS in Aarti Gandesha's absence. GM detailed the good relationship with the council and the agreed extension (12 months) of the HWS contract. GM outlined the current financial position of HWS. It is currently running at a deficit but this was related to non-recurring expenditure and the outlook is more positive.

GM discussed an ongoing issue with HWS and the CCG. There has been an underlying current of tension between the two bodies. Trustees felt it was important to ensure the relationship is a positive one and there is no reputational damage. However it was agreed it was important to stress the independence of HWS and for it to move forward on its own priorities – unless the CCG wish to commission HWS to conduct engagement work for example.

5. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes from the last board meeting were agreed.

It was agreed that the annual accounts and trustee report for 14/15 were adopted.

It was agreed that £80,000 was released from reserves in 2016/17 to fund new posts. It was agreed that this was a one-off release of funds and would be backed up with a fundraising raising strategy focused primarily on community engagement and volunteering initiatives.

6. CEO Report

GM gave an overview of the CEO report and activities. There was a discussion about the infrastructure contract and how its scale was a vote of confidence in CAS and a vote of confidence for the merger.

7. Name change

There was a discussion about the background to the name change and the commitment made to the Volunteer Centre with regard to coming up with a new name following the merger.

KW expressed concerns about the costs of rebranding at a time when member organisations were struggling which she felt placed the moral and legal aspects of the name change in a wider perspective – as it could be seen as financially irresponsible.

BA felt that none of the suggested names reflected what CAS and the VCS do. She also felt that it was a tokenistic change and many members seemed happy with the current name.

JW reflected it was a difficult position but there were concerns about the moral and reputational damage that could ensue if we didn't change the name. He felt that expenditure of £8-10k for the rebrand was not significant.

MP felt it necessary to make a decision now however none of the options were particularly inspiring. He recognised all the hard work that had gone into this but we may not find a better solution if we waited. He was unsure if the reputational risk was real but there was a commitment to the VCS to make the change.

MB felt that VCS had lost everything in the merger process and he is the sole trustee from the VCS that had transferred across. MB felt that if the name was not changed he would have to consider his position on the board.

VM stated that CAS was committed to the name change as, during her discussions with the chair of the VCS, it was a red line for them and if we went back on that agreement it would be one of misrepresentation. VM stated we have been through a rigorous process and we agreed to the name change in the heads of agreement and deed of transfer.

It was agreed by all to commit to the name change and after some discussions about the relative strengths and weaknesses of the four options presented to the membership, a compromise name was agreed on.

The board unanimously agreed that from the 1st April 2016 Community Action Southwark will become Community Southwark. A number of calls to action (such as Volunteer Southwark, Engage Southwark) will act as sub brands.

Action : GM will start the process of rebranding and developing position statements. The new name will be announced at the CAS AGM on 2nd December.

8. Vision for CAS

A broad ranging discussion took place on the trustee's vision for CAS over the next three years. The following are some of the key points to emerge:

- Impact of austerity on local setting and the re-imaging of the relationship between citizens and the council. How can citizens be support to work in partnership in a new way?
- Social finance, helping the sector to understand it
- Responding to negative press coverage of charities – try to understand the impact locally and help charities respond to it
- Merger with Lambeth/Lewisham CVS. Possible but does this direction of travel have to match with local government structures?

- Relationship with business needs to be fostered as the power of local government wains. There also needs to be a relationship with SMEs as it could be a fundamental way to empower communities.
- Encouragement of social business/social enterprises –missing a trick if we only focus on charities
- Importance of research and the need to strengthen CAS's research function.
- Improve outreach functions – no disconnect with membership yet but with some organisations suffering from uncertain futures CAS needs to position itself to show its value to the sector. Less emails and more meeting people and attending AGMs etc