

Community Southwark Minutes from Board Meeting 23/03/17

For information and agreement

Summary of Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MP to prepare Brexit risk assessment paper for the Board to review. 2. GM to circulate a quarterly briefing to the Board on statistics about work in relation to concerns listed. 3. GM to write a further '7 things you need to know' document to circulate to the Trustees. 4. GM to redraft the 2017/18 Community Southwark Budget to reflect a two-year horizon, with a review point at October, 2017, where possible, offsetting costs incurred against revenue streams earned to highlight the deficit position throughout this timeframe. 5. GM to schedule future Board meetings to coincide with strategic forecast review dates, to include October, 2017 and potentially with the next meeting at Community Waltham Forest (with local staff presenting to the Trustee Board). 6. GM to confirm June and August 'Away Day' dates. 7. Deploy CH SurveyMonkey tool to conduct a skills audit, the output of which to be used to profile skills needed from new trustee recruitment.
Attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacky Bourke-White (JBW, Chair) • Karin Woodley (KW) • Mark Parker (MP) • Matthew Guest (MG) • Michael Bukola (MB) • Khosi Mamaka (KM)
Staff in attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gordon McCullough (GM), Bron Thomas (BT),
Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

1. Welcome & Conflicts of Interest

JBW welcomed everyone to the meeting. JBW's and KW's usual conflicts of interest were noted (commissioning Community Southwark's services & Cambridge House CEO).

KW also gave her belated apologies for not attending the December 2016 AGM.

2. Minutes from Meeting held on 27/10/16

The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 27th October, 2016 were reviewed.

It was noted that MG should have been the owner of the Brexit risk assessment action, and that he was still to complete this. KW added that a lot of effort had been invested in making the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) web site useful for Brexit and that this may offer helpful inputs for the risk assessment.

With regard to applications from prospective trustee candidates attending the AGM, GM confirmed that he had not received any.

Reviewing the other Actions Arising from the previous meeting, with the exception of the quarterly briefing to the Board (which GM undertook to circulate shortly), all were noted as having been completed.

The Minutes were then approved.

3. **CEO Report**

GM stated that he'd not updated the CEO's report since the version prepared for the postponed 27th January, 2017 Board meeting and noted that he would recirculate the Quarter 3 monitoring statistics to the Board.

Referring to the headline Q3 results, there were 76 cases of support delivered, with over 80% of this effort continuing to go to smaller organisations and groups in Southwark (i.e. those with an income of <£100k, 70% of which had an income of <£25k). 8% of these organisations supported BAME and refugee communities, and income generation, starting-up and planning were the three most common areas of support. 12 organisations were supported with impact measurement and 8 organisations were supported in applying for funding.

Five safeguarding cases were worked on, including an in-depth redrafting of policies and procedures for a youth focused mental health charity. A safeguarding conference hosted by Community Southwark (CS) during October was very well attended (58 participants).

Turning to Training delivered, representatives from 88 organisations attended, 51 of which were from organisations with income of £25k. The most popular training need themes identified included Income Generation, Financial Management, Risk Management, Collaboration and Marketing and these are being woven into the course curriculum to be delivered during 2017/18.

Regarding volunteering support and advice services provided, 156 people were supported to find volunteering opportunities. GM noted that, whilst the Volunteer Centre Southwark did not attract a higher footfall compared with the E&C Shopping Centre, CS's conversion rate for those wishing to volunteer was greater (40%). 67% of clients were unemployed, 24% were disabled and 9% were under 20 years of age.

GM stated that **Community Waltham Forest** (CWF) was now up and running and that the recruitment was complete, with the hiring of Chris Todd as the second Development Officer. CWF's web site had been launched (www.communitywalthamforest.org) and a number of training courses had

already been delivered, with positive feedback received. Capacity building activities had also been launched and there was demand for 1:1 sessions, again with positive results achieved.

GM then noted that the Waltham Forest Council had approached him to support development of a voluntary sector strategy for the Borough.

Turning to **Lambeth**, GM stated that, following Lambeth Council's award of an 18 month / £20k consultancy contract, CS was now developing a (formal) presence in the Borough. Currently, one out of five organisations supported by CS was Lambeth based, and one in six volunteers attending a drop-in advice session originated from Lambeth.

Regarding other Lambeth based opportunities, GM stated that he had met the Council's Director of Commissioning and that there was potentially a six-month horizon on further opportunities (noting the positive influence the CWF award had made).

Concerning **Southwark Giving**, GM stated that two big corporate investors and the City Bridge Trust had generously committed funding and that two corporate engagement events were being hosted to secure additional large funders (events to be held at More London Riverside during June and July). The SME community would be approached later in the year.

For **Involve**, GM stated that the 2017 committed pipeline for team challenge and skills based events with corporate clients was looking positive and the future for Involve was very solid, following a dedicated focus on marketing Involve's services to a more diverse range of corporates.

KM joined the meeting.

Referring to the up-coming **Southwark Stars Awards** (this year, to be held at the Tate Exchange on Tuesday, 2nd May), GM stated that 183 nominations for awards had been received by yesterday evening's deadline for submission, 80 of which were for 100 Hours awards. It was anticipated that about 200 people would attend the event this year and the Trustees were asked to reserve the date. GM added that he would be joining the judging panel meeting on 27th March to finalise the award winners (other panel members included Cllr Hargrove, James Banks (GLV), Tinku Thomas and Fiona Kingsman (Head of the Tate Exchange)).

On a general note, GM commented that 2016 was a year where a huge amount of energy was expended on rebranding and consolidating the merged organisation and setting up CWF, where the team had pulled together and worked very hard to get this launched. 2017 had started well and everyone was looking forward to things planned for the coming year.

KW noted that there had been a lot of change management to handle and commended the team for this, noting that a certain amount of bravery was needed with new challenges. GW responded that they were very fortunate to have such an able and committed team.

JBW asked whether there was a similar strategy in place for CWF as for CS and that the Board wanted to understand more about what had been happening in Waltham Forest. GM replied that, for some time, the voluntary sector and Waltham Forest Council had been drifting apart. The new Assistant Chief Executive then joined and set about fixing this and is now focused on linking the CCG and Council with the voluntary sector.

In CWF support level terms, GM described Waltham Forest as being rather more remedial than Southwark and in terms of developing the volunteering strategy, the processes set out for Southwark should be replicated, but at a lower level. Focus would be on hosting listening events, with the aim of reframing and reinvigorating the relationship between the sector and WF Council.

JBW then asked whether there was anything else to note from the CEO report and GM responded that he would write another '7 things you need to know' document for circulation.

GM then stated that CS was currently running a Member's survey that provided an opportunity for organisations to assess themselves and how well they were doing, with initial feedback indicating that the results would not be as favourable as in previous surveys. This was potentially indicative of the state of the sector overall where, for example, it was harder to diversify when obtaining funding was more challenging. GM added that, with this in mind, it was harder to assess CS's impact on the sector.

JBW responded that, if the sector was changing, there was less capacity for organisations to engage CS and that this may have a knock-on effect with regard to CS's contribution to the sector. GM responded that, from a training delivery perspective alone, there was clear evidence that sessions were having a big positive impact on attendees.

KW commented that people were being driven down by the sheer weight of what was being asked of them and that this impacted on staff and their ability to apply their knowledge. GM replied that there would be one more push on survey responses and KW added that, if CS looked less successful than they actually were, there was potentially a need to profile the sector – there may be something quite seminal that could be done to share experiences of people feeling embattled and less brave, e.g. in criticising the Council's services. Part of CS's remit was to be critical friend.

4. Finances

From a financial perspective, JBW noted that, as one who was responsible for running a larger organisation and not necessarily 'with all ducks in a row' at the present time, she faced the prospect of running a deficit in the coming year. KW agreed and added that an interesting part of diversification was the impact on how cash in was managed (the 'cash sensitivity') and JBW responded that this did indeed present challenges to Finance functions.

With this in mind, GM explained that CS would report a £65k funding deficit for the year end, made up of £25k attributable to Involve and also CWF set-up costs. It may be possible to defer some of this into the following year to arrive at a £35k deficit for the current financial year.

Regarding the 2017/18 budget, a target of £70k had been put in for consultancy (versus £50k earned during the 2016/17 year), Involved was budgeted to earn £140k (of which £70k was already committed and £40k was in the pipeline) and a general fundraising target of £70k had been set.

GM then asked the Trustees whether, given the deficit position this year and possible operational challenges next year, it would be more appropriate to:

1. Conduct a cost review or
2. Continue as planned and review the financial position in October 2017, with a view to implementing changes then.

The position on bid applications was then discussed. The results of a May submission for Reaching Communities funding would be known about in October. A two-year extension to the current funding stream from City Bridge had also been confirmed for the Evaluation & Impact Support Officer role (four days in CS and one day in CWF).

GM then noted that the Healthwatch contract was now in its final year and that he would be discussing with the Council the feasibility of extending this for a further year.

Southwark Giving had been budgeted for through to October, 2017 and the 'Elephant Consultancy' brand had recently been registered with the intention of marketing consultancy services in Southwark, Lambeth, Waltham Forest and Newham, where there was no CVS presence. The first evaluation contract had already been agreed with the Kingswood Estate in the south of the borough.

To summarise, GM reiterated his proposal to 'hold fire' on any immediate action with regard to deficit reduction in favour of a review in October and cost/staff reductions immediately thereafter (the largest cost commitments being staffing, premises and the SRCF commitment). If the Reaching Communities bid did not come through, a contingency plan was currently being worked on.

MB asked about the current position on Reserves and GM responded that, taking into account the deficit projected, the year-end balance would be £320k.

KW acknowledged that GM's recommendations were well made, but as there had been a lot of charges in the past couple of years, maybe there was a third option: to reduce the income targets, eg: Consultancy from £70k to £60k and to take a 24-month view, the timeframe for when a surplus was anticipated to be reached. GM agreed, but stated that he would really like to eliminate the deficit. KW responded that there was a difference, in business terms, to recording an outright deficit versus recording some exposure to deficit [through matching income and expense flows].

JBW asked KW whether she would like to see a scale back in operation and running at a deficit and KW responded that she was proposing that the current forecast be implemented, but to take a view at the end of quarter one to determine whether the Trustees could live with the level of deficit incurred, taking into account a two-year view.

JBW then stated that she was very conservative and never recognised unsecured income streams, and asked what the Board would like to see? MP responded by proposing that, given the organisational changes in progress, and the current climate overall, an 18 month budget be reviewed in October 2017 and GM then asked whether the Trustees would be happy to see a deficit based budget, adding that he had always prepared a consultancy type budget in the past.

KW commented that organisations liked to see what was coming in and what was going out, ie what was in the revenue pipeline to fill the funding gap. GM responded that would redraft the 2017/18 budget to give this view.

JBW then stated that she would also like to see what decisions the Trustees could take versus what 'had to be' and GM responded that, wherever possible, he would show how each project was funded (noting that projects had multiple funding streams).

KW commented that making cuts during the current year would impact upon the following year and that it was better to take a longer view. GM then summarised by stating that, in the run up to October, he would produce a funding budget and then an 18 month budget for the 18 months ending in the 2018/19 financial year (coinciding with the current end date of the Southwark Council contract). He would also look at sequencing Board meetings with forecast reviews, eg: October, 2017.

Referring to any staffing reductions needed, KW stated that these would need to be made in July, 2017 for less impactful consequences on the organisation's performance. For this meeting, the Trustees were not agreeing the budget, but instead, GM was to propose recommendations.

5. Community Waltham Forest

JBW then asked GM to comment more on the set-up of the CWF office and GM explained the staffing composition, where two individuals TUPE'd across from a predecessor organisation and, following a short consultation period, were up and running for the November start of contract. The Director then joined from another organisation and two further external hires were then made [with one starting in February and the other yet to start in April]. At the outset of the new organisation's launch, a bit of negative feedback had been coming in from the community, but last week's events had started to demonstrate the relevance of the new organisation to the Borough.

JBW asked for a little more detail on the local perception of the new organisation and also about the CWF staff perceptions of external feedback and being part of

a bigger CS organisation. GM responded that the CS team were being very responsive to CWF's needs, with several staff shuttling between the two locations to provide support and deliver training and consultancy services. GM had also pared back the Building Strong Foundations strategy somewhat at this stage to reflect the maturity level of the new CWF organisation and added that he typically spent a day per week at CWF to work, rather than to lead.

KW stated that it typically took about six months or longer for a TUPE type activity bed down and MP suggested that something like a Myers-Briggs session with staff could be helpful at some stage. Also, a future Board meeting should be held at CWF. GM asked whether all present would be happy with this and that he would arrange accordingly and include staff presentations in the agenda.

KW noted that her organisation was currently bidding to run a second service in WF and that she would potentially have two teams operating there [was there potential to co-locate with CWF in future?]. KW added that the Chair and Vice Chair could go to CWF to meet the staff, as it was also important for them to not be anonymous. JBW agreed.

KM asked how the 'mother ship' had been impacted by the CWF set-up and GM responded that it was very much viewed as the sister organisation. Running training events had been great for both teams. In phasing terms, CWF had completed start-up and, from April through to December, would be in consolidation phase, with a longer term voluntary sector strategy focus thereafter. Also, an advisory group would be established in WF.

Referring to Trustee representation, KW asked whether a WF candidate should be sought and GM responded that someone from Lambeth could also be sought (acknowledging that SG was a Lambeth resident). Three Southwark residents were currently serving on the CS Board.

6. Community Southwark Strategy

GM stated that the *organisation went through a big transitional process last year* and that he would like to know whether everything was ok, from the Trustees' perspective.

Referring to the strategy document, MG commented that Point 5 seemed to have drifted to the end. KW stated that she liked the commentary related to service, but that she was less convinced by Point 5.

Referring to the name 'Building Strong Foundations', KW asked whether these were already in place and suggested the use of 'Growing' instead. GM responded that 'building' reflected the sub £25k organisations that weren't yet strong and perhaps 'stronger' could be used for CWF's strategy document.

7. Governance

JBW stated that more trustees were needed who would 'do things' and that the Board had talked about this a lot, but not as yet done anything, including running a skills audit. KW suggested using the Cambridge House Survey Monkey tool for this and the Board agreed.

GM then urged the Trustees to identify the gaps on the Board and KW responded that the survey outcomes would potentially be very interesting on diversity, e.g. people not talking about disability, yet talking about dyslexia all the time.

JBW stated that she talked to people frequently about joining the Board, but that people seemed really busy. KW then asked whether more trustees were actually needed and JBW replied that it would be good to have a couple of directors from other charities join the Board. MG and MP were both appointed, so there were potentially five slots for Community Southwark Member Trustees and one further slot for an appointed Trustee.

KW also noted that Q1 was horrible, as it was all finance focused. Perhaps it would be better to look at late spring/early summer to recruit?

KM then stated that, on a personal note, she thought she would learn a lot from becoming a trustee, but that she was so busy. It would be good to be able to make more time for training.

8. AOB

JBW commented that she had been very impressed by Healthwatch recently; their previous low profile was now much stronger. GM agreed, noting that Aarti, Chip and Catherine were an exceptional team.

KM then stated that Nathan Lewis had done some great work with his visiting [hard to reach] communities and GM agreed, noting particularly his work with the Eritrean, Somali and LGBTQ communities.

KW added that there was enormous commitment from the staff overall and MG said that the Investors' in People report was very strong; a fantastic result, although the Trustees' presence appeared to be lower. KW responded that she felt the Trustees should be 'badgered' more and GM agreed to do so! GM closed the meeting by inviting the Trustees to attend the upcoming Southwark Stars awards ceremony at the Tate Exchange on 2nd May.

The meeting closed at 7pm.