

Minutes of a meeting of the board of trustees of Community Base held on 13th March 2008

Present: Sylvia Alexander-Vine (chair), Ros Cook, Bob Cristofoli, Paul Evans, Jane Frost

In attendance: Colin Chalmers (director and minutes), Annette Moss (building manager) and Deborah Sprackling (receptionist/administrator)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Sarah Bourne, Tina Harrison, Hong Lu and Lucy Stone.

2 Minutes of previous board meeting

The board approved minutes of the board meeting held on 8th January 2008.

3 Matters arising from last board meeting

- (a) The board noted that East Sussex Credit Union and Audioactive will be moving into Community Base on 17th March. The board noted that ESCU would initially not need the room to the immediate north of the ESCU entrance and it was agreed to offer a licence for the use of this room to TB Alert on condition that it was not used as a public office and in the expectation that ESCU would licence it at some point in the future.
- (b) The board noted that 20 spare laths had been bought for the car park gate to minimise disruption if it is damaged in the future.
- (c) Colin reported that Green Champion 2008 had got started with about a dozen champions so far.

4 Participant group meetings January and February 2008

- (a) The board noted the notes of the participant group meetings held in January and February 2008.
- (b) The board decided not to buy a second photocopier as it would cost around £4,000 with no increase in income, it would be difficult to find anywhere to put it and the number of breakdowns did not merit such expenditure. The board asked Colin to suggest that groups doing large copying runs do not use the photocopier on weekday afternoons and consider going to a printer instead.

5 Health and safety

Annette reported that the issue of strangers being let into the building had been raised at a participant group meeting and on the Community Base email group. The issue has been highlighted on the new *Information for people working at Community Base* webpage.

6 Finance

- (a) The board noted a balance sheet at 31st January 2008 and an actual against budget comparison for April 2007 to January 2008.
- (b) Colin reported that a problem with off site phone logging software had resulted in participant groups not being charged the correct rate for non-local calls between May and December 2007. The total amount undercharged for the period was £8,347. Annette had relogged the calls for this period and groups would be given the option of paying the undercharged amount in March 2008 or with their next April invoice. Our phone company have agreed to reduce their charge to us by £50 a month as way of apology for this mischarging.
- (c) Colin reported on data backup practice for our financial and other records.

7 Our carbon footprint

- (a) Annette reported that she hoped to have bought heater timer switches for most heaters throughout the building by next winter.
- (b) Colin reported that Annette and he had identified Community Base's windows as the main source of heat loss and wasted energy in our building. New windows would significantly improve heat retention in cold weather and reduce heat infiltration in hot weather resulting in improved working conditions for everyone at Community Base but would be expensive.
- (c) Colin agreed to produce an options appraisal for the installation of new windows, including consideration of the financial implications, for consideration by a future board meeting in 2008.

8 Our 2007 annual monitoring figures

The board noted monitoring figures for 2007.

9 Our 2008 questionnaire

- (a) The board noted the results of the 2008 questionnaire which were extremely positive.
- (b) The board agreed not to ask groups to rate individuals or areas which Community Base is not responsible for in future questionnaires.

10 BASSAC conference and membership

- (a) Colin reported that he had attended the annual BASSAC conference in February and had found it extremely useful for discussing voluntary sector issues with other voluntary groups and community buildings around the country.
- (b) The board approved Community Base's membership of BASSAC.

11 External artwork

- (a) Colin said the banners at the front of our building will be replaced with a new design before the open day.
- (b) Colin reported that a community artist from Bristol had offered to create a work of art on our north. The board agreed to this.

12 Brighton and Hove volunteer search

- (a) The board noted a survey into the use of Brighton and Hove volunteer search in its first six months which was overwhelmingly positive.
- (b) The board recorded its thanks to Deborah for carrying out this survey.
- (c) Deborah reported that she had had a successful meeting with the manager of the Volunteer Centre Brighton and Hove and that Community Base and the volunteer centre were now cooperating to support local volunteering.

13 Names of participant groups and projects

- (a) The board noted that the Scarman Trust had merged with the Novas Scarman Group, an industrial and provident society with charitable status.
- (b) The board noted that Brighton and Hove Millenium Volunteers is changing its name to Brighton and Hove Volunteers with substantially the same role.
- (c) The board agreed to Brighton and Hove Volunteers running RASP (Refugee Asylum Seekers Project) as a project.
- (d) The board agreed to TB Alert running a project called the Tuberculosis Survival Project which may become a charity in its own right.

14 Our 2008 open day

- (a) The board noted progress with the open day.
- (b) The board agreed to invite Caroline Lucas, Member of the European Parliament for the South East of England, to be a guest speaker at a debate during the open day.

15 Reorganisation of information for people working at Community Base webpage

Colin reported that website pages on general information, fire safety, safety and security and top ten dos and don'ts had been merged into a much clearer *Information for people working at Community Base* page.

16 Director's long leave May to July 2008

The board noted that the director would be on extended leave from 15th May to 11th July 2008. Colin said he would table arrangements for covering this absence at the May board meeting.

17 Annual review of policies

- (a) The board noted and reviewed all policies.
- (b) Policy on allocation of space – the board agreed to delete clause 1.
- (c) Policy on avian flu – the board agreed to change the title to 'Policy on avian flu and pandemics'; in clause 1 insert 'or other type of pandemic' after 'avian flu' and replace 'fatal flu' with 'fatal disease'; in clause 3 delete 'avian flu' twice.
- (d) Policy on bullying or harassment – the board agreed in clause 5 to delete 'other than another Community Base staff member'
- (e) Policy on financial controls – the board agreed in clause 6d to replace 'faxed' with 'sent electronically'
- (f) Policy on opening times – the board agreed in clause 2 to replace 'receptionist' with 'receptionist/administrator'.
- (g) Policy on relationship with participant groups – the board agreed in clause 3.1 after 'suggestions' to add 'Community Base policies and practices'; in clause 3.2 to delete 'and' and divide into two clauses; to delete clauses 3.3 and 3.5; in clause 5.1 to replace 'licence' with 'licence agreement' twice; in clause 3.4 (formerly 3.6) to change 'director or building manager' to 'Community Base staff'.

18 Assessment of risks to development 2008-13

The board agreed an assessment of risks to development for 2008-13.

19 Estimate of capital expenditure 2008-33

- (a) The board agreed a draft estimate of capital expenditure for 2008-33 as a basis for setting a budget for 2008-13.
- (b) The board agreed to review the estimate of capital expenditure at a future board meeting in 2008 when an options appraisal for the installation of new windows is tabled.

20 Staff terms and conditions of employment

- (a) The board noted a history of Community Base's staff pay scales, job descriptions and employer's pension contributions.
- (b) The board agreed to make the post of building manager full-time from 1st April 2008.
- (c) Colin reported that all non-locum staff had agreed to slightly revised job descriptions more accurately reflecting their roles. The board approved revised job descriptions for the posts of director, building manager and receptionist/administrator from 1st April 2008.
- (d) The board noted a uniform terms of conditions of employment for all non-locum staff from 1st April 2008.
- (e) The board agreed to decide staff salary scales, employer's pension contribution and entitlement to annual leave in the absence of staff.

21 2008-13 budget

- (a) The board noted a draft budget for 2008-13.
- (b) The board approved the budget except for salaries and pensions which it agreed to discuss in the absence of staff.

22 Dates of future board meetings

- (a) The board agreed to hold its remaining 2008 meetings on 8th May, 30th July, 18th September and 20th November.
- (b) The board agreed to hold subsequent meetings on the second Thursday of each January, March, May, July, September and November.

23 Brighton and Hove Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF) and Spoke magazine

- (a) Sylvia reported that following a request from Community Base a meeting had been held between Community Base (Sylvia Alexander-Vine chairperson, Sarah Bourne trustee and Colin Chalmers director) and CVSF (Jon Cooper chairperson, Simon Lewis trustee and Sally Hiscock chief officer) on 11th February 2008.
- (b) Sylvia reported that at this meeting Community Base and CVSF had agreed that Community Base has a right to ensure that Community Base is, and is seen to be, only a home for community and voluntary groups.
- (c) At the meeting the Community Base director raised the issue of Spoke magazine, a publication of Brighton and Hove ChangeUp Consortium. Until this meeting CVSF had not consulted Community Base about the publication of this magazine.
- (d) The Community Base director asked for an assurance that Community Base would not be given as Spoke's address as it was not a CVSF publication or a community and voluntary sector publication. The meeting agreed that the Community Base director would email CVSF's chief executive within five days suggesting ways Spoke magazine could be published without diminishing Community Base's identity as a home only for community and voluntary groups.
- (e) Before the Community Base director could email CVSF as agreed, CVSF's chief officer emailed the Community Base director to say Spoke would give its address as Community Base, subsequently stating that this position was 'non-negotiable'.
- (f) Colin reported that he regularly agreed arrangements for cross-sector partnership working with participant groups on the basis that groups were welcome to take part in partnerships but could not 'host' such partnerships at Community Base as this would threaten Community Base's identity as a home only for community and voluntary groups. CVSF's decision to claim Spoke magazine is published from Community Base in defiance of a request from Community Base not to do so was a direct challenge to Community Base's trustees right to manage Community Base in line with its core aims.
- (g) Sylvia agreed to write to CVSF on behalf of the board requesting again that CVSF do not allow non-community and voluntary sector organisations or publications to give Community Base as their address.

24 Policy on partnership working

- (a) The board agreed a policy on partnership aimed at promoting partnership working by participant groups while maintaining Community Base's unique identity as a home only for community and voluntary groups.
- (b) The board agreed to add a regulation to all licence agreements stating that the licensee agrees 'to abide by the terms of Community Base's policy on partnership working'.
- (c) The board agreed to seek the views of participant groups on the policy by email and at the next participant group meeting before reconsidering the policy at its next meeting in May.

At this point Colin Chalmers, Annette Moss and Deborah Sprackling left the meeting.

25 Staff terms and conditions of employment

- (a) The board agreed salary scales, employer's pension contribution and entitlement to annual leave for non-locum employees from 1st April 2008.
- (b) The board agreed to offer uniform terms of conditions of employment including these agreed salary scales, employer's pension contribution and entitlement to annual leave to all non-locum staff from 1st April 2008.

26 2008-13 budget

- (a) The board agreed a budget for 2008-13.
- (b) The board agreed to review the budget for 2009-14 later in 2008 when reviewing the estimate of capital expenditure in the light of an options appraisal for the installation of new windows.