

## Minutes of a meeting of the board of trustees of Community Base held on 22nd March 2010

**Present:** Sylvia Alexander-Vine (chair), Mick Barry, Bob Cristofoli, Paul Evans and Lucy Stone

**In attendance:** Colin Chalmers (director and minutes) and Annette Moss (building manager)

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Sarah Bourne, Ros Cook, Adrian Davies and Jane Frost.

### **2 Minutes of January 2010 board meeting**

The board approved the minutes of the board meeting held on 25th January 2010.

### **3 Matters arising from January 2010 board meeting**

Colin reported that the Brighton Carnival Association was not able to take up our offer of office space as it had not received the funding it needed to do so.

### **4 Participant group meetings**

The board noted notes of the February 2010 participant group meeting.

### **5 Health and safety**

Annette reported that the south lift had broken down the day before and that she was investigating the incident.

### **6 Our carbon footprint**

Annette reported that due to the recent exceptionally cold weather our overnight electricity use this winter had been significantly higher than last year.

### **7 Finance**

- a. The board noted a balance sheet at 31st December 2009 and an actual against budget comparison for April to December 2009.
- b. The board noted that all parking space in our car park were now taken.
- c. The board noted a change of electricity supplier from Green Energy to the 100% renewable tariff of Scottish and Southern Energy.

### **8 Statistics for 2005-2009**

The board noted statistics for 2005-2009 showing a continuing growth in the use of our reception, particularly by people interested in volunteering, our conference room and our website.

### **9 Brighton and Hove community job search**

Colin reported that he expected this to be launched in April.

### **10 Bassac conference**

Colin reported on a bassac conference he had attended in Manchester.

### **11 Local Prospective Parliamentary Candidates**

Colin reported that he had invited candidates for Brighton Pavilion constituency to a hustings at Community Base but as one candidate could not attend this did not go ahead.

### **12 Event for local councillors to meet groups at Community Base**

Colin reported that Community Base would be holding an event for local councillors to meet groups at Community Base on 29th March.

### **13 Membership of Community Base**

The board approved membership of Community Base for Mosaic Black and Mixed Parentage Family Group.

### **14 Licencing of space**

- a. The board noted that Creative Future had now moved into Community Base.
- b. The board noted that a new storage space had been created on the third floor.
- c. The board agreed to licence the ground floor office currently used for storage to Pohwer.
- d. The board agreed to transfer the licencing of a second floor cupboard from Carr-Gomm to Friends, Families and Travellers from 1st April 2010.

## **15 Maternity policy and parental leave policy**

The board agreed a maternity policy and a parental leave policy.

## **16 Locum staff and cover for maternity leave**

- a. The board approved a person specification and job description for the post of locum receptionist/administrator.
- b. Colin reported that we had a pool of ten locum receptionist/administrators, all of whom had been interviewed and met the person specification for the post.
- c. The board agreed to use this pool of locum staff to cover Deborah's maternity leave.

## **17 Reserves policy**

The board amended the reserves policy to state that we aim to hold reserves equivalent to between three and six months of revenue expenditure.

## **18 Tenders for installation of new windows**

The board noted progress with tendering for the installation of new windows and asked Annette and Colin to discuss the tenders further with our architect.

## **19 Estimate of capital expenditure 2010-35**

The board approved an estimate of capital expenditure for 2010-35.

## **20 Assessment of risks to development 2010-15**

The board approved an assessment of risks to development 2010-15.

## **21 Budget 2010-15**

- a. The board approved a budget for 2010-15.
- b. The board noted that the budget did not increase rent by £1 per square foot per year in response to losing our income from advertising, as the board had previously decided to do. The board agreed to reassess the situation if it appeared likely that we would lose this income permanently.
- c. The board agreed that if Brighton and Hove City Council withdrew the discretionary rate relief it has always given Community Base the cost would have to be passed on to licencees as a rent increase.

## **22 Planning consent for advertising on our north wall**

- a. The board noted that a meeting of Brighton and Hove City Council planning committee on 3rd February 2010 had decided to remove planning consent for advertising on our north wall, with all Conservative councillors voting to remove consent and all other councillors present voting to renew consent.
- b. The board noted that our application for renewal of planning consent was accompanied by 24 letters of support and faced no objections.
- c. The board noted that this decision would reduce Community Base's income by at least £18,500 a year.
- d. The board noted a press statement from Community Base and media coverage concerning the matter.
- e. The board noted a complaint lodged by the Community Base director with Brighton and Hove City Council and the council's response.
- f. The board agreed to amend the policy of good practice to specify that if consent for advertising were granted in the future we would not display advertising for political parties .
- g. The board noted that an appeal against the decision had been lodged with the Planning Inspectorate.
- h. The board agreed to submit an amended application to Brighton and Hove City Council for planning permission for advertising on our north wall.

## **23 Discretionary rate relief**

- a. Bob and Colin reported on their meeting with the leader of Brighton and Hove City Council Mary Mears, councillor Dee Simson and two senior Brighton and Hove City Council officers on 5th March 2010.
- b. The board noted a copy of a dossier prepared by the Community Base director and presented to Mary Mears ahead of the meeting, a letter from Mary Mears to the Community Base director following the meeting and a letter in reply.
- c. The board noted the Charity Commission's guidance on charities and elections.
- d. The board noted that Brighton and Hove City Council has always shown its support for Community Base by giving us discretionary rate relief but was now not agreeing to our request that, in the face of the current instability facing charities and community groups at Community Base, it agree to continue to award us discretionary rate relief beyond March 2011.
- e. The board agreed to launch a petition calling for Brighton and Hove City Council not to withdraw discretionary rate relief from Community Base and present it to a full meeting of Brighton and Hove City Council in July 2010.