

Minutes of a meeting of the board of trustees of Community Base held on 29th January 2009

Present: Sylvia Alexander-Vine (chair), Ros Cook, Bob Cristofoli, Adrian Davies, Jane Frost and Lucy Stone

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

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Sarah Bourne and Paul Evans.

2 Minutes of November board meeting

The board approved the minutes of the board meetings held on 20th November 2008.

3 Matters arising from November board meeting

The board noted that all trustees have now signed the trustees' code of conduct.

4 Participant group meetings November and December 2008

- a. The board noted notes of the November and December 2008 participant group meetings.
- b. The board agreed to change participant group meetings to the third Thursday of the month so that notes could be circulated to trustees in advance of board meetings.

5 Health and safety

Annette reported that a successful fire evacuation had taken place earlier in the day.

6 Our carbon footprint

- a. The board noted a summary of energy use for 2000-2008 showing a drop in energy use between 2007 and 2008.
- b. The board noted an Energy Performance Certificate supplied by RitchieLambor giving us an F rating.
- c. The board noted a Display Energy Certificate supplied by RitchieLambor giving us an E rating.
- d. Colin reported that he had commissioned an environmental review from Ecosys.
- e. Colin reported that he had asked Peter Allen of the Ethical Property Company to carry out a further independent report on our building's energy use.
- f. Colin reported that he had arranged a meeting with Karen Gardham, an environmental consultant, with a view to getting further advise on energy use and her speaking at a working lunch on good environmental practice in offices.

7 Finance

- a. The board noted a balance sheet at 31st December 2008 and an actual against budget comparison for April to December 2008.
- b. The board noted that a deposit account with Triodos bank had been opened.
- c. The board agreed not to obtain a company credit or debit card and agreed to reverse the change to the policy on financial controls agreed at the July 2008 board meeting concerning the use of a company credit card.
- d. The board noted that the 2008/09 NJC payscale has not been finally agreed between employers and unions and that because of the delay an interim scale has been agreed which we have implemented.
- e. The board noted that in response to the VAT reduction from 17.5% to 15% from 1st December 2008 we had refunded customers VAT overcharged in October 2008 and charged participant groups 15% for phone calls, parking and photocopying in October and November.

8 Statistics for 2004-2008

The board noted statistics for 2004-2008.

9 2009 guide to Community Base and other local services

- a. Colin tabled the 2009 guide to Community Base and other local services and a press release promoting the guide.
- b. Colin reported that the print run for the guide had been increased to 20,000 this year and that 7,500 had been distributed with the Leader in central Brighton.
- c. Colin reported on an interview he had given to BBC Southern Counties Radio promoting the guide.
- d. Deborah reported a greater number of enquiries following our distribution of the new guide.

10 National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

The board noted that Community Base had joined NCVO and that Colin was attending its 2009 conference.

11 Membership of Brighton and Hove Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF)

The board noted correspondence from CVSF concerning Community Base's membership of CVSF.

12 First floor changes

- a. The board noted the first floor office vacated by Mencap Personal Support and Housing had been turned into a photocopier room and small office and storage area for our use.
- b. The board noted that the new furniture that had been bought for the coffee room was proving very popular.
- c. Colin reported that the post area on the first floor landing was being redesigned.

13 Our website

- a. Colin reported that following problems with web hosting we had transferred our hosting to Fasthosts.
- b. Colin reported that he had bought a number of domains similar to communitybase.org and pointed them at our website.

14 2009 annual meetings with participant groups

Colin reported on his annual meetings with participant groups.

15 Management of core services

- a. Colin reported that we have recently faced problems with a number of our core services including two power cuts, heating/insulation inadequate for the recent cold weather and problems with our photocopier.
- b. Colin reported that he was in the process of establishing monitoring systems to improve the way we anticipate, prevent and resolve such problems in the future.

16 Expansion of membership

- a. The board approved membership of Community Base for Brighton Activist Network, Clare Project, Epilepsy Action Brighton and Hove, Goal Group, Moulsecoomb Forest Garden and Wildlife Project, Sierra Leone Brighton Association and Simon Jones Memorial Campaign.
- b. The board noted advice from the Charity Commission concerning membership stating that the Charity Commission 'would expect a member of a charity to act only in the interests of the charity and in furtherance of the charitable objects' and advising trustees to consider clarifying the rights and responsibilities of the membership. The board asked Colin to seek clarification of the advice.

17 Trustees' skills audit

The board noted an audit of trustees' skills showing a high level of skill amongst trustees in all areas audited.

18 Development plan 2009-14

- a. Colin reported that he had consulted with all participant groups on the 2009-14 development plan during his January meetings with groups.
- b. The board asked Colin to table a draft development plan at the March board meeting.

19 Capacitybuilders funding for new windows

- a. The board agreed to bid for £80,000 funding from Capacitybuilders towards new windows.
- b. The board noted that 18 groups at Community Base had written letters supporting the bid but that Brighton and Hove Community and Voluntary Sector Forum had written to us saying it would not write a letter of support.
- c. The board expressed its support for the bid for Capacitybuilders funding for the One Brighton Centre.
- d. The board asked Colin to seek support for our bid from Brighton and Hove ChangeUp Consortium.

20 Advance Advocacy and small meeting room

- a. The board noted that Advance Advocacy had ended its licence agreement on 31st January 2009.
- b. In response to requests from groups the board agreed to turn the room licenced to Advance Advocacy into a small meeting room for supervision and counselling.

21 Brighton and Hove Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF) and LINK

- a. Colin reported on recent meetings he had had with Sally Hiscock of CVSF to discuss this matter.
- b. The board noted email correspondence with CVSF that included a commitment from CVSF to remove Community Base's address from LINK material and use a PO box address for LINK.
- c. The board noted a letter dated 28th January 2009 from CVSF giving notice ending CVSF's licence to occupy space at Community Base on 30th November 2009.
- d. The board agreed to CVSF continuing to licence space at Community Base until November 2009 and the ending of CVSF's licence to occupy space at Community Base on 30th November 2009.