

Minutes of a meeting of the board of trustees of Community Base held on 8th May 2008

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

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

1 Apologies

- (a) Apologies were received from Tina Harrison and Lucy Stone.
- (b) The board noted the resignation of Hong Lu from the board and expressed its thanks to Hong Lu for her work as a trustee.

2 Minutes of previous board meeting

- (a) The board noted that in point 13 of the previous board meeting Brighton and Hove Volunteers was given permission to run RASP (Refugee Asylum Seekers Project) as a project.
- (b) The board approved the minutes of the board meeting held on 13th March 2008.

3 Matters arising from March 2008 board meeting

- (a) The board noted that TB Alert has licenced the room to the immediate north of the East Sussex Credit Union entrance.
- (b) The board noted we now have new banners.
- (c) The board noted that artwork by a Bristol street artist would be put up on our north wall this weekend.
- (d) The board noted a double page spread in the Argus about our open day in April.
- (e) Colin reported that all staff have agreed and signed revised terms and conditions of employment.

4 Correspondence

- (a) The board noted a letter dated 20th March 2008 from the Community Base board to Brighton and Hove Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF) requesting that CVSF not host non-community and voluntary sector organisations at Community Base.
- (b) The board noted email correspondence with Sally Hiscock of CVSF concerning an objection from CVSF to some material being placed on our website. The board agreed not to remove the material.
- (c) The board noted email correspondence from CVSF, Mosaic and the Working Together Project alleging a lack of consultation with participant groups over the policy on partnership working. The board noted that the correspondence was sent to the Community Base email group in response to an announcement of a two month consultation process over the policy. The board agreed Community Base had robust consultation mechanisms and that there had been a full consultation with participant groups over the policy on partnership working.
- (d) The board noted an email from CVSF to the Community Base email group alleging misreporting of the March participant group on the Community Base website and replies to this allegation from Ros and Colin that were also sent to the email group. The board rejected the allegation.
- (e) The board noted an email from Emily O'Brien of CVSF inviting Community Base to a ChangeUp meeting of volunteer agencies. Sarah reported Brighton and Hove Volunteers had also been invited. Sarah said she had told Emily that volunteer agencies were already working well together. The board decided to take no action.
- (f) The board noted an email sent by Duncan Blinkhorn of CVSF to the Community Base email group concerning community interest companies. The board reaffirmed that Community Base offered accommodation to community and voluntary groups and not to for-profit or statutory organisations.

5 Participant group meetings March and April 2008

- (a) The board noted notes of the March and April 2008 participant group meetings.
- (b) The board considered a suggestion from Emily of CVSF at the April participant group meeting that groups licencing space at Community Base should be allowed to share space with smaller groups. The board noted that there had been some experiments with shared space which had not worked and taken up a lot of management time. The board resolved to maintain the current situation where licences for defined spaces are offered for the use of named participant groups.

6 Health and safety

Annette reported that she was currently undertaking annual risk assessments.

7 Finance

- (a) The board noted a balance sheet at 31st March 2008 and an actual against budget comparison for April 2007 to March 2008

- (b) The board noted that with income for the year 2007/08 of £439,830 we were £2,488 (0.6%) off budget.
- (c) The board noted that the starting bank balance of the 2008/13 budget included prepayments of £22,000.
- (d) The board agreed a statement concerning salaries and pensions for 2008/09.

8 Our carbon footprint

Colin said he had nothing to report on this standing item.

9 Audited accounts 2007/08

- (a) The board noted a letter from our auditors Clark Brownscombe asking if we wished to have a full audit for 2007/08 as this was only required for companies with income over £500,000. The board approved Colin's decision to have a full audit.
- (b) The board noted a letter dated 3rd April 2008 from Clark Brownscombe concerning our audited accounts for 2007/08.
- (c) The board noted two letters dated 7th May 2008 from Clark Brownscombe concerning our audited accounts. Colin reported that he had discussed the accounting of accruals with Graham Shorter of Clark Brownscombe and agreed that accruals would be adjusted annually to reflect changing circumstances.
- (d) The board approved audited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2008.
- (e) The board agreed a letter to Clark Brownscombe confirming representations in respect of these accounts.

10 Fixed asset register

The board approved a fixed asset register at 31st March 2008.

11 Refugee week meeting

Colin reported that we would be holding our fifth annual public meeting for Refugee Week on 16th June 2008.

12 Working lunch

Colin reported that Mike Short, Unison's national officer for the community and voluntary sector, had agreed to speak at a working lunch at Community Base on 30th July 2008.

13 Novas Scarman and the Immigration Legal Service

- (a) The board agreed to issue new licences from 1st July 2008 to Novas Scarman and the Immigration Legal Service, who occupy space on the second floor north corridor, that would give Novas Scarman less space at their request, give the Immigration Legal Service more space and a discrete office space at their request, increase total rentable space by 119 square feet and leave a small office available for licencing.
- (b) In consideration of the increase in total rentable space the board agreed to pay partitioning costs for the new Immigration Legal Service offices.
- (c) The board agreed to discuss the use of the new small office at its July meeting.

14 TB Alert, Mosaic, Assert and Brighton and Hove Volunteers

Sarah Bourne and Jane Frost declared an interest in this matter and were invited to remain.

- (a) Colin reported that he had tried to broker a deal on the second floor to meet the needs of four groups – TB Alert who had requested more space, Mosaic who had said they wanted to give up their west facing office, Assert who wanted to move into the room licenced by Brighton and Hove Volunteers and Brighton and Hove Volunteers who had requested more space. Unfortunately the deal fell through when Naima Noudjem of Mosaic indicated that Mosaic did not after all want to give up their west facing office.
- (b) The board agreed, with Sarah and Jane abstaining, that if Mosaic indicated to us before the next board meeting that they did want to give up their west facing office and if other groups still wanted to go ahead the deal could be agreed to.

15 The Chinese Educational Development Project (CEDP)

Colin tabled correspondence with CEDP which was noted by the board.

16 Director's long leave May to July 2008

- (a) The board approved a policy on cover for extended leave.
- (b) The board agreed that the staff supervision group for the period of the director's extended leave between May and July 2008 would be composed of Sylvia Jane, Ros, Sarah, Annette and Deborah.

17 Legal advice

- (c) The board agreed terms of business with Colin Wibley of Edward Harte and Co Solicitors for the supply of legal advice to the board.
- (d) The board noted confidential legal advice from Colin Wibley.

18 Policy on partnership working

- (a) The board reconsidered the policy on partnership working in the light of the consultation with participant groups about the policy that had been initiated at the last board meeting. In particular the board considered notes of the March participant group meeting, email correspondence from CVSF, Mosaic and the Working Together Project and a paper from Sally Hiscock of CVSF.
- (b) The board agreed to delete section 6 of the policy and renumber sections 7 and 8 sections 6 and 7.
- (c) The board asked Colin to write to the Community Base email group notifying participant groups of this decision.

19 Request from CVSF to have three projects listed as having a home at Community Base

- (a) The board considered a paper from Sally Hiscock explaining CVSF's wish to host three projects, the Stronger Communities Programme, Brighton and Hove ChangeUp Consortium and LINK, at Community Base.
- (b) The board agreed to list the Stronger Communities Programme as a CVSF project on the Community Base website.
- (c) The board considered a request from CVSF that Brighton and Hove ChangeUp Consortium be listed on the Community Base website as a project of CVSF. The board did not agree to this as Brighton and Hove ChangeUp Consortium is cross-sector partnership with its own identity, membership, structure, chair, quorum, voting procedures and publications rather than a community or voluntary group.
- (d) The board noted that the first edition of Brighton and Hove ChangeUp Consortium's Spoke magazine gave its contact address as Community Base despite not having permission from Community Base to do so. The board asked Colin to write to CVSF on its behalf explaining that as Spoke is a publication of a cross-sector partnership rather than a community or voluntary group it cannot give its address as Community Base.
- (e) The board considered a request from CVSF that LINK be listed on the Community Base website as a project of CVSF and that CVSF be give more space at Community Base to accommodate LINK. The board noted that LINKs are organisations established by the Local Government and Public Involvement Act (2007) which local authorities have a statutory duty to finance accommodation for and which are organisations with their own identity. The board noted that Community Base currently has over thirty community and voluntary groups wanting space, or more space, at Community Base with no space currently available. In light of these facts the board decided not to list LINK on the Community Base website as a project of CVSF or give CVSF more space at Community Base to accommodate LINK. The board asked Colin to write to CVSF informing it of this decision.