

Minutes of a Community Base extraordinary general meeting held on 16th April 2007

Present: Sylvia Alexander-Vine (trustee and chair), David Botibol (Assert), Paul Bramwell (Working Together Project), Debbie Charman (Carers Centre), Ros Cook (aMaze), Bob Cristofoli (trustee and treasurer), Paul Evans (NHS Support Federation and trustee), Jane Frost (Assert and trustee), Tina Harrison (TB Alert and trustee), Sally Hiscock (Community and Voluntary Sector Forum), John Holmstrom (Brighton Housing Trust), Naima Noudjem (Mosaic Black and Mixed Parentage Family Group), Rachel Smith (Gender Trust) and Alison Whiteoak (Carr-Gomm)

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

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Sarah Bourne (Millenium Volunteers and trustee), Arran Evans (Sussex Interpreting Services) and Lucy Stone (trustee).

2 Motion

This general meeting considers the review of policies and other actions carried out by the board of trustees meet the requirements of the motions passed by the extraordinary general meeting of 14th December 2006.

Sylvia invited Colin Chalmers, Community Base director, to outline what actions had been taken by the Community Base board of trustees since the extraordinary general meeting in December 2006.

Colin said that the Community Base board meeting in January has set terms of reference for a review and appointed a consultant, Jeremy Spafford, to lead the review. A review email group was set up and a questionnaire about issues to be covered by the review was distributed and responses published on the Community Base website. An initial review meeting led by Jeremy was held on 7th February followed by other meetings between Jeremy and participant groups, Community Base trustees and Community Base staff. Following these meetings, Jeremy's interim review findings were distributed to participant groups and put on the website. The March board meeting agreed to hold a final review meeting on 16th April.

Colin said that a number of other actions had been taken by the board. In January three new trustees had joined the board followed by a decision to initiate a skills audit of trustees. The board decided to make a report on participant group meetings a standing item at board meetings. The board agreed to put the annually updated five year capital and revenue budgets and assessment of risks to our development on the Community Base website. The website's homepage was rewritten to give a more accurate description of Community Base's activities and ethos.

Colin outlined the process involved in the review of policies. On 12th February he sent out an email to participant groups requesting ideas for improving or adding to Community Base's policies over the next two weeks and three responses were received. As part of the policy review Colin also consulted Brighton and Hove City Council, UNISON, the Children and Young People's Trust, our surveyor Ed Flude, our legal adviser Michael Barry, our auditor Graham Shorter and others. On 2nd March an open meeting was held to discuss proposed changes to policies attended by two Community Base trustees, two Community Base staff and one participant group. Following this meeting, comments were invited on revised draft policies made available at reception and one participant group responded. On 13th March the Community Base board considered all suggested changes while carrying out its annual review of policies and created a number of new policies and amended others. These included

- a child protection policy for dealing with issues that have arisen in our reception
- a policy on bullying and harassment
- a data protection policy
- a policy on opening times
- clarification of timetables and other improvements to complaints, staff grievance and staff disciplinary procedures
- a policy on relationship with participant groups which
 1. clarifies the difference in meaning between licencees, members and participant groups
 2. gives a clear statement of the role participant group meetings play in the running of Community Base
 3. gives a clear statement that no licence will be ended by Community Base without reason and without the licencee having a right of appeal
 4. gives a clear statement that participant groups are allowed to have students and other individuals on placement while stating that groups are not allowed to share space with other organisations without permission.

Paul (Working Together Project) said that some policies were still not robust enough and lacking in terms of procedure but he would not vote against the motion.

Naima (Mosaic Black and Mixed Parentage Family Group) said the complaints procedure could still be improved but she would not vote against the motion.

Tina (TB Alert and trustee) asked if anyone thought there were any specific things wrong with the new policies.

Sally (Community and Voluntary Sector Forum) said the new policies would need to be tested.

John (Brighton Housing Trust) said that he had taken part in the review of policies and felt all his points had been listened to. John congratulated the Community Base trustees and staff on the work involved.

Paul (NHS Support Federation and trustee) said he thought the policy review had been a very useful experience. Paul pointed out that all Community Base policies are reviewed at least every year and asked for input from participant groups into policy development in the future.

The meeting unanimously passed the motion.

Sylvia thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.