

Community Base participant group meeting 31st January 2008

The meeting was attended by Colin and Annette (Community Base) Nicola (Community and Voluntary Sector Forum), Emily (Carr-Gomm) and Jane (Assert and trustee).

1 Apologies

Colin said he had received apologies from the Working Together Project and Amaze and Annette said she had received apologies from TB Alert. A rather soaked Michelle from the Gender Trust popped in to give her apologies.

2 Open day

Colin said an open day was planned for April involving participant groups opening their offices to the public (and each other!) for the afternoon, a guest speaker, probably the MEP Caroline Lucas, and some events in the conference room and asked for any ideas to make it our best one yet. Nicola suggested everyone be given a map of the building for the day and Colin agreed to do this. Food would be available in the conference room and some sort of party planned for the end of the day. Jane suggested groups putting leaflets about their work in the conference room. Nicola suggested trying to let university students know about it and Colin said he would do this once we had agreed a date and format. Colin said he would look into some sort of treasure hunt idea to encourage people to go around the building meeting participant groups and finding out about them.

3 Annual questionnaire

Colin said he would be sending an email with the results of the annual questionnaire to the email group but would not be putting ratings of individuals and things that were not services or facilities provided by Community Base on the website. Colin said he would be recommending to the board that in future the annual questionnaire only related to services and facilities which Community Base provided.

4 Photocopier

Colin reported that there had been a request to buy a second photocopier and asked for people's views. Annette said that the photocopier was generally fixed in a few hours and thought this was inconvenient she was not sure it justified buying a second photocopier. Annette also said that though there were times when people wanted to use the photocopier when someone else was using it this was usually only in the afternoon and could be avoided by planning to use the photocopier in the morning. Nicola said the forum staff team wanted a second photocopier but had also worked out a strategy for copying things in different places depending on how many copies they needed and thought planning copying was important. Emily asked where a second photocopier would be put, Nicola thought the coffee room but realised this could cause problems. Colin said a second photocopier would cost around £4,000 plus maintenance costs without bringing in any extra income and thought that, as with the franking machine, some planning could reduce queuing. Colin said he would ask the board to make a decision on the matter at its next meeting.

5 The coffee room

Emily asked if there was a legal obligation to provide a quiet space such as the coffee room in Community Base. Annette said she thought that obligations like this were dependent on the number of employees of individual groups rather than buildings. Colin said he thought it was really important that the coffee room existed as a quiet place to relax and emphasised that apart from a carers meeting on Thursday morning and the monthly participant group meeting no meetings were allowed in the coffee room so it could be used by people wanting some peace. Nicola said she would remind her staff team about the coffee room.

6 People letting strangers into Community Base

Jane expressed concern that people were letting people they did not know into Community Base when leaving the reception and South Wing entrances, something that was potentially dangerous. Nicola said it was sometimes difficult not to let people in when you were leaving and they walked past you. Colin agreed with this and thought it was important that people working here did not ask people they don't know to let them in. Annette said Community Base was mainly a safe building but it depended on everyone working here to keep it that way by sharing responsibility for security. Jane said she would send an email to the email group sharing her concerns. Annette said she would raise the matter with groups when she met them. Colin said he would review the information on safety on the website and in the letter to new people to make sure important matters like this one were more prominent.

7 Annual budget and review of policies

Colin said that the next board meeting would be setting a budget for 2009-14 and reviewing all policies. Colin would post the new budget and any new or amended policies on the website. Colin said he would be suggesting a change to the policy on relationship with participant groups to make it clear that people can raise any issue relating to Community Base, including its policies and budget, at any participant group meeting.

8 The amazing one cup water boiling machine

Annette demonstrated the one cup machine that boils water for one cup at a time, saving energy and boiling water a lot quicker than a kettle. Everyone was pretty impressed. Annette said she would be replacing the conference room kettles with the machines and emailing people to see what they thought of them, with a view to putting them in kitchens throughout the building.