

**Gloucestershire VCS Alliance
 Operational Board
 Thursday 5 April 2018 10.00-11.45 am
 YMCA Cheltenham, Vittoria Walk, Cheltenham**

MINUTES

Present:

Jan Burn	Kingfisher Treasure Seekers	(JB)
Bridget Davies	Gloucestershire Care Services	(BD)
Peter Guns	Cheltenham Street Pastors	(PG)
Maz Jennings (Chair)	Furniture Recycling Project and YMCA Cheltenham	(MJ)
Catherine Kevis	Gloucestershire Community Foundation	(CK)
Elin Tattersall	GRCC	(ET)

Apologies:

Stuart Croft	Hygrove House
Norman Gardner	Citizens Advice Gloucester
Simon Gillings	Youth and Community Services
Emma Griffiths	Gloucestershire Counselling Service

In attendance:

Matt Lennard	(ML)
Jem Sweet	(JS)
Susan West	(SW)

1. Welcome

MJ welcomed everyone to the meeting. She reported Gareth Parry had resigned from the Board following at promotion at Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. The Board recorded its thanks for his valuable contribution and agreed he would be missed.

2. Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2017 were approved.

- ET highlighted forthcoming training events to be run by GRCC, including theory of change, volunteer management and running community events. The GAVCA legacy fund will offer subsidised places to VCS organisations.
ACTION: ET to send SW details to publicise in the Alliance newsletter.

3. VCSE Strategy 2018-19

A commissioning event took place on 6 December in Gloucester discussing the VCSE response to proposals for working with the County Council and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This was based on the roadmap discussed at the last Board meeting.

ML reported there has been consultation with the VCSE on the three-year strategy since July 2017. There had been limited co-production, in general the VCSE affirmed ideas put forward by the Alliance.

The County Council and CCG have now agreed a contract with the Alliance. Both organisations have committed to three years' funding and the CCG has increased its financial contribution. This puts the Alliance in a stronger financial position. JS is planning to work for an additional day a week.

Mike Brain is writing the executive summary for the strategy which will be monitored and evaluated by the Enabling Active Communities Board.

The Board agreed that confirmation of funding and having a monitoring system in place was a good vote of confidence for the Alliance.

4. Gloucestershire 2050

ML reported that Gloucestershire 2050 is a 30 year vision developed by Leadership Gloucestershire that aims to make the county a better place to live, and to retain more young people. Gloucestershire 2050 includes six big infrastructure ideas. There is nothing on health outcomes or culture.

ML feels it is good to have a long term vision for the county and is encouraging the VCS to respond to the consultation as individuals. The consultation is available at <https://glos2050.com/default.asp>. He is also planning to run a short survey to create a generic VCS response. The Health and Wellbeing Forum recently discussed Gloucestershire 2050 and suggested aspirations such as eradicating homelessness, reducing carbon emissions, or being the healthiest county. The Forum did not want a specific event on the consultation.

CK suggested ML should circulate the survey to Operational Board members in advance. She is keen to make sure economic benefits from the vision are shared with all communities.

PG had attended consultation events which asked why the vision was set so far in the future.

JB thinks the county needs employment, housing and for young people to be valued.

ET reported that some areas are very resistant to local housing plans.

BD asked to what extent young people have been consulted, given an aim is for more young people to stay in the county. ML reported that some young people attended the launch event but there was not a wide representation.

JB reported many young people have little aspiration and that needs to change. She said Kingfisher Treasure Seekers is establishing a new Youth Forum including many different youth organisations. They plan to use different media to seek views from young people.

CK highlighted it is hard for young people to think about the future when they are struggling today.

PG recommended asking the Cheltenham Youth Network to participate.

ACTION: ET will add Gloucestershire 2050 to the agenda for the Cheltenham VCS Forum in April. All Board members should look for opportunities to promote the consultation especially those who work with young people. Please send ideas to ML.

5. Current projects

Community transport scheme

ML explained that CARMA is a community transport scheme to encourage people to volunteer time using an uber-style app. He has funding from Gloucestershire County Council to test the scheme's feasibility. The initial focus will be on young people in rural areas and also consider driver-less transport. It was acknowledged there are plenty of challenges such as safeguarding and recruiting volunteers.

ET reported that the county has previously discounted the idea of using an app. ML believes this will be essential.

ML emphasised the Alliance will not own or run any service. It will be accountable for the feasibility funding. He has been discussion with Community Connexions, Cotswold Friends, and the Forest Voluntary Action Forum. ET said that GRCC would like to be involved

The feasibility project will run from April to October this year.

Digital e-learning

ML has submitted a bid to VolTech for funding to create an e-learning package for community and voluntary organisations that do not have time to go to meetings. This would include adding e-learning packages and streaming meetings and training sessions. He will look elsewhere for funding if the bid is unsuccessful.

He added that there is a need to co-ordinate available training and he has offered to produce a training calendar with links to what's available.

ET stressed the need to offer a choice of training from face-to-face and e-learning. Training should be affordable and accessible.

Crowdsolving

There is no funding available for this proposal about creating an app for volunteering. It aims to produce an app for peer to peer support. An individual would log into an app to offer practical, short-term help, for example with gardening or shopping.

JB felt it could work for practical help but a volunteer's personal development is also important.

MJ highlighted the need for different types of volunteering and the need to build a sense of community.

ET though this was a good idea and suggested researching what may already exist elsewhere. Young people tend to prefer short-term volunteering focused on social action, not something that requires a long term commitment.

Social impact project

ML reported this idea is about measuring the social impact of collective actions, for example the benefit of not buying plastic cups or bottles.

It was agreed this was a spark of an idea but there are probably other organisations better placed to develop it. The Board agreed that although the idea could be beneficial, it was not central to the VCS Alliance.

ACTION: The Board asked ML to write a two-page proposal with a view to handing this idea on to another organisation.

VCS conference 2018

ML reported that this year's conference would focus on mental health and take place on 10 October, World Mental Health Day. The OPCC has offered to provide some funding for the event and ML has a provisional booking at Gloucester Rugby.

The Board agreed it should be a half-day event and wanted to look at alternative venues to reduce costs. Board members suggested Highnam, Imjin Barracks, Forest Green FC, EDF Energy (contact through the LEP), Renishaw, the Pavilion in Cheltenham and a number of village halls. Barnwood Trust might have funding available.

ML asked for ideas for the agenda and possible speakers.

BD suggested a speaker on body image. JS has approached Jonny Benjamin and Neil Laybourn who he recommended as good speakers. *He has subsequently heard they are not available.*

JB discussed a practical example of KFT's work at The Cavern. She explained there are two strands: first how to empower people to set up a similar operation elsewhere, and secondly educating GPs on engaging with disengaged people. KFT is looking to open a health clinic on the premises and she could share general principles on what people with mental health issues need. She believes the right environment helps with prevention/early intervention.

The Board agreed this it would be good to have a practical, local example.

ACTION: ML to invite JB to join the conference planning group.

6. Updates

- **Head of Operations**

ML had previously circulated his report.

In response to a question on the GEM Project, ML reported he has been invited to join its Leadership Board which is looking at the project's sustainability.

- **Health and Wellbeing Officer**

JS had previously circulated his report.

In response to a question on social prescribing, JS explained it is no longer in his remit. Community Connectors have taken over the work previously carried out by the Social Prescribing Co-ordinators. It was agreed that services provided by voluntary organisations are not free and groups cannot cope with extra referrals without additional funding. JS reported that the same groups tend to be used repeatedly and small, local organisations are not getting used at all. ET said that most referrals now seem to be coming through GPs. A list of organisations that hold the Social Prescribing Kitemark is on the Alliance's website at <http://www.glosvcsalliance.org.uk/social-prescribing/organisations-that-have-the-kite-mark/>.

ACTION: JS to ask the CCG what is happening to social prescribing.

JS reported the CCG has asked him to join the Scrutiny Panel about the location of the community hospital in the Forest of Dean. He would sit alongside a representative from Healthwatch Gloucestershire and a Forest of Dean District councillor.

7. Any Other Business

ET highlighted the GRCC training programme. She suggested ML should meet Janice Banks, CEO at GRCC, to discuss the overlap between the two organisations' business plans.

PG is implementing GDPR for the different VCS organisations he is involved with.

CK reported that the UK Community Foundations have received tampon tax funding for distribution through the Community Foundations. She is meeting her counterparts in Herefordshire and Worcestershire to consider a three counties approach. Funding will be for projects working with women and girls. The aim will be to reinforce existing projects rather than start new ones.

She highlighted the Nationwide Building Society Housing fund open until 13 April. Applications should be made through the Heart of England Community Foundation <http://www.heartofenglandcf.co.uk/nationwide-building-society-community-grants>. She also drew attention to the Garfield Weston Anniversary Fund open until the end of June, <https://anniversary.garfieldweston.org/weston-anniversary-fund/>. The Fund would warmly welcome applications from Gloucestershire.

MJ reported that there is a fundraising sleep out on 10 Oct at Kingsholm. She thanked the Alliance team for the good breadth of information covered in its newsletter.

8. Next meetings

Tuesday 12 June, 9.30am-11.30am, Gloucestershire Counselling Service, Stroud

Tuesday 2 October, 2-4pm, location tbc

Monday 17 December, 10am-12pm, location tbc