

**Minutes of The Forum Committee Meeting,  
11 September 2008 at RISC, London Street**

**Attending:**

Rajinder Sohpal (RS)            Chair  
Peter Burt (PB)  
Malcolm Stone (MS)  
David Bertram (DB)  
Anne Laing (AL)                Stronger Together  
Anna Fowler (AF)               Stronger Together  
Nick Wooldridge (NW)        Meeting observer from BACYP

**Apologies:**

Cecily Mwaniki  
Chris Turner  
Laura Johnson Collard

**Non-attending:**                Steve Masters

**Summary of Actions**

| No. | Agenda Item | Action  | Allocated to      |
|-----|-------------|---|-------------------|
| 1.  | 2a          | Nominate PB to the Compact and his subsequent attendance of meetings                      | AL, PB            |
| 2.  | 2b          | Recruit new treasurer   | RS,AF             |
| 3.  | 2c          | Approach Councillor Tom Stanway for advice on how to engage more Sport and Culture groups | PB                |
| 4.  | 3           | Organise a joint ST and Forum Committee meeting   | AF                |
| 5.  | 3           | Produce a brief on key Stronger Together issues for Forum Committee members               | AL                |
| 6.  | 4           | Resend priorities document and organise priorities meeting                                | AF                |
| 7.  | 5           | Finalise content of 15 October Forum event  | AF, RS, NW        |
| 8.  | 6           | Resend consultancy project document and organise consultancy project meeting              | AF                |
| 9.  | 6           | Finalise consultancy project brief  | Committee, AL, AF |
| 10. | 9           | Arrange for changes to signatories of Forum bank account                                  | AF                |

## 1. Welcome

RS welcomed everyone to this, a new Forum Committee.

## 2. Minutes of last meeting and AGM, and matters arising not included in the agenda

- a. AL highlighted the need for further reps for the Compact. PB put forward his name for nomination and will attend Compact meetings in a non-Forum capacity.

**Action: AL & PB**

- b. The position of Forum Treasurer is still outstanding. ST to advertise position in upcoming newsletters and committee members to produce a list of possible candidates by the end of September.

**Action: RS & AF**

- c. There is currently a lack of representation from Sport and Culture groups in the wider VCS, which needs to be addressed (PB will raise this issue with Councillor Tom Stanway).

**Action: PB**

- d. PB reported back on his letter to the Home Office Minister Meg Hillier regarding her comments on the alleged voluntary sector interest in the proposed National Identity Card scheme. The reply was rather unsatisfactory and has now been filed at Stronger Together.

## 3. The Stronger Together Committee and Forum Committee

It was agreed that there should be a joint Stronger Together and Forum Committee meeting in December and that there should be a short paper on any unresolved Stronger Together issues available to the Forum committee before this meeting. It was suggested that the agenda be separated into Forum and ST defined and common issues.

**Action: AF & AL**

## 4. VCS Priorities generated from AGM workshop

It was agreed that a further meeting was required to discuss the priorities and that further consultation is required for structuring, prioritizing and scheduling the priorities.

**Action: AF**

## **5. Forum Event - 15 October 2008**

The next Forum event will have a children and young people's theme and address the priority issues of negative media portrayals and engaging young people in the Reading VCS.

The event will be designed to have the twin objectives of providing media training at a grassroots level and to generate positive PR for the local VCS and the children and young people that are involved with these groups.

AF has a list of content options for the event and has asked for further input. NW and Ben Cross of RCVYS have offered assistance.

**Action: AF**

## **6. Consultancy Project through Stronger Together**

A sub-committee that included AL had produced an initial document on how a consultancy project could be used as a way to consolidate the Forum's position; identify medium and long-term aims and objectives; and as means to develop a 'pre-exit' strategy.

The consultancy project is in the Stronger Together Development plan for completion by the end of Year 1 (March 2009).

RS suggested that the consultancy project could be an opportunity for The Forum to plan for its own future, and PB agreed that the project should be focused on future needs, possibly funding.

RS suggested that we ask the Big Lottery Fund for a variation in the schedule for the delivery of this project and that planning commence on it in December. AL made the point that the project has already been delayed once.

RS was concerned that more evidence, especially with regards to managing Forum finances, was required to prove how the Forum has progressed, and that this issue should take priority over the consultancy project. AL suggested that a consultancy project could be used as evidence and would enhance the Forum's credibility.

AL suggested that a focus group component to the project be a good way to engage statutory bodies, some of whom are also potential funders, although RS felt that statutory body responses were already well documented.

PB was concerned that more ideas be brought to the table to flesh out the consultancy proposal and AL agreed.

RS suggested that AL's proposal be re-sent to committee members and that they should reconvene to discuss the consultancy project within a month.

**Action: AF and Forum Committee**

## **7. Feedback with meetings with Local Councillors**

PB reported to the committee that he and Sarah Morland had had productive meetings with the following councillors: Bet Tickner (Lab); Andrew Cumpsty (Con); Mike Townend (Con) and Gareth Epps (Lib Dem).

All the councillors aspire for a central base for the Reading VCS, and all councillors stated that they would continue to maintain funding for VCS as far as they were able to.

## **8. Partnership Development Manager's Update**

- a. There will be an 'Impact Skills' training course for Forum Voices on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008. This part of the induction process is to provide the Voices with the skills required to maximize their negotiating and debating skills when representing the Forum at statutory partner meetings.
- b. There is a new, revised Stronger Together Action Plan document.
- c. All the Stronger Together Team is now in place, and Yasmin Bador is making good progress with Sakoma.
- d. A burglary at the Stronger Together offices resulted in the loss of some data, including the Forum Voices Induction Pack. However, the team is once again moving forward.
- e. It has been agreed that a Diversity and BME Representative be elected to the LSP through the Sakoma AGM in October (although they would not be a Sakoma representative).
- f. AL reminded the meeting to please encourage others to attend the Sakoma AGM.
- g. PB asked AL for an update on Social Inclusion Advisory Group. AL responded that there is currently a sub-committee that will recommend the number of Equality Impact Assessments that should be submitted to the main SIAG management group to be implemented by Scrutiny Panels.

A further sub-group had revised the Terms of Reference and would be proposing these at the next meeting.

**9. AOB**

AF requested new signatories for the Forum's bank account, who will be RS and the new treasurer (PB and AL will remain as signatories).

**Action: AF**

- 10. The next joint Forum/Stronger Together Committee meeting will be on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 4.00 - 6.30 at RCRE, 1 St Giles Court, Southampton Street, Reading, RG1 2QL**

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm.