

Minutes Meeting of the Forum Committee held on Thursday 29th May 2008 at Reading YMCA, 34 Parkside Road, Reading

Attended: Peter Burt (Chair), Malcolm Stone, Mikko Summala, Vic Hills with Anne Laing & Paul Harper from the ST team

Apologies Cecily Mwaniki also from RVA who have not yet been able to identify a representative to attend

In a pre-meeting discussion Vic Hills flagged up that now the Stronger Together bid had been successful there would be a good deal of commonality in the business of the ST committee and that of The Forum committee. RCVYS has suggested that in practice it would make sense if the ST organisations' chairs were in fact also The Forum Committee members. This was acknowledged, however The Forum constitution provides for election of committee members from across the membership – this would therefore be an issue to be revisited in due course and which would require constitutional amendment to The Forum.

### **1. Minutes of meeting held on 27 March 2008**

These were agreed as a true record.

### **2. Matters Arising from minutes of last meeting**

- (i) Item6: – Stronger Together update – Anne updated on recruitment to the remaining Forum Coordinator position.
- (ii) Action Plan:- AL has contacted Nick Pritchard-Gordon regarding representation on 50++ but not heard whether he has confirmed this with Steve Masters. ACTION: AL to speak to SP-G again.
- (iii) Action Plan:- AL sent an email to Sunita Mishra about joining the committee as Treasurer but has not heard back yet. ACTION: await contact if not made then consider other candidates

### **3. Forum Accounts 2007/8**

PH said that the funds c/f at end of year represented real money in the bank. There was an additional sum of £500 being a GAYE gift which was inappropriately caught up in the financial travails of RESOURCE – when received this would increase funds available further. PH had agreed with MB that he would draft a letter to send to RESOURCE's successor requesting immediate authorisation to CAF to release this.

PH also flagged up that the 'net movement in funds' line in the accounts did not make sense, but that the bottom line did appear to be accurate. He would speak to MB about correcting the figures.

VH asked about the £1000 Berkshire Community Foundation grant. PH explained that according to MB this was not reflected in the accounts since The Forum had never formally made an application for the grant – so it had never been received.

The note relating to other expenses of £500 reflected the grant that The Forum made to the Environmental Network via RVA to fund its initial development.

#### **4. Annual Report**

PH outlined where we are with the preparation. Some report headings were missing since the relevant partnership boards no longer existed. PB flagged up that this, together with other changes that AL outlined, meant that The Forum would need to consider which partnership boards it wished to seek representation on in the future.

#### **5. AGM 2008**

PH outlined the proposed programme that had been discussed with The Forum Chair and explained the logic behind the framework for the workshop on VCS priorities. It was acknowledged that for practical reasons there could not be a group for each discrete service sector but that some of these would have to be brought together. The committee was of the view that one of the groups should look at issues around Communities and Diversity, but that this should be brought within the remit of a group considering 'general' issues including commissioning and procurement. PB would ensure that these specific areas within that group's remit would be flagged up in the introduction to this session.

VH suggested that we check with other groups e.g. RCVYS what they are doing at their AGM's.

Potential facilitator/rapporteurs for the group sessions: Malcolm or another RFTRA rep, Anne, Mikko and 2 or 3 other RVA staff.

ACTION: PH to work up into detailed plan for workshop, identify helpers etc.

#### **6. Forum Elections 2008**

The schedule of nominations to partnership bodies was noted – it was agreed to keep the Supporting People Inclusive Forum on the list for the present and add the 50++ group to it. In addition the proposed Climate Challenge Partnership group should be added to the schedule, but note that it has not yet been convened and that the place is reserved to the Greater Reading Environmental Network.

PB confirmed that the reduced LSP was not affected by changes at RBC since this had been agreed by the partnership itself. With regard to this VH asked whether, if RCVYS nominated a candidate, the constituent organisations' votes could be cast at the Forum by proxy for that candidate. The committee was of the firm view that this practice would not fall within the constitutional arrangements of The Forum. AL flagged up that there needed to be deputies for the two representatives on the LSP. After discussion it was agreed that these would not be elected separately but would comprise the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> placed candidates in any ballot at The Forum.

Nomination papers should make clear what the role of the partnership board in question is for and that training will be available for elected Voices, which they would be expected to attend.

It was suggested that this training be organised jointly with RCVYS.

## **7. Partnership Development Manager's report**

- (i) SIAG:- AL reported that the final SIAG report had been to the LSP which had approved the recommendations. AL chairs this group and Joanita Lwanga would also be very involved; the group will no doubt move on to elect its own chair in the future.
- (ii) All other matters had been covered in discussing other items on the agenda.

## **8. Engagement with the new Borough Council**

PB flagged up that RBC today was very different than before the local elections and in addition there was a new Chief Executive.

He had discussed this with the Director of RVA, Mike Martin, and they proposed that some high level meetings should be sought by The Forum Chair and RVA with the leaders of the three parties and the Council's Chief Executive. The chairs of other fora, such as RCVYS, Faith Forum or SAKOMA could follow this up, or be invited to a collective event.

Mikko said that we should ensure that they (RBC leaders and CE) are made aware of the VCS agenda in terms of continued support for the VCS including the non VCSSU commissioning and procurement processes, which is in cash terms more important to the sector than the VCSSU itself.

In addition to this proposal PB had an incidental conversation with Councillor Tom Stanway (chair of the Culture and Sport Scrutiny Committee) who wants to engage in a dialogue with the voluntary sector – are there any ideas on how to progress this? Suggested that sports associations or Sport England might help in those areas and that should also speak to RCVYS.

**ACTION:** PH to pull off list of relevant organisations from the RVA Directory

## **9. Development Consultancy**

AL outlined the case for pushing this back in time since The Forum was operating at a much more effective level than when this was agreed as a first six months priority for the ST project. The Committee acknowledged that it was probably advantageous, subject to Lottery approval, for this to be undertaken toward the end of this year.

## 10. Any other business

- (i) PB drew the attention of the Committee to an article in the local press highlighting the visit of the Home Office Minister, Meg Hillier, to Reading for the 'roadshow' on the proposed national ID card scheme. She was quoted in the paper as saying that the voluntary sector was very interested in ID cards. No one from the committee could identify what evidence there might be to support such an assertion, either locally or nationally. It was agreed that PB should draft a letter on behalf of The Forum concerning what appeared to be an unfounded representation of VCS views and asking for the evidence to support this.
- (ii) PB also flagged up the Volunteer Party which will be held at RISC on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June

The meeting ended at 7.15 p.m.

**The date of the next Forum Committee was fixed for Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September 5.00 -7.00 p.m. at the RISC Offices, London Street.**

Item	Action	TASK
2. (ii)	Speak to Nick Pritchard-Gordon again about SM joining 50++ group	AL
2.(iii)	Contact other candidates about Forum Treasurer position if no contact from SM	PH/AL
3.	Speak to MB about discrepancy in 2008 accounts in the net movement of funds	PH
5.	Work up detail of AGM workshop, recruit facilitators etc	PH
6.	Organise joint representatives' training with RCVYS post elections at AGM	PH
8.	Sports and Culture contacts – pull list of sports body contacts off RVA directory	AL
10.	Draft letter to Home Office Minister re. claims about VCS engagement in ID cards scheme and circulate	PB