



GRANTS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FORUM

MEETING : Thursday, 29th January 2015

PRESENT : Councillor Jim Beeley
Councillor Usman Bhaimia
Councillor David Brown
Councillor Terry Pullen
Anne Whitworth, Gloucester Law Centre
Robin Agascar, Gay- Glos

Ex-Officio Member

Cllr. Councillor Jennie Dallimore, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods

Officers in Attendance

Gareth Hooper, Senior Engagement and Partnerships Officer

APOLOGIES : Councillor Kathy Williams, Councillor Gerald Dee, Pauline Reynolds (Gloucestershire African and Caribbean Association), Mike Harrison (Hucclecote Community Association) and Michael Teesdale (Abbeydale Community Association)

10. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Ms Helen Black (representing GAVCA) was appointed Chair for the remainder of the municipal year 2014/15.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

12. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 3 July 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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13. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no questions from members of the public.

14. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions or deputations.

15. FUTURE OF GRANTS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FORUM

The Forum considered the report of the Senior Engagement and Partnerships Officer which outlined options for changes to the Grants and Community Services Forum. He advised the Forum that the report was in its early stages and that he was eager to receive the feedback of the Forum.

The Chair circulated a handout that illustrated how the voluntary and community sector is commonly structured and questioned how the Forum could better engage with the voluntary sector.

Councillor Dallimore stated that the illustration failed to highlight the role individuals play within the voluntary sector.

The Chair questioned whether there was a Community Legacy Group within Gloucester. She was advised by Councillor Dallimore that there was a group within Gloucester and that this was often the only place where voluntary organisations were able to network.

Councillor Dallimore stated that the Forum had been part of the Council's Constitution for a long time and since its introduction there had been significant change within the voluntary sector. She advised the Forum that she felt the report was a positive starting point for adding value to the Forum meetings. The Chair agreed with Councillor Dallimore and also suggested that there were better ways for the Council to engage with the Voluntary Sector.

Robin Agascar questioned the value of the Forum in its current format and suggested that it was no longer valid given the changes within the voluntary sector.

Councillor Dallimore believed the group would be more relevant after an appointment had been made to the Joint Managing Director and Commissioning Director post for Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucester City Council. She expected an appointment to be made by April.

The Chair made reference to Section 11.1 of the report and expressed concern at the impact safeguarding policies can have on small community groups. She requested that safeguarding be added as a future agenda item.

Members of the Forum also expressed concern that safeguarding policies were often barriers to supporting people and also discouraged individuals from volunteering.

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The Chair drew attention to the Terms of Reference for the Forum and questioned whether elected representatives from the voluntary sector should be replaced with voluntary sector advocates.

Members agreed that the report needed further work before recommendations could be made as to the future of the Forum. It was suggested that members should meet informally to offer further comments.

16. VOLUNTARY SECTOR UPDATE

Robin Agascar reported that Gay Glos were still operating but had encountered many difficulties in the current climate.

Anne Whitworth advised the Forum that Gloucester Law Centre had experienced difficulties due to a lack of resources that had hindered their ability to fundraise.

The Chair advised the Forum that she had replaced Sally Pickering as Chief Executive of GAVCA in September 2014. She advised the Forum of a number of projects that GAVCA was involved in and stated that GAVCA would be completing a voluntary sector survey which would look at ways of improving the sector in the future. She encouraged representatives of the voluntary sector to complete the survey and also expressed the desire to meet with individuals informally to further discuss the future of the Forum.

Councillor Dallimore informed the group that she was involved in a ten year social investment study and advised the group that she would be willing to share the research with those who were interested.

17. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Thursday 16th July 2015 at 18:00 hours.

Time of commencement: 18:05 hours

Time of conclusion: 19:35 hours

Chair