



GRANTS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FORUM

MEETING : Thursday, 3rd July 2014

PRESENT : Robin Agascar, GayGlos
Councillor Jim Beeley
Sally Pickering, Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and
Community Action (GAVCA)
Councillor Terry Pullen
Michael Teesdale, Abbeydale Community Association

Ex-Officio Member

Councillor Jennie Dallimore, Cabinet Member for Communities and
Neighbourhoods

Officers in Attendance

Edward Pomfret, Health, Partnerships & Engagement Manager
Tony Wisdom, Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Councillor Usman Bhaimia, Councillor David Brown and Anne
Whitworth (Gloucester Law Centre)

Sue Cunningham, GL Communities

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Sally Pickering was appointed Chair for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made on this occasion.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2014 were confirmed as a correct record. Members expressed concern that the notes had not captured the detail of the discussions and it was requested that the GAVCA response to the City Council budget proposals be recirculated.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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There were no questions from members of the public.

5. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

There were no petitions or deputations.

6. AMENDED TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chair believed that it was necessary to clarify the purpose of the forum.

Ed Pomfret referred to paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 of the report. The Chair said that, for the last three years, funding priorities had changed and that there was no funding available for supporting the election of representatives of the voluntary sector to the forum.

Councillor Pullen believed that there were communities of interest. The Chair noted that GAVCA would be pleased to help but that work would require resourcing.

Robin Agascar noted that the City Council structure had changed as had the voluntary sector landscape.

The Chair believed that the formality of the forum tended to discourage people from participating and she recalled the informal round table sessions previously held.

Councillor Pullen noted that two-way communication was required.

Councillor Dallimore, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, noted that the forum would have to abide by the Council Constitution.

The Chair noted that the forum was not working and it was suggested that another form of regular dialogue could be used. There were concerns, however, that communication would fail if this was not in the Council structure.

Councillor Dallimore gave a commitment that this would not happen. She noted that the Council wanted engagement with the voluntary sector and noted the number of non-cabinet Councillors appointed to outside bodies in the sector.

Robin Agascar believed that an event could be held which would provide a useful information exchange. He believed that the degree of formality should be mutually acceptable to the voluntary sector, councillors and officers.

Members agreed that the forum was not working in its current format and a larger networking event was required. She advised that GAVCA could help to organise if the event if it was resourced. They had run a successful volunteer fair in the shopping mall.

Councillor Dallimore asked the voluntary sector to detail what they required so that it could be considered. Ed Pomfret undertook to liaise and suggested that some form of evaluation questionnaire should be developed.

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Members agreed that the forum should until an event had been held where views would be sought on how the forum, or a different form of the group, could operate in the future. There was a preference for an autumn event to be held in September or October.

7. UPDATE FROM THE CITY COUNCIL

Ed Pomfret reported that the Health, Partnerships and Engagement Team comprising himself, Gareth Hooper, Isobel Edwards and Verona Vidal was now in place.

He noted that the Voluntary and Community Sector grants for 2014/15 had been allocated together with a substantial part of the 2015/16 allocation. He noted that priority had been given to developing and providing opportunities for Gloucester residents to help form a strong and diverse community with an emphasis on health and well being. The Community Grants had been greatly over-subscribed.

The second round of Youth grants had closed on 30 June with the decision panel meeting on 10 July.

Robin Agascar noted that a number of youth groups had not met the grant criteria.

Councillor Dallimore, Cabinet Member for communities and Neighbourhoods noted that the Council had to allocate funds to groups that served Gloucester City. Whilst this did not rule out County-wide groups, it was more difficult for such groups to prove that City taxpayers' money benefited the people of Gloucester.

Ed Pomfret noted that the Asset Based Community Development Fund (ABCD) was available and Officers were working on how this could be distributed to appropriate projects and causes in a simple and efficient manner.

The Chair noted that ABCD did not have to be geographically based. Robin Agascar noted that groups varied.

The City Council update was noted.

8. VOLUNTARY SECTOR UPDATE

Robin Agascar reported that the Gay Glos Youth Group was progressing well with funding secured until 2017. He noted that youngsters loved trips and that attending Birmingham Gay Pride was an expensive day. Gay Glos was working with schools but having to charge them.

The group no longer had an office and relied on GAVCA to host a telephone line. He noted that the future looked difficult.

The Chair reported that Jane Jarman was working to set up new groups but some of the more established groups were suffering especially in respect of overhead costs as County Council Active Together funding could not be used for payment of salaries.

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Councillor Pullen noted that there was a danger that new groups would duplicate work already undertaken by others.

The Chair believed that had always been the case as voluntary organisations were driven by people's passions.

She noted that Jane Jarman did a lot of work to bring people together. She noted the new Community Champions training aimed at grass roots and the master class for larger organisations run by Amey covering issues such as bidding for contracts and services. She noted that GAVCA had received the Equalities Gold Award from Equalities North East (as Equalities South West no longer existed) which was an externally accredited standard.

Councillor Beeley enquired about events run by Gloucester City Homes and the Chair advised that they did not clash with GAVCA work. Some joint work was undertaken on social proscribing although the two organisations had different roles. GAVCA supported community groups and charities. Gloucestershire Rural Communities Council performed a similar role in rural areas.

The Chair asked who was currently the City Council Compact Champion and noted that a talk about the compact with Gloucester City Council would attract people to attend the proposed voluntary sector event. She noted that the compact was a County Council led initiative. Robin Agascar believed that all districts were involved in developing the compact.

The voluntary sector update was noted.

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting was Wednesday, 29 January 2015 although it was noted that an additional meeting may be required before that date.

Time of commencement: 18:00 hours

Time of conclusion: 19:00 hours

Chair