

Minutes of Harrow Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Forum meeting

held on 28 July 2014, 10:00 – 12:00 hrs.

Venue: Harrow Civic Centre, Station Road, Harrow, Committee Rooms 1&2

Attendance:				
Member	abbreviation in minutes	Member Organisation	abbreviation in minutes	Forum Role
Steve Porter	SP	Third Sector Potential CIC / Capable Communities		Forum Chair / VCS Representative
Alex Buckmire	AB	Voluntary Action Harrow	VAH	
Linda Robinson	LR	Friends of Bentley Priory Nature Reserve		
Gerry Devine	GD	Harrow Community Transport		
Varsha Dodia	VD	Harrow Interfaith Council / Namaste Care CIC		
Deven Pillay	DP	Harrow Mencap		VCS Representative
Tajinder Nijjar	TN	Harrow Citizens Advice Bureau		
Leandre Sahiri	LS	Mary Bro Foundation		
Asia Chetouani	AC	Voluntary Action Harrow	VAH	Meeting Minute Taker
Mike Coker	MC	Harrow Carers		
Avani Modasia	AM	AGE UK Harrow		VCS Representative
Sharon Pinearosa	ShP	Harrow Carers		
Eileen Martell	EM	HOPE Harrow	HOPE	
Carol Foyle	CF	Kids Can Achieve		
Neeta Bhalla	NB	Harrow Council	HC	

Apologies:				
Member		Member Organisation		Forum Role
Trevor Walker	TW	Prostate Cancer UK		

Item	Minutes	Action by whom	Action by when
1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies		
1.1	SP welcomed everyone & opened the meeting with introductions.		
1.2	SP welcomed CF to the Voluntary & Community Sector Forum [the Forum]. AB reminded SP to go through the 'Apologies'. LR queried why they hadn't been added to the agenda as it was recorded as an action in the last meeting (2 nd June).		
1.3	SP asked if anyone had received any apologies. These were noted as above.		
Action	<i>SP to add 'Apologies' to the 'Agenda', in the title, for the next meeting.</i>	SP	for next meeting
2.	Approval of Minutes of VCS Forum meeting on 2 June 2014		
2.1	GD clarified that his initials were GD not GC as noted in the last minutes attendance list.		
Action	<i>Master copy of the minutes to be amended with the above corrections.</i>	VAH	before next meeting
3.	Matters Arising		
3.1	On Item 3.1 (Matters Arising (of previous minutes)), SP had got in touch with the Grants Advisory Panel (GAP) who said there was a conflict of interest with VD in this case as VD had submitted an application.		
3.1.1	LR queried if the Forum should have been given the opportunity to put someone else forward and felt unhappy at the behaviour of the GAP.		
3.1.2	SP reminded the Forum that the council were clear anyone involved in the application process could not be on the board.		
3.1.3	TN queried if there could have been other options e.g. leaving the meeting at the point of decision where there was a conflict of interest.		
3.1.4	AM suggested two people from the Forum rather than one could be put forward.		
3.1.5	SP reminded the Forum that only one person had come forward at the time.		

3.1.6	AM informed the Forum that so many people had been disappointed as they were treated as observers rather than obtaining any feedback.		
3.1.7	SP clarified the history of the GAP saying Cllr. David Perry wanted people on the board as observers as there was nothing about two and a half years ago. SP & AM had given feedback and felt the process was not understanding of the voluntary sector. AM felt that this needed to be taken up by the VCS Reps.		
3.1.8	SP informed the Forum that the VCS Reps will be attending a meeting on the 29th July with Cllr. Sue Anderson where they could raise this issue.		
Action	<i>VCS Reps to speak to Cllr. Sue Anderson and review the situation.</i>	VCS Reps	before next meeting
3.2	On Item 3.3 (Matters Arising (of previous minutes)), SP confirmed Nigel Long (NL) from Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD) and has been invited to talk about the Advocacy Forum.		
3.3	On Item 4.1 (Matters Arising (of previous minutes)), AB informed the Forum that Harrow Community Action (HCA) had discussed whether or not to constitute the Forum. The HCA Board had voted on whether HCA members were in favour of constituting the Forum and the majority vote was no.		
3.3.1	LR wanted a clarification as to whether HCA were not in favour of constituting. SP confirmed the HCA Board were not in favour of constituting.		
3.4	On Item 9.1 (Request from Harrow for sector engagement in a new festival), LR queried if the festival action was on the agenda. SP said they had thought that this would be a new festival but it was Under One Sky again and was to be held on the 21st September 2014. AB informed the Forum that VAH had attended a planning meeting. SP confirmed Flash Musicals were the only group from the voluntary and community sector who had been approached. SP confirmed that HCA would be providing a stall for the voluntary and community sector groups and the cost for a stall was £30 for community groups. AB informed the Forum that VAH will purchase a stall on behalf of HCA for small groups to use. SP informed the Forum that Terry from Flash Musicals had been asked by HC to put something forward but was not aware of the full details. AB informed the Forum that Harrow Shopmobility would be at the event. AM felt LBH was hand picking groups. AB confirmed that only 4 groups attended the planning meeting and went forward. AB also confirmed the information was sent out through the HCA newsletter. AB informed the Forum that if		

	<p>groups were interested that they should speak to Marianne Locke and Kerry Blackburn as they are in consultation stage.</p>		
3.5	<p>On Item 10.2 (Councillor Board Members), AM confirmed this had been raised in a previous meeting and would be raised again at the meeting on the 29th July 2014 by the VCS reps.</p>		
3.6	<p>On Item 10.3 (Thirst Sector Investment Plan), TN queried if this would be taken up with the portfolio holder. SP confirmed this would be taken up. SP wrote to the portfolio holder and has requested a meeting with the reps. SP confirmed £50k spending is on the agenda HC rules state buy local but this is not currently the case. There is a question on investment on the sector. DP informed the Forum that this was the first meeting and that issues of the sector would be put forward and to establish what the Labour group investment with the sector would be.</p>		
4.	<p>Rep Elections</p>		
4.1	<p>AB confirmed that the elections for the VCS Reps had closed on Friday 25th July 2014 at 17:00 and the results were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4 expressions of interest in the role were received ● 3 nominations were received ● 1 of which was late so not included ● 4 organisations voted 3 of which were eligible ● 1 vote was recorded for CF ● 0 votes for Gloria Waithe <p>From this AB had understood CF had become a VCS Rep and congratulated CF.</p>		
4.1.1	<p>AB & LR queried why people were not putting forward representative and not voting. AB confirmed that the statistics of people clicking on minutes were not very good.</p>		
4.1.2	<p>LR queried the number of people the information was sent to. AB confirmed the 385 individuals on the HCA mailing list had been sent the information. LR queried if these were members. AB confirmed these could be individuals but contained around 45 organisations. LR queried if these 45 were registered organisations. LR wanted to know how many organisations were registered with the Forum. AB confirmed this information was not known and that Ealing CVS had held this information previously. LR was frustrated as there had been a lot of work put into getting members on board. AB queried if the VCS Reps knew where the paper work was. EM informed the Forum the case may be that all groups did not want to be represented.</p>		
4.1.3	<p>AM confirmed that HCA was a newly established organisation and would not have member's details of the Forum. HC had commissioned someone to do all this work for the Forum and handed all the details over to somebody. AB confirmed that VAH had</p>		

	<p>not received these. GD felt it was the case that groups wanted to be actively involved but it was a pity that the communication chain was not maintained since Harrow Associations of Voluntary Services (HAVS) ceased to exist. GD felt there was confusion over what they were signing up to whether this was HCA or the VCS Forum. AM stated the VCS Reps are responsible for the Forum and not HCA.</p>		
4.1.4	<p>SP confirmed that all the groups that he provides capacity building support to are informed of the Forum. SP anyone working in the voluntary and community sector is entitled to come along and attend the meetings.</p>		
4.1.5	<p>DP suggested looking at the past list of attendance and also suggested further summits as these were successful because they were focused and addressed key issues. DP stated the Forum had clear lines when it was linked to the Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP) and VCS Reps need to take this to the meeting on the 29th July 2014 with Cllr. Sue Anderson and take this to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and HC to see if there was money that would help increase the membership.</p>		
Action	<p>SP confirmed that the VCS Reps need to take this back to HC as to where the Forum sits.</p>	VCS Reps	
4.2	<p>SP stated VCS Reps may have to look at other means of engagement. SP commented there were still issues around the VCS Rep elections which need to be addressed as there was still one vacancy following CF being elected. DP suggested an interim post. SP suggested that the late nominee, Julie Browne (JB) as a trustee of Asperger's Syndrome Access to Provision (A.S.A.P.) in Harrow. JB has expressed an interest in becoming a VCS Rep. GD & MC agreed that this would be of benefit.</p>		
Action	<p>JB would be asked to be Interim VCS Rep until the next election which is in one years' time.</p>	VCS Reps	
5.	<p>Election Of Chair</p>		
5.1	<p>SP recapped that the Forum members in the past have voted for the Chair at a Forum meeting. SP would like to step down as Chair because of his work load. MC thanked SP for all the work he had done for the Forum. LR asked if there was any remuneration for the Chairs role. SP confirmed there was not. AM stated VCS Reps receive expenses but not the Chair. MC suggested JB chair if she had the capacity. MC confirmed it was a capacity issue for many people. AB confirmed he would be happy to go back to previous VCS attendees. MC suggested HCA chair the Forum AM said this would be confusing.</p>		

Action	AB to invite the attendees of the last 3 meeting to stand as chair including JB as GD stated that she had not been there for the last 3 session.	AB	
5.2	SP to create back up plan. DP suggested that the CVS Reps could share this role. EM queried the number of Reps SP confirmed 4 but 5 if JB was co-opted.		
5.2.1	AB suggested 2 weeks should be given for the community to come back with the opportunity to become chair If nobody puts themselves forward VCS Reps act accordingly.		
6.	Constituting the Forum		
6.1	AB thanked LR for running a positive workshop. AB requested that attendees take a copy of the constitution and to email any comments they may have. EM asked what the deadline is. AB answered a deadline will be emailed round when distributed to the mailing list. LR said if anyone had any strong points they should attend the next working group meeting. AM queried who was on the group. AB informed the Forum that Sarah Kersey, Alan Voda, Gerry Devine, Linda Robinson and Varsha Dodhia were on the group. DP suggested that the final document be brought to the next Forum.		
6.2	SP confirmed no one had come back to him regarding constituting the Forum.		
7.	Harrow Community Action (HCA): Volunteering Bid		
7.1	SP supported the volunteering bid at this stage at present the majority of the bid has been completed. VAH has carried out a survey and SP is waiting for all the information to be collected together. SP confirmed it is a two stage application and this is the first stage. AB informed the Forum that VAH needed to form a steering group for this project to support 600 marginalised volunteers over 3 years. AB asked if any Forum members would like to get involved. VD informed the Forum that she would be working with the Harrow Women's Centre focusing on child deprivation issues language issues and marginalised women on zero contact hours. SP suggested that the management group need to include HC and CCG SP would be part of bringing this in. DP asked about beneficiaries. AB confirmed it is mainly the marginalised volunteers and the groups willing to take volunteers. LR queried the online survey results. AB confirmed the data was positive so far. AB also informed the Forum that the data was still in the process of being collected. AM reminded the Forum that different level of organisations could get involved. SP put himself forward and was in support of the steering group.		

	Integrated Care		
8.			
8.1	<p>VD stated Harrow is developing an integrated care system this involves the CCG and local authorities. The input of the voluntary sector is important. A steering group has been put together VD has been asked to chair this. This involves 8 boroughs Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster with 31 organisations working together. VD stated Harrows financial situation is challenging. VD suggested the Forum allocate a thirty minute slot for a presentation to enable groups to understand how the structure works. SP felt this was very important. Anna Donovan has a presentation that everyone can have a look at.</p>		
8.2	<p>TN stated the Harrow Integrated Board is all Health and Wellbeing Board and there is no representatives from the VCS sector. VD confirmed that there would be lay partner - Harrow Healthwatch who play a key role in all aspects of the programme. TN asked does whole systems approach include advice to individuals and has a strategy been written. VD said communications were a weak point in localities. VD mentioned implementation will happen locally. TN asked how they do this. MC confirmed through workshops. VD informed the Forum that 5 groups had attended the workshops so far. VD suggested all those interested put forward their names. VD stated the Integration Board is looking at the Care Act and a better care fund of 2 million. Advice and information is very relevant towards to this fund.</p>		
Action	<p>SP asked if this information could be sent out via the HCA newsletter. VD to send AB the presentation also DP suggested this comes to the next forum meeting.</p>	VD	
9.	Advocacy		
9.1	<p>SP had requested that NL from HAD to come along to talk about the Advocacy Forum. DP confirmed there are terms of reference for the Advocacy Forum. VD informed the Forum that INCA, INHA and INVA are a statutory requirement. AM said Voiceability were looking at mental health.</p>		
Action	<p>SP will obtain Terms of Reference for the Advocacy Forum to be sent out.</p>	SP	30 th July 2014
9.2	<p>CF confirmed there were terms of reference for the group. SP asked CF if there was anything that was relevant. CF said the Kids Can Achieve were no longer involved. DP said the copy he had said draft on it. CF said that this was not the case with the copy she had. DP informed the Forum that an individual had said that no one should be getting the money for advocacy. DP said if this is sent out it may cause confusion. AM said the Advocacy Forum was set up by the</p>		

	council for organisations which offered advocacy support to obtain quality marks and share information. CF confirmed to join up good practise. CF said lots of groups are not constituted and there is no transparency. DP the terms of reference need to be clear.		
10.	Call for VCS Member on Cabinet		
10.1	SP reminded the forum that there was a VCS Rep meeting on the 29th July at 11.30 with Cllr. Sue Anderson. A meeting had been arranged with David Perry for 9th September 2014 at 15:00hrs to find out how the new administration will be engaging with the VCS as no proposal has come through. SP suggested that the Forum put its own proposal forward.		
10.2	SP confirmed that there would be no voting power but there is the opportunity to feedback. SP questioned if the Forum would be part of this. DP queried how the Cabinet currently did this and hope it was not similar to the GAP process as the Cabinet is the ultimate body. SP said there was nothing in writing confirming this from HC.		
10.3	VD suggested that small organisations feed in to the process. TN said participation should come from the Forum and VCS Reps are the voice for the sector and it is on individuals to turn up to the Forum so they can feedback into the process. AB queried if any research had ever been carried out as to why small groups are not attending.		
10.4	DP suggested the process used to put in funding bids to HC was not transparent e.g. Trustees of boards who wrote applications were also Councillors who were also part of the GAP. DP felt there was a lack of understanding about the sector from the Councillors and GAP.		
10.5	AB confirmed the importance of this role in the sector. AB stated engagement with the sector need to be better. CF confirmed this was not unique issue to Harrow but the same issues existed in Westminster. CF went on to say they had lots of summits and found individual contact with the small groups made it a bit more personal. AM agreed this was a good idea. VD lots of groups turned up at the previous summit in Harrow.		
10.6	LR felt 300 groups would be difficult to engage with at the Forum because of space constraints. LR suggested sub-groups and that it is not all about meetings. AB felt there was a strong need for new communication tools for better engagement within the sector. MC said things need to be realistic sometimes agendas may not be relevant and low numbers is not really a problem.		
10.7	GD queried if the voting procedure should be inputted into the constitution. LR said that this may be not offered by the next		

	Administration. DP suggested that once the principles were embedded they would be difficult to remove.		
10.8	LR questioned if the same person should be attending the meeting and if there was an opportunity to have a deputy member.		
10.9	DP said currently 3 Members of Parliament cover Harrow to engage in equal terms consistency and understanding. MC said there is a lot to keep on top of and people from small organisations might not have the capacity to do this. AM said it was a very onerous position this work cannot be on equal terms due to the work of the VCS. VD stated Healthwatch as an example which is a lay partner which feeds back into smaller individuals and organisations enabling them to set learning curbs and develop.		
10.10	LR queried if the VCS member would get an extra allowance on cabinet like elected councillors.		
Action	<i>Action: SP said usually cabinet members are given money which has been reduced this year. SP will follow up with Cllr David Perry to confirm this and ask if an allowance will be given to the VCS member on Cabinet.</i>	SP	
11.	Any Other Business (AOB)		
11.1	NB, Social Worker based at HC spoke about private fostering and how this was not about children in care. NB wants to raise awareness of these private fostering arrangements through the Voluntary & Community Sector. NB confirmed that living arrangements would need to be made with the local authority being made aware. NB stated that parents/carers would need to be leaving their children in care with someone e.g. a neighbour or friend for more than 48 hours. NB confirmed 6 children in Harrow were currently under these arrangements. NB was keen to visit organisations, provide and distribute a presentation. SP suggested a digital email so this could go out in the next newsletter to be sent to AB. TN felt the benefits of the services need to be stated so that people were not driven underground. MC suggested that a marketing communication plan is drawn up and used.		
11.2	MC queried if there was anything the Forum was doing around the savings that the council need to make as the risk is if the funding decreases the sector will become more vulnerable. SP said there had been a strategy day and that the VCS Reps would discuss this with the local Members of Parliament. Summit agreed as possible vehicle.		
11.3	<u>HOPE Harrow</u> – EM provided the Forum attendees with information regarding HOPE's upcoming workshops and training session and raised awareness of some of the work the Barefoot Institute is		

	delivering. EM distributed flyers of HOPE activities.		
12.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>15th September, 10:00 – 12:00 at the Civic Centre, Committee Rooms 1&2</p> <p>Dates, times and venue for forthcoming Voluntary and Community Sector Forum Meetings in 2014:</p> <p>24th November, 10:00 – 12:00 at the Civic Centre, Committee Rooms 1&2</p>		
13.	Meeting closed at 12:10		