

**Notes of The City Together sub group –
Voluntary Sector sub group
Thursday 9 September 2010, 10.30am-12.30pm
Beyond Boyle Foundation, All Hallows by the Tower**

Present:

Thomas Brettle, City YMCA, Finance Director, thomas.brettle@cityymca.org
Lorraine Butler, City Citizens' Advice Bureau, lbutler@city-cab.org.uk
Geoff Dignum, St Magnus-the-Martyr, geoff.dignum@googlemail.com
Paula Graham, Fossbox CIC, paula@fossbox.org.uk
Sophie Hulm, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, City of London Corporation
sophie.hulm@cityoflondon.gov.uk
Keith Manaton, Commissioning Manager - Community & Children's Services, City of London Corporation,
keith.manaton@cityoflondon.gov.uk
Lindsay Peniston, CITY.COMM Information & Communications Officer, info@citycomm.org.uk
Emma Plouviez, CITY.COMM, Organisational Development Officer eplouviez@citycomm.org.uk
Mark Pudge, Director, CITY.COMM, mpudge@citycomm.org.uk
Sheilagh Roberts, Tudor Rose Court Residents' Association, Secretary, sheilagh.roberts@btinternet.com
Rebecca Sycamore, Beyond Food Foundation, Chief Executive rebecca@beyondfoodgroup.com

Apologies were received from:

Afia Begum, Community Development Officer, Bishopsgate Institute, afia.begum@bishopsgate.org.uk
Elizabeth Pinel, Schools & Community Learning Manager, Bishopsgate Institute,
elizabeth.pinel@bishopsgate.org.uk
Maggie Bromage, City and Hackney Carers' Centre, maggie.bromage@hackneycarers.org.uk
Neil Young, City of London Corporation Community Development Manager, neil.young@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Action

1. Mark welcomed group members who introduced themselves.

2. CITY.COMM Project Update

Funding

- 2.1 Mark explained that CITY.COMM's three main streams of funding end in March. Emma's Organisational Development work will continue, however, due to Big Lottery funding. The Voluntary Sector Subgroup needs to consider how we can resource what is needed by the City's voluntary sector in future.
- 2.2 Mark showed CITY.COMM's new film which is also on the home page of the website (www.citycomm.org.uk). He thanked those who contributed. Interviews with organisations represented at the CITY.COMMunity Fair show how CITY.COMM has made a real difference to the City's voluntary sector.
- 2.3 Mark distributed branded goods from CITY.COMM's parent organisation, Voluntary Action Westminster. New publications included a 'Faith in the Community' directory for Westminster, which might also be useful to some City groups, and a short annual report on how Voluntary Action Westminster is making a difference.

Organisational Development

- 2.4 Emma distributed a postcard which has been left in various places around the City and has a FREEPOST address. It aims to encourage groups, and individuals volunteering or working with voluntary groups, to seek help to develop their organisation. There has been a good response and she has made contact with a number of new groups because of it.
- 2.5 Emma continues to develop work at Portsoken and has been working with the residents' group and women's group.

- 2.6 Emma has also been working on the City's Volunteering Strategy., A new Volunteering Service Manager started work on 7 September: Joanna Kelly.

Information & Communications

- 2.7 Lindsay reported that e-news bulletins are monthly and ongoing. The next one would be distributed on Friday 10 September and could include any updates the group wanted to circulate from the meeting.
- 2.8 The leaflet about courses offered by Voluntary Action Westminster and open to City groups is now available. City groups should book through Lindsay so that CITY.COMM can monitor participation.
- 2.9 Support with accreditation for the quality standards PQASSO and Investing in Volunteers is available through Voluntary Action Westminster for City and other groups who serve residents in Westminster. Contact Lindsay if you know anyone who is interested in taking this forward.

3. Voluntary Sector Strategy

'Big Society' in the City (paper)

- 3.1 Mark explained that one function of this group is to be the City's ChangeUp Consortium. In Autumn 2008, it received funding to undertake a major business planning exercise which resulted in a set of outcomes listed in the City's Third Sector Development Strategy 2008-2011. Due to political and economic changes, the group should now review these outcomes and amend them as necessary for the future.
- 3.2 Page 4 of the document highlights key developments in the Big Society agenda. The State will shrink and local citizens are expected to volunteer and shape local services. There will be less emphasis on the traditional professional voluntary sector (infrastructure) and more on individual philanthropy and innovation. After the Comprehensive Spending Review (20 October), local authorities will be in a better position and know what money is available at borough level.

Commissioning priorities

- 3.3 Keith explained that he represents the Department of Community & Children's Services. At the local government level, staff are preparing for the Comprehensive Spending Review which is anticipated to require a 25% cut in the workforce, 12.5% budget reduction, followed by 10% in the second year and a further 10% in the following year. However, the City of London Corporation must also consider that cuts will need to be higher than this. Even before central government cuts, the Corporation had a £20m budget deficit to address. Distance planning for procurement of services is therefore very difficult in this situation. The Corporation is in the process of choosing a new procurement partner (the 'Procure and Procure to Pay' partner) and seeking support to increase its cost effectiveness in purchasing goods and services. They are re-tendering their advice and information services and have appointed a new Advocacy provider.

Review Strategy

- 3.4 The group agreed they knew nothing about how the government planned to build the 'army of 5000 full time, professional organisers' whilst by-passing the current infrastructure. The Big Society plans do not currently show any interest in or valuing of existing, experienced infrastructure organisations.

- 3.5 In terms of procurement, the Big Society will want big organisations that have large reserves and in whom there is confidence in their ability to deliver services. Organisations are risk-averse and they in turn will only enter into partnerships with other large organisations with high reserves. Smaller social enterprises with fewer resources will lose out.
- 3.6 Local authorities face a position of having to work in partnership or merge (e.g. Islington with Camden, Barking & Dagenham with Havering and Redbridge, also Hammersmith & Fulham with Kensington & Chelsea).
- 3.7 The emphasis will be on individual volunteering philanthropy, ignoring the infrastructure that supports and helps build up organisations and requiring us to tap into individual motivations.
- 3.8 On a positive note, there will be a national profile given to volunteering and employers will be encouraged to release staff to volunteer.
- 3.9 Organisations might have to re-brand themselves as organisations which did not exist before the Big Society was introduced.
- 3.10 It is likely that some public services will be delivered by volunteers (e.g. library services).
- 3.11 CITY.COMM could support the sector by:
- helping organisations to rebrand themselves;
 - helping groups to tap into the personal motivations of individuals for volunteering;
 - offering HR and Organisational Development support;
 - continuing to support small local organisations that would not be able to bid for contracts;
 - helping organisations to reach a stage where they can bid for contracts;
 - acting as an interface between businesses and the voluntary sector.
- 3.12 The group recognised that every model of what to do with a church building exists in the City. They are also local funders in many cases. Our strategy for the sector should value, support and raise awareness of them more.
- 3.13 The meeting agreed to take the Big Society paper away and add to the boxes in the table. The paper can be downloaded from the website at: <http://www.citycomm.org.uk/sites/citycomm.org.uk/files/images/Big%20Society%20in%20the%20City%20of%20London.doc> Please make any suggested changes to text in a different colour from the original, or use the 'track changes' facility.

ALL

4. The City Together Compact

- 4.1 Mark tabled the Compact Agreement which is the working protocol between the voluntary sector and statutory public sector organisations. Changes suggested to it following the last meeting were highlighted in green, although Keith's comments were not yet incorporated. The basics of the agreement are not being changed, but it does need updating. Mark reported that the police are likely to sign up to it and his contact is Chief Inspector Andrew Radcliffe.
- 4.2 Keith has a few ideas about potential new partners to be involved and will talk to Mark about them.
- 4.3 The committee agreed that individual member organisations should take it back to their boards to be recognised and agreed.
- 4.4 The Voluntary Sector Sub Group is on track to re-launch this later in 2010.

KM/MP

ALL

ALL

5. The City Together Governance Review

- 5.1 The Performance Management Group comprises City of London Corporation officers whose Departments contribute to the outcomes of the City Together

Strategy. The Voluntary Sector Subgroup delivers on the “safer and stronger communities” outcome, particularly on “stronger communities”. The Subgroup will need to send someone to the Performance Management Group in future. It is a way of raising awareness and increasing the profile of the sector.

5.2 Once information is available on the corporate side, Alan Hughes will attend the Voluntary Sector Subgroup. The more opportunities we have to demonstrate our success, the better.

5.3 We are represented on The City Together’s Board by Loraine Butler (CAB) and Mark Pudge (CITY.COMM) and the Archdeacon of the City of London.

MP

6. **ChangeUp Consortium**

Once finalised, our strategy for the future (item 3) would meet the aims of the consortium.

7. **Any Other Business**

Funding Conference

25 November 2010 is the date for this year’s funding conference hosted jointly by Voluntary Action Westminster and CITY.COMM. Due to the changing grants situation in Westminster, the date may not be ideal for Westminster. Lindsay will keep the group informed – and others via the website and e-news bulletin – about any changes.

Group members said it would be useful to learn how funders’ priorities will shift in future.

LP

7.2 **Date of next meeting**

2 December 2010 from 10.30am-12.30pm at St Magnus-the-Martyr Crypt (confirmed). Directions: The church is near London Bridge. Monument Underground, Fish Street Hill exit. Go down Fish Street Hill, past Monument and cross the road. On various bus routes.

<http://www.achurchnearyou.com/stmagnusmartyr/>

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