

## **Notes of VCS Assembly Steering Group**

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015 12.00noon – 2pm.**

**Present:** Sue Ashmore, Liz Chadwick, Cath George, Mike Gowland, Chris Orrick, Joe Jackson (chair) Sharon Spurling, Ann Lyall, Ann Atkinson

**Apologies:** Julie Dodson, Sue Patience, Liz Prudhoe, Rodney James,

### **1. Notes of last meeting**

AL stated that the bullet point in relation to the database of members, that would be updated regularly, related to the Assembly website and not the WCVS website. The Assembly database would be started from scratch.

### **2. VCS Assembly Framework and Terms of Reference**

JJ introduced the reports and asked for comments. A number of points were made by members for amendment in relation to the:-

#### a) Framework.

- Initial paragraph to be clearer referring to the Assembly and stating what trying to achieve.
- Objective 1 to be simplified and separated into two bullet points.
- Under VCS Assembly membership, trustees needed to be clarified i.e. Trustees of voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Specify who the Assembly Steering Group are
- Specify what the VCS Liaison Group is.
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#### b) Terms of Reference

- Relate membership details to the framework and state that membership will be invited rather than drawn from across the spectrum of Northumberland's VCS.
- Membership will be reviewed if *individual* attendance drops below 50%
- In terms of time commitment, meetings will be at least four times a year to coincide with VCS Liaison Group meetings and at other times as required.
- Values and beliefs to be reworded and written as a paragraph rather than bullet points.

Framework and term of reference agreed with amendments

**Action - AA to amend Framework and Terms of Reference based on comments received.**

The composition of the Steering Group was discussed. AL raised the difficulty of getting people interested and the need to encourage membership. The links between the VCS Liaison Group and Steering Group and representation were raised. It was agreed that there was a need for flexibility and that it was important to get representation from people who were committed and interested as a priority and get a spread of involvement if possible. JJ stated that some of the Steering Group would also attend the VCS Liaison Group but may also include others to ensure suitable representation of the sector. This would be an interim measure until an Executive of the Assembly formed to represent the Assembly on the VCS Liaison Group. Steering Group members would be asked views/ comments on issues prior to VCS Liaison Group meetings.

**3. VCS Assembly Work plan**

Work plan agreed

**Action - AA to update work plan on a quarterly basis and monitor and develop with a traffic light system.**

**4. VCS Liaison Group meeting feedback**

AA reported on the positive meeting with the members of NCC. All 8 councillors were present. A presentation from Kirsten Francis detailed funding by NCC of the community and voluntary sector. The different types of voluntary and community organisations were explained to members. A discussion took place on what was wanted from the relationship between NCC and the VCS and all agreed that it was about identifying mutual opportunities and sharing common concerns. It was agreed that the VCS would put together a statement which specified what success would look like, who needed to attend and why and how the VCS and the Council would work together to deliver this. This would then be considered by NCC members. It was suggested that the next meeting should take place at Wansbeck CVS on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March at 2pm.

**Action - AA to provide members of the Steering Group with a list of the Councillors on the VCS Liaison Group.**

**5. VCS Liaison Group - Statement of Intent**

JJ asked for comments on the Statement of Intent. Amendments included

- Bullet 3 – present a collective rather than representative voice
- Activities – bullet 1 promoting what VCS and NCC *are* doing
- Activities – bullet 5 ensuring the VCS is *fully* informed and represented on boards/working groups
- Activities – bullet 6 – reword

JJ explained that the VCS Liaison Group had been set up by the Council and that the Council wanted to develop the relationship with the Assembly. It was suggested that the link to the Steering Group needed to be included in the Statement of Intent and representation

**Action - AA to make amendments stated above to the Statement of Intent and then share with NCC.**

## **6. Progress Report**

AA provided a note on progress to date and results from the small number responding to the survey that would be sent out again in a way to encourage wider participation. Useful information had been collected from the few responding to the survey and it was felt valuable to pursue getting a better response. AA also distributed a revised leaflet about the Assembly for comment. AA stated that future work would focus on the website, database and development of networks.

## **7. Assembly re-launch**

AL introduced proposals for a morning launch event of the Assembly in April. This event could include a councillor from the VCS Liaison Group speaking about the value of the NCC/VCS partnership, an inspirational speaker to motivate the sector who could talk about the value of the VCS sector, followed by a workshop on the needs and priorities of the sector with a requirement that funding would not be included in discussions.

Suggestions included for the workshop were 'what are the issues for the sector in relation to commissioning and lobbying', not calling the event a re-launch as indicative of initial failure. The need to be able to get over how this Assembly will be different was stressed to ensure participation and get attention. The response to the survey had been poor so need to inspire and state why important to complete it to ensure an improved response.

SS suggested CX of Big Lottery Fund as a speaker. Alnwick Gardens was suggested a location for the event

**Actions - SS to see if CX of Big Lottery Fund available as a speaker.  
AA to send information about the Assembly to SS.**

**AA to explore scope for using Alnwick Gardens as a venue for the event.**

## **8. NCC Budget proposals**

JJ stated that the budget summary had been provided for information but enquired about whether we should send a response. He raised the issue of not being given enough time to respond to consultations. It was agreed that just a paragraph would be appropriate stating that VCS would continue to develop and support communities within financial constraints.

**Action - AA to produce a paragraph for circulation to members for comment before sending to NCC.**

## **9. AOB**

It was agreed that Kirsten Francis be asked to attend meetings as and when it was felt appropriate. It was considered helpful if the dates of future meetings could be provided to ensure a good attendance.

**Action - AA to circulate details of members of the Steering Group to members.  
AA to arrange dates of future meetings and inform Steering Group**