



# CVS Cheshire East Annual General Meeting

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013  
6.00pm – 8.30pm  
The Masonic Hall, Sandbach

## Minutes

**Present:** 55 Individuals representing 38 member organisations

|                                            |                        |                                   |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| NSPCC                                      | Samaritans             | The Rossendale Trust              |
| Friends of Sandbach Park                   | Oakhanger Project      | Cheshire East Council             |
| Disability Resource Exchange               | HANFA                  | CECAP Project                     |
| Holmes Chapel & Area Christian Communicare | YMCA Crewe             | CECAB                             |
| South Cheshire Pensioners Assoc            | Parkinsons UK          | Cheshire Young Carers             |
| The Tabley House Collection Trust          | South Cheshire CCG     | LIFT Project                      |
| Macclesfield Community ArtSpace            | Congleton Town Council | Alsager Partnership               |
| East Cheshire Mental Health Forum          | Nantwich Flourish      | Activity in Retirement            |
| The National Deaf Children's Society       | Visyon                 | Macclesfield & Congleton Scouts   |
| Peaks & Plains Housing Trust               | Redshift Radio         | Churches Together in Cheshire     |
| Donna Louise Children's Hospice            | CVS Cheshire East      | Warrington Disability Partnership |
| Macclesfield Christadelphian Church        | CVS Healthwatch        | Counselling & Family Centre       |
| Cheshire & Warrington Carers Centre        |                        |                                   |
| St Mary's Methodist Church (Handforth)     |                        |                                   |

### 1. Welcome

David Priaulx, Chairman, CVS Cheshire East welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 2. Three guest speakers attended and presented on the following topics:

**William Lowther from SAS Daniels LLP:** gave a presentation on "The Challenges of Employment Law and being properly protected".

Contracts of Employment: William began by advising that the service they offer is for all CVS members and the importance of charity organisations having Contracts of Employment. The purpose for this is to ensure that the charity organisation is fully protected legally. If an organisation employees staff, it is legally required by law to have given its staff member a contract of employment detailing their rules & regulations within 8 weeks of the employee commencing. An explanation was given regarding the different types of contracts i.e. fixed term, temporary contracts etc).

SAS Daniels LLP offer a service where they can give advice and guidance on existing contracts of employment that are in place.

Employment Advice/Support: William began by introducing his colleague, James who is a solicitor for the firm and who provides on site, physical support at meetings and this can be for both the employer and employee. It was noted the importance of insurance especially in the instances of tribunals that can incur expensive costs - £1250.

They offer advice, support and feedback on any current matters that are ongoing and will come along personally to review if required.

**Chris Furness from Blueye Media:** gave a presentation on “How a well thought-out website can help your Charity”

Chris explained how important a good website can make to an organisation and in order to achieve great quality content, there are five main areas that should be focused on:

- Testimonials
- Video
- Blogs
- Advice
- Volunteers

He explained that Social media helps to:

- Push the message out
- Pull in followers
- Engage in your cause
- Feedback
- Grow your audience

A good way of identifying who is visiting your website is by capturing visitor data. This can be done by:

- Google on analytics (this will advise you where a visitor has come from, how long they have spent on the site, the pages they have visited, at what point they have left the site. This is an important part of information as it can highlight where weakness may occur on your site as the visitor may have lost interest)
- Newsletter sign up
- Offer club membership
- Free information (it is highly recommended that organisations do this).

Mobile Friendly Responsive Design

- Search on mobile devices are up by 400% since 2010
- You could potentially be losing donations by 25% if you are not using mobile services

Donations – Making it Easy (there are many different methods that can be used)

- Paypal
- Credit Card
- Text
- Direct Debit
- Shopping

Chris ended his presentation with this final statement “Has your Charity got what it takes to stand out?”

A **free booklet** detailing 21 ways to make your website work harder was made available.

The third presentation was given by Joanne Grubb from JG Creative on “How to create a great Impact Report”.

Joanne advised that a handout was available listing her ten top tips for Impact Reporting as follows and discussed fully each point listed below:

- Remember who you are talking to and why
- Tell them what they want to know
- Remind them who you are
- Be honest about what you’ve achieved
- Tell them what you want to do next
- Show them who you’ve helped already

- Remind them you can't do it without their help
- Make it look good
- Guide them around clearly and let them browse
- Tell them where to go for more information

A bonus would be to think about the forthcoming year and have a process put in place to cover all the above.

There are a number of very useful sites that can be visited to obtain information and examples of good 'Impact' annual reports i.e.

- Charity.comms.org.uk
- Information is Beautiful website (for infographics)
- Guardian Data Store
- J G Creative website

David Priaulx thanked the speakers for their interesting and informative presentations and advised that there would be a Q&A session at the end of the meeting should anyone wish to ask any questions.

*Copies of the speaker's presentations are to be obtained and will be located on CVS Cheshire East Website.*

### **3. AGM Business**

#### **3.1. Approval of Minutes of AGM held on 17 January 2013**

The minutes of the AGM on 17 January 2013 were approved,

**Action: The process of approving the minutes is to be reviewed due to different members of staff from organisations being present.**

#### **3.2. Chairman's Address**

David Priaulx, Chair of CVS Cheshire East presented an overview of the work of CVS Cheshire East (full report attached) that included information on:

- 'Transforming Local Infrastructure and the ASK website that was launched. A grant was made available that enabled training on leadership and two trustee events were held that involved bringing trustees together from other organisations which enabled them to get to know one another and to form trusting relationships.
- Awarded Healthwatch Cheshire East contract. Currently at the stage of recruiting volunteers.
- Work around engaging with young people.

David posed the question – "What is CVS all about?"

- Volunteering
- Group Development (supporting existing groups)
- Representing sector (your views)

David advised the changes within CVS:

- Focusing on rapid recruitment with volunteers
- Congress process – facilitated by CVS and has now become 'The Voice'
- Developing process for your views and passing back to local authority

David discussed Finance and the fact that the Lottery funding had now reached its conclusions. There was

a reduction in regular funding however, as the Annual report shows '*we are still able to balance the books*'.

David ended his presentation by thanking the Chief Officer, the staff and all the volunteers of CVS for all their hard work and contributions.

Special thanks went to all members and funders especially Cheshire East Council for their funding and thanks to business partners and stakeholders for their support.

### **3.3. Our Future Plans -**

Caroline O'Brien, Chief Officer, CVS Cheshire East presented an overview of CVS's future plans.

- Research on lottery funding – key issues
- Support on training and online resources
- Managing staff, finances and long term planning
- Mentoring and coaching
- Funding (tendering/contracts), business support/funding
- Difference we've made to our members
- Development advice – taking what people have said to increase our skills/knowledge, saving time, expanding services, making contracts.
- Promoting networking/sessions to get more people on board.

Our aim is to continue to want to improve the services we offer.

Key points to assist our members:

- Who to contact and to signpost to right source
- The Voice – online and networking. Link in with other people within voluntary sectors.
- Forum – needs to be promoted in order to be utilised by the sector
- There are a bank of experts from various organisations that can address issues

Our pledge is to focus on our members and give them support in order for them to deliver their services effectively. We will continue to share our knowledge to members.

Caroline O'Brien, Chief Officer presented the new CVS Cheshire East website and advised that this has been done to refresh the old website to enable the jump between our own website and [www.just-ASK.org.uk](http://www.just-ASK.org.uk) to flow better. Our site has new promotional banners and a Market Place that will help to raise revenue.

It has been colour coded to make it easier to navigate around both sites.

### **3.4. Approval of Accounts**

The Chief Officer presented the accounts and advised that these were also accessible on line.

It was noted that the summary of accounts provided in the annual report provided a clear and understandable picture of the finances for the year. It was agreed that if there were any questions relating to the accounts that these could be directed by e-mail or drop a line to Caroline O'Brien, Chief Officer.

Members present voted to approve the 2012-2013 accounts.

### **3.5. Election of Trustees**

CVS Cheshire East Board of Trustees recommended that following nominees were suitable for election as full voting trustees:

- Sir Graham Melmoth

- Moira Beswick
- Fatima Perriman

The members voted and approved the list of nominated Trustees.

David Priaux explained that as a third of the Board is required to retire, both Bronwyn Dean and Bill Gregory were to stand down however it was Bill Gregory's wish to stand for re-election.

The members voted and approved the re-election of Bill Gregory.

Special thanks were expressed to Bronwyn Dean for her contributions as a Board Trustee and to wish her well for the future.

### **3.6. Question & Answers**

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions from the panel of speakers:

#### Question to Chris Furness, Blueeye Media by Harold Pinkney, Alsager Partnership

Q: What advice would you give to Cheshire East Council on improving their website, in particular the problem with navigating around the planning section?

A: It would be difficult to make the website relevant for one individual thing. There may be many different issues that people face when navigating around a website. It was suggested that a good way to discuss this would be to go onto 'The Voice' to enable sharing information.

#### Question to Chris Furness

Q: For online access to a small, voluntary organisation, how do you coordinate Facebook/Twitter cost effectively?

A: You don't actually need a website. As an example Facebook is a versatile tool, a ready made platform. If a website is too costly to produce, gain maximum use for your organisation by using Facebook or Google Plus etc.

#### Question to SAS Daniels LLP by Moira Beswick, CVS Cheshire East Trustee

Q: Do you negotiate annual fees for CVS members? Also, does it offer cover at tribunals?

A: Yes, on a retainer basis. The insurance does cover tribunals.

#### Question to SAS Daniels LLP by Macclesfield Community Artspace

Q: The charity doesn't have any paid staff, only volunteers. Liability and Insurance is OK but is there any other legislation required?

A: Volunteer agreement was advised.

#### Question to Joanna Grubb, JG Creative by Redshift Radio

Q: How do you balance written/picture requirements?

A: Use all channels on how you deal with people.

### **4. Showcase – CVS member organisations**

A number of organisations provided a showcase of their activities at the event.

## 5. Event Close

The Chairman thanked the speakers and everyone for attending and the AGM was closed.

### Chairman's Report

#### Chairman's Address

At the last AGM I reported that we were leading a partnership project with other infrastructure organisations called 'Transforming local Infrastructure' and that we were also in a consortium partnership, which had just been awarded the 'Healthwatch' contract. . Caroline also described the challenges she saw for 2013. I now provide a summary of the progress we have made to date on both external developments and internal CVS improvements.

Firstly Transforming local Infrastructure; in March the partners held a successful joint annual conference under the ASK banner at Wychwood Park at which we launched the ASK website which now provides a single entry point for 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisations, and potential volunteers in Cheshire East. The website has now been populated with extensive links to each of the infrastructure organisation's individual websites. Joint training and development was also carried out focused on leadership. Two further Trustee events were organised to assist in creating trust between the partners and to aid awareness of the services that we each provide. The project funding is now concluded and a learning review has been commissioned. We are now cascading what we have learnt to our member organisations

Having been awarded the Healthwatch contract, we rapidly moved into appointment of a project manager, TUPE'ing across staff from Links, developing the specification for the website and beginning the recruitment of volunteers. A Directorate of the Chief Officers from the partner organisations was formed and registered as an independent company limited by guarantee and an operating Board, composed of very experienced volunteers, was appointed to comply with national and local authority requirements. Launches with key stakeholders have since occurred and engagement of the community (especially the youth) is ongoing.

During the year the Board spent time thinking strategically and confirmed our long term priorities to be **volunteering, group development** (start up of new C & V organisations and support where needed for existing ones) and **representing the sector & influencing** ( esp. statutory partners, health boards etc)

Major changes within the CVS services included the following....

Volunteering was re-engineered to focus on providing a rapid recruitment process that serviced the need of our member organisations rather than the traditional 'Volunteering Centre' approach

Another change was made to the 'Congress process', which as you know, is facilitated by the CVS. It has been rebranded as the Voice and will more enable the consultation activities to be concluded more effectively and efficiently.

In addition there were also many ongoing work programmes such as Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, a celebration of volunteering, funding fairs and network meetings.

Finally a quick summary of the financial picture; the final project supported by funding from the Big Lottery came to its natural end during the year. There were some reductions in some core funding as well as the need to absorb inflationary increases but as you will see, when you read the annual review we have managed to balance the books with the help of some alternative income and internal savings.

I wish to publically thank Caroline, our Chief Officer and her staff and volunteers for their amazing efforts to continue to transform the CVS and maintain the high standard of services and also a special thanks to

yourselves the members and our funders, especially Cheshire East Council and all the other stakeholders and supporters without which none of what we have reported could have happened.

Thank you  
David Prialx  
Chairman of CVS Cheshire East

