

CVS CHESHIRE EAST
1st Annual General Meeting
Friday 18 January 2011
Macclesfield Football Club

Members present

Jacque Grinham	CE CAB north	Rhona Marshall	Hope in NE Cheshire
Dominic Anderson	Age UK Cheshire East	Ron Ford	Sandbach Crosses Rotary
Ken Clemens	Age UK Cheshire	Ross Thompson	Just Drop in
Barbara Lawton	Age UK Cheshire	Madelyn Bridge	Age UK Cheshire East
Glenn Williams	Bromley Farm Community Development trust	Denis Murphy	CE CAB
Maggie Spooner	East Cheshire Home Start	J Grossniklaus	Cheshire Communicators
Laura Holden	Cheshire Carers Centre	Peter Munro	East Cheshire Home Start
Alison Roylance-White	Cheshire Community Action	Bronwyn Dean	Disability Resource Exchange
James Cartledge	Cheshire Community Action	Sue Conway	Friends for Leisure
Melanie Sheward	Cheshire Community Action	Patricia Wilson	Girl Guiding Macclesfield Cheshire Border
Bernice Walmsley	Middlewich Clean Team	Rachel Costigan	National Trust – Cheshire and Wirral properties
Hilary Jones	Middlewich Clean Team	William Alaha Pwaisiho	Macclesfield Rotary Club
Martyn Ripley	Cancer Research	John Jane	Home Farm Social Club
John Lamb	SPACE	Marion Tugwood	Macclesfield United Reformed Church
Paul	Mary Sunley Canal Boat Trust	David Hunter	CVS CE Trustee
Robert Owen	CVS CE Trustee	John Taylor	CVS CE Trustee
Alan Pickup	CVS CE Trustee		

Partners Present

John Nicholson	Cheshire East Council	Cllr Rachel Bailey	Cheshire East Council
David Woolliscroft	Marton PC		

1. Welcome

David Priaulx welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were 38 members present representing Local Groups.

2. Apologies

Tony Ranfield

3. Chairman's Report – David Priaulx

David Priaulx informed the meeting of the major milestones and key learning in the short life of the new organisation. The organisation was formed on 1 January 2010 from the merger of 2 Voluntary Actions and one CVS following 10 months of extensive preparation by a task group made up of trustees from the 3 organisations. The 3 original organisations were wound up creating a new charitable company limited by guarantee.

The first challenge was to attract and recruit a new Chief Officer which took 4½ months during which time survival was achieved by having great support from the staff and several trustees. The new, great Chief Officer is Caroline O'Brien.

One of Caroline's first influences was to restructure the organisation to enable focusing on the delivery of a consistent set of services across the borough using the best practice from each of the former organisations. This enabled the harmonisation of internal procedures, etc.

The challenge of compliance with the TUPE regulations was an example of a true learning experience for the new organisation and our experience overall enabled us to provide a new service, namely 'Helping other organisations merge or work in collaboration'

Merging the financial operations using the SAGE software proved particularly problematical. We also soon found that the 3 inherited IT systems were not fit for purpose and we had problems with reliability, security and communications between our 3 bases in Crewe, Sandbach and Macclesfield. The Trustees decided there was no alternative but to purchase new hardware and to secure day to day support from a professional provider. This was costly but essential if we were to use technology to operate efficiently, to access our systems remotely, and to help broaden our services to our members. We have never regretted this decision.

Creating the new charitable company proved much more difficult than we had expected as we had to renegotiate all our contracts, such as utilities, insurances, memberships of national organisations etc. Transfer of assets, especially ownership of 3 buildings has been very difficult requiring much solicitors' time and one piece of learning here was to have identified the potential problems before merger and to somehow manage the professional services that we had to employ. Volunteering centres and partnerships, transfer of grants and much more had to be addressed.

We were delighted when Capacity Builders (the NGO set up to improve the quality of support available to our sector) asked us to share our experiences of merger by participating in a national case study of mergers of infrastructure organisations in the

Sector. We were somewhat surprised to find that we were one of the very few mergers that had been achieved and others had largely merged without the restructuring that brings with it opportunities to work differently and more efficiently.

A most important development during the first year was to clarify the CVS role in supporting the development of a vibrant 3rd Sector network (which was locally known as the Congress). This project was sponsored by Cheshire East Council and led by a CVS consultancy that had considerable experience in this area. Their recommendation, which was accepted by all parties, was that CVS Cheshire East should actively facilitate this critical process of local consultation.

The ongoing challenge for the CVS will be, on the one hand, to integrate support for the Congress with other CVS services (for efficiency and to avoid duplication) and on the other hand, to ensure that a democratic Congress provides an independent voice on behalf of all voluntary & community groups. Today is a perfect example of that put into practice.

In summary, David advised that we have had an excellent start during the first year of the new charitable company. The merger has been more costly and time consuming than expected but more than worthwhile. Increased efficiencies will be apparent in next year's accounts, new services are being developed and CVS has every confidence that they can support all the groups throughout Cheshire East so that together, we will be a more vibrant voluntary & community sector able to cope with what will clearly be a very challenging time for some years to come.

Finally David thanked all staff, funders, and members in supporting CVS through this past very challenging year.

4. Annual Accounts

Yvonne Baker presented the accounts. It was pointed out that CVS Cheshire East had become incorporated in September 2009 but had only been trading from January 2010 and the accounts did not therefore represent a full year's picture.

The accounts were approved.

5. Election of CVS Cheshire East Trustees

The nominated Trustees listed below were approved.

David Priaulx	Sandbach Methodist Church / Life Line Debt Advice	Yes
Flora Yvonne Baker	Cheshire Communicators Club	Yes
Bronwyn Ann Dean	Disability Resource Exchange	Yes
Dr Peter Kolker	Rotary, Holmes Chapel	Yes

William Gregory	Samaritans Crewe South Cheshire	Yes
Robert Owen	Previously nominated from CDVA	Yes
David Hunter	Previously nominated from CDVA	Yes
Alan Pickup	Previously nominated from MDCVS	Yes
John Taylor	Previously nominated from CNVA	Yes

David Prialux thanked the Trustees that had resigned and stood down within the year

Mike Woodrow

Jane Whetnall

Ray Palin

6. Close

The meeting closed at 1.55pm