



CVS Cheshire East Annual General Meeting

Thursday, 17th January 2013

6.00pm – 8.30pm

Peaks & Plains, The Ropewalks, Macclesfield

Minutes

Present: 37 Individuals representing 26 member organisations

Activity in Retirement	Congleton Youth in Action	Raynaud's & Scleroderma Association
Age UK Cheshire East	Creating Sustainable Organisations CIC	Relief in Sickness Charity
Ashfields Patients Panel	CVS Cheshire East	RSPCA Macclesfield, SE Cheshire and Buxton Branch
Barnaby Festival	FPN	St John's Lunch Club
Cheshire & Wirral Partnership		
NHS Foundation Trust	Just Drop-In	Stroke Association
Cheshire East Council	Mary Canal Boat Trust	The Cre8 Youth and Community Programme
Cheshire Wildlife Trust	NHS Eastern Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group	The LIFT Project
Coaching Inside and Out	Peaks & Plains Housing Trust	Wulvern Housing
Community Education (South Cheshire College)	rasasc	

1. Welcome

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

2. The Importance of Partnership Working

Tim Pinder, Chief Executive of Peaks and Plains Housing Trust gave a presentation on the importance of partnership working.

He talked about how it is essential to deliver something that is greater than the sum of its parts, the scale of benefit with partnership and how when delivered successfully, partnership brings synergy, leverage, mainstreaming & influence. However, partnership can lead to waste & competition when utilized unsuccessfully.

He discussed how to deliver objectives in a partnership, and that to ensure that delivery is achieved, the partnership must be based around an issue, project or strategy. How it is essential to employ some value for money principles when looking at partnerships to reduce costs & duplication, to improve targeting of pooled resources and to test the effectiveness of skills & pooled resources. Partnership allows easier communication.

Peaks and Plains know their strengths, which is providing secure, warm homes; helping to changes lives by investing in homes. They are clear on expertise and where they need assistance. Peaks and Plains clientele generally have poorer outcomes in terms of health, employment and life expectancy.

Tim then went on to discuss a number of successful recent partnerships for Peaks and Plains – namely working with the Macclesfield LAP (Local Area Partnership) on the Weston Estate, with the Moss

Community Budgeting Pilot where they engaged with residents to discover what their values were.

They have had partnerships resulting in a boxing club funded for young women; a cheerleading group that went to Slovenia; 'wheels to work' for people without public transport; luncheon clubs for the elderly; an anti-social behaviour project with the police and local football club, and a street soccer training project which greatly improved the self-esteem of many of its participants.

One particularly successful partnership was with the Bridgend Centre in Bollington, which delivered a guided walking club for people with depression; providing health benefits to those residents involved. Peaks and Plains have undertaken partnerships with schools & colleges, ensuring the next generation benefit from their involvement, and resulting in community gardens, performing spaces and breakfast clubs.

Ultimately, Peaks and Plains are focused on achieving vibrant communities with increased satisfaction levels, and he commented that they seem to be delivering this.

Questions were then invited from the audience.

Claire McGregor, working in Styal Prison, made a case for the possibility of CVS members present to work with them collaborating in a partnership.

David Priaulx asked what do Peaks and Plains define partnership as?

Tim Pinder replied not funders and suppliers – these we regard as stakeholders.

David Priaulx asked how are decisions made by the board with regard to partnerships?

Tim Pinder replied by cascading the decision making process down. They take informed risks.

Jeremy Halliday asked have any of their partnerships failed?

Tim Pinder replied no although he has known of partnerships where they have questioned if they delivered? Where reputation might be at stake.

Rob Raphael asked what have the risks of partnership been?

Tim Pinder replied that generally where there has been a mutual arrangement there has been mutual benefit. Only sometimes a concern re staffing of bringing a new partner into an organization although staffing would be protected.

3. AGM Business

3.1. Approval of Minutes of AGM held on Wednesday 28th March 2012

The minutes of the 2012 AGM were approved

3.2. Chairman's Address

David Priaulx, Chair of CVS Cheshire East presented an overview of the work of CVS Cheshire East over the last 10 months (full report attached)

3.3. Our Future Plans -

Caroline O'Brien, Chief Officer, CVS Cheshire East presented an overview of CVS's future plans. This would be based around the strategic planning of the board, ensuring CVS members have the right volunteers, and that member organizations have the capacity to deliver services. CVS is not a frontline organisation, we are good at infrastructure – that is, supporting organisations to deliver services.

There is a changing landscape for the future, with financial pressures strongly affecting our sector. Next year we will respond to change and ensure VCS (Voluntary & Community Sector) organisations also respond to change.

There are big changes being introduced to CRB checking – with fewer people to be CRB checked.

CVS is delivering training on the CRB changes. CVS is also delivering training on social media.

Transforming Local Infrastructure is a big project for CVS within an online portal website to be called 'Ask' undergoing a big marketing campaign. There will be a single online portal, with CVS and 8 other infrastructure organisations feeding into it. The website will be launched in March.

Also in March, CVS will be hosting the Ask conference at Wychwood Park. We will explore areas of work around commissioning, fundraising, recruiting trustees, governance, planning and social media amongst other areas of interest.

Open for Community is an online funding tool. CVS understand that when filling in a bid, some organisations require more help than others.

The Healthwatch project is going by the new name of Cheshire East Resource Consortium. CVS approached other organisations to help deliver this.

CVS are going to be delivering internal volunteering training to East Cheshire NHS Trust. This training programme is a pilot, and could be a way forward for organizations for the future.

We are hiring for a Business Manager to improve income generations & sales, to increase unrestricted income and to broaden our market. The business manager will share learning as regards the work of the South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group, that is, the setting up of a small grants scheme open to voluntary or community organisations in East Cheshire, Cheshire South & Vale Royal.

There is funding for discrete projects regarding health work.

3.4. Approval of Accounts

The Chief Officer presented the accounts

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. £230,000 Ask expenditure will be carried forward to the next financial year.

The accounts were approved.

3.5. Re-election of Trustees

CVS Cheshire East Board of Trustees recommended that following nominees were suitable for re-election for the 3 Trustee positions

* Robert Owen: Current Trustee standing for re-election

* Alan Pickup: Is IT Security Manager at Astra Zeneca. Current Trustee standing for re-election

* Jeremy Halliday expressed interest at the last AGM. He has joined the board as a co-optee – there is the possibility to invite him as a full board member. He is a Sandbach Patients Panel member.

The board wish to co-opt 3 new board members; who will come to at least 3 meetings and the next AGM. These are Moira Beswick; who works at Astra Zeneca and as HR director of the Rossendale Trust; Steffanie Weir who works for Peaks and Plains Housing Trust; and Fatima Perriman who is Finance Manager at the YMCA in Crewe.

The members voted and approved the above list of nominated Trustees.

3.6. Question & Answers

Questions raised by the members were answered by the Chairman.

Tina Jones of Cheshire East Council commented on the reputation of CVS; that CVS are well thought of in the sector.

David Priaulx responded that that gives CVS confidence as an organization.

The chairman commented that he appreciated everyone travelling to the AGM in the bad weather conditions. He thanked Peaks and Plains for providing the facility.

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

The period since the last AGM has been a time of both consolidation and improvement in our services and also a time of reaching out into new areas to provide leadership in bidding for new services in partnership with other infrastructure organisations.

Internally we have welcomed a number of new staff and said farewell to a roughly equal number who have moved on to pursue careers elsewhere, in some cases because their project came to a natural conclusion. Restructuring of individual roles seems to be an ongoing necessity due to meeting changes in funding requirements.

We have continued to promote volunteering, placing nearly 2000 volunteers in the last year. Our own services have concentrated efforts on hard-to-place individuals and to support organisations with specific volunteering requirements, so matching people with opportunities. Finding funding to support our volunteering service is particularly difficult.

Facilitation of the Third Sector network has progressed with both the 'Congress' work and also by setting up a number of common interest networks. Some of these have taken off whilst others have struggled to create interest. The Trustee network is an example of the latter which I find unfortunate as more informed trustees/Board members/ management committee members etc leads to better governance. This is an area of concern as we hear of many examples where Boards create problems for their organisations rather than solve problems for them. Referring back to the Congress, I am delighted to report that reps to many statutory meetings are now better trained and are increasingly being able to represent their members. There have also been several examples of where the sector's voice has been more effectively heard by local authorities.

Several successful events have been held during the year, most notably the annual conference for our members and a celebration of volunteering. I especially want to thank our staff for organising these with such enthusiasm.

We also attempted to strengthen the CVS Board by further recruitment of Trustees to provide missing skills and to broaden our diversity. We will be appointing one new trustee today and the Board has also co-opted 3 potential trustees.

The last year has been exciting in other ways too as we successfully led a consortium bid for £400,000 of Central Government funding with which we had committed to introduce collaborative working with 9 partner infrastructure organisations. This programme had three major aims. First: to develop a common hub, thus providing a single access point for volunteers, V & C organisations and social enterprises and providing signposting and common approaches and information. Second; to create a common leadership and development programme for infrastructure organisations. [Some member organisations also benefited directly from this]. And third: to explore the potential for sharing some common back office processes. A joint meeting of the Boards of all partner organisations was held last autumn and there was much

enthusiasm to see progress but also recognition that partnership will continue to be difficult to achieve when we are also in competition for the same ever diminishing funding pot.

We have also led a consortium bid for Healthwatch, the purpose of which is to act as consumer champion for patients, service users, carers and the wider public in the area of health and social care. This bid required considerable analysis of both the risks and benefits for us as an infrastructure organisation but also for our partners who would provide much of the customer facing service. The contract has been successfully won and much work lies ahead to create and structure the service so as to meet Central and Local Council requirements. I must mention Caroline our Chief Officer, who without her leadership and huge personal efforts neither of these bids would have materialised.

Like many of our member organisations, funding is a major driver of change and, in the last few months, the CVS Board has met to critically examine the role of the CVS for the next few years. We consider that we will no longer have the resources to provide a full range of services to whichever Community, Voluntary and Faith group in Cheshire East requests it and we will need to ensure that every pound of public money spent to support our members provides best value to meet the needs of the Cheshire East community. We will also need to find ways to generate income to support our work rather than to rely solely on public funding.

I cannot conclude this report to you all without making some mention of Big Society. The principles on which this concept was built and communicated was like music to our ears as we believed strongly in community involvement and the benefit of local groups available to serve the wider community. We saw this as an opportunity to do even more with, albeit, a necessary drive for efficiency and effectiveness. However we all have costs even with the welcome contribution that our volunteers so willingly offer. Many of our members have seen funding shrink and the national move towards larger contracts and payment by results. Big Society now seems a tainted brand linked to spending cuts rather than an exciting opportunity for a better society. We need to hang on in there as to quote a recent article in the Guardian "civil society has quietly kept British Society intact for hundreds of years".

Finally my thanks go to:

- the CVS staff who worked so hard to provide your services
- our Board members and the other volunteers who support us so generously
- our funders who have entrusted us to deliver
- our members. We appreciate your feedback, positive or otherwise, which has made us a stronger and more confident organisation. Together we will continue to provide Cheshire East with a vibrant set of V & C services and make it a great place to live and work.

Thank you
David Prialx
Chairman of CVS Cheshire East

