



## CVS Cheshire East Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2014  
6.00pm – 8.45pm  
Barclays' Radbroke Hall site, nr Knutsford.

### Minutes

**Present:** 39 Individuals representing 31 member organisations

Ableworld (UK) Ltd	Macclesfield Castle Rotary Club
Activity in Retirement	Macclesfield URC
Adullam/matt25	Mid Cheshire Riding for the Disabled
Alsager Caring Network	M & C Scouts
Alsager Community Church	Oakhanger Project
Cheshire Centre for Independent Living	Samaritans Crewe South Cheshire
Cheshire East Council	Sandbach Patient Reference Group
Cheshire Neighbours' Credit Union	Shavington Youth Club
Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Trust	SSAFA Cheshire
Congleton Museum	St John's Wood Lunch Club
Congleton Town Mayor	The Rossendale Trust
Crewe YMCA	Together Trust
CVS Cheshire East	Vernova CIC (Waters Green Medical Centre)
Deafness Support Network	Wythenshawe Development Trust
East Cheshire Mental Health Forum (Macclesfield)	Youth in Action
Lifeline Debt Advice	

#### 1. Welcome

David Priaulx, Chairman, CVS Cheshire East welcomed everyone to the meeting. Expressed thanks to Bob Cunningham (host) for the use of Barclays facilities.

#### 2. Minutes of AGM held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013

The minutes of the AGM on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013 were approved.

#### 3. Chairman's Address

David Priaulx, Chair of CVS Cheshire East presented the Annual Report and an overview of the work of CVS Cheshire East 2013/2014. A summary is detailed as follows (full document attached).

- The period since the last AGM in December 2013 has been one of consolidation for CVS Cheshire East, building on the changes that we shared with our members at that event. The new organisation's structure has matured considerably and staff have begun to have a greater understanding of the full range of services. We understand the need of clear objectives, financial viability and good governance.*
- Governance. Our own organisation strives to be an example of best practice and this also applies to the trustees! In my experience of Boards, Management groups, Steering committees etc they can either be a help or a hindrance; I am particularly proud of our Board. The Board meets regularly, with good attendance and the right level of documentation to support their discussions and sub groups to deal with specific matters such as financial control. Staff members have attended Board meetings to keep them informed on matters such as volunteering, the Voice, Business Development in order to keep the Board well informed. This has enabled the Board to*

give support and guidance as appropriate. In March 2013 the trustees met for an 'away day' and I believe that this is essential practice in order for Board members to work together, looking back at achievements and learning, a self assessment of themselves. We also spent time looking forward, ensuring a clear, mutual agreed strategy.

I would also like to reflect on the bigger picture that relates to the sector:

- When the idea of Big Society emerged some time ago, we believed that we were already doing it in Cheshire East; however the aspirations of government were and still are very valid if we want vibrant and healthy communities. In hindsight Central Government has done little to help the local organisation. It focused on new initiatives such as the Charity Bank, the National Citizen Service, training community champions etc. During this time economic pressures at Local Authority level caused erosion of financial support for much of the Voluntary and Community sector.
- The relationship between business and the charitable sector has been in the news lately. It seems that in our area there is plenty of evidence that business and charity do work together for a better society and a better business environment.
- Big Society may fade away but the need is even greater than when it started. The sector is still active and we have the opportunity in the run up to the next election to engage in dialogue either locally or, if you are affiliated to larger organisations, nationally. **Our voice must be heard!**

*"Voluntary and Community organisations stand ready to make a bigger difference in our communities. Individual's lives are changed for the better because of what we do and this does lead ultimately to reduced pressure on the public purse."*

I would like to offer my thanks to the following: the members, without whom we would have no purpose, and our business supporters whom we particularly value, not just for what they offer us but for recognising the work of the sector within our communities. Thanks also to our funders without whom we couldn't provide our valued services and finally, the appreciation of the Trustees for all the efforts of our staff and volunteers.

#### 4. The Impact of our Work

Caroline O'Brien, Chief Officer, CVS Cheshire East gave a PowerPoint presentation on 'The Impact of CVS Cheshire East's Work'. [Click here](#) to view the full presentation 'Supporting you to Enable Positive Change in our Community'.

- 145 different members supported with information, advice and guidance – exceeds last year's figures. Examples of anonymous comments shown from outcomes measurement tool can be found on the slide.
- CVSCE has helped 78% of members increase their confidence in running their organisation – we are here to ensure members can deliver their services effectively/confidently.
- Funding Advice - we helped 74% identify a broader range of funding options – encouraged to look at broadening ways of funding. In the first 6 months – members awarded 160k of funding. We are able to offer support on funding from as little as £500 to £1.5million.
- Volunteering - 184 members supported in good practice on volunteering, or help recruiting volunteers – we looked at the process of how we find volunteers for organisations to make it more efficient and effective i.e. partnered with local media, local radio, job sites in order to attempt to widen the reach.
- Voice of the Sector 2013/14 – last year we focused on getting it right. Over the last 12 months we have encouraged people to raise issues and work with us. We want to be the Voice of the Sector to enable our voice to be heard.

- What worked best – E-Bulletins/Face2Face meetings. *The E-Bulletin will go out to everyone to give members an idea of what we do.*
  - Voluntary sector impact
  - Statutory sector impact – *Multi Agency Group feedback to key statutory groups in order to effect change.*
- 100% of members said that they would recommend CVS Cheshire East to others – *members are encouraged to feedback any issues or successes.*

## 5. Why our Services are Special

- We have the right people with the right skills
- **Specialist Trustee Recruitment** – looking at organisations' needs and the service required.
  - Role description/advertising
  - Working with existing Trustee Committees' members on policies
  - Indepth service – sitting in to assist
  - Interviews – assisting throughout the whole recruitment process
- **Gripp Tool** – an online diagnostic tool that allows organisations to identify areas of the business where support is needed. CVS Cheshire East staff who are both knowledgeable and experienced can offer professional support and guidance in the areas identified.
- **Job Adverts** – Recruitment for Paid Staff
  - CVS Cheshire East has a jobs page on its website
  - Discounted rates are available with corporate partners for job advertising
- **Market Place** – on CVS Cheshire East website that gives discount details on:
  - Business Services i.e. Insurance, DBS Checks, Mediation, IT & Telephoning, Payroll Services
  - Discounted Products i.e. Print Services, Event Clothing, Ink Cartridges & Toner Services
- **Training** – Bespoke Service
  - We can deliver a bespoke in-house training programme
  - We can offer a similar bespoke funding service
  - We provide a read through service that is vital for organisations that are interested in tendering
  - Our staff will give detailed/quality feedback

Once the presentation was concluded members were given the opportunity of a Q&A.

- Members found the presentation to be interesting.

Q: Read Through Service – what notice is required for staff to turnaround read through service for grant applications?

A: Turnaround can be done within a day although good practice would be a week before the deadline for submission.

## 6. Membership & Support Fee Model Presentation

Caroline O'Brien advised that this financial year will be spent looking at the 'Membership & Services' model. She explained, like many organisations, CVS Cheshire East is finding there is a reduction in funding for our services. The Big Lottery no longer funds us or, in fact, any advice giving CVS Service.

We have run specific projects such as 'Time Bank' and have spent a lot of time working with Corporate Partners over the last year.

1% of our income currently comes from members who attend our training courses. All other services that

CVS Cheshire East offer are delivered for free.

Caroline O'Brien went on to explain that we can't rely on one funder, therefore consultations have taken place to enable all members to access support that is deemed affordable. Two focus groups were held followed by an online survey for CVS Cheshire East members. A brief overview of the results was presented to the meeting. Members were asked for their concerns on the membership model. A full report will be issued over the next few weeks.

At the last Board meeting in September, Caroline O'Brien gave a presentation to the Board with the recommendation that we should go with the 'standard fee' model. The reasons for this were:

- To keep the price low for all organisations
- It would be simpler to implement/understand for members
- Addressed concerns that turnover isn't always representative of size or cash available in an organisation

Caroline O'Brien advised that we are still in the planning stages although the model has been decided upon. The next steps are:

- Market testing
- Full implementation plan
- New membership pack
- Aim to launch in the New Year
- Aim to implement in the new Financial Year

At the AGM, group discussions took place to consider the following:

- What services would you like under the free membership?
- What price level is right (all groups encouraged to agree a price) for value of services

Afterwards, each group individually presented back their collaborate opinions. Caroline O'Brien advised that all responses from the group discussions on the fee model would be publicised and all comments made would be presented to the trustees at the next Board meeting in November. This will then be fed back to members.

David Priaulx thanked everyone for their participation.

## **7. 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. Caroline O'Brien advised that there was a need to use some reserves due to a slight loss however, CVS Cheshire East is in a good financial position.

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.

An opportunity for Q&A was given:

Q: On income received, did it include anything from the Big Lottery?

A: Money had been received from the Big Fund for the Transforming Local Infrastructure project but that all other Big Lottery funding under Basis had ended by March 2013.

## **8. Election of Trustees**

David Priaulx advised that there was a need for a third of CVS Cheshire East Board of Trustees to stand for re-election. He advised that David Hunter resigned as a trustee earlier in the year and that Yvonne Baker and he wished to stand for re-election.

Both Yvonne Baker and David Priaulx left the room whilst Graham Melmoth (trustee) gave members an

overview of the candidates standing for re-election.

The members voted with a unanimous decision for the re-election of Yvonne Baker and David Priaux.

## **9. Question & Answers**

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions:

Q: Is there a concern that Cheshire East Council will remove the funding for CVS Cheshire East if money from membership is coming in?

A: Caroline O'Brien advised that it was expected that Cheshire East Council's funding will be reduced as had happened in previous years but was not expected to be reduced directly linked to the membership charge. Cheshire East Council is aware and supportive of what CVS Cheshire East is doing. Caroline O'Brien stated that if Cheshire East Council suggested they would reduce the core funding due to the new membership fee that CVSCE would challenge this.

Q: How do you hold Healthwatch accountable?

A: Healthwatch is registered as a separate company. Caroline O'Brien is a director; there is a volunteer board which has been set up to oversee the work plan. CVS Cheshire East hold the funding and as such ensure that the work undertaken stays within the contracted and statutory areas we are accountable to Cheshire East Council at present.

## **10. Event Close**

The Chairman thanked Barclays for allowing us to hold the event at their venue and asked for our thanks to be passed on to their Senior Management. He also thanked everyone for attending and participating.

The AGM was then closed.