
Oxfordshire Voluntary Sector Development Partnership

c/o Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary
Action
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The Partnership met on Wednesday 8 October 2008 in the Plowman Room at Oxford Town Hall

MINUTES

Present:

Alison Baxter (AB)	Jacqueline Malone (JM)
Pat Chirgwin (PC)	Janet Pring (JP)
Gwen Davies (GD)	Dene Robson (DR)
Bishop Coin Fletcher (Chair) (CF)	Meryl Smith (MS)
Jim Flux (JF)	Patrick Tolani (PT)
Julie Higgs (JH)	Toby Warren (TW)
Kate Hill (KH) minutes	Jo White (JW)
Bede Gerrard (BG)	

1. APOLOGIES

Emma Morris (EM), Val Johnson (VJ), Nigel Randall (NR), Vickie Zilenski (VZ)

Action

2. WELCOME

The partnership welcomed Jacqueline Malone who is the interim manager of OCVYS to the meeting. Barry Tanswell of Oxfordshire Community Foundation has now joined OVSDP but was not present at the meeting. Nicole Beauchamp has left Cherwell District Council and her successor will be Pauline McCreadie who will be invited to join us at the next meeting.

3. MINUTES

The minutes were circulated and accepted as a true record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. COMPACT UPDATE INCLUDING RESEARCH INTO TENDERING AND HOW RESULTS BEING TAKEN FORWARD

GD commented that a paper was to go forward to the County Council Management Team regarding issues raised through work promoting the Compact. There are many more requests for information now than the team can deal with but they want to ensure any changes put in place are sustainable and will be beneficial in the long term. The Compact Delivery Group is taking work forward through two main working groups.

a) Developing Volunteering Policy

An internal audit of services working with volunteers is underway because at the moment there is no agreed benchmark in place. It is recognised as an area of risk

and is being looked at with insurance and legal teams within OCC as well. GD will consult with this group as work moves forward.

b) Funding, contracts and procurement

A Funding Working Group has been formed to take forward issues that are arising. The OCVA paper on research into tendering was discussed at the last meeting. It is recognised that there needs to be support for local voluntary sector groups to bid for contracts so that they are awarded to groups from within Oxfordshire. This is seen as a 2 – 3 year programme and there will not be a quick fix, OCC is trying to ensure that it is dealt with properly and not just applying a sticking plaster to the problem.

JW knows of a brief for tenders from Gloucestershire written so that bids are encouraged that better reflect local communities

JW to forward information to GD

AB extended thanks to Andrew Woodgate who carried out this research under cost as it was an area of work he was interested in. She also welcomed the positive response from OCC towards this research. We should be proud as we are showing leadership on this issue in the country and that now this research is being picked up nationally.

There is to be potentially a rewrite of the National Compact and therefore there are implications for local compacts. Do we wait to review the Oxfordshire Compact until the changes to the National Compact are clear so that we can mirror it? It was thought that the Compact needs to be a more practical document for Oxfordshire. KH agreed to write a discussion paper to help decide.

KH to write paper for the next meeting

Compact Week programme

A programme of events taking place throughout Compact Week (1 – 7 November) has been organised, mostly events for briefing OCC members of staff, although OVSDP members are all welcome to attend.

GD would appreciate feedback on training available for the VCS on contracting and tendering. Is there currently enough information for groups in the county to be able to go away and make informed decisions? If more needs to be put in place this can be addressed.

All to feedback to GD

5 .BUSINESS AND STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

1. *Support for volunteering*

AB explained that the Place Survey would be conducted soon with the general public as a baseline for measuring NI6 'Increasing volunteering'. A percentage increase will be set as a target over the following years.

AB has compiled a table as a means of measuring numbers coming forward from OCVA, Cherwell and Volunteer Link up so that all new volunteers are recorded in a consistent way and to demonstrate that we are robust in how we monitor activity. So far we are ahead of target in the numbers of volunteers being recorded. We will request OCVYS to supply v team figures as well.

The new High Sherriff wants to hold a reception for Oxfordshire Businesses to promote employee volunteering to them. This event will be 25 November at Bicester Village.

For Make a Difference Day on 25 October, VCS organisations can join the campaign in the Clarendon Centre in Oxford to recruit shoppers to become volunteers, and highlight the work of local groups. OCC's Social and Community team recently asked OCVA for support to deliver work to increase volunteering through two new schemes.

a) Good Neighbours schemes – matching people to local residents who need some help. A grant is available if communities need help to set up a scheme or develop an existing one.

b) Vulnerable volunteers – many volunteers are referred to OCVA because they are not yet ready to enter the employment market. They may have a history of drug or alcohol addiction, homelessness, have mental health issues and so on. OCVA works through this new project as both a referring agency so that there is more on going support available to the individual once they have found a volunteering role, and advises the host organisation, for example offering training on mental health awareness issues etc. This is a pilot and OCVA is waiting to hear if more funding will become available in the next financial year.

GD highlighted that Melinda Tilley the new Cabinet Member for Place is keen to look at practical projects that make a difference to individuals so advised keeping Melinda up to date.

AB also pointed out that all this work is fine so long as OCVA wins the tender for the volunteer centre from OCC in December. The knock-on effect of OCVA not hosting the volunteer centre would be huge.

JH reported that she had met with Job Centre Plus and a colleague there was keen to be more involved with the work of OVSDP. It was suggested that she be invited to the next meeting or provide an overview of the work she does to update the meeting so that a decision could be made about whether it was appropriate to involve Job Centre Plus more.

KH to
liaise with
Job
Centre
Plus

2. *Improved information resources*

AB reminded the group that the platform for the Oxnet website has been withdrawn. A satisfactory alternative at a reasonable price has been agreed, and the design of the new website is now taking place and arrangements for the transfer of data being worked out. It is hoped to launch the new website in November. OCVA has funded this and so it will be an OCVA website that can be reached via both www.oxnet.org.uk and www.ocva.org.uk. Links to OVSDP

partners will still continue to be a feature of the site.

3. Support for organisational development

AB reported that the development team was now established at OCVA. The team is supporting large numbers of voluntary groups including BME groups. Basis funding is also supporting training workshops and the Management Development Training Programme (MDTP) from January to March 2009. GD felt a leaflet on the team would be useful for her to promote the team to Community and Social Services.

KH to
liaise with
GD

4. Support for community capacity building

MS reported that the work around NI4 on community led planning was submitted to the Sustainable Communities Strategy on behalf of OVSDP and it is hoped that it will be adopted as a local target which OVSDP will have responsibility for. ORCC with the Parish Plan reference group will act as the lead body for it. There is a focus on town and parish councils as they need to have buy-in to this process.

NI7 Creating an environment for a thriving third sector is also a local target that has been submitted with OCVA as the lead body on behalf of OVSDP. OVSDP will be accountable for this target too.

5. Promotion of equality and diversity

PT updated the group to say that he has been working with the Raise Equality and Diversity board. The business case for the South East is being consulted on at the moment. Equality Champions are being trained through Raise in the SE and will advise organisations how to mainstream equalities and diversity into the work that we are each doing.

PT to
circulate
the paper

Regarding the Improving Reach funding, PT reported that the workplan had been submitted, and adverts for the new posts were out with a closing date for the end of October.

PT to
circulate
more
informati
on

PT had met with Melinda Tilley and has a synopsis of her role which was felt would be useful for all members of OVSDP to have sight of.

6. Support for faith-based social and community activity

KH updated the group on progress with this project so far. A Steering Group is to be formed representative of different faith groups in the county to oversee the work. Thames Valley Police, the Primary Care Trust, Oxfordshire County council, the district councils and faith groups are to be approached to ask for their financial support for the project. KH is to spend 8 days of her time to help co-ordinate the project.

PT to
circulate
to OVSDP

7. Enhanced networks and partnerships and promotion of the voluntary and community sector (including update on recent election process)

KH updated the group that Martin Briggs of Thame CAB had been appointed as a new voluntary sector representative to the Oxfordshire Partnership. There were not enough nominations for the five Voluntary Sector Panel members for the Children's Trust and so this election is on hold whilst a decision is made for how best to take this forward. It is likely that Colette Selwood will also resign from the Oxfordshire Partnership as she no longer works in the voluntary sector but KH is still waiting for confirmation to trigger another election process for the Oxfordshire Partnership.

6. DEVELOPING OVSDP

KH introduced the new workplan submitted to Capacity Builders and pointed out that because there is no increment built into the funding of £27K per financial

year, that OCVA is subsidising the work of OVSDP. There will be no funding remaining to pay the expenses and back fill of the voluntary sector members as has always been in the past. OCVA can subsidise OVSDP at present thanks to other funding sources, but if OCVA were not to win the contract with Oxfordshire County Council in December it would be an issue.

7. PROPOSED NEW STRUCTURE OF PARTNERSHIPS FOR OXFORDSHIRE

CF met Mary Harpley to talk about partnerships. Mary apologised for not consulting sooner, explained that the new structure was never supposed to put an extra burden on the voluntary sector and that further talks with OVSDP need to be had. It was agreed that KH should set up a meeting with Mary Harpley, David Neudegg and Paul James to meet CF, AB, JF, VJ and MS to discuss further so that views of OVSDP are taken on board before any more decisions are made.

8. ROLE OF ELECTED MEMBERS AND OVSDP – DISCUSSION

It was agreed that it was difficult to discuss this topic before the proposed meeting with Mary Harpley. There has been an indication that all partnerships directly under the Public Service Board should include an OCC cabinet member so if OVSDP is to have a place on a par with other partnerships we may have to include a cabinet member as well. It will presumably bring more buy-in from them which may be important if Capacity Builders funding comes to an end in 2011 and we may be forced into making alternative approaches for funding.

9. CURRENT CONSULTATIONS

A list of current consultations of interest was circulated to update members of the group.

9. REGIONAL META PLAN

There has been no update so far from Kat Pearce at Capacity Builders on this.

10. EVENTS FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

It was felt that the newsletter for elected members should be a priority. We should find out what they want to know and address it through this newsletter.

KH to
take
forward

It was felt that exploring more of the information they may want to know could be addressed during the self assessment exercise in January.

It was also noted that events for elected members such as the one held last year in the Vale and the one in March this year for the County Council were a good way of engaging councillors and increasing their understanding of the local voluntary sector and could be replicated in other districts and repeated with OCC.

15. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR FORUMS

KH reported that there had been two successful forum events held so far and that others were all scheduled, and invited members to attend the County Forum on 18 November.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

GD announced that this may be her last OVSDP meeting for a while as she would be going on maternity for six months either in December or in January.

KH has drafted an OVSDP Communications Plan and wanted to put this before the meeting for comment but time ran out.

KH to
circulate
plan with
the
minutes

BG said that the first Council of Faiths meeting would take place on 22 October. This is for those who live, work or worship on Oxford.

17. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Already agreed, all at the Town Hall are

- 6 January for self assessment exercise 10 am – 1 pm followed by lunch, and
- 7 April in St Aldate's Room,

It was noted that future meeting dates need to tie in better with dates of Public Service Board.

Signed: Date: