

Cross Party Group Volunteering and the Voluntary Sector

Minute

Wednesday 27th January 2016, 6.00pm-7.30pm

Committee Room 4, Scottish Parliament

Convenor: Margaret McDougall MSP

In attendance:

Margaret McDougall MSP (Convenor), John Mason MSP, Margaret McCulloch MSP, John Mullin, Margaret Starkie, Jenny Bloomfield, Morven McLean, Paul Okroj; Alan Stevenson, George Thomson, Rubina Mooney, Marion Findlay, Kim Atkinson, Louise McIntyre, Stephanie Guerin, Paul Reddish, Sarah Latto, Gordon Brown, Joyce Munro, Shelagh Young, Emma Murton, Susan Murray, Joanne Stewart,

Apologies:

Joan McAlpine MSP, Pam Duncan-Glancy, Harriet Eadie, Annette Wilson, Emma Whitelock, David Coulter, Fiona McLaughlin, Traci Kirkland, Cat Campbell, Alan McCrone, Peggy Winford, Alexa Anderson, Gillian Lithgow, Mike Melvin, Louise McGinty, Andrew Lindsay, Liz Watson, Eileen Moulton, Katie O'Donnell, Alan Bigham, Robert Pickles, Helen Fleming, David Karikas, Emma Murton, Keith Wimbles

1. Welcome and introductions

Margaret welcomed everyone to the meeting, including John Mason MSP and Margaret McCulloch MSP. Margaret stated that Kate Wane had now moved onto SPICE, Scottish Parliament and Margaret Starkie, John Mullin (Volunteer Scotland) and Jenny Bloomfield (SCVO) will now take on the role of joint-secretariat for the CPG.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting matters arising

The minutes of the September meeting were approved with an amendment from Alan Bigham;

Minutes stated;

Alan Bigham on behalf of the Scottish Health Council stated that the Council have been working to convene a group (including the integrated health boards) to assist organisations on guidance and processes on how third sector organisations can have equal opportunity to tender for contracts and reduce the vast paper work and processes small charities have to go through, when competing with larger charities to provide the same services.

Amended to:

Alan Bigham on behalf of the Scottish Health Council stated that the Council have been working with Voluntary Health Scotland to convene a group (possibly including the integrated health boards) to improve governance of the relationships between NHS Boards and third

sector organisations who engage volunteers for, or on behalf of the NHS. It is anticipated that this will also reduce the bureaucracy involved in establishing these relationships.

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising. All of the actions referred to in the previous minutes had been completed.

4. Joint Presentation by Volunteer Scotland and the Scottish Volunteering Forum on a new approach to volunteering

- Margaret McDougall welcomed Alan Stevenson, Volunteer Scotland and Paul Okroj, Scottish Volunteering Forum to the meeting.
- The presentation looked started with Alan Stevenson from Volunteer Scotland highlighting the work that has been carried out within the Demonstration Project firstly looking at at Rationale, Method and Context;
 - o The Demonstration project completed by Volunteer Scotland undertook various approaches from surveys, on-line panels, focus groups and interviews, contacting 1446 individuals to obtain the data required.
 - o The data showed an flat-line in volunteering;
 - o Within the adult population 73% no longer volunteer formally
- Volunteer Perspective – and what the Demonstration Project tells us;
 - o Variances due to gender, age, socio-economic background, urban-rural location, employment status (student, self-employed, unemployed, sick-disabled).
 - o With clear evidence of a lack of diversity in the volunteering population
 - o Rise in local activism, less professionalized approaches to volunteering (civic society paradigm) and volunteering as serious leisure, live alongside traditional, formal role-based volunteering.
 - o A demand for different types of volunteering (more flexible roles, the rise of virtual volunteering, employer supported volunteering, increased uptake amongst the young and old).
- The intervention and the challenge;
 - o 3.15 million lapsed & non-volunteers
 - o 1.25 million current volunteer participation with 10,000 opportunities
 - o Theory of change – **Ask** more people, **Fit** with people's lives, **Share** knowledge and values, **Experience** that's rewarding
 - o The offer to organisations reflects the ToC – marketing, Matching, Mission and Managing
- Paul Okroj then continued to present on behalf of the Scottish Volunteering Forum on the Change Agenda;
 - o A group of organisations passionate about increasing volunteering
 - o Fundamental principle is working collaboratively for the overall benefit of volunteering in Scotland
 - o All the evidence tells us that volunteering and participation rates need to increase if we are going to make Scotland a happier, healthier and more prosperous place to live
 - o This is only going to happen if volunteering becomes a social norm

- “give more and different people a great volunteering experience taking into account a very wide set of needs and motivations”
- Do we agree there is a strong rationale for change?
 - A 1% increase in volunteering equates to £26m of economic value for Scotland, each year
 - A happier, healthier, connected population; better meet local needs – deliver on our policies
 - Virtuous cycle (volunteers influence more volunteering, wom is a key trigger)
- We must change the nature of the intervention
 - 1% increase in volunteering needs a more than ten-fold efficiency gain in our current model
 - Now is the time to look at different initiatives with wider impact
 - Work with our partners on a growth agenda; Nurture new networks and spheres of influence
- We must move away from our current approach to volunteering
 - Create more sophisticated views of the volunteer; their motivations and needs and the ‘fit’
 - Value their contribution in the widest sense by listening to and acting on their needs and aspirations
 - Adopt a **Volunteer Centric approach**

The members were asked to give comment/feedback on the presentation:

- John Mason MSP asked how robust the data was; Alan Stevenson confirmed that the data was based on the Scottish Household Survey.
- Members confirmed that there had been a ‘dip’ in volunteers coming forward which was starting to raise concerns for future planning.
- Paul Reddish raised the concern that the same data/information was being shared but little or no action had been taken and it was now time to look at how we do things within our organisations and how this can increase volunteer participation.
- Shelagh Young – Homestart stated we need to stop focusing in on young people as much and seek information from older people.
- Rubina Mooney – Guidedogs informed the group that they had started to introduce new volunteering roles instead of the time-served traditional ones which has been met with great interest and they have seen an increase in volunteering participation. Therefore suggested to the group this was something to think about, maybe its time to move away from tradition.
- Kim Aitkinson – 50,000 people applied to volunteer at Commonwealth Games so surely there is an opportunity in that. Kim urged everyone to read the ‘Case For Change’ document (<https://scottishvolunteeringforum.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/why-volunteering-matters-the-case-for-change.pdf>); to think about what our individual organisations can do to be an exemplar; and to talk positively about volunteering with everyone we meet.

5. Volunteers Week 2016

- The group agreed better coordination within Scotland was required for Volunteers Week, a sub-group of the Scottish Volunteering Forum has been created and decisions made that Volunteer Scotland at the National Centre for Volunteering will play a key role in coordinating activities.
- It was agreed that given restricted timescales and resources the main efforts for Volunteer Week 2016 would focus on social media.
- Volunteer Scotland will have a designated page on their website, sharing templates and links to the NCVO map. Susan Murray highlighted that the NCVO map was an excellent tool and should be promoted better.
- John Mullin stated that due to the forthcoming election arranging a parliamentary event was difficult therefore contact was to be made with Scottish Parliament on the 6th May to secure a booking of the Garden Lobby.

6. Any Other Competent Business

- Flowers were presented to Margaret McDougall MSP for her continued support as convener and the members wished her well for the future.
- It was agreed that the additional communication from the secretariat was encouraging and that communication should be kept up and engaging with the members more frequently.

1. Date of the Next Meeting

Date to be agreed after the 5th May 2016

ACTIONS

- Cross Party Group to be re-constituted after 5th May 2016.
- Cross Party Group to seek new convener after 5th May 2016.
- Margaret MacDougall to send letter to Alex Neil asking about the Scottish Governments participation in Volunteers Week, confirmation of the findings received from cross party group members on participation; and raising the issue of concern amongst cross party group members that it was extremely difficult to plan to increase volunteer numbers due to the uncertainty of funding to the voluntary sector and would seek advise from the Cabinet Secretary.
- The Group's remit to be reviewed in line with a new constituted group and convener.
- Letter to TSI's following on from Shona Robison's presentation on what are the opportunities within Health and Social care and what they are being asked to do.
- Contact Scottish Parliament on 6th May to secure booking of Garden Lobby for Volunteers Week activities – of which are to be agreed.