

Salford Unemployed & Community Resource Centre

Minutes of Management Committee Meeting SUCRC on Monday 5 December 2016

1.12.16 Steve North welcomed all in attendance to the meeting

Present:

Steve North – Chair (SN)
Cllr John Ferguson (CJF)
Cllr John Walsh (CJW)
Gerry Phillips (GF)
Eddie Garner (EG)
Maggie Smith (MS)
Jack Youd (JY)

In attendance:

Alec McFadden – (AM)

2.12.16 Apologies:

Cllr Bill Hinds (CBH)
Hanif Belim (HB)
Kester Dean (KD)
Hayley Hinchy (HH)
Allison Taylor (AT)

3.12.16 Minutes of the last meeting:

Held 28.07.2016

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be a true record of the meeting and were approved.

4.12.16 Matters arising:

a) Contract lease; AM reports that all was agreed and is just waiting for the new contact for signing.

b) Charity commission investigation; AM reported that the investigation is now completed and from the Charities Commission it has been noted that:

- The cost of the conference in relation to the overall funds of the charity was small, and its cost was met by funds specifically sought for the purpose;
- The charity used previous high-profile research and case studies from the local constituency (such as that mentioned in the Manchester Evening News article you forwarded on 8 September) to make the case for considering alternatives to austerity;
- The findings have been used in discussions with the current government as well as the main opposition and other politicians;
- All trustees have received and considered our advice relating to our guidance Speaking out: guidance on campaigning and political activity by charities (CC9) in

planning any such future activity, specifically with regard to briefing speakers on what content is and is not acceptable;

In reviewing the remainder of the charity's website and activities reported in the trustees' annual reports, no issues of concern are apparent.

The matter is now closed.

5.12.16 Minutes of AGM:

Held 22.09.16 were for information purposes only, no matters were arising.

6.12.16 Big Lottery:

SN gave a detailed summary of the 6 month investigation carried out by the Big Lottery following a complaint from former employee. The 3 senior officials had dealt with the official of Big Lottery, all questions had now been resolved and Big Lottery now accepted that the work and funding had been spent correctly.

The end of project report covering the 4 years of the 'Closing the Gap' project had been written up by AM and the finances done by John Howard.

Provided that Big Lottery were happy with the report then the final £9,000 of funding would be sent to the centre on Wednesday 7 December 2016. SN wished to record his thanks to both John Howard and AM for their support in replying to the many questions from Big Lottery.

The report was accepted with thanks.

7.12.16 Salford City Council discussion- joint report SN & CJF

SN stated that discussions have been on going between the Centre and Salford City Council ever since the two Big Lottery project funding ended. The Centre needed £35,000 to retain staff working on anti-poverty work until the end of the financial year 31 March 2017.

CJF reported that the Council was very keen to assist the Centre in the short term and possibly the longer term through commissioning anti-poverty work. It should be noted that the Salford City Council had also made a financial contribution to the Salford Prison Project in partnership with Greater Manchester PCC to ensure the excellent work of Salford Prison Project continued. At this stage the agreed wording from the City Council was read out. "As requested, statement I made on Monday night The City Council is actively considering a request for a loan of £35k to 31 March 2017 and longer term funding options for the continued operation of the UCRC. It is clearly essential that any decision to provide this support is transparent and therefore the City Director has asked one of his Directors, Debbie Brown, to do an immediate piece of work to carry out an impact assessment in terms of the people who would no longer receive the vital services that the centre provides and on the outcomes delivered that benefit the city as a whole. Debbie will be in contact to progress this piece of work tomorrow (6th December)" CJF concluded his remarks by proposing that a joint Finance Committee be established to assist the Centre both in terms of income but also possible efficiencies and assist the work AM and John

Howard. The proposal was moved by SN and seconded by CJW and agreed unanimously by the Management Committee.

It was agreed the Finance Committee should have the following members, Steve North, Jack Youd, Hanif Belim, Cllr John Ferguson, and Cllr Bill Hinds with Cllr John Walsh as a substitute for the two councillors. Maggie Smith was also added to the Finance Committee. The first meeting will be held on Friday 9 December 2016. It was also agreed to start putting the minutes of Management Committee on the Centres website.

8.12.16 Financial Report

In the absence of Hanif Belim and John Howard, AM introduced the cash flow report £61,913 had been received in the period since 1 June 2016 whilst £91,098 was spent making an overall loss of £29,184. This was possible only because of the very high surplus in the funds on 1 June 2016.

AM answered a number of questions to the satisfaction of the meeting. The report was accepted and the budget was deferred to the first finance committee.

9.0 Centre Report to the Management Committee of Salford Unemployed & Community Resource Centre Monday 5 December 2016 at 6:00pm at SUCRC

9.1 Introduction

A lot of the items normally in the written centre report will be raised verbally at the management committee meeting. A great deal has happened since the AGM and this report will attempt to cover as much as possible.

9.2 ESOL and the Winter Warmer

Over the last 4 months the centre has gradually established a new partnership in Little Hulton this includes City West, NHS, Salford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) & Big Local. The partners are targeting greater access to the NHS & Migrant workers for ESOL classes. On Thursday 8 December the 'Winter Warmer' will take place at St. Pauls Peel Church hall (Please see attached leaflet). The funding has been raised from Salford Unison, City West, Big Local and CCG. We are hoping for around 140+ people across the 2 events, 60/70 children 70/80 adults. A debate took place around the title of the event.

9.3 The DWP

Department for work and pensions, attended a meeting with the centre manager and offered to try and start a new working partnership. For almost 5 years since benefit sanctions and conditionality were introduced relationships between the centre and DWP staff deteriorated, as centre staff and volunteers defended the rights of unemployed people who were being sanctioned. Thousands of local people have been negatively affected through this, however benefit sanctions are gradually reducing due to campaigning, the Ken Loach film and public opinion.

The DWP are referring clients for ESOL and mental health issues to our centre. The DWP have offered to re start regular visits to meet DWP staff, and to explain the

work of the centre. They have offered to nominate SUCRC for flexible funding to assist clients with mental health problems, ex-offenders and migrant workers to improve their knowledge of English. This is very good and surprising step which can assist our clients. It was agreed to monitor the situation carefully and report back to the meeting in January 2017

9.4 Benefit Sanctions and Conditionality

The centre staff and volunteers linked with Salford TUC leafletted the Home cinema where Ken Loaches new film 'I Daniel Blake' is on. The management invited us in to put leaflets on the seats inside the cinema which we did. 8 Staff and volunteers went into see the film which is excellent. A number of campaign groups and student organisations have also taken our leaflets for distribution.

9.5 The 'Closing the Gap'

The end of project report has just been finalised today after 4 full years. The outcomes are very successful, both the planned outcomes and the unexpected outcomes including:

- * Excellent ESOL training courses
 - * CV Provision & Interview techniques
 - * Debt advice & Debt prevention
 - * Health & Wellbeing
 - * Reduction in stress levels and an increase of people taking part in healthy life style activities
 - * Increase in Partnerships and partnership working
 - * Increase in the number of people knowing about the Salford credit union
 - * Peer mentoring training
 - * High number of volunteers and a high quality of volunteers over the 4 year period, but in particular the past 18/24 months.
 - * One of the outcomes was to target 1000 people to be helped and supported to claim their full benefit entitlement. We actually reached 4100 clients over the 4 years and 15,000 were made aware of our campaign. No actual financial target was set however £2,015,613 was won back for our clients over the 4 years of the project. **The total funding from Big Lottery was £378,490, so for every £1 we received from Big Lottery the SUCRC brought in £5.32.** The welfare benefits team clearly did an amazing job.
 - * Salford City Council have now agreed to sustain the project and staff up until the end March 2017, then to review as part of their anti-poverty strategy.
- A number of questions were raised and answered in detail, all were impressed at the success of the Project.

9.6 Prison Project work

The prison project work in Salford and the proposed Greater Manchester expansion have gained more and more supporters. The SPP (Salford Prison Project) now has 52 on the project, this has been funded by Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner since the Big Lottery failed to deliver the funding.

The Greater Manchester Prison Project now has 15 local members of Parliament supporting. However in spite of support and the national crisis in Prison and Probation no funding has been achieved. We have been invited to apply for 2 possible £50,000 bids from Purple Futures.

The project is costed at £640,000 for the 1st year keeping 350 offenders from re-offending so for every £1 of funding £17 is saved. The Centre manager has been invited to meet Graham Brady MP on the 12th January 2017 to try and push the funding for the project. 7 bids have been applied for under prison project work, to-date a further £5000 was agreed last week from a special Tony Lloyd fund.

The prison project team needs a further £20,000 from Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner to sustain until the end of March 2017.

This Project is fully supported by the Management Committee.

9.7 Funding

The SUCRC has a number of bids in to funding organisations

- Henry Smith £105,000 over 3 years is at the last and final stage
- Awards for All £10,000 for the prison project for Feb 2017
- Purple Futures 2x £50,000 bids for Jan 2017
- Big Lottery welfare bid £340,000 awarding decision for Jan 2017
- Greater Manchester Prison Project £640,000 - Home Office meeting 12th January 2017
- Police Custody Suite bid £100,000 referred to commission – Jan 2017
- Power to Change £300,000 to be submitted in Jan 2017
- Awards for All £10,000 for Hate Crime – 2017
- Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner £40,000 – already received in June 2016
- Tudor Trust £35,000 – March 2017, with a second year of funding agreed

9.8 Partnership & Volunteers

The project that the centre is running and the relationship to people has led to 2 expansion growth areas.

Partnerships and Volunteers: The latest partnership project is the ‘Winter Warmer’ this Thursday, Both City West and NHS CCG are new partners, both needing the link and input for ESOL to reach their clients and patients. Standing Together is both a religious and Police anti hate crime initiative. Add to this the DWP, Mustard Tree, Morrisons, Tesco and TDB Partnership training. These are all new partners in the last 4 months.

The volunteers presently working on training in the centre is the highest ever and the most skilled and qualified. Mainly in welfare benefits.

Dave – Admin Support

Peter Cruickshank – Welfare

Kester Dean – Welfare

Ian Wallace – Welfare

Gordon Jones – Welfare

Carol Laidlaw – Housing

Cllr Kate Lewis – Welfare

Andrew Buckley – Prison Project

Natasha Hall – Prison Project
George Tapp - OFFA

9.9 Special Training & Illegal Money Lending

The government campaign against Loan sharks has identified that many ex-offenders targeted by loan sharks are becoming prolific thieves in order to meet the loan shark repayments.

On Wednesday 14 December 2016 between 1-3pm Tracy Fairhurst the Senior Local Officer in the Illegal Money Lending Team is running a special training session for staff and volunteers on how to spot and identify loan sharks. 2 places are still available.

9.10 Xmas Holidays – Office Close down

The Management Committee agreed the Christmas close down would be from Thursday 22 December until Tuesday 3 January 2017.

10. Next Date

The suggested date for the next Management Committee was agreed in principle as Thursday 26 January 2017 at 5.30pm.

Alec McFadden