



**VOX 55th Board Meeting
8th March 2016
The Renfield Centre Glasgow**

Present:	Gordon Johnston	Chairperson
	John Sawkins	Secretary
	Chris Evans	Member Director
	Chris White	Member Director
	Dianna Manson	Member Director
	Donald Grant	Member Director
In Attendance:	Wendy McAuslan	Development Coordinator
Apologies:	Amanda O'Connell	Vice Chairperson
	Laura Caven	Member Director
	Tracy Laird	Member Director
	Carole Mapley	Member Director
	Pauline Bradley	Member Director
	Dr. Alison Thom	RCPsych. Non Member Director

1. Welcome and Apologies

Gordon Johnston welcomed those present.

2. Declaration of Interest

Chris White intimated that he would indicate where his position with Mental Health Foundation might prove to generate a conflict of interests.

3. Minutes

Adoption of the minutes of the board meeting held on 18 January was proposed by Chris Evans and seconded by Chris White.

4. Matters arising

Regarding the action on Wendy to look for opportunities for volunteer support, it was suggested that Board Members would be keen to assist with this (in particular a funding bid).

Action: Wendy to pull together a draft bid and send around for approval.

The spending cuts and advance statements work plans have been developed.

The Board took a decision (via email) for VOX to commit to a further three years' hosting by the Mental Health Foundation (MHF). Consultations with the Scottish Government were taken up despite the relatively short period of notice. The Carers Scotland Bill has now been passed.

4b. 2nd Away Day

An action had been placed on Laura Caven to help organise an additional "away day" for the Board. This took place on 3 March in Edinburgh. Laura has provided a detailed minute of the meeting, but the following items were highlighted today:

- All Board Members must familiarise themselves with our Memorandum & Articles of Association and Business Plan 2014-2017, in particular the 7 outcomes we have stated we will address.
- Development Coordinator's report to the board should be constructed under the seven outcomes, detailing activities and how they are contributing to that outcome.
- All Board Members must receive an induction pack
- Where Board Members represent VOX through various sub-committees, they must be clearly identified and democratically appointed.
- Where they wish to make a comment at a meeting in a personal capacity, they must state that they are not necessarily representing the collective view of VOX.
- Board papers to reach members ONE week before the meeting; proposed agenda items to reach the VOX office TWO weeks prior to the meeting
- Informal update to directors who missed the meeting to be provided by the VOX elected Secretary – currently John **Sawkins** (N.B. Some confusion may arise here: John **Steel** is the Administration Officer, so please use full name to clarify)
- Skype should be considered where a director cannot physically make a meeting (Advanced notice obviously required).
- Expand membership. Recruit volunteers to help with this. Exploit the situation whereby members representing groups can enhance participation and recruit more individual members on our behalf.
- Detailed joining instructions should be sent to members and others attending VOX events, including a clear expenses policy.
- Board members or volunteers should be assigned the role of greeting those who are new to VOX, have not attended a VOX event before or have not attended for a while.

- Invite an expert on accessibility issues to run a training session prior to a board meeting, covering communications and wider access issues, to increase the capacity of VOX to welcome a diverse group.
- The board agreed that a legal expert should review the Memorandum & Articles of Association over the next 3 or 4 months to ensure it meets current legislation.
- Chris White will check with the Mental Health Foundation if they have in house expertise or a preferred supplier for this.

5. Board Membership

Given the Treasurer's recent decision to resign from the board, it was suggested that the Secretary write to him thanking him for his contribution. Fellow Board Directors can help to construct the letter.

The Board should consider who might have the skills to take on the role of Treasurer, given that a skills audit has been conducted. Attention was drawn to the Board's stated requirement that any member missing three meetings without presenting apologies would be approached to discuss the value of his/her continued participation. Crises arise when the Board reaches a stage where it has difficulty reaching quorate. Suggestions were therefore called for to co-opt member director places for the remaining three meetings (on the understanding that said individuals would need to apply for re-election at the AGM in September).

6. Finance Update 2015-16 to end of February 2016

Wendy presented a very clear set of figures. There was some debate regarding the perceived advantages of continuing to support SMHAFF financially. Moving Minds was a notable success. Potential underspend was agreed to be utilised for SMHAFF, printing, future event and accessibility training.

7. Proposed Budget 2016/2017

Wendy explained how category headings varied with funders and the accountants, and agreed to provide the Board with more detailed breakdown for the heading that covers - members travel, staff travel, subsistence and communication support, also clarity over the events/conferences heading was requested. Overall the budget was agreed.

Action: Wendy to amend the 2016/2017 budget to include these changes/additions.

8. Winter Members' Meeting Evaluation

Though written feedback was mostly good, a number of informal comments on the day suggested we could improve the overall experience. "Here to help" badges would help ensure that members - particularly new members - felt welcomed and informed. Some

felt intimidated when they were practically interrogated by facilitators. It was agreed that even external “facilitators” on tables should be provided with a clear brief, reminding them of the potential vulnerability of our members.

Though the standard of catering could not be faulted, the accessibility of the building left a lot to be desired e.g. “disabled” lift! N.B.

It was stated that there should also be a clear expenses policy for attendees. Wendy noted that there was a clear policy, however due to staff absences there had been some lack of practical experience of how we determine “reasonable expenses”.

9. Work Programmes/update

Wendy gave an update on where we were in relation to the work programmes action plans (spending cuts and advance statements) which were on schedule. She also gave an overview on the partnership work on human rights which is currently taking place.

Wendy also highlighted the consultation work that VOX was carrying out on the Scottish Governments Mental Health Strategy. This was taking place in five geographical areas (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Alloa and Inverness), in addition to pulling together viewpoints from our community leaders, some views from individuals from rural areas, young people, older people, the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. This work was to be completed by the end of March.

Action: Wendy to update on key findings around the mental health strategy (lived experience views) at the April board meeting.

10. Correspondence

As mentioned above, David Atiyah’s resignation would be responded to.

We now have a response (pending) from RCPsych regarding a reciprocal arrangement with them to have representation on each other’s committees.

11. AOCB

- a) Applications for Membership – Wendy listed the 3 names which were all approved, and stated there was also a request for group membership from a new advocacy project starting up in Angus.
- b) Date & Venue of Next Meeting – Tuesday 12 April, Renfield Centre **Glasgow** at 1.00 pm (14 June meeting to take place in **Edinburgh**: TBA; 12 July meeting in **Glasgow**)

Donald Grant stated that he felt that maybe his skills and experience weren't best suited to the role of director, and that as such he didn't feel he could offer much to VOX and felt he should resign. Donald was thanked for his involvement over the last few months.

It was suggested that Directors' feedback from meetings attended might best be discussed prior to the main meeting over lunch. This should avoid protracted debate during the actual meeting. The key point about providing such feedback is that fellow directors know what each other have been doing. A further use for such information would be to convey key details to members in order to demonstrate a "You said, we did" list of achievements on behalf of members.

John Sawkins (Secretary) Thursday 10 March 2016.