



VOX 54th Board Meeting
Monday 18th January 2016
The Renfield Centre Glasgow

Present	Gordon Johnston	Chairperson
	John Sawkins	Secretary
	David Atiyah	Treasurer
	Chris Evans	Member Director
	Chris White	Member Director
	Laura Caven	Member Director (Item 10 only)
In Attendance	Wendy McAuslan	Development Coordinator
	Mahmud Al-Gailani	Equality & Development Coordinator
	John Steel	Administration Officer
Apologies	Dianna Manson	Member Director
	Amanda O'Connell	Vice Chairperson

1. Welcome

Gordon Johnston welcomed everyone present.

2. Declaration of Interest.

There were two declarations of interest, one from Chris White regarding an item on the agenda relating to VOX relationship with Mental Health Foundation.

The other declaration was from Wendy McAuslan and Mahmud Al-Gailani regarding an item on the agenda relating to additional work through relating to the mental health strategy.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the board meeting held on 23rd November 2015 were formally adopted on the motion of John Sawkins and Chris Evans.

4. Matters Arising

Discussion took place regarding the dates and venues for board meetings in 2016. Some comments were made that a Monday was perhaps not the most suitable day for board meetings.

It was agreed that meetings will be held on **2nd Tuesday of March, April, June, July, August, October and November**. Two meetings are to be held in Glasgow and one in Edinburgh alternately.

Action: John to book venues/clarify dates with board members.

5. Board Away Day

Discussion took place around the away day, and the key outcomes that we had agreed to progress. Focus on the following was highlighted;

VOX has five topic based areas to progress over the coming months namely, spending cuts, advance statements, human rights/stigma and discrimination, peer support /isolation. We must ensure we stay on topic, and that we continue to support the VOX collective.

Using our volunteers more effectively was mentioned a number of times;

- need to fund ways to build capacity around social media/utilising members'/volunteers
- Need to consider the best mechanisms to make effective change on topic based work (using our volunteers), this could include more of a focus on topic based issues rather than the sub-group structure.
- Capacity and funding is crucial - more time and energy needs to be committed to grow VOX.

Action: Wendy to look for opportunities for volunteer support

It was felt that due to the skills audit highlighting some gaps that fundraising and marketing should be areas where we look for co-opted directors/advisers to support the board.

Action: all to seek potential directors and advisers to fill this gap.

6. Work Programmes (developed at the morning session)

- a) Spending Cuts Survey, including questionnaire promotion, collection of narratives, launch event, media involvement, partnership work and influencing strategy.
- b) Advance Statements, develop useful materials, bring together interested individuals to progress, develop a working group to progress awareness raising work.

- c) Human Rights/stigma and discrimination - continue mainly through partnership working and the Rights For Life initiative.
- d) Isolation and Peer Support, to weave throughout the work strands.

Action: Wendy, to produce project plans for spending cuts and advance statements work.

7. Finance Update

Chris White left the room while a discussion on VOX's future relationship with the mental Health Foundation took place.

Gordon reported on a meeting involving Wendy, Lee Knifton (Head of MHF, Scotland) and himself. Lee had asked that VOX commit to a further three years agreement to being hosted by MHF.

As the meeting was now inquorate, the four Board members present agreed after a full discussion to recommend in principle to the full board that a three year agreement be made.

Action: Gordon to circulate a note to all Board members not present seeking Board agreement.

Chris White re-joined the meeting.

8. Board Policies

Mahmud has taken on the role of internal policy development.

Action: Mahmud to progress.

9. Winter Members Meeting

Wendy provided an update on what is planned for the winter festival meeting (based on the away day discussions on what to include) this included a VOX update, article 12 presentation/discussion, human rights pathways presentation, and an opportunity to discuss the mental health strategy.

Action: Wendy will progress.

10. VOX Development Paper

A Skype session took place between the board members present and Laura Caven.

Laura outlined her previously circulated proposal for the development of VOX. Much discussion took place regarding the possibility of VOX adopting a National Council model.

A range of viewpoints were given: some felt that change of structure may help, but others felt unsure of how the solutions suggested solved the problem we had which was in relation to capacity and reach.

Action: A second Board away day/ planning session is to be organised to discuss Laura's paper in detail.

11. Mental Health Strategy

Wendy and Mahmud left the room.

A paper was discussed outlining the Scottish Government's plans for a limited consultation on a new Mental Health Strategy. After discussion the Board expressed its dissatisfaction regarding the short timescale to contribute but decided to take part in the process.

It was agreed that a number of focus groups be run jointly by VOX and members of the VOX Collective. As some limited funding to support this work will be made available by the Scottish Government, the Board agreed to Wendy and Mahmud working additional paid days on top of their contracted hours to facilitate the sessions.

Action: Wendy to progress with the Scottish Government.

12. Any other business

David suggested that we should network with Interrelate. Gordon reported that there had been a hiatus in operations and the regular Skype meeting has not taken place in many months.

David also wished to raise the title of the Development Coordinator, and felt it should be changed to manager. It was felt that this was something that should be looked at alongside other staff, and that it was really the role of the employer to look at this.

John Sawkins spoke about the Carers Scotland Bill.

New applications

An application from the Psychiatric Rights Group for group membership of VOX was formally approved.

Action: John Steel to inform the group.

13. The next meeting will be held in The Renfield Centre Glasgow at 1.00pm on Tuesday 8th March 2016