

East Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Area Network

Minutes of the Meeting held on: **Thursday 07 July 2016 1.00 p.m. at The Box Youth Project**

1. Introductions and Apologies

Attendees

1. Cllr Ellen Ball	Ryhope Ward (Chair)
2. Lisa Wilson Riddell	The Box Youth Centre
3. Steven Rylance	Blue Watch Youth Centre
4. Heather Redgrave	Sunderland Council
5. Sarah Grey	Sunderland Council
6. Allan Rowell	Grow Sunderland
7. Cllr Elizabeth Gibson	Doxford Ward
8. Eddy Moore	Long Streets Action Group
9. Bobby Surtees	Ryhope Sea Angling Club
10. Joe Lemon	Ryhope Sea Angling Club
11. Nicola Scorer	Gentoo
12. Lesley Errington	Young Asian Voices
13. Bob Murray	Hendon Young Peoples Project
14. Paul Baker	Thornholme Residents Association
15. Martin Wilson	Sunderland Maritime Heritage
16. James Garland	Sunderland Council
17. Nesrine Houheche	Sunderland Council
18. Michal Chantkowski	ICOS / Grow Sunderland
19. Daniel Krzyszczyk	ICOS
20. Adam Gawne	Sunderland Student Union
21. Hazel Clark	Hendon Young People's Project
22. Kay Duffie	Sunderland Carers Centre
23. Nicol Trueman	Sunderland Council
24. Clare Holyoak	The Bunker

Apologies

1. Cllr Emerson	Ryhope Ward / Mayor of Sunderland
2. Karyn Jackson	FUSHIA
3. Ross Wares	Ryhope CA
4. Gordon Webster	Doxford CA Karate Club
5. Claire Wayman	Grow Sunderland

6. Cllr Dixon	St Michaels Ward
7. Jackie Kent	Access Counselling
8. Richy Duggan	Sunderland Community Action Group
9. Sylvia Copley	ShARP
10. Angela Sinclair	Gentoo
11. Jackie Pitt	Gentoo
12. Cllr McClennan	Hendon Ward
13. Cllr Scanlan	Millfield Ward
14. Dave Burke	City Bethany Church
15. Helen Stephenson	URC, Stockton Road
16. Peter Curtis	North East Sports
17. Steven Ruffell	Live Life Well
18. Carol Rutherford	Sunderland Autism in Mind
19. Dean T Huggins	Sustainable Sunderland
20. Elaine Harbron	Sunderland Council
21. Cllr Christine Marshall	Doxford Ward
22. Trish Cornish	VCAS
23. Cllr Paula Hunt	Ryhope Ward

1. Cllr Ball made a round of introductions.

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2016 were circulated. One amendment was noted later on during the meeting, which was:
Pg1 – attendees Kay Duffie is not a ward Cllr for Millfield, Kay represents the Sunderland Carers Centre

Subject to the above amendments (amendments made 07.07.16), minutes were agreed a true record with no matters arising.

3. Community Led Local Development Strategy, James Garland

See Presentation (attached)

A good discussion was held with the majority of groups asking questions and making observations. James agreed to provide an update following the SWOT and share it with the VCS Area Network. In the meantime if anyone has any questions they can contact James on james.garland@sunderland.gov.uk

4. Grow Sunderland CIC, Michal Chantkowski and Allan Rowell

See Presentation (attached)

The Network advised that they was a number of allotments and community gardens within the East delivering a local 'grow and sell scheme' and encouraged the group to make contact with them, examples presented were Blue Watch Youth Centre, Hendon Community Allotment and Tunstall Allotment Association.

5. Sunderland Welfare Rights Service, Sarah Grey and Heather Redgrave

Sarah outlined the key role of the service, which is to provide free, confidential, independent, high quality advice at a range of venues to residents, for example:

- Benefit entitlements
- Challenge benefit decisions
- Tribunal appeals
- Employment issues and tribunals
- Debt problems
- Tailored training and awareness raising sessions
- MacMillian Welfare Benefits Services to assist people that are affected by cancer
- First Tier Advice Providers (SHARP and Sunderland West Advice Project) who are the first port of call for clients for non-specialist advice, welfare benefit checks, form completion and referrals into Welfare Right Services

There is a range of information available via the webpage. The link is www.sunderland.gov.uk and search 'welfare rights service'.

The most common issues are; Benefit issues relating to Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments; Child DLA; Employment and Support Allowance; Job Seekers; Tax Credits; Attendance and Carers Allowance; Debt issues; Appeals; employment issues – unfair dismissal, non-payment of wages; universal credit claims; referrals from home improvement agency.

Key advice to learn from is 'knowledge and evidence is power when proving good cause' so people should be encouraged to keep copies of any letters, phone calls made, who they spoke to, the date, time, what the outcome was, etc.

Demand for the services has increased dramatically. There is a Team of eleven workers, with a waiting list of six weeks. It is a massive issue and the Team cannot cope with the demand. DWP don't have a clear understanding yet about Universal Credit so everyone has concerns.

Contact details are: heather.redgrave@sunderland.gov.uk – 07769881035
Sarah.grey@sunderland.gov.uk – 07500 551767

6. East VCS Representative

Hazel advised the Network that Paula had resigned from her role with her being a Cllr which left a vacancy. It was reported that only one application was received from Lisa Wilson Riddell therefore no vote was required as Lisa is automatically selected. The floor congratulated Lisa on her appointed, and Lisa thanked the Network for their support.

7. Information sharing

Martin Wilson, Maritime Heritage: two events, the first happening on the 11 July, Work Discovery Week at Stadium of Light – there will be 1,000s of young people and employers to engage with, the second, 31 July Sunderland Harbour Day happening in the North Dock so come down and visit us.

Lisa Wilson Riddell, The Box, the next Doxford Community Connectors meeting is scheduled for 25 July 2016, 6pm at the Centre. If any small groups or people working in the area want to attend feel free.

Lisa circulated information on behalf of ICOS about Handball Sessions and OPAL. Steven, Blue Watch are delivering lots of activity over the Summer, including a

summer 'healthy' BBQ.

Lesley, Young Asian Voices and Adam, Sunderland University talked about the Journey to Justice project, with is celebrating Martin Luther King and the fight for social justice and civil rights. A steering group has been established to try and get the national project to visit Sunderland Museum during October and November 2016. If anyone wishes to join the steering group please contact 'Adam Gawne' adam.gawne@sunderland.ac.uk Also, the group are looking for stories from the city relating to social justice/civil rights to look at the past, to learn from it for the future.

Nicol provided an update of Self Harming in the East area. It was noted the findings will be passed over to the Hostel Strategic Working Group to consider. The East Area's Fancy a Day Out Scheme (aka Holiday Hunger) scheme is agreed, with over 90 sessions being delivered across the East area. 2,000 copies of the programme will be printed and circulated. The e-learning lounge was launched at the last meeting, and is open to volunteers in the East to support them to up-skill. Volunteers can register via www.facl.org.uk The 'What's On Guides' relating to events and regular activities are getting printed. If any organisations want hard copies please let Nicol know.

8. Issues effecting the East VCS Area

1. Reduction in RLS Streetscene Services.

A lot of comments received under this theme: Deterioration in the standard of Streetscene services, residents finding it depressing. Concerns shared around grass cutting, weeds, fly tipping, dog fouling, litter. Cllr Ball pointed out that the council has lost £352m from the budget, and that only 13% of council tax goes towards all council services, were decisions have got to be made – do we keep welfare rights teams or cut the grass. Enforcement was pointed out as a key action which should be encouraged, as previously the council had a successful enforcement team. It was pointed out that in other areas of the country and in Europe, that many communities / individuals get together regularly to 'clean up' their community and if we all did our bit it would help.

2. Youth Contracts

Lisa wanted it noted that the Council's commissioned youth contracts ends in March 2017. She asked that it was kept on the Networks radar as youth work covers everyone's agenda e.g. health, employment, crime, etc.

9. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 8 September 2016, 1pm at Ryhope Community Centre