

Board of Trustees Meeting

MINUTES

25 November 2024, 6 – 8pm

Via Teams

Present:

Andrew Brabban (Chair) (AB)
Theresa Pass (TP)
Sam Ruck (SR)
Lisa Cormack (LC)
Barry Brennan (BB)
Vicky Rutherford (VR) - minutes

Apologies:

Sharon Conlon (SC)
Sidra Ali (SA)
Jonathan Clay (JC)

Absent:

Adrian Dean (AD)
Helen Butters (HB)

Mentioned in minutes:

Service Effectiveness Group (SEG)
Financial Sustainability Group (FSG)
Internal Governance Group (IGG)
Integrated Care Board (ICB)

1: Introductions, Apologies & Conflicts of Interest:

Apologies from SC, SA and JC
No conflicts raised.

As part of the introduction, AB noted the low attendance from the trustees.

There was also a discussion around tools to support minute taking. AB mention Co-pilot which writes the minutes and records actions but is about £30 per head per month. TP noted Fireflies was one she was keen to review and also mentioned that Cheshire East are paying for Governance 365 which looks to be a document storage platform.

Action: VR to review tools that may support the wider governance process

2: Minutes & Action Log from previous meeting:

Minutes 19.08.24 - The minutes of the Trustee Meeting of 19th August 2024 were checked for accuracy. No comments or adjustments, all agreed that the minutes were accurate.

Action: Send over to AB for signing off.

Action log 25.11.24

Actions were discussed and progress updated.

Action: Develop Legal Requests Policy – ongoing. Check for update in November.

This has been done and the IGG have sent through comments which are with the author for review

Action: Develop Media Communications Policy/statement

This has been done and the IGG have sent through comments which are with the author for review

Action: Review skills map to identify gaps in trustee experience.

Skills matrix to be circulated to trustees

Action: FSG/IGG and Safeguarding Group to make review of Risk Register a standing item on agendas

Completed for FSG – to be done for SEG and IGG

Action: Forward email re: contract approval delegation to DP

Check with JC

Action: Meet to chase the strategic letter sent to ICB.

TP and SR have met with JDI and also with the ICB and CWP but this has stalled – to be kept under review

Action: Review Statutory Funder Relationship risk on register.

TP gave an update on allies she was building across Congleton so keep under review

Action: Review property risk on register.

Ongoing

Action: Review Business Continuity Plan

Ongoing

3: Safeguarding:

SR confirmed it was very much business as usual with Beverley completing some good case reviews with SC.

4. Chief Executive's Summary Report:

AB was keen to understand the uptake for the self-employed counsellor role, and whether the hourly rate was attracting people. SR explained we had received 12 applications as of last Friday and the hourly rate was in line with what JDI pay.

AB asked about some background on Difficult to Reach Communities. TP explained this is something we have discussed for a while now and asking ourselves whether we are inadvertently discriminating by not knowing what we should be doing for those difficult to reach communities. TP said she had been looking to see how we can take this forward and whether there is someone we could partner with who already has these relationships. TP has met with Amaka Lawton from the Alpha-Omega WPS who already has these relationships established and built up trust. There is a skills exchange planned for January/February which is really exciting. Amaka also has access to different funding streams, for example from the UN. We could look to start small and maybe look to cascade awareness for example on line through webinars so real potential for joint projects and funding but very early days.

LC agreed they are a good person to build up a relationship with, and who had good connections and mentioned their links with Rhino Safety.

LC also mentioned the two highly commended awards for Visyon's Excellence in Customer Service and Contribution to the Community for our Crewe Schools Project at the South Cheshire Business Awards and it was good to have Visyon's name being seen.

AB asked regarding the lease, what comments TP was expecting back from the Board. TP clarified she was asking what the next steps should be, for example, setting up a focus group. AB confirmed the lack of response may be because people weren't clear.

LC referred to TP's comments in the report on funding and supported this with her examples. LC explained that it is being noted that what has worked in the past is not necessarily working for funders or charities any more so it is being recognised that something has to change but it was agreed this would take time.

Therapeutic Services Report

AB raised a question about the service to years 1 and 2 so younger age groups. SR explained that the HYM funding was for ages 0 to 25. Our predominant service is 11 to 19 but we felt we could reach out to younger ages through workshops in schools. The uptake from primary schools has been great and there has been amazing feedback from teachers. The staff are also enjoying it and they have developed the materials using an evidence based framework and we have staff with this wider set of skills and it's great working with younger children as a preventative approach.

SR provided a summary of ithrive. It is a model based on 4 quadrants and young people will fit in to a quadrant but move across them. SR explained it worked well in multi-disciplinary teams. Cheshire East and the ICB have commissioned ithrive with the aim to roll it out across Cheshire East. SR that the roll out could be challenging as Cheshire East didn't necessarily work as a multi-discipline team and there isn't universal buy in for this. TP explained we are keeping engaged but it is difficult when meetings are being cancelled. AB asked whether this was a bit disruptive or whether it is increasing the risk for Visyon. TP and SR felt it wasn't increasing the risk as the risk is already there and actually this was helpful as it was highlighting the issues and showing they are not just issues for Visyon. It was also felt interesting to see how the CWP would tackle this.

Finance & Business Support

AB thanked everyone for their efforts on cost management. He asked about the comment on aging laptops and whether we needed to put funding aside in the next budget. TP explained we do write it in to bids where we can but that tends to be 1 laptop per funder. It was suggested we could relook at leasing laptops. AB suggested we put a proposal in to next year's budget so we don't get in to a situation where we have to replace large numbers in one go.

AB also asked about the GDPR breach and whether it was reported. The breach was a unredacted bank statement that was sent out and in the meeting it was thought this wasn't a breach and shouldn't have been reported as it didn't contain personal data.

After the meeting VR clarified that personal data was on the bank statement but this had not been reported formally but steps had been implemented to ensure it didn't happen again.

AB asked about the water bill and VR confirmed this was in the reforecast.

BB asked about the exit interview themes as these stand out in the report. TP explained the missing context was the notes from HB which have still to be shared with the board. Two individuals in particular had made comments but without specific situations so this needed the right context. AB agreed that to close the loop, HB would circulate her summary to the whole board.

LC asked whether the number of leavers was normal as it looked high. AB confirmed it was 50%/75% up on other quarters and TP confirmed it was an unusual period.

TP explained the Fundraising element had been split in to a separate report. It hadn't been added to the file so TP talked through the key points, and more analysis on where we are down against target is being added in. TP also went through the real successes, including £25,000 from the Congleton Inclosure Trust, £1000 from Nantwich Town Council and the Clothworkers support for IT changes.

Action: VR to add in the draft budget some funding for laptops for review

Action: HB to circulate her summary of the exit interviews to the board

Action: TP to circulate the Fundraising report

5: Chair's Report

AB provided the following updates.

1. The board found the session on board responsibilities with Alison very useful and it was a good discussion. The actions from this were for a skills matrix for all trustees to complete, a register of interest for trustees and a declaration for all board members. VR has worked on these as a starter for ten, so after the meeting these will be packaged up and circulated. LC noted that in addition to a conflict of interest, there was also the obligation of individual loyalty, for example, if they had been struggling for a runner for the London marathon, LC could potentially pick up names that were discussed at Visyon so there may be areas where we are flying too close together and Visyon wouldn't want LC involved in. LC to send VR the wording from Alison.

2. AB, LC and BB interviewed a potential new board member last week. The view was that he was very positive and enthusiastic and wanted to make a difference.

Action: AB to send round the declarations to the board and LC to send VR the wording from Alison on the obligation of values or loyalty

Action: AB to talk through the options with the potential trustee and report back to the board

6: Service Development and Safeguarding group update:

SC wasn't at the meeting so SR noted that she and Beverley were looking at a proposal of what it would look like if we were to work with more risky clients. It's not something we'd necessarily do but it's taking a deeper dive of what it could look like if the CWP push back at us to take these cases.

7: FSG update:

Due to the low attendance, AB asked BB for any update from the FSG. BB noted the excellent cost control but the big concern is fund raising and there isn't anything more that isn't being done.

8. IGG update:

No comments – the IGG didn't take place in November but the trustees have reviewed the policies outside the meeting.

9. Management Accounts & Budgets:

AB asked why the Edward Gostling award wasn't on the balance sheet. VR explained it was shown in the bank account on the balance sheet and on the Balance of Reserves tab but she would pull it out as a separate line to show how much was still remaining in the fund. VR called out the update on the budget but it was noted this would impact next year's finances.

On the reforecast, AB asked about the level of confidence for the surplus being reported for

the rest of the financial year when we had run deficits so far. VR explained that it was relying on the funding that was still to be secured coming through and a lot of the funding had been allocated to the back end of the year due to the delays with funders. VR also explained that some of the savings for example in SR's area hadn't been put in to the forecast due to the self-employed recruitment so there would still be some savings coming through so potential good news isn't released until we are certain. However there was a risk as some of the funding isn't secured.

10. Policies & Procedures:

All the policies for this meeting had been reviewed with no comments. JC had sent through comments via email at the start of the meeting but related to policies that weren't up for approval. It was agreed the policies could be approved and signed off.

11. Risk Register:

BB noted that this was covered off at the FSG. It was agreed that at the SEG and IGG it should be included on the agenda whether there was anything to add to the risk register.

Action: The SEG and IGG to include the risk register on their agendas

AOB: AB to write a note re attendance and how this is managed going forwards

Action: AB to write a note re attendance and how this is managed going forwards

Date of next meeting: Still to be confirmed

All meetings 6.00pm unless otherwise stated.

Venue: via Teams



Signed: 

Position: Chair of Trustees

Date: 3rd March 2025