

# MAIN VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS FORUM

Minutes of meeting held 9.45am, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011  
Committee Rooms 1, Kensington Town Hall, London W8 7NX

Chair: Mary Gardiner (Kensington & Chelsea Social Council)  
Attendance list attached

1.	WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES	ACTION
1.1	Mary welcomed everyone to the forum and invited members to introduce themselves and one new or exciting venture they are involved in. KCP and BVOAG reps were also asked to introduce their roles as representatives.	
2.	<b>REVIEW OF 2011: KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES</b> Angela Spence, Kensington & Chelsea Social Council	
2.1	<p>Angela began by asking how the members would summarise the year if they could only use one word. Some of the responses included, confusing, challenging, expansion and difficult.</p> <p>Angela highlighted some of the main developments that affected the local voluntary sector in 2011 including Localism Act, Equality Act, Credit Union, Giving White Paper and the summer riots.</p>	
2.2	<p>Following the 2011 recap, members split into groups to discuss the main concerns and challenges for the VCS in 2012 and fed back what they felt should be the priorities in 2012.</p> <p>Some of the concerns included the welfare reforms and the impact it will have. That single parents, people with disabilities and the financially deprived will be vilified. Implications of tri-borough on the VCS and service users. The implications of Big Society and Localism and the reduction in grants, with the expectation to deliver more/better for less.</p> <p>Forum members felt some of the priorities for 2012 should be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider a local Fairness Commissioning Board to ensure changes do not marginalise or vilify particular groups.</li> <li>- Avoid being too 'inward looking' as VCO's and maintain focus on the interests of service users.</li> <li>- Improve marketing and partnership working to place the sector in a stronger position to compete with external/national organisations.</li> <li>- Continue building our brand as a sector and celebrate successes and achievements.</li> <li>- Rebuild tri-borough links and relationships following the restructuring of council positions.</li> <li>- Safeguard vulnerable families and older people from on-going and future changes</li> </ul>	

3.	<p><b>A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE-VIEWS FROM THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES</b></p> <p>Cynthia Dize (ACKC), Helen Leech (Open Age), Jamie Renton (ADKC), Angela Spence (KCSC) on behalf of Paula Murphy (K&amp;C LINK)</p>	
3.1	<p>Cynthia (Wellbeing rep BVOAG and Adult Health &amp; Wellbeing deputy KCP) said there was concern about the impact tri-borough will have on RBKC's VCS services. She explained that with much more severe cuts in Westminster and Hammersmith &amp; Fulham, clients who are unable to access local services may look to access services in RBKC, which may stretch the services here. Cynthia pointed out that organisations were losing officers who understood their work, as a result of the merge which means more resources will be required to establish new relationships. She also pointed out that the shortage of funds meant that smaller groups in particular will struggle, and stressed the importance of larger organisations taking more responsibility in supporting the struggling groups.</p>	
3.2	<p>Helen (Wellbeing rep BVOAG and Adult Health &amp; Wellbeing rep KCP) said isolation will be a key issue in 2012 adding it is the mayor's fundraising theme for this year. She said there will be a huge focus and increased campaigning on loneliness. Helen said that the feedback from the VOFs is valued and encouraged members to pass on issues to reps that should be addressed at KCP meetings.</p>	
3.3	<p>Jamie (Equality &amp; Inclusivity rep BVOAG and Diversity, Equality &amp; Inclusivity rep KCP) said that whilst diversity, equality and inclusivity in the past received good attention, it has in recent times fallen down the agenda. He warned that the impact of the reforms will mean greater inequalities, but the attitude will be to treat everyone as equals, and stressed that a strong voice would be required to protect the most vulnerable and to keep diversity, equality and inclusivity on the agenda. He said it wasn't all negative news, as there will be incentives for bodies to implement the Equality Act and local authorities to implement the Public Sector Equality Duty, and reminded the forum that they have the power to hold local authorities to account. He ended by encouraging the forum to utilise him as a rep by giving him issues to raise at partnership meetings.</p>	
3.4	<p>Angela, on behalf of Paula (Engaging Communities rep, KCP) said the Engaging Communities VOF has been focussing on supporting micro and BME organisations. Some of the recent themes covered at the EC VOFs included the Equality Act and a study by the Big Lottery Fund on support for single issue groups. The priority for the EC VOF is to continue to encourage micro and BME groups to attend the VOFs to share work, network and keep up to date with important developments in the sector.</p>	
3.5	<p>Mary spoke on behalf of children young people and families, saying that they will be among the most vulnerable in face of the changes. She said that CYPF groups were still waiting to hear news about the next round of commissioning, and warned that the budget is shrinking. Mary said there is currently a huge focus on early help as well as child poverty. In light of welfare reforms, she said that the Child Poverty Group will widen its boundary to become the Poverty Watch, as much more people are likely to be affected. The group will gather evidence of poverty in the area, monitor the impact of welfare reform and use the information to respond and lobby. She also announced that there will be a meeting with Councillor Ritchie and Joanne Hay to discuss the Employee Led Mutual.</p>	

4.	<b>A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE - KCSC</b> Mary Gardiner, Siobhan Sollis, and Angela Spence (KCSC)	
4.1	<b>Transforming Infrastructure:</b> Siobhan explained that short-term funding had been made available by the Office for Civil Society to provide better support to front line organisations by transforming local infrastructure organisations. She said KCSC along with other infrastructure organisations in K&C are submitting a bid to transform the way infrastructure organisations provide support to the sector. This will include a joint web portal, which will act as a one stop shop for most organisational needs. A new member of staff to encourage collaboration between local businesses and VCOs and a tender vehicle to support organisations throughout the tendering process as commissioning becomes increasingly popular. Siobhan said the tender vehicle will go ahead even if funding is not awarded.	
	<b>Supporting Change and Impact:</b> Angela announced that as part of the Big Lottery Fund's Supporting Impact and Change funding, KCSC is considering running a 'local leadership school'. The project will support newly emerging leaders as well as existing to develop entrepreneurial and management skills. In some cases organisations will receive bursaries, and others will be expected to contribute.	
	<b>Campaigning:</b> One of KCSC's focuses for 2012 Mary explained, will be campaigning and lobbying. She said it is important that the sector unites to bring about equality and protects the interests of the most vulnerable, especially as we will see the impact of the changes take its toll. She asked the members how what their views were and how they felt the campaigning should be approached.  Gaenor said that we need to be more assertive, but at the same time careful in our approach, as our borough has protected its voluntary sector more than others.  Michael said the KCP should be used as a medium to lobby and get the sectors view across, and encouraged members to engage more with the KCP.  Jamie felt the local authority respects the sector when involved in activism. He said that many were worried their relationship would be affected if they got involved in campaigning, but he felt on the contrary, it would earn more respect. He said that as a sector we can make more noise and that we should.  There was a strong sense of support for organisations to engage in more campaigning and lobbying as a sector.	<b>KCSC</b>
8.	<b>KCSC ANNOUNCEMENTS, TRAINING AND EVENTS:</b> Mary Gardiner, Kensington & Chelsea Social Council	
8.1	Upcoming events were announced.  <b>KCP:</b> 11 <sup>th</sup> January 2012, 5.00pm-7.00pm at (TBC) <b>OP VOF:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> January 2012, 3.00pm-5.00pm at KTH <b>BVOAG Annual Meeting:</b> 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2012 <b>EC VOF:</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> February 2012, 10.00am-12.00pm at KTH <b>CYPF VOF:</b> 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2012, 10.00am-12.30pm at KTH <b>BVOAG:</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> February 2012, 6.30pm-8.30pm at KTH	

9.	<b>FEEDBACK FROM OTHER FORUMS AND NETWORKS</b>	
9.1	<b>Kensington &amp; Chelsea Partnership (KCP):</b> Meeting held 15 <sup>th</sup> November. The meeting was a development session to discuss and agree the vision of the KCP. The group identified four priority areas: Isolation, youth crime, affordable housing and good neighbourliness. Michael also said the meetings will be more discussion based with less presentations, which he felt was a positive move.	
9.2	<b>Borough Voluntary Organisations Advisory Group (BVOAG):</b> Meeting held 9 <sup>th</sup> November. Cynthia said the main focus of this meeting was to discuss third sector property issues with Michael Clark. The Reps prepared a list of questions for him to answer. Michael was clear that property services will be managed as a business and will have an equal approach to both businesses and VCOs, explaining that any subsidy would have to be negotiated with the boroughs business groups. Cynthia said the discussions are on-going.	
9.3	<b>Children, Young People and Families VOF:</b> Meeting held 7 <sup>th</sup> December. Victoria spoke about children's service inspection preparations and how it may affect VCOs. Val presented on the experiences of members of the RBKC supplementary school consortium on the grants to contract transition, and Brendan gave an update of the ELM.	
9.4	<b>Engaging Communities VOF:</b> Meeting held 16 <sup>th</sup> November. Prue Grimshaw spoke about the Public Sector Equality Duty; the statutory requirement to ensure all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all. Abdullahi gave a presentation on the Somali Network, its purpose and aims, and Gabrielle Tierney presented short films made by local young people regarding recent changes including those to benefits, housing, university tuition fees, highlighting the support available to residents affected by the changes.	
9.5	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing VOF:</b> Meeting held 17 <sup>th</sup> October. There were presentations from Dalgarno and Midaye on the Healthworks project. Also presentations from Crossroads and Turning Point. Clair Mundle from the King's Fund presented on the role of the VCS in the new healthcare landscape.	
9.6	<b>Kensington &amp; Chelsea Advice Forum (KCAF):</b> Meeting on 22 <sup>nd</sup> September. The meeting was focused on housing matters and there was a presentation on how housing benefit reforms will affect BME families in K&C.	
9.7	<b>Kensington and Chelsea Local Involvement Network (K&amp;C LINK):</b> In relation to Shaping Local HealthWatch, LINK has completed mapping on Information, provision and signposting and will report their findings to the K&C Advice Forum in the new year and have completed the Access to pharmacy project for people with disabilities. LINK's female cancer screening ambassadors are continuing work on Breast and Cervical Screening and are also currently working to support patient groups in GP practices.	

<b>10.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING</b>	
10.1	The minutes of the meeting held 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2011 were agreed.	
<b>11.</b>	<b>AGENDA PLANNING</b>	
11.1	There was a request to cover the role of social media in the Voluntary Sector.	<b>MM</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
12.1	Siobhan asked if there are any specific areas members would like covered in the next trustee seminar. Cynthia suggested the role of treasurer.	<b>SS</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>	
13.1	<b>Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2012. 9.45am to 1.00pm</b> , Committee Room 1, Kensington Town Hall	

# ATTENDANCE LIST

## Main Voluntary Organisations' Forum Meeting

9.45am, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011, Committee Room 1, Kensington Town Hall

### 1. ATTENDANCE LIST

	Name	Organisation
1	Jamie Renton	Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea
2	Cynthia Dize	Age Concern & Sixty Plus
3	Deborah Richards	CASH
4	William McGranaghan	Dad's house
5	Samantha DeHaan	Kensington & Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation
6	Gaenor Holland-Williams	Kensington & Chelsea Forum for Older Residents
7	Reneta Charles	Kensington & Chelsea Local Involvement Network
8	Robin Tuck	Kensington & Chelsea Local Involvement Network
9	Mary Gardiner (Chair)	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
10	Mohammed Miah (Minutes)	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
11	Angela Spence	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
12	Siobhan Sollis	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
13	Michael Bach	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
14	Rita Taylor	Munro Health Cooperative Ltd
15	Intlak Al-Saiegh	Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre
16	Sana Al-Hadad	North Kensington Law Centre
17	Silvia Schmidt	North Kensington Library
18	Helen Leech	Open Age
19	Fiona Scaife	POhWER
20	Everine Shand	RBKC Tenant Management Organisation
21	Gursharn Bhogal	Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea
22	Sean Mendez	Solidarity Sports
23	Kirsty Palmer	Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE WERE RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING

	Name	Organisation
1	Beth Crosland	Migrant & Refugee Communities Forum
2	Aidan Moloney	MIND
3	Audrey Mitchell	Thames Reach