



## Kensington and Chelsea Social Council's Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the 2 November 2021  
10.00am to 12.15pm

### 1. Welcome – Shelina Thawer, Chair, KCSC

Shelina Thawer (ST) welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and went through the agenda for the meeting.

#### a. Apologies for absence

Apologies were noted from trustees Miles Kerstein and Anna-Louise Thomond, and from member Cynthia Dize

#### b. Minutes of the last AGM

Tom Fitch (TF) queried if Jacob Rety's request at last year's meeting to meet with the Chair had been minuted, noting that this has not yet taken place. Angela Spence (AS) confirmed that she had reached out to Jacob by email to organise a date to meet and he had responded initially but no follow up response from Jacob meant a date was never set. ST confirmed that she was happy to meet with all relevant parties and suggested that this be followed up outside of the meeting.

The minutes of the last AGM were formally approved.

Proposer: Shelina Thawer  
Seconder: Stephen Duckworth

**Action: ST to follow up on meeting with TF/CASH/Jacob Rety.**

#### c. Chair's address

ST extended a warm welcome to all members, partners and stakeholders before noting how the organisation has had to adapt to working online with all activities now taking place virtually, which has resulted in increased attendance as meetings become more accessible. ST advised that KCSC are looking to reintroduce face-to-face events where possible and where it is safe to do so, and that they hope this can increase over the coming months.

ST looked to the work undertaken by the organisation in the last year with trustees meeting more frequently to better understand the pressures faced by staff during the pandemic and guide the organisation while it focused on supporting other organisations in providing food and services to residents. ST particularly noted the work coordinating with the council to provide updated information about VCS services to the Council's support hub residents and keeping the sector informed of changing Covid regulations. Support was also offered to help members adapt to work from home as well as to access Covid grants.

ST thanked everyone who participated in KCSC's Covid survey, noting that the report is now available to view online and the results have fed into the organisation's new 3-year strategic plan.

KCSC continues to play a role in the health sector with programmes such as My Care My Way working alongside NHS services to help those with long-term self-care needs. Last year, this resulted in over 700 people being referred to self-care programmes and over 3,000 older people receiving support calls.

Organisational Development remains central to KCSC's work with a strong focus on keeping the sector informed of Covid changes, particularly in what organisations needed to keep service users, staff and buildings safe.

The annual funders' fair was delivered online across 5 separate events and was attended by over 100 staff across the 3 boroughs. The last AGM introduced a new programme, Kensington & Chelsea Together, working with local charities and residents in addressing barriers in accessing the VCS, and training has been provided with 8 local organisations now receiving dedicated support.

ST noted the organisation's community development efforts in supporting the food distribution service for under 65s in collaboration with a range of VCS organisations. She went on to thank the organisational development team sharing that advice sessions have risen from 84 to 315, and fundraising support has brought in almost £1.2m support for residents.

As part of the broader strategic review, trustees and staff have undergone theory of change training to look at the organisation's purpose and, in conjunction with the results of the Covid survey, have produced the 3-year strategy. The strategy is available on the website and continues to focus on the organisation's pillars of Organisational Development, community development, health and wellbeing, and providing central support.

ST thanked all KCSC staff for their continued work in making the organisation as strong as it is, and particular thanks were given to staff who started during the pandemic for adjusting to become part of the team. Thanks were also given to fellow board members, partners and stakeholders for their continued investment and for placing their trust in the organisation.

## **2. Treasurer's Report**

### **a. Presentation of Annual Accounts**

Mark Anfilogoff (MA) drew attention to the company's financial accounts, noting that income for the financial year was £1.4m, an increase of just over £385k on the previous year, which is largely due to increased funding from West London CCG. Delays in delivering some health programmes, caused by Covid, has resulted in a surplus. Total expenditure was just over £1.1m and the balance is £1m.

Looking to the next financial year, MA noted that funds of just over £1.4m will be carried over with £239k into general funds, In the year, £440k was given in grants to various organisations in the borough, including the 'Men's Shed', the North Kensington Self Care programme, and My Care My Way. £25k was also received from the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation to distribute foods and goods to residents during lockdown.

The balance sheet and cash flow remain strong with net current assets having increased by £379k. Unrestricted funds currently stand at £279k, of which £39k has been designated for specific uses, and £183k will be set aside to maintain 6 months of operating costs, as per the organisation's policy.

Trustees agreed to use some of the designated funds for project support and to employ a policy and voice officer to help look at the impact of Covid on the black Caribbean and African communities in the borough. Funds have also been designated to IT and to KCSC's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary event.

MA thanked all the funders#: West London CCG, RBKC, Trust for London and the Tudor Trust for their support in community development, and City Bridge Trust and Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime . . .

MA referred to the organisation's secure financial position with ongoing support from the NHS and the council, which will allow them to continue to provide ongoing organisational development support.

TF asked if trustees had calculated unit costs on advice time, commenting that he had provided information to Tom Richards and asked if trustees had received this? AS confirmed that this matter could be addressed outside the meeting. MA provided TF with reassurance that there are strict monitoring processes in place with regards to how KCSC manages its finances but agreed that they would investigate this outside the meeting.

The members confirmed they were happy to receive the annual accounts.

Proposer: Iain Cassidy  
Seconder: Annie Redmile

**Action: Trustees to address concerns raised by TF regarding unit costs of advice time.**

#### **b. Appointment of Auditor**

MA noted that the accounts were approved by Goldwins and proposed that they be reappointed as auditors for the next financial year.

The members approved the reappointment of Goldwins as auditors for the next financial year.

Proposer: Stephen Duckworth  
Seconder: Annie Redmile

A question was noted from Joanna Edward on how to discuss how to support organisations in future as she believes there to be no direct help at present. AS requested that she speak to Joanna further outside the meeting to better understand her concerns.

**Action: AS to speak to Joanna Edward on concerns around direct support for organisations.**

### **3. Appointment of KCSC Board Members**

ST noted the ordinary resolution to elect Modan Deb (MD) as Treasurer for 2 consecutive terms of 3 years. ST stated that MD was appointed to the KCSC board in May and that the election was in accordance with the organisation's articles. MD introduced himself to members, explaining that he has worked as a qualified chartered accountant in local government and the charity sector for many years and that he hoped his experience would support the work of the organisation.

The members formally approved the election of Modan Deb to the board for 2 consecutive terms of 3 years.

Iain Cassidy questioned why appointments were made for 2 consecutive terms. AS explained that the articles were updated around 3 years ago to allow trustees to be appointed for 2 terms without reappointment, though this can't go beyond 6 years except in exceptional circumstances.

ST presented the list of board members for 2021. ST noted that Angela Wilson and Daisy Ryan have both stepped down and they were thanked for their valued contribution and support to the board.

ST confirmed that this would be MA's last AGM as he will be stepping down from the board. Having served as Treasurer since 2014, ST remarked on MA's support through challenging periods, particularly noting his strong support in technical developments for the organisation. MA was thanked for his time, energy, leadership and focus, and a gift was presented to him by way of thanks for his service.

Michael Bach thanked MA for his support during his time as Chair and noted both his strong support of the organisation as Treasurer and as a consultant in helping the company become more agile.

MA commented that it had been an honour to work with KCSC for the past 9 years, thanked Michael Bach for his support, and wished both ST and MD success on the board. MA then thanked AS and the KCSC staff for their support and wished them well for the future.

#### **4. AOB**

TF raised an issue regarding KCSC's involvement in moving £19k funding from CASH to Sutton CVS, noting the complaints they have received about Sutton CVS. AS said that she would be happy to discuss the matter further outside the meeting.

Dayo Gilmour (DG) noted her dissatisfaction that CASH and TF are no longer involved with KCSC, and she reflected on the support he had given her in setting up a CIC alongside support for many other local organisations. DG asked AS to look at ways to resolve the issue rather than just stop working with TF.. AS explained that the decision wasn't taken lightly and that she would be happy to discuss this further outside the meeting. DG urged that this be followed up and ST provided reassurance that there was no reluctance to meet but the issues couldn't be resolved within this meeting. ST confirmed that she was happy to meet and stated that she would involve some longer-standing members of KCSC to help provide more historical context at trustee level.

Isis Amlak (IA) commented that she would support this issue being resolved and she noted the important work that CASH has carried out within the voluntary sector.

Confirming that members had no other items to raise, ST congratulated AS for being the recipient of the Mayor's Award for 2020-21 in recognition of her role as Interim Chair for the Westway Trust and as CEO at KCSC. ST noted AS' work in supporting residents and the sector, and a small gift was given by way of thanks.

## 5. **Maddy Desforges, Director, National Association of Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)**

Maddy Desforges introduced herself as the Director of the National Association of Voluntary and Community Action and commented on how the VCS has stepped up during Covid to fill in gaps to meet community needs and build up relationships of trust. The VCS have often been the first and best people to respond to crises at a local level throughout the pandemic, including Mutual Aid groups, ensuring those dealing with isolation and additional pressures were fully supported.

The pandemic increased additional pressures with the rise in those reliant upon Universal Credit and food banks, and this need was often absorbed by communities. Community organisations had to adapt to this new environment and increased demand, and the work done to ensure people understood and complied with restrictions was noted. The VCS lead on communication and ensuring that the relevant language was used to ensure that changes were understood, and it was also first in setting up testing sites and helping with vaccination take up.

Maddy Desforges focused on the following areas to think about for the future:

- Acting small but thinking big. While the problems faced during the pandemic were large, small actions in working together and interacting locally lead to larger authorities.
- The importance of the voluntary sector and putting value on strategic relationships that the voluntary sector has. The VCS is so embedded in communities and provides a safety net, and there is a need for the whole sector to work together to help release assets and build on relationships. There also needs to be a focus on working with all communities, not just those that are easier to access.
- Failing fast and failing early. It's impossible to get things right first time and it's essential to adapt and not look to blame others for failing. The VCS is best when it's transformational and agile, and lessons can be learnt from working more flexibly in being more open to new ideas and partners.
- Seeking out communities and working out what is most important and what outcomes are wanted. The most deprived areas rely heavily on VCS services and there are common goals in ensuring communities receive the best service to live their most fulfilling lives. It is essential to look at who is best placed to offer this by devolving decisions and power locally and trusting communities on what they need most.

The scale of work required was noted, particularly amidst the challenges of climate care, social care, the economy, and the need to support young people, and that the voluntary sector needs to work together to face these challenges.

Maddy Desforges posed 3 questions to members to consider and responses were captured live.

*What do you need from KCSC to flourish in that new world?*

- Partnership
- Honest interactions
- Support on organisational development
- Insights
- Networks
- Support to wrest limited funding from the large national organisations
- Cost-effective

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- CEO peer support
- More secure funding for organisations

*What is your ask of the statutory partners?*

- The local authority and NHS – to foster strategic relationships and for the local VCS to be a key partner
- Better understanding of what we do and how we do it
- Responsiveness and flexibility
- Willingness to understand the VCS – as much as we try to understand them
- Shared problem solving
- Understand challenges
- Funding – we might be called the voluntary sector but we are not free
- Openness
- For the local authority and NHS to work better together
- Apply the concepts of partnership , co-production, openness, listening and working together for commissioning
- Flexibility and energy were appreciated during Covid – the sector needs to keep appreciating that
- Understand the cost of a service and what is needed in the community
- Devolve close to the ground

*What do you bring to the table and offer to support the wider system?*

- Understanding our community
- Connection to the wider community
- Connection with communities – Covid has demonstrated the level of inequality and distrust
- Access to community data experience
- Training and employment opportunities
- Ability to be swift, innovative and flexible
- Trusted relationships and understanding with BME organisations
- Specialist knowledge and skills in relation to mental health, specifically in relation to Muslim and communities of colour
- Understanding of costs, full cost recovery and pricing and providing courses on these topics

Maddy Desforges noted the clear messages that came out of the session and commented on the responsibilities that local VCS leaders have to their communities and sectors in ensuring that the sector remains resilient and meets the needs of its communities. The VCS brings a different perspective to the table and is part of a much wider system that needs to come together with humility and needs to be patient in bringing changes at a system level.

Karima Bint Dawoud (KBD) thanked Maddy and NAVCA for the support they offered to charities during covid in providing the right information to ensure they can make an impact.

## **6. Local examples of new areas of work that emerged from the pandemic**

William Roberts from Venture Centre began by looking at how the pandemic provided his organisation with the opportunity to show how quickly it could adapt, learn new things and provide new services. The organisation runs a small foodbank assisting around 20-30 people with lunch, and this grew to up to 250 during the pandemic alongside distributing food to the under 65s alongside KCSC. This has now levelled out to around 150 people, many of whom have vulnerabilities. Once



their food requirements have been met, the organisation is now seeking ways to address any other underlying issues. Venture Centre now works with partners such as Nucleus to develop triaging, and with Munro Health who provide therapies to those attending the foodbank. Going forward, the organisation wants to continue interacting with those who present to them.

Nafsika Thalassis of BME Health Forum offered support to organisations throughout the pandemic dealing with practical challenges. As the pandemic continued, it became apparent that BME communities were being disproportionately impacted with higher death rates and also an increase in conspiracies and distrust of the NHS. The BME Health Forum therefore looked to apply for funding from the London Community Response alongside communities who had trouble applying themselves, which helped a number of organisations survive and reach communities devastated by lockdown. Engagement work was also carried out to improve the perception of the NHS, such as videos involving medical students available in a number of languages, and regular meetings with an NHS consultant. Funding was secured through Comic Relief for £240k and this was allocated across 20 BME organisations across London. Engagement work has continued in encouraging vaccine take up, particularly amongst the Chinese community.

Paul O'Mahony of Playground Theatre provided an overview of the organisation, paying particular attention to Well Read, a play reading group that started in 2017 and introduced community sessions in 2019 to provide an open group where people can read plays, talk and discuss issues. Sessions moved to being held online in April 2020 with 2 groups a week and around 20 attendees at each. This has now grown over the last 20 months with around 7 groups a week being held with positive feedback from participants on how it has positively impacted their lives. The programme also works closely with other organisations, such as Open Age and Community Champions, and is now returning to in-person sessions, though online sessions remain.

## **7. Cllr Anne Cyron, RBKC**

Cllr Anne Cyron began by acknowledging the work of KCSC and encouraged members to fully utilise the services on offer. Cllr Cyron commented on the dramatic change in people being supported by foodbanks and noted that 21% of households are now facing cash shortfalls, adding that they will now be faced with the challenge of trying to do more with less support. This will require consideration of how to work differently together as the country recovers and Cllr Cyron confirmed her commitment to continue championing the work of the VCS and ensuring broader support is also offered outside of funding.

Cllr Cyron commented on how the VCS manages to reach and engage with residents that the council often can't, and she particularly noted the recent work the VCS has done in supporting the 800 new Afghan refugees in the borough. Residents have also faced challenges through recent flooding and the long-lasting impact of Grenfell on residents. Cllr Cyron stated that she hoped the year ahead would be one of co-production with the council and she thanked KCSC for how it has supported the council in looking at new ways of working.

DG commented on the Grenfell recovery strategy and asked if it has always been a 5-year plan. Cllr Cyron explained that the plan has always been 5 years, though they are conscious of not having a 'hard stop' on any recovery programme. The impact of the strategy will be discussed by the council next week and it is aware that the disaster will have a generational impact that goes beyond the years set out. Cllr

Cyron stated that the strategy is in place to provide enough learning to the council to adapt its services to provide support to people in the long- term and she also encouraged people to apply to the Grenfell Projects Fund, which is now open. AS added reassurance that they could continue to work with North Kensington residents beyond the 5 years of the strategy and that they will continue to support organisations in applying for the fund.

KBD commented on the need for mutual respect between those who have had the vaccine and those who choose not to, urging for those not vaccinated to not be demonised. KBD then looked to the flooding in the area, noting that this was not a new problem and that RBKC needs to look at long-term solutions to address this. Cllr Cyron gave reassurance that the council is working with Thames Water, to which KBD? responded that the council needs to consider the resources required to prevent this in future and to manage the water in a way that isn't wasteful. It was noted that this could be picked up outside the meeting and that Cllr Cyron could help identify the correct person at the council who could assist with this.

IA commented on a disconnect between the council's development strategies and the natural environment, stating that these need to be reconsidered to see how the natural environment can help mitigate issues.

**8. Angela Spence, CEO, KCSC**

AS acknowledged all the comments and issues raised throughout the meeting and assured members that they would be considered, along with all comments made in the chat. AS thanked the members, speakers, staff and trustees for attending, and ST was thanked for chairing the meeting.

**9. Close**

There being no further business, ST formally closed the AGM.