**Note of meeting of the Third Sector Strategy Group (TSSG) – 17 November 2020**

1. **Present:** Raymond Branton, Chair (Family and Community Development), Diane Cameron (WLSEN), James Penman, Minute Taker (VSGWL), Helen Davis (West Lothian Youth Action Project), Alan McCloskey (VSGWL), Angie Mason (WLSEN), Karen Nailen (Citizens Advice Bureau), Brian Pringle (WLDAS), Stuart Barrie (Homestart), David MacDonald (Whitburn and District CDT), Jay Haston (Men/Women Matter), Andy Heapy (Willdig Dean), Brian Pringle (WLDAS), Stuart Barrie (Homestart), Alan Davidson (The Bridge), Lesley Mount (Signpost), Helen Davis (WLYAP), Tracy Murdoch (Kidzeco), Jack Christine (River Kids), Ally Graham (Beechbrae), Anne Marie Wardlaw, Kathleen Neilly (West Lothian Foodbank), Lisa Drinnan (Community Action Blackburn).

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| **ITEM** | **KEY POINTS** | **ACTION BY** |
|  | **Apologies**  Raymond welcomed everyone to the meeting.  Apologies – Alison Wright (Carers of West Lothian), Diane Cameron (WLSEN), Margaret Bryson (The Larder), Tom Heron (The Vennie), Dawn Henderson (Families Outside), Errin Anderson (Polbeth Community Hub). |  |
|  | **Welcome**  Raymond welcomed everyone to the meeting.  Andy Heapy from Willdig Dean gave a presentation on HR issues. Slides attached.  **Previous minutes**  The action notes were accepted as an accurate account of the previous meeting.  **Review of actions from last meeting**  **Children and Families Forum**  Minutes of the latest meeting will be circulated soon.  **Diversity**  This is progressing well with the Race Forum. The new book ‘West Lothian Connection’ has been launched and is available through FJSS.  **Children’s Services Plan**  There was a meeting this week to review the plan which has moved on since it was last circulated. Another meeting needs to be arranged to prevent the plan from ‘drifting’. An email will be sent to the sub-group to arrange this. The plan is a bit disjointed because of the number of inputs. Due to Covid, Health and Wellbeing in an important art of the plan. The latest version will be circulated alongside the minutes of the Children and Families Forum. Organisations were urged to contribute.    **Strategic Mapping Exercise**  Stuart (Homestart), Alison (Carers of West Lothian), Alan (VSGWL) and Linda (VSGWL) are meeting for the first-time next week, any progress will be updated at the next meeting.  **How are we all doing?**  The Bridge secured funding to provide free counselling to anyone in the Voluntary Sector. There are still 5 places available offering 4 sessions (as of 17 November). Anyone interested can contact The Bridge through https://bridgecommunityproject.org.uk/counselling/  Raymond is interested in setting up a support group, particularly for leaders, in the Voluntary Sector, to allow them to meet and informally discuss their stresses and worries. Leadership can be a lonely place, this would provide a safe space to chat and would help address peoples feeling of social isolation and fill the void people are feeling due to lack of informal communications with members of the voluntary sector. This would also complement any formal counselling opportunities people may choose to use. Raymond will send invitation to wider mailing group with a description to see who is interested. The possibility of setting up a lunch club was suggested.  Mental Health can still be a bit of a taboo subject but, the importance of people, especially leaders, taking advantage of these opportunities was echoed by other members of the TSSG. Leaders usually end up taking care of everyone else and often forget to look after their own mental health.  VSGWL are providing up to 6 counselling sessions to each of their staff members, should they wish to use them. Other organisations are being asked to consider doing the same in their organisations.  There may be funding available soon through the National Lottery to provide mental health support. Information will be made available if this indeed does go ahead.  Polbeth Community Hub have had a counsellor for a while now but have recently added a second counsellor due to demand. Funding opportunities are of interest as they are expecting an influx of new referrals and are already putting plans in to action to deal with this.  Men/Women Matter, in partnership with Wellbeing Scotland, are open to organisations who wish to refer clients.  Lesley (Signpost) has recently joined ACOSVO (Association of Charity Leaders) who are doing work around peer support at the moment, there is a charge for this service but business mentors who volunteer their time are available at no extra cost.  WLDAS had an NHS consultant Clinical Psychologist provide a session through zoom to their staff focusing on self-care. Brian has offered to contact him again to provide a session to anyone who wants it. This is not guaranteed but can always ask, if you are interested let Raymond know.  **VSGWL update**  In the process of finalising the distribution of £15k from phase 2 of the National Lottery funding.  A new fund will be launched on Thursday 19 November from the Response, Recovery and Resilience fund in partnership with Foundation Scotland. Organisations can apply for between £500 and £1k. The fund will be particularly resilience focussed on food, shelter and basic amenities. Applications to be returned by 4 December. Hopefully, money will be distributed before Christmas for activity taking place between January and March.  Alan has been asked to be part of a short life working group that has been set up look into urgent care pathways due to the impact Covid has had on A&E Services. NHS call handlers will be directing people to the most appropriate help or support that may not involve hospital to ease pressure on A&E. The Third Sector may be able to help with the ‘Community Pathway’. Referrals to Third Sector organisations may better meet the needs of an individual. There is the potential for new development and funding for the Voluntary Sector. This has been piloted in Ayrshire and Arran. Further information will be publicised soon.  The new TSI manifesto has been launched and is available to view on VSGWL’s website.  VSGWL staff are in the process of distributing a survey round all the volunteers who signed up through the Ready Scotland campaign. The results of the survey will allow volunteers to be better matched to appropriate opportunities.  The Voluntary Organisations PDSP takes place this week and everyone is urged to view the papers for this meeting. These can be found on COINS through the West Lothian Council website. The papers highlight the vol orgs revenue budget with 35 applications received for £1.1 million out of the £400k that is available. Alan and Diane will be part of the assessment panel. As part of the papers there is also a Health and Wellbeing report that is worth looking at based on the earlier discussion.  **WLSEN update**  Senscot have been holding Restart and Rebuild webinars with the focus on where organisations go post pandemic.  Just Enterprise will be hosting webinars in West Lothian on what they offer including help for Third Sector organisations aspiring to be more enterprising. An info-mail will be circulated soon or contact WLSEN if anyone is interested in attending. Angie will forward information to Raymond for circulation.  The mental health collaboration group is going strong. The next meeting will be on 1 December. If anyone is interested in attending, please contact WLSEN.  The uptake for Adapt and Thrive in West Lothian has been very poor, hardly any organisations have applied. This is a support programme with funding attached. Organisations are urged to apply. The support organisations receive from Community Enterprise is invaluable.  **AOCB**  Beechbrae have received money from the Response, Recovery and Resilience fund to run a branching out group. This is a 12-week mental health programme specifically for women and can take up to 12 participants. This is currently a pilot but hoping to secure funding so that it can continue. If anyone is interested, please contact Ally Graham at Beechbrae. Ally will send further information to Raymond for distribution. | **Helen (WLYAP)**  **Helen**  **(WLYAP)**  **Alan (VSGWL)**  **Brian (WLDAS)** |
|  | **Next meeting date**  The next meeting will take place via Zoom on Tuesday 15th December at 1pm. Any issues to be raised or agenda items please contact Raymond. Yvonne Lawton (NHS partnership manager) will be invited to the next meeting to talk about engagement and possible links with the Health and Social Care Partnership. | **All** |