**Note of meeting of the Third Sector Strategy Group (TSSG) – 6 May 2020**

1. **Present:** Raymond Branton, Chair (Family and Community Development), Alan McCloskey (VSGWL), Diane Cameron (WLSEN), Angela Mason (WLSEN), Helen Davis (West Lothian Youth Action Project), James Penman, Minute Taker (VSGWL), Tracy Murdoch (Kidzeco), Lisa Drinnan (Community Action Blackburn), Jay Haston (Men Matter), Joanna Van Den Berg (Firefly Arts), Errin Anderson (Polbeth Hub), John Moore (Lothian Community Transport Services), Stephanie Simpson (Victim Support), Matt Pearce (WC & Harburn CDT), Dawn Henderson (Families Outside), David MacDonald (Whitburn and District CDT).

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| **ITEM** | **KEY POINTS** | **ACTION BY** |
|  | **Apologies**  Raymond welcomed everyone to the meeting. There will be no fixed agenda for the meeting.  Apologies - Koen Van Der Straeten – (The Brock), Simon McGowan – (Children 1st), Jane Deary (Craigshill Good Neighbour Network), Karen Nailen – (Citizens Advice Bureau), Mark Kennedy (Circle), Douglas Westwater (Community Enterprise), Brian Pringle (WLDAS), Alison Wright (Carers of West Lothian), Pauline Moffat (Cyrenians OPAL). |  |
|  | **Previous minutes & matters arising.**  Change to the previous action notes. Section 7 – The Larder are not eligible for funding from Supporting Communities fund. No further changes.  **Matters arising from previous minutes**  Susan McLaren from Health Improvement Scotland to contact Tracy from Kidzeco regarding offer to use premises for digital skills training. 6 other organisations have been in contact with an offer of hubs after reading the TSSG action note. The programme will be called Connecting Scotland.  Application for Food Fund to be submitted this afternoon (6 May), Angela (The Larder) is in the process of chasing up further information before submitting. |  |
|  | **Hardship Fund**  Results have been announced. VSGWL have not been involved in this process but have received funding to help with IT costs.  **Wellbeing Fund**  Scottish Government announced 2nd round of funding with expressions of interest to be received by 30 April. The role of VSGWL is as 1st stage assessor for West Lothian applications. Over 1000 grants applied for throughout Scotland totalling £25 million. Around £500k applied for in West Lothian. VSGWL making recommendations for awards which are then passed to a 2nd assessor before the final assessment. Those who have applied should find out soon if they have been successful.  Scottish Government have indicated the next round of the Wellbeing Fund was being opened on 7 May. No further details available at this stage. Information will be distributed as soon as it becomes available.  VSGWL/WLSEN have applied to the National Lottery Supporting Communities Fund. Bid was not supported but National Lottery are keen to work with VSGWL and WLSEN.  Organisations that are struggling are encouraged to make application to the Resilience Fund. WLSEN and Community Enterprise are available to help with funding applications.  Social Enterprise, led by Senscot, will be having a large event w/c 13 May to promote Social Enterprise. The event wall be called Social Enterprise Reset. WLSEN will circulate further details when they become available.  WLDAS have received £5000 from the Cloth Workers Fund.  **Business Support Grants**  As charitable rates relief is not included in the eligibility criteria, it was suggested to look at your small business relief letter and highlight the section stating that you would have been eligible for small business rates relief but charitable relief superseded this. Raymond is asking everyone to apply for Business Support Grants even if organisations have already been, or expecting, to be declined. Could organisations please send rejection letters to Diane so it can be escalated to a higher level. | **Alan/VSGWL**  **Diane/WLSEN**  **All** |
|  | **VSGWL update**  VSGWL are currently co-ordinating responses to over 1200 volunteers who have signed up through Volunteer Scotland and directly to VSGWL. The Scotland Cares campaign has now been paused as it was agreed that there were not enough roles locally and nationally to meet expectation. VSGWL are currently helping NHS Lothian and Carers of West Lothian recruit volunteers for various roles.  If any organisations require volunteers, please contact VSGWL.  VSGWL have sent a survey round the sector to gauge how successful the resilience fund has been at reaching the ‘front line’. Organisations are urged to complete and return by 15 May. VSGWL will provide a co-ordinated response.  In conjunction with other TSI’s, VSGWL will be pulling together a national survey of the impact on the Third Sector of Covid 19 focusing on short/long term viability, funding and leadership challenges etc. The results will be shared at national as well as local level. It is expected to be a valuable assessment, and everyone is encouraged to participate. Survey will be launched 11 May.  Alan asked if there were any organisations interested in being the ‘org in the spotlight’ for the next ebulletin. Please contact VSGWL if you are interested. | **All**  **All**  **All** |
|  | **Organisation updates**  Kidzeco   * Successful with some funding applications which has relieved a bit of pressure. * Kidz N Kin has been made into a food pantry. * Massive increase in referrals for Kids Start free baby essentials.   Families Outside   * Inundated with calls from anxious families who are unable to communicate with loved wones in prison. * Families being help with food provision, finances etc.   West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust   * Busy with food provision. * Been relatively successful at bringing in funds.   Polbeth Hub   * Successful in securing funding for counselling, food projects etc.   Firefly Arts   * Facing difficult year due to funding cuts plus other funding coming to an end. * By March 2021, the organisation will have to consider if it is still viable. * Application made to Wellbeing Fund for focused work with young people.   Community Action Blackburn   * Progress made with Fair Share, back log now cleared. * Working closely with Blackburn Family Centre in distributing food.   WLYAP   * Hectic just now delivering food parcels. * Waiting for the results of the Wellbeing Fund which will be vital for long term survival. * Good positive partnerships developing. * Managed to keep the Growing Together project.   Whitburn and District CDT   * Been busy with food distribution. * Funding applied for has come through which should keep the organisation going until March 2021.   Victim Support West Lothian   * No funding issues due to being a national organisation. * Inability to hold face to face meetings has been a challenge. * Staff have been working from home since mid-March. * Alarming rise in domestic abuse during lockdown. * Received extra money for the victim’s fund.   Men Matter   * Seeing a rise on the impact to mental health as well as a rise in domestic and child abuse during the lockdown.   Stephanie stated that Victim Support can support people whether a crime has been reported or not. People can contact Victim support to self-refer. |  |
|  | **Next meeting dates**  Zoom meeting every 2 weeks. Next meeting 20 May. |  |