**Note of meeting of the Third Sector Strategy Group (TSSG) – 15 December 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), David MacDonald (Whitburn and District CDT), Lesley Mount (Signpost), Helen Davis (WLYAP), Lisa Drinnan (Community Action Blackburn) Matt Pearce (West Calder and Harburn CDT), Angela Weir (West Calder Hub).

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| **ITEM** | **KEY POINTS** | **ACTION BY** |
|  | **Apologies**  Alison Wright (Carers of West Lothian), Brian Pringle (WLDAS), Karen Nailen (Citizens Advice Bureau), Alan Davidson (The Bridge), Monica Mochar (Wellbeing Scotland), Joanna Van Den Berg (Firefly Arts), Stuart Barrie (Homestart), Dawn Henderson (Families Outside), Kathleen Neilly (West Lothian Foodbank) |  |
|  | **Welcome**  Raymond welcomed everyone to the meeting. Yvonne Lawton is unable to attend this meeting and will be rescheduled for the meeting in January.  **Previous minutes**  Amendment: Diane Cameron was not in attendance at previous meeting.  **Matters arising**  **Children and Families Forum**  Children and Families Forum minutes were distributed to the sector.  **Children’s Services Plan**  The updated plan is looking good, Helen has picked up on a few small things that need looked in to, but overall, it has made good reference to the Third Sector and its services. It flows a lot better than it did previously. It will now go through an approval process with Council PDSPs and planning partners before going to the CPP for final approval.  **Leader Support Group**  Raymond sent a poll out to the leaders in the sector with a list of possible dates for the first meeting to plan the structure and find out what people need from this group. An invite will be sent out at the end of the week once more people have responded. Friday seems to be the most popular day so far, but some people have still to respond.  **Psychologist sessions**  Brian had mentioned at the last meeting the possibility of a trained psychologist being available to provide a session to organisations. The only interest so far has been from Angela at the Larder. Raymond will forward on these details but anyone else that is interested should contact Brian directly.  **Beachbrae Information**  The 12-week mental health programme for women information has been circulated to the TSSG members.  **How are we all doing?**  **Mental Health Group update**  The mental health group had 19 people in attendance at the last meeting. Diane has spoken with the service manager of the community wellbeing hub and would be beneficial for the Third Sector to build bridges with the community wellbeing hub, who have in the past have been known to work against each other.  The group is in the process of trying to list all the mental health services available in West Lothian on one website, producing a flyer and creating a document with the details from the mapping exercise in it for professionals to share with their clients.  Things are moving in the right direction. Better communication is needed and what has become evident is that the sector cannot expect other services to know what we do when we struggle to keep on top of it in our sector. The Third Sector need to take on the role of marketing, promoting, and telling stories of what the sector has achieved.  There is money available through West Lothian Council for young people and mental health, they are still unsure how they are going to spend this money. Information should be gathered to show them where the money is needed. The council are to employ a coordinator to determine where this money is needed but there probably will not be anyone in post until March or April next year. The representative on the working group for the funding is Simon McGowan. We need to make sure that he is representing the sector and Helen will try to contact Simon as a matter of priority ahead of Thursdays meeting to get him to link in with the children and family’s forum and to ensure small local groups are represented. It is frustrating that it has taken so long to distribute this money and that 62k will be allocated to the post of coordinator. Important that Simon liaises with the Children and Families forum and the Mental Health forum.  The next Mental Health Group meeting is on the 12th January at 1:30pm.  **Children and Families Forum update**  The Children Services Plan was not available to be shared at the last forum but is available now. The format and layout are looking good, it will not change much now but small tweaks can still be made. Only a few of the examples have been kept in, they have kept it wide and generic as it is an action plan for the next 3 years. You can get in touch directly with Sharon Houston or Denise Arbeiter if you feel like anything has been missed, or Helen can pass on anything when she contacts them with her concerns.  A few organisations have taken up the offer of counselling through the bridge.  Information on the HR Support was distributed.  There is still a lot of stress for leaders, managing services and staffing issues can take its toll, there is a need to continue having the forum as a supportive group.  Fed information into the wellbeing recovery group which take referrals for children and young people. At the weekly referrals meeting this morning, it was reported there were 30 referrals in one day. There are still a significant number of issues coming through from the schools, children, and young people team and from GP’s. Lots of support is still required for parents but there is a long waiting list to access this support. There is still a lot of work to be done. YAP will tie in with the mechanism of support that is trying to be put into place. All High Schools in West Lothian now either have access to a counsellor or have a counsellor allocated to the school. Not everyone is interested in counselling so there is a need for access to a wide range of community support services.  We had an update from everyone at the forum and YAP updated about their work with Safe Space. Food and toy deliveries will be distributed over several days to those who have been identified as in need, this is linked with anti-poverty strategy and the food consortium.  **Community Development Trust update**  Not much to report on the forum side of things. Most CDT’s are communicating on a one-to-one basis at the moment on specific items. The hope was to have regular CDT forums, but this has yet to materialise mainly due to time constraints. It is hoped that from the beginning of 2021 there will be a more co-ordinated amalgamation of what has been experienced as CDT’s.  West Calder and Harburn CDT have secured funding to employ a Local Wellbeing Navigator to help people access a wide range of different services.  **VSGWL update**  The Voluntary Organisations revenue budget assessments have taken place to a point where recommendations have been put forward to Craig McCorriston on how the £400k should be allocated. Alan and Diane were part of a 6 persons assessment panel which has been welcomed by officials as this adds transparency to the process and ensures the sector as a voice in the process. 35 organisations have applied asking for a total of £1.1 million. Pressure has been put on WLC to communicate decisions to all applicants urgently.  There was an extensive discussion at the Voluntary Organisations PDSP around Mental Health and Wellbeing. The 3rd Sector Peer to Peer support was also discussed. Mental Health was the main feature of the CPP meeting. There was recognition of the need to support each other during these uncertain times.  The first meeting re the mapping exercise has taken place. Starting to build a document that sets out the groups that the sector is currently represented on. There is a meeting today to further progress. It is hoped the mapping will be complete in Spring next year. Alan will provide updates to colleagues, as necessary.  NHS Lothian are doing some community pathways mapping to divert people away form Accident and Emergency. This continues to be a weekly meeting. Looking to create a community single point of contact. NHS Lothian want to put a proposal to the Scottish Government about what a service may look like that diverts people away from A & E and will include a resource/funding opportunity for the sector. The Third Sector would be keen to play their part but would require funding/resources to do so.  WLC have invited Alan to be part of an Economic Recovery Working Group that meets every Tuesday at 3pm. Predominantly the CPP partners sit on this group. Its purpose is to get an idea on how Covid 19 is impacting jobs and the economy in West Lothian. Alan will feedback any information that impacts on the sector.  Alan has been involved in a proof of concept discussion with West Lothian College around students finding work experience and ways into employment. The Third Sector may have a role in trying to find opportunities for students. There may be funding available for the Third Sector further down the line once the proof of concept is developed. Alan will report back with relevant information.  **WLSEN update**  WLSEN AGM took place last week. Went well and had a great attendance. A vote was taken for WLSEN to move to being a charity which was passed. This will open new funding opportunities for the organisation and hopefully put WLSEN in a better place next year. Thank you to everyone that came along.  The Mental Health Group has taken up a lot of time but is moving along. The progress is being watched both locally and nationally.  Diane said that being part of the Voluntary Organisations budget panel was difficult, but the process was very robust. West Lothian Council have a long way to go before understanding the workings of Social Enterprises and Third Sector organisations. Diane suggested a ‘job swap’ so that council members can fully understand how Third Sector organisations run.  The Social Enterprise Action Plan is moving forward. Meeting taking place during the first week of January so hopefully there will be further updates after that.  Senscot are trying to put together a Social Enterprise Net Zero strategy on climate change. Social Enterprises often lead on climate change. Hopeful of having local events to raise the profile of the Net Zero strategy.  There is a general acceptance that Social Enterprises and the Third sector have been at the forefront of the pandemic response and that this should be continued.  Raymond thanked Diane and Alan for their efforts as part of the funding panel. Diane and Alan requested that West Lothian Council provide feedback to all unsuccessful applicants.  **AOCB**  No further business to be discussed. | **Helen (WLYAP)**  **Alan (VSGWL)**  **Alan (VSGWL)**  **Alan (VSGWL)** |
|  | **Next meeting dates**  19 January 2021, 16 February, and 16 March**.**  Raymond thanked everyone and closed the meeting. |  |