THird sector COST OF LIVING MEETING

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date: | THURSDAY 29 MARCH 2023 |
| Time: | 14:00 |
| Place: | TEAMS AND GATEWAY OFFICE |
| Attending: | ALAN MCCLOSKEY, ANN EDWARDS, DAVID MCDONALD, GILLIAN PEARSON, HELEN DAVIS, MARIA THORP, RAYMOND BRANTON, ROBYN OSWALD, SILENCE CHIHURI, TRACY KERR  AND TRACY MURDOCH |
| Apologies: | JOANNE BROWN, ALAN DAVIDSON, JOHN MCCLAY, KAREN NAILEN AND ANN PIKE |

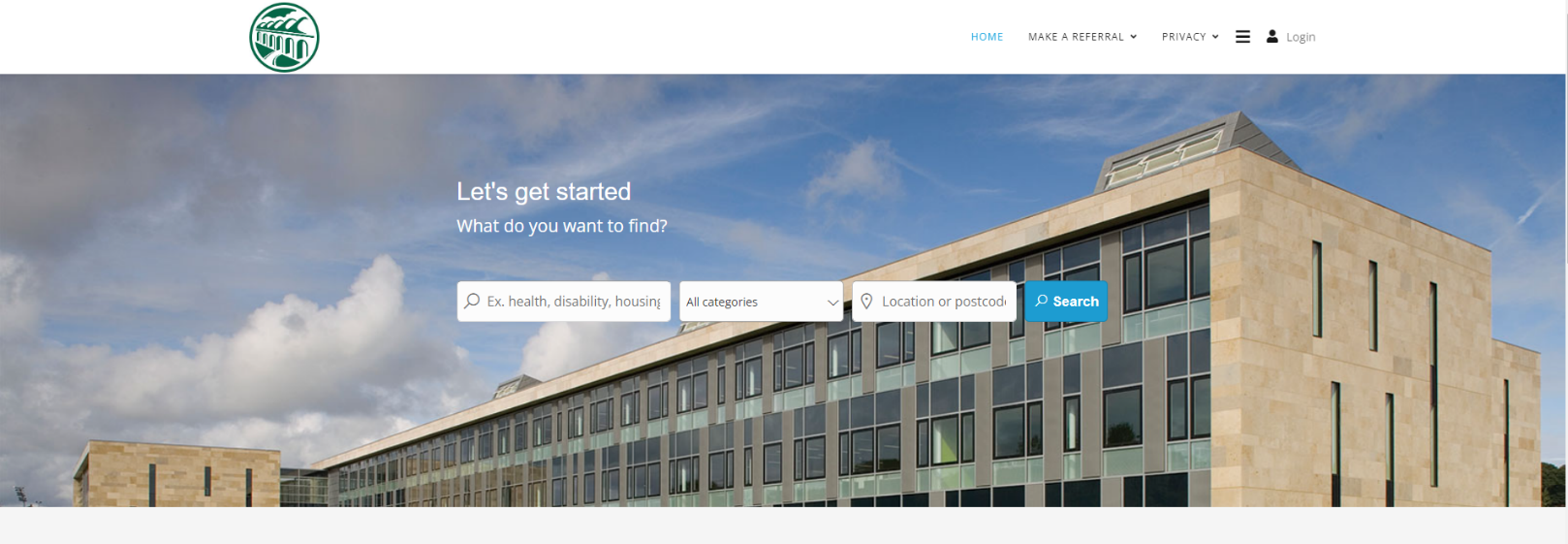
Alan McCloskey welcomed everyone to today’s meeting.

**2. minutes from the last meeting / accuracy and actions –**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **UPDATE ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING** | | |
| Add question to survey regarding the future and re issue | Karen | Question added to the survey |
| any health and wellbeing/Councillor services offer group costs that would reduce costs for individual organisations in sector? | Alan | Alan has approached 2 organisations to see if there would be interested in offering a group discount – currently waiting on a response. |
| Survey results in the annual report | Alan | Alan to include the survey in the third sector annual report. |
| Sub Group to meet to discuss pulling together separate report to annual report group | Robyn to arrange meeting for those who raised interest. | Meeting arranged for Wednesday 5 April at 10am |

Some amendments to make to the minutes;

* The date of the meeting was in February, but the note stated January – to be amended.
* An action that was marked down for Tracy Murdoch was for Tracy Kerr – action to be amended to Tracy Kerr.
* Alan Davidson attended the last meeting, but he wasn’t on the minutes – Alan to be added to the attendance on the minutes.

**3. Development of local support directory – West Lothian Council**

Gillian Pearson shared the screen (above) to discuss the Councils development plans for a support directory for residents of West Lothian; [www.westlothianadvicenetwork.org](http://www.westlothianadvicenetwork.org)

The above link takes you to a directory of organisations in West Lothian – they can be searched for by category or location. There is also a map on where everyone is.

Organisations that would like to be added to the directory will be given log in details for the website – this will allow them to edit their information (e.g. opening hours, contact details, the services provided etc.)

At the top of the page, where the services tab is – there is a drop down for service listings which lists all the services available. Once you click on the service you are looking for it will open up with information on who they are, what they provide, how to get in touch etc. it will also tell you if referrals can be made through the FORT system.

The Council are currently working on the information relating to FORT, and this directory is linked in with FORT. They have been in talks with the developers, and confirmed that there is an unlimited number of organisations that can be added to the list. The organisations “profiles” will be updated on whether referrals can be made through FORT or, if there are other methods to refer, they will be added instead.

In the services tab, there is a section for triage referrals – that will be replaced with the option for people to make self-referrals. The referrals will come in to a central point at the Council, who will then pass the referrals to the relevant organisations.

This directory is a web-based system that can be accessed anywhere.

Gillian asked the group for some input on:

* what the directory should be called – they are juggling some names at the moment, and would be open for suggestions.
* Is there any information missing that should be included?
* Is this something that everyone would use? And build together to create a West Lothian directory.

Alan M – there is a service tool that the Gateway use – which will be further developed – thinking the food network would be a really good platform to host some information. There are lots of opportunities.

Gillian – trying to arrange a meeting with the developer to discuss changes – adding the food network is a really good example of adding to the categories section. If someone was looking for food support, if they click on that in the category section it will then take them to a map of all food support in the area.

On the Councils website, there are sections for food support and warm banks – but they are on separate pages within the website. This directory could be a way of bringing these 2 pieces of information together.

Maria asked if people will be able to search by location (e.g. if you search Bridgend, all the service in the area will pop up). Gillian stated that yes, this is a function on the website – you can search by organisation name, category your looking for or location.

Maria also asked if organisations that are out with West Lothian but support residents in the West Lothian area – Gillian stated that this can be something they can discuss with the developer.

Tracy K asked Gillian if, under location is that where the organisation is based? Gillian will take this back to the developer to ask how this will work for outreach locations for organisations. Most of the services that are on the site, their location is where they are based (e.g. if you search for the Advice Shop, it stated they are in Bathgate but they have outreach locations all over). One way around this is to have separate listings for different sessions.

David asked Gillian if the triage referral system on the directory will replace FORT – Gillian stated that, every area that has FORT as a referral and tracking System also gets access as part of the package. Organisations will also get access to web directory support – this is aimed at those who are not on FORT. The triage referral system allows those who can’t make referrals through FORT to make referrals. There will be referrals aimed at the public and another aimed for organisations.

Regarding the self-referral, David asked if there was a way to add something in for clients self-referring – if someone presents certain issues to an organisation, could the system say that they should contact another organisation (and list them). Gillian will take this back to the developers to ask. In the referral form for the public, there will be a section that asks have you identified a preferred service you would want to be referred to. Could ask what the issues are and list the services available for them.

If anyone would like their details added to the directory, there is a button on the website to get in touch – this will get you log in details to amend your organisations details when needed.

The directory is up and running, but changes and additions are still being made.

The team are currently looking into changing the name of the directory – will be open for suggestions. If anyone has any questions or suggestions, please email [fort@westlothian.org.uk](mailto:fort@westlothian.org.uk)

**4. Update on COL Survey**

Karen Nailen wasn’t able to attend today’s meeting to discuss the survey.

Alan asked the group if anyone had any thoughts on the results from the survey;

Silence asked the group how to address the issues that have been raised throughout these meetings and the survey. Alan stated that the group will use opportunities at various forums to report on the issues raised during the meetings and present in the annual report. Alan attended the PDSP meeting this week and highlighted the challenges the sector is facing at the moment – especially funding challenges.

Alan mentioned that he has been working with SCVO around some publicity on the challenges facing the whole of the sector for the last few months. Today, there is a new campaign launch called “essential sector” its all-over social media with the hashtag #essintialsector. They are looking for organisations in the sector to send on case studies for their campaign and do some filming to discuss what it means to work in the third sector – to highlight why the third sector is so important.

There will be lots of publicity of essential sector over the next few weeks – one of the immediate asks is if there are ay organisations to put themselves forward to do some filming.

As there is now a new First Minister and new Scottish Government, the third sector may be able to get more attraction with the Government.

Maria mentioned that there was an article presenting research about younger people entering the third sector (20’s-30’s), and some of the thinking is that younger people want a better work life balance than the third sector provides. Maria stated that it will be interesting to see with the next generations to see whether they come in with different expectations on careers and work life balance, and whether that will have an impact on the sector.

Helen suggested that this is a study the group should look at – Maria will look for the link and sent to the group.

Alan mentioned that the Scottish Government sent him information on a new fair pay arrangement that requires third sector organisations who receive grants to pay the Real Living Wage. Alan will share the information on the VSG website – its from July, but gives us a heads up on what’s to come in the next few months.

Helen stated that the sector needs to gather as much evidence as possible to say, collectively, where things are getting harder.

**5. PARTNER UPDATES**

Tracy mentioned that they received a hardship fund to deliver shopping card service for 3 months – families receive £20 for Aldi, but in order to get a Second card, the client needs to get money advice. This service will start on Saturday, and they have doubled the shopping stock – there is a potential of reaching over 200 families. Tracy mentioned that she is interested in seeing the drop off rate and how many people don’t want to take the next step in getting advice. Tracy will keep everyone updated on the process.

Raymond mentioned that a similar pilot took place in Argyll and Bute – first referral got the payment but the second they requested clients get money advice. 95% of people got money advice.

**6. AOB**

Alan has 2 things to raise;

1. reminder to everyone to complete the evaluation form – closes lunchtime tomorrow.

2. Lisa Hunter from West Lothian Leisure – providing winter warmers, soup and a roll for people in Bathgate. They are looking to organise something in April – Lisa was hoping 4 or 5 organisations based in Bathgate could come along at the Bathgate Sports Centre. If you are interested, please email Lisa on [lhunter@westlothianleisure.com](mailto:lhunter@westlothianleisure.com)

**7. Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 9 May 2023 at 2pm

It was agreed that the group would meet 1 week after the short-term forum meet (every 6 weeks).

Alan to send Robyn the dates for the short-term forum meetings so she can get dates for this group issued out.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ACTIONS FROM TODAYS MEETING** | | |
| **ACTION** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **ACTION PROGRESS** |
| Amendments to make to the previous minutes: | Robyn | Amendments corrected |
| Webpage link to be sent to the group regarding the research on young people joining the third sector | Maria |  |
| Scottish Government’s information on the new pay agreement for organisations who receive grants to be added to the VSG website | Alan | Added to VSGWL Website - <https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/fair-work-first-guidance/> |
| Update on the process of shopping Cards | Tracy M |  |
| Send Robyn the dates for the short-term forum meetings so she can get dates for this group issued out. | Alan and Robyn | Next CPP cost of living forum is 17 May |