Third Sector Strategy Group Forum

Thursday 29th May 1.30pm

Present: Louise Crozier (CAB), Alan McCloskey, Tracy Kerr and Victoria Isbister (VSGWL), Neil Barnes (WLCAN), Collette Moran (School Bank), David Macdonald (Whitburn CDT), Hilda Dolan (WLYAP), Stephen Newman (River Kids), Jamie Seery (50+), Simon Henderson (Play Works), Jane Masters (Play Works), Karen Campbell (Mhap), Gareth McKenna (Broxburn Utd)

Apologies: Mark Vance (WLDAS), Marcia Moreira (Health in Mind), Struan (Xcite), Ann Pike, Helen Davis (WLYAP)

1. **Welcome and Apologies (Louise)**

Action note from previous meeting, actions and matters arising.

* PDSP Case study requests (completed)
* PDSPs – get in touch if you wish to be added to the mailing list or would like to be a rep / deputy. [Policy Development Scrutiny Panels (PDSP) - Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian](https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/working-together/policy-development-scrutiny-panels-pdsp/)
* Invite Councillor Susan Mangan to July PDSP – Victoria / Louise
1. **Council / Sector working group updates and discussion on ideas / plans**

Report pulled last minute in April due to lack of case studies. Now tabled for June 10th. Group met yesterday to have final read through of report, content great however discussion surrounding the number of pages – this has now been reduced. It was decided that if format remains same for next year, Gateway will issue a template for clarity and consistency. Photos have a big impact. Report will be published next week. Louise said guidance on case studies would be welcomed as was difficult to know which piece of work would be relevant to pick out. Suggestions: short videos, podcasts, adding QR code requesting feedback.

What do we want out of the Third Sector annual report? Will get feedback from elected members so can start thinking now about how to present next year. Susan Mangan is keen to get out and meet local groups, would be great to build positive relationship. Need someone to understand the sectors challenges and see what we do well. Claire suggested PDSP reps meet next week ahead of next round of meetings to see report.

What are we trying to achieve from case studies? Demonstrate impact of work being done, raise awareness, educate the PDSPs, promote partnership working. SCVO tracker updated in June, this was picked up on by the media.

1. **VSGWL report**
* Event: Organisations throughout West Lothian were invited to nominate their volunteers for one of three categories: Volunteer of the Year Award, Dedication and Commitment Award and Volunteer Team of the Year Award. We had an outstanding response, with collectively over **240 volunteers** nominated in total. The celebration will take place on Thursday 5th June, from 12pm to 2pm, at St Mary’s Church Hall in Bathgate. All nominees, along with their nominators from the organisations they volunteer with, have been invited to attend. Each nominee will receive a certificate of recognition, and a winner and runner-up for each category will be announced on the day. Genuinely we thought this might be a small event and we were blown away by response.
* Health check tool: <https://salesforce.123formbuilder.com/form-6821758/org-health-check> It will take about 10mins to complete, RAG indicator, light touch self-assessment.
* Cyber security: David has put together a video of tips. Simon signposted [Home | Third Sector Lab](https://thirdsectorlab.co.uk/)
* Charity law changes – we held awareness session in April.
* Service locator: [Homepage - VSGWL Locator](https://westlothianlocator.org/) Tracy said lots of services updates using online form and to get in touch if any issue as Gateway have a resource who can support input. getting good number of hits. No feedback or comments. [Membership - Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian](https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/organisation-support/our-members/)
* Due to increase in drug deaths in WLDAS running Naloxone training June 9th and 23rd at the Gateway, few spaces left. [Events from 9 June – 23 June](https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/events/)
* Funding tool: [Home | West Lothian 4 Community](https://funding.idoxopen4community.co.uk/westlothian) Lots of people using this tool but there was awareness that there could be some benefit to one to one chats. Please get in touch if you want to book a space.
1. **Forum / Sector updates**
* PDSP reps’ updates: Meetings coming up. Alan asked for deputies. Training available and coaching. Simon said it is a formal event however after you’ve been once and understand how things work, it’s fine.
* WL Food Network: Alan advised FN no longer being funded by WLC. As bank account now open funding applications will now be completed. Will be working with Jamie Oliver’s Ministry of food programme to do Train the trainer. Train one person who will then train others. Recipes and logo can be shared. [Jamie's Ministry of Food - Because every meal matters | Jamie's Ministry Of Food](https://www.jamiesministryoffood.com/) Subgroup will be working on event planning to raise awareness of the Network and hopefully secure local business backing. Neil advised that WLCAN could tie in with this as they have 2 food themed events planned, Almond Valley are keen to partner up, so opportunities there. Level of food insecurity remains high,
* Children and Families: Tracy said hearing from HMP Addiewell member was really interesting.
* Employability forum: Alan advised new Employability Development Worker Liyan Hmidan starts June 10th at the Gateway and will initially go out and meet partners to find out the needs. No one left behind mainly funds employability initiatives, potentially money may come from Shared Prosperity Fund also.
* WL Race Forum (MD): No update.
* WL Volunteer Network: Victoria advised WLVN met online on Tuesday. Initial discussions about volunteer fayres in January and a celebration event in November. Members holding separate events during volunteer week, link together on social media and promote WLVN. Presentation from Joceyln WLCAN who are supporting their first volunteer.
* Social Enterprise network / forum: Raymond is dedicated Gateway resource for supporting social enterprise (SE) activities. WLSEN EGM was held last week and has now been formally wound down. Members agreed around 30k will be transferred to the Gateway and ringfenced for SE support. Plan to run micro grants and capacity building, for people / orgs who need a hand up. Established SE won’t be eligible; it’s about encouraging start-ups. David wondered if Food Network might apply and Neil spoke about public diners. [Public Diners - Nourish Scotland](https://www.nourishscotland.org/projects/public-diners/)
* WL Climate Action Network: Neil advised eco development fund mark 4 will be launched now funding is secured. Hoping to match fund to maximise. £2000 ringfenced for DYW, aiming for one young champion in each ward and keen to work with different partners and empower young people to get involved. Working to set up Youth climate action network. Climate conversation completed in Linlithgow. Challenging communities to identify 3 priorities as part of engagement plan. Biodiversity and active travel events along River Almond. Neil also touched on recent scientific papers and the importance of restoring nature to mitigate climate action effects. [Welcome - West Lothian Climate Action Network](https://wlcan.scot/)
* Older people’s provider: Tracy said there was lots of discussion around the changing nature of referrals. Most organisations are light touch however now interacting with people at crisis point. Volunteers have taken calls from people who are suicidal leading to conversations around what support is there for staff and volunteers. There has been a noticeable impact caused by health and social care crisis and loss of services (i.e. health in mind services). Challenges include getting in touch with adult protection and social work. Also mentioned was changing criteria for SDS (self-directed support), some people have lost funding and in other cases where it had been assessed that two staff were needed now only one is being funded, leading to concerns for staff and client. There was also discussion about purpose of Older Peoples Provider Forum run by council and how we can better support. What’s on where guide, summer edition due. Question – what is the basis of crisis referrals? E.g. cost of living, isolation. This was not known. Discussion followed on what services were available. Simon said Play works had explored options in Armadale and Blackridge however there was no demand, plenty on already. Tracy wondered that there the issue may be surrounding support – people who need help to access activities. Gareth said they have started older peoples programme due to funding received and it has been really popular, 80-100 per week. Trying to vary activities. Social interaction, bringing people together and healthy.
* CDT Forum: Pre covid it was a well-recognised useful group and David was happy to advise that they have met for first time since pandemic and it was great having so many partners round the table, sharing commonalities. It was raised that TSI used to provide (?) an independent examiner for accounts? Someone who could the charity sector could go to as it’s difficult to find someone. Daid wondered what would happen if existing examiner ceased. They talked about all the great and varied work happening across West Lothian, funding opportunities and potentially partnership working. Claire, Council, has offered Finlay’s admin support which is much appreciated. DETAS also represented which is connection to wider national figure. David has offered to be link for Third Sector to open up communication both ways. Matt from West Calder attends Development Board. Projects are so varied and geographically based, with a wide demographic and it was good to share information, advice, training and ideas. Louise said this was a really positive move as when she had visited CDT’s years ago she had been surprised the individual orgs didn’t know what each other did. Will meet quarterly, next in July, in person.

Alan advised that VSGWL changed their auditor last year and found it difficult to find someone to take on a charity. The new charity law change means that if greater than one million pounds income requires full audit which is more expensive. Alan said the TSI could perhaps provide contact information.

**AOCB**

1. CAB: Financial inclusion team received funding for referrals for staff in work poverty. This work can be completed on a Saturday, recognising that people likely working during the week and support may be needed at weekend.
2. Self-assessment tool closed around May 19th, extended due to lack of responses. Louise encouraged members to complete and reassured questions were relevant and it was easy to complete.
3. WLCAN call to action – Neil asked member to come forward with sites, land and buildings, solar developments. There’s funding available form government. Some momentum surrounding community energy. Neil involved in setting up Solar enterprise with Linlithgow, it was not easy, but is worthwhile. Energy cooperatives. There could be some income stream generated from e.g. EV charging points. It’s an opportunity for communities.

**Actions**

* Invite Councillor Susan Mangan to future TSSG – Victoria / Louise
* Tracy and Simon explore where Play Works could link in with OPP - added to Agenda
* Child poverty tool to be reshared – Victoria <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/H1X6CL/> (completed)
* Alan to contact Gillian Amos
* Neil to send information to Gateway who will share on socials
* Any member who wishes to act as PDSP deputy please get in touch

[Policy Development Scrutiny Panels (PDSP) - Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian](https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/working-together/policy-development-scrutiny-panels-pdsp/)

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| PDSP | Rep | Org | Deputy | Dates |
| Corporate policy and resources | Stuart Barrie | VSGWL |  | June 20th |
| Education | Simon Henderson | Simply Play |  | June 10th |
| Housing Services | Silence Chihuri | FJSS |  | May 29th |
| Public and Community Safety | Helen Davis | WLYAP |  | May 13th |
| Social Work & Health | Mike Niles | Carers of WL |  | June 5th |
| Environment and Sustainability | Carole Racionzer | Linlithgow |  | June 10th |
| Economy Empowerment and Wealth building | Alan McCloskey | VSGWL | Matt Pearce | June 10th |