

Minute of Meeting Forum for Empowering Communities

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday 15 November 2022	14:00	Remotely via Teams

Present

M Mathieson, Barnados; J Gonani, DEAR; A McNiven, Engage Renfrewshire; S Cruickshank, Renfrewshire Access Panel; M Fotheringham, Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau; C Forbes, ROAR

Chair

A McNiven, Chief Executive, Engage Renfrewshire, presided.

In Attendance

R Robertson, Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership; A McBride, Engage Renfrewshire; D Lockyer, CAB; D Pole and S Graham (both Renfrewshire Council).

Apology

A Thomson, Bridgewater Housing Association;

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to commencement of the meeting.

1 MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Renfrewshire Forum for Empowering Communities Group held on 27 September 2022.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 MATTERS ARISING

DECIDED: That the updates be noted.

3 ROLLING ACTION LOG

The Rolling Action Log was submitted for approval.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the update be noted; and
- (b) That the Rolling Action Log be approved.

4 COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING FUND

A McBride, Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund Officer, Engage Renfrewshire, gave a presentation relative to an update on the Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund.

She advised that applications for the Fund closed on 31 October 2022 and successful groups would be notified early December.

DECIDED: That the verbal presentation be noted.

5 WINTER CONNECTIONS

S Graham, Partnership's Manager, Chief Executive's, Renfrewshire Council gave an update relative to the Winter Connections project.

He advised that the Winter Connections project was a network of local places and spaces where people could connect to others in their community this winter. The project was free and open to all in every neighbourhood. £50k Winter Connections funding had been agreed in September and had mostly now been allocated across 24 local projects. A further £20k had been agreed by the Council's Leadership Board to 'top-up' the fund as well as £10k for a programme of activities from OneRen. He advised that the current focus was on targeting geographical 'gaps' and extending provision throughout January and February.

DECIDED: That the verbal update be noted.

DECIDED: That the verbal presentation be noted.

6 UTILITY COSTS

A McNiven led a discussion with the Group on rising utility costs and the possibility of having to pass those costs on to clients.

DECIDED: That the discussion be noted.

7 FORUM WORKPLAN

The Chair led discussion on the development of agenda items for the Forum for the coming year. It was noted that an email had been sent to members prior to the meeting.

It was proposed that the following items would be submitted as future items on the agenda for the Forum for Empowering Communities Group with regular updates being provided for Ethnic Diversity of Renfrewshire and Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Programme. This was agreed.

- **Ethnic Diversity of Renfrewshire** – Updates from IN-Ren will be supplied on a regular basis;
- **Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Programme** – Updates will be supplied on a regular basis till conclusion (activity ceasing around December 2023);
- **Voluntary Sector Groups and impact of crisis** - There is a tension between agencies seeking to help while perhaps having costs cut – for example, a rent freeze will impact on housing associations potential to do additional support work. This point should be shared with the Executive group as an ‘alert’ – a danger that local agencies are under ever increasing pressure with less and less resource;
- **Supporting the workforce** within 3rd Sector and Voluntary Organisations - Many of us are employers – what additional actions can we take to ensure our staff are supported during this time;
- **Reaching those with real need versus organisations staying within financial constraints (living wage/procurement/hardship funds)** - We need to act to ensure that phrases like ‘warm banks’ are not normalised – the Forum should be vocal around this issue;
- **Winter Connections Programme** - network of local places and spaces where people connect to others in their community this winter.
- **Providing Confidential Support** - the importance of delivering services unobtrusively; the delivery of community services should be dignified, without stigmatisation and should be a service of ‘choice’; and
- **The Positivity of Connectiveness** – the opportunity when delivering services such as designed to tackle the #CostofLivingCrisis to also tackle social isolation and increase connectiveness.

DECIDED: That the list of agenda items be submitted as future items on the agenda for the Forum for Empowering Communities Group with regular updates being provided for Ethnic Diversity of Renfrewshire and the Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Programme.

8 TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS FOR THE FORUM FOR EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO DECEMBER 2023

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the timetable of meetings for the Forum for Empowering Communities Group for the period January 2023 to December 2023.

DECIDED: That the timetable of meetings from January 2023 to December 2023 as indicated within the report be agreed.