**Forth & Inverleith Voluntary Sector Forum**

Wednesday 1st May, 10.30 - 12.30

North Edinburgh Arts

Chair: Morag Wilson, Stepping Stones North Edinburgh

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| **PRESENT:****Chair**: Morag Wilson, Stepping Stones North Edinburgh* Julie Smith, First Port
* Heather Young, North Edinburgh Timebank, Volunteer Edinburgh
* Katherine Anderson, EVOC
* Ella Simpson, EVOC
* Jan-Bert Van De Berg, Art Link (Chair of EVOC’s Board of Trustees)
* Su Millar, Lifecare
* Margaret Stewart, Lifecare
* Julie Crawford, Link Up
* Kate Wimpress, North Edinburgh Arts
* Willy Black, West Pilton Neighbourhood Centre
* Sandra Walkingshaw, Living Well North Edinburgh

**APOLOGIES:*** David Pickering**,** Granton Information Centre
* Dawn Anderson, PCHP
* Alex Collop, Circle
* Laura Donnelly, Community Renewal
1. **Welcome and thanks for attending**
2. **Input from Jan-Bert Van De Berg and Ella Simpson**

The forum invited Ella & Jan-Bert to attend to discuss further the IJB Grants Programme. Ella & Jan-Bert highlighted the following in relation to EVOC’s involvement in the programme: * From the outset, EVOC advocated that the grants programme should have a strategic purpose, aim and vision.
* EVOC were invited to be part of the process alongside the Lothian Community Health Forum.
* Four information sessions were held with the sector as part of the consultation process.
* In relation to the allocation process for the funding and the learning for the future, EVOC would make an explicit decision on whether or not we would be involved in this part of the process again. The reasons for involvement would be clearly communicated to the sector.
* Positives from EVOC’s involvement included: £1.5 million added into the pot from the PIF fund (others wanted this to be shifted into contracting), and that the HIF money became part of the programme.
* It was acknowledged by everyone involved in the process that there needs to be a more sophisticated process for considering demographics and localities.
* The TSSG was involved in putting together a disinvestment in the sector paper, which argued that the best way to address need is through the third sector. This went to Judith Proctor and included information about the third sector’s knowledge regarding needs and gaps for local communities.

The following discussions occurred with members of the forum:* Discussion whether we should bring organisations together in North Edinburgh so they are more likely to be funded. Highlighted that the alternative would be to demonstrate how we can work better together, and not to develop something new.
* Discussion regarding how do we get more of the impetus to come from the third sector? EVOC has put together a paper in response to the £2 million set aside for community led support, arguing that a community-investment strategy is needed first before decisions can be made about spend: this paper will be discussed at TSSG first.
* There needs to be a change in relationship between the third sector and the public sector, so there is more of a balance of power. Currently, we need to make sure the third sector is included in the strategic commissioning plans.
* Members raised concerns about the type of support available from EVOC post IJB decision and about the lack of communication from EVOC.
* The Save our Services campaign was well attended, including local councillors, to consider solutions for the area. There needs to be a short-term solution for organisations in the area to stabilise them.
* Concerns raised that EVOC exists within a tent with the community only looking in: members felt that EVOC was too involved in the process. They would like a further conversation on the sector’s view about the role of EVOC moving forwards (long and short-term). EVOC highlighted their role to create space where different sectors can be brought together.

Learning for the Future* We need to learn from the IJB programme for the Communities & Families Grants Fund and the Daycare Fund.
* There has been £100,000 set aside for transition work for unsuccessful organisations and the decision about the other £200,000 will be made in the next CEC Finance & Resources Committee.
* Future learning points for EVOC: improve communication with the sector, for example, it should have been communicated that there was a shift being made about involvement in the process. Also, review EVOC’s policy around involvement in grants funds, considering learning for the future.
* EVOC’s communication with the sector is through the thematic and locality forums. There are plans to use more digital means in the future for example making better use of the website (this will be rebuilt in the future) or through the online platform, Slack.
* Members would like EVOC to be more involved in showing the impact of the third sector in the future and to hold those in power to account about the impact on real people in real communities.
* Would be useful in the future to invite members of the IJB to this community in the North West to meet the local community who will be affected by projects closing down. Point raised that EVOC should be present in local communities.
* Action point: focus on transitional support fund- this money needs to be available now.
* Action point: invite both EVOC and the Convenors of the Education, Children & Families’ committee to the next Save our Services campaign meeting.

**3.** **Support for VSF Forth and Inverleith**EVOC had a 38% cut to funding for community planning/strategic partnerships and as a result had to make the Senior Development Officer post redundant, but they have received ongoing funding for the Development Worker for the Voluntary Sector Forums. **Date of Next Meeting: TBC** |