

Carmarthenshire Volunteer Organisers Network – CVON

Minutes

Wednesday 17th November 2020 via Zoom

Present –

1. Nevil Williams	Radio BGM Llanelli	
2. Jane Hemmings	CAVS	jane.hemmings@cavs.org.uk
3. Alud Owen Jones	CAVS	alud.jones@cavs.org.uk
4. Jackie Dorrian	CAVS	Jackie.dorrian@cavs.org.uk
5. Jamie Horton	CAVS	jamie.horton@cavs.org.uk
6. Pennie Walker	Welsh Ambulance Service	
7. Piers Lunt	Tywi Gateway Trust	
8. Andrew Hopper-Davi	CBSA	
9. Louise Wilkinson	PAVS	
10. Chris Hamilton	Llanelli MIND	
11. Lynn Preece	Stroke Association	
12. Sally Richards	Llanelli MIND	
13. Meinir Evans	Menter Gorllewin Sir Gar	
14. Alice Freeman	Leonard Cheshire	
15. Eve Jones	DrMz	
16. Ruth Evans	Guide Dogs Cymru	
17. Jeremy Hewitt	Age Cymru Dyfed	
18. Kathleen Kelly	Local Motion	

1. Welcome & Introductions

Jane welcomed everybody to the meeting, and brief introductions were made.

2. Apologies

Andrew Fewtrell Smith (Carmarthenshire Carers); Abigail Steanson (Burns Pet); Suzanne Samuel (Fusion); Kate Evans (Wool Museum); Judith Collins (Carmarthenshire Counselling); Helen Gough (Scouts Wales); Andrea Edwards (WWAMH); Jo-Anne Zapettis (Age Cymru Dyfed); Leigh George (CCC).

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

These were proposed correct by Meinir of Menter GSG and accepted as such

4. Presentation (addition to Agenda) – Kathleen Kelly, Local Motion

Kathleen Kelly represents a group of 6 philanthropic funders who are joining forces with local people to explore what might be possible if they come together to look at social, economic and environmental change. They want to do something different, try new things, collaborate and learn how funders can better understand local need for change. It is hoped to present the funders with plans for a 10-year commitment, starting with 1 or 2-year learning pilots.

The aim is to work collaboratively, not in competition for funding.

For clarification, this work will cover Carmarthen town only.

See attached document “LM 1page intro” for further details.

5. Presentation – Piers Lunt, Tywi Gateway Trust

The Tywi Gateway Trust was established in 2016 with the aim of restoring the Bishop’s Park, Abergwili. Initially a 3-year grant-funded project to restore the garden and outbuildings.

The community-facing aspect is very important; Volunteering is also a key element of the project’s current and future success. To this end they now have a Volunteer Coordinator in post, and hope to build on their current Volunteering Opportunities.

Most of their volunteers work in horticulture and/or restoration, although they do also have some volunteers researching the history of the site, back to 1282 and even earlier.

“Lockdown” meant that all volunteering was suspended for around 3 months. All events were stopped, and the park was closed.

Facebook and other social media was the main method of keeping in touch with their volunteers and the community at large. Most important for volunteer retention was to create a WhatsApp group, continually keeping them informed, but also bringing the volunteers closer together as a group, albeit virtually – for example, people who normally would have volunteered on different days could now develop a sense of camaraderie not possible previously. This was particularly important because many older or more vulnerable volunteers had to stay away. Communication was therefore key, keeping people “in the loop” so that they are more likely to stay with you. Undoubtedly social distancing is easier to maintain in an outdoor setting, but there are also indoor spaces in use by the project, toilet facilities, for example, which had to change, and which will present their own set of difficulties over the winter months.

New hygiene protocols were put in place, for example around the sharing of tools (to be avoided if possible but disinfected if necessary).

The project have lost 5 out of 20 volunteers – they may return over time if circumstances allow. They are currently developing new ways of working, particularly online, and examining how to increase volunteer engagement moving forward.

6. CAVS News

- Jackie reminded the network of the Telephone Befrienders service, and drew attention to funding available for organisations that run befriending projects. Contact jackie.dorrian@cavs.org.uk for further details.
- Alud spoke of the recent work around volunteer survey along with the new Volunteering Wales subgroup of WCVA.

7. Comfort Break

8. Discussion Slot – Developing Resilience in challenging times

Two “breakout rooms” were created, enabling the Forum to be split into two groups which discussed various topics around developing ways of remaining resilient now and in future. Notes from those “chats” are available. Please note: Time of next main CVON meeting to be confirmed, but also we are likely to call smaller, ad hoc meetings as required, to discuss and disseminate new advice and guidelines as they become available. Meeting details will be sent to all on the mailing list.

9. Presentation- Jamie Horton.

Due to time constraints this was deferred until a future date.

Date & Time of next meeting: 9th March 2021, 10.30am – 12.30pm