



North West Glasgow Voluntary Sector Network SCIO

Annual General Meeting


Wednesday 6th December 2023 at Byres Community Hub, Clarice Pears Building, University of Glasgow

Present: Melanie Farrow, Sandy Busby, Jill Mackay, Anna Dyer, Andrew Mc Courtney, Mark McRitchie, Jason Railton, David Reilly, Lainy Bedingfield, Anthony Coia, Susan Grant, Amy Mills, Laura McMahon, Margaret Elliott, Julie McMillan, Richard McMullen, Robert Alston, Ted Scanlon, Barbara Oliver, Jane Cowie, Mhairi Shepherd, Elaine Torley, Maeve Wightman, Sarah MacNeil

NWGVSN Staff: Martina Johnston-Gray, Lynn Lovelock, Gordon Taylor

Agenda Item	Note	Action
Welcome	Welcome from Martina Johnston-Gray (MJG), Network Manager. MJG thanked members and partners for attending and welcomed everyone to the AGM. Susan Grant from Byres Community Hub welcomed everyone to the venue.	
Apologies	Dougie Taylor, Neil Lovelock, Julie Fox	
Minute of Previous Meeting	Minutes proposed by Barbara Oliver and Melanie Farrow seconded the accuracy of the minutes.	
Chair's Report	Melanie Farrow delivered the Chair's Report. Her report focussed on Post Pandemic Recovery, Resilience and the Cost-of-Living crisis and the Network and members responses to these. Melanie recognised the support the Network offered members all year, through Network Meetings, Cuppa & Catchups, working groups and its programme of capacity building and training for members. She acknowledged the hard work put into the IT project and the recognition it has received and thanked referrers and donators for their support. She also added her thanks to the staff and Martina for their strength and resilience throughout the year. And an additional congratulations to Martina on winning the Women in Charity Award as part of the Circle of Inspiration Awards run by Business Women Connections.	

	<p>Finally Melanie finished by thanking the members, supporters, funders, and fellow Trustees, past and present, for their invaluable support and hard work over the past year.</p>	
Annual Report Highlights	<p>Martina Johnston Gray presented the main highlights from the Annual Report 2022/23, which highlighted a year of “Engagement” for the network which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation and Advocacy The network strengthened its role within decision making structures and supported voluntary sector reps in the Community Planning Area Partnership meetings, where we submit and present the voluntary sector report. We attended 32 in the year and 4 Sector Partnership meetings. • IT Recycling Project, on an extremely limited budget and with the kind donations of members, partners and members of the public, is making a real difference. We are the only project that also gives free internet. We have handed out a total of +1200 IT packages via 62 different referrer organisations. Thanks to staff, volunteers, funders, and referrers for all they do. • Communications & Engagement Subscribers to the newsletter continue to grow +14% to 429. We sent 49 newsletters in the year. Social media channels grew in followers and engagement. • Engagement Our annual report focuses on member engagement and community engagement we have done on behalf of other organisations. We also continued to engage via Cuppa & Catchups, Network Meetings, Working Groups and ward specific projects and meetings. • Glasgow Community Fund 2 Engagement. Thanks to all members, community members and elected members who engaged with the network about GCF2. Because of your feedback, Glasgow City Council are asking to work with us to help develop a fairer GCF3. • Thank Yous were extended to the Board and Chair Melanie for their support. The Reps for their important contribution in representing their wards. Staff members Lynn and Gordon. Sandy and Andrew at Yoker Resource Centre. Funders, supporters and the members for their hard work and support. 	
Financial report	<p>Andrew Mc Courtney summarised the financial report. There were no questions regarding the accounts.</p>	

Appointment of auditors	Alexander Sloane and company were reappointed. Proposed by Mark McRitchie and seconded by Bob Alston.	
AOB	Melanie Farrow announced the network are looking for additional Board Members. Anyone interested can contact her or any of the board.	Contact Melanie at mfarrow@mbht.org.uk
Launch of "Plugged In"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gordon Taylor officially launched the new identity for the network's IT Project. • The named stemmed from a training Course, run by the Network early 2023. We liked the name so much we decided to call the whole project: Plugged In – Everyone deserves to be connected. 	
Austerity Crisis Panel Q & A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four guest speakers, with experience of the effects of the austerity crisis on not only the people they work with, but frontline staff too spoke about their experiences and answered questions from the floor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elaine Torley, Health & Social Care Partnership ○ Lainey Bedingfield, Kingsway Community Connections ○ Laura McMahon Drumchapel CAB ○ David Reilly, The Poverty Alliance • We had very thought-provoking, emotional, and hard-hitting presentations, questions, and discussions on the topic. • David Reilly quoted ??? What is the opposite of Poverty? Justice! • 	
Thanks & Close of AGM	Martina Johnston Gray thanked everyone for attending. Thanked members of the Panel for their contribution to the day and closed the AGM.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the meeting, an attendee who works for SCVO summarised the discussions and his thoughts on networks and connections in the third sector on his social media. • See them on the next page. 	

Summary and Thoughts about the Network and its members' Austerity Crisis impacts from Jason Railton from SCVO:

 **Jason Railton** @jason_railton ...

I was at the @NWGVSN AGM this afternoon and it was an amazing example of the importance of how our sector needs to build strong and connected networks. There was a fantastic panel discussion on the impact of austerity on our services and it's given me some thoughts.

3:56 PM · Dec 6, 2023 · 445 Views

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 **Jason Railton** @jason_railton · 23h ...

1. Our staff are burning out and we're losing talented people. The voluntary sector can't sustain itself when it doesn't prioritise the wellbeing of its most valuable asset: people.

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 **Jason Railton** @jason_railton · 23h ...

2. There is an important conversation to have around governance and capacity building. Boards need to have a greater role in ensuring that the workforce is coping with increasing pressures. We need to review our governance arrangements and modernise them.

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 **Jason Railton** @jason_railton · 23h ...

3. We need to increase the value we place in charity professionals. The expectation that staff should work above and beyond, be underpaid and deal with a constant cycle of crisis and trauma because we are 'passionate' needs to be addressed and binned.

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 **Jason Railton** @jason_railton · 23h ...

4. Vicarious trauma and increasing helplessness in the face of limited resources and weakening social safety nets are fracturing organisations, teams and having a massive impact on individuals and their families. We need to be honest and upfront about how we tackle this.

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 **Jason Railton** @jason_railton · 23h ...

5. The changes we need to make are structural and political - poverty is a political choice. Improving our access to and participation in democracy from the local to the national is absolutely crucial in anti-poverty work.

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 **Jason Railton** @jason_railton · 23h ...

The last point particularly is why @NWGVSN, TSIs, intermediary bodies and advocacy networks are so important in making actual change happen. A really thought provoking and inspiring afternoon.

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