

**Cross Party Group on Volunteering Meeting
Minute
Wednesday 28th March 2018, 1.00pm-2.30pm
Committee Room 5, Scottish Parliament
Convenor: Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP**

Attendees

MSP members of the Group

Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP – Scottish Liberal Democrat Party (Convenor)
Jeremy Balfour MSP - Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (Vice Convenor)
Angela Constance MSP Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities –Scottish National Party
Rachel Hamilton MSP - Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

Non-MSPs Members of the Group:

Paul Okroj – Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, George Thomson – Volunteer Scotland, Margaret Starkie – Volunteer Scotland, John Mullin – Volunteer Scotland, Bernadette Monaghan – Volunteer Glasgow, Sarah Van Putten – Befriending Networks, Paul Wilson – Volunteer Edinburgh, Alex James – Scouts, Carin Patterson – VC Borders, Mike Melvin – ACVO, Natalie Christison – Volunteer Midlothian, Cath Logan – Big Lottery Fund, Keith Wimbles – VAF, Elaine Gibb – VAS, Lidia Dye PKAVS Volunteering Hub, Tina Cameron – Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire, Ruth Bowen – Bield Housing & Care, Gail Phillips – Lead Scotland, Morven MacLean – CHAS, Helen Webster – Scottish Government, Sarah Latto – Shelter Scotland, Melanie Craig – South Lanarkshire Council, Pat Scrutton – Intergenerational National Network, Joanne Rae – Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise, Alexandra Herdman – Office of Graham Simpson MSP, Kirsty MacDonald – Volunteer Centre Western Isles. Louise Bluett – Strive, Catherine Cockburn – Fife Voluntary Action, Justine Mann – The International Voluntary Service, Annabelle Ridley – Citizens Advice Scotland, Joanne Stewart – Breast Cancer Care, Emma Cormack – Citizen’s Advice Scotland, Alan McCrone – Machan Trust, Lorraine Moir – East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action.

Apologies

MSP members of the Group

Pauline McNeil MSP – Scottish Labour Party
Gordon Lindhurst MSP - Scottish National Party
Fulton MacGregor MSP – Scottish National Party
Johann Lamont MSP – Scottish Labour Party

Non-MSPs Members of the Group:

A considerable number of apologies were received for this meeting.

1. Welcome and introductions

Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Cross Party Group on Volunteering and invited introductions.

2. Matters Arising

The convenor highlighted with the Cabinet Secretary attending the meeting there would be opportunity to discuss the decision made by Scottish Government will cease to fund Voluntary Action Scotland from Sept 2018.

3. Minutes of Previous meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to two changes.

Actions from previous meeting:

- Paul Reddish, Project Scotland to present ESV Digital Platform at next CPG – On-going
- Secretariat to arrange presentations from cross sector organisations on ESV - Closed
- The convener with the assistance of the secretariat will send an e-mail to all MSP's regarding the need and topics for future lunchtime seminars – Closed

All actions from the meeting on the 31st January 2018 were ratified.

4. Volunteers Week 2018 Campaign

Margaret Starkie – Volunteer Scotland provided an update on the Volunteers Week 2018 Campaign. The SVF Volunteers Week Sub-group consisting of Volunteer Scotland, Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland, Befriending Networks, Children First, SCVO, VAS and the Scottish Health Council.

This year's campaign sees the first National Campaign in many years with, Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales joining forces in a joint message 'Volunteering for all', this is not only to thank volunteers, promote volunteering highlight the difference it makes but also to highlight that volunteering is inclusive and an reach all areas of society.

The aim is to increase awareness of volunteering predominately through social media and the help of the Volunteers Week Scot partners to recognise volunteering in all its forms.

Volunteer Scotland have re-created the Volunteers Week webpage and created a resource pack with various helpful tips, templates and lots more. The thunderclap was a great success last year with a target of 250 but reaching 350 therefore this year we have increased the target to 500 but need lots of support, if we don't reach 500 it doesn't work!

We will be encouraging MSP's to get involved in their constituencies and take time to volunteer.

www.volunteerscotland.net/volunteers-week-2018

#volunteersweekscot

The next meeting which falls in Volunteers Week will demonstrate the impact of volunteering by hearing from volunteers and their stories.

5. MSP Lunchtime Seminar Update

John Mullin – Volunteer Scotland highlighted a letter had been sent out from the Convener asking MSP's if there were any topics they wished to be discussed over a lunchtime seminar, unfortunately the response was very low.

It was agreed instead of lunchtime seminars the CPG should link into other committees, and forums to highlight issues facing volunteering. Volunteering spans across many topics e.g. sport, health etc. This would be a good way of getting volunteering on various agendas.

George Thomson – Volunteer Scotland suggested looking at 'What works' who have written a good piece on inclusion.

6. **Angela Constance MSP – Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities**

The Cabinet Secretary thanked the CPG for the opportunity to meet and discuss the importance of Volunteering.

Ms Constance highlighted the last time she met with the CPG on Volunteering was at its inaugural meeting and was pleased by the progress made to date and this gave the members the opportunity to provide feedback on how the government are doing as well.

George Thomson – Volunteer Scotland thanked the Government for their long standing commitment to volunteering and that local government who have also played a significant part in encouraging active citizenship seem to have become withdrawn in the third sector and the wider issue of the reduction in the number of volunteers, which is a concern as volunteers have a significant impact on society.

Jeremy Balfour MSP (vice convener) agreed that due to funding cuts there is a difference on who/what local government fund and see as a priority.

Bernadette Monaghan – Volunteer Glasgow asked how do we measure the impact of volunteering, do we actually need more people to volunteer, should be not be capturing more information on the quality of volunteering experiences? How do we support organisations to support volunteers, are we capturing the richness of what is going on if we are only focused on volunteering rates.

The Cabinet secretary agreed we need to capture the value of volunteering a various ways from volunteering rates, to the volunteers experience and motivations to enable us to create a better environment for volunteers and increase participation.

Mike Melvin – ACVO praised Government for ensuring Volunteering was in the Programme for Government for the first time and more effort should be with the Third Sector linking locally with communities planning partnerships and NHS.

Ms Constance commented that volunteering is the bolster that brings many communities together and that volunteering is just as beneficial to the volunteer as to the beneficiary.

Volunteering polices and procedures are developing in Scottish Government and this is being demonstrated with the Scottish Volunteering Forum and other Third Sector organisations working with Government to create a Volunteering Framework. The framework will be to create outcomes to support a long-term strategy.

Using research and evaluation on developing a framework of activity not just making a system to work for those already existing, we want new people to be involved.

Government have invested 3m in the Volunteer Support Fund, and the creation of the National Youth Volunteer Design Team to also strengthen the Governments understanding of volunteering and the impact it has on Scotland's society and for the government to work more directly with TSI's to have a more direct approach to issues.

It's time we shifted the narrative on volunteering, we need to find out different ways to engage with volunteers.

The Cabinet Secretaries comments on challenging the narrative were welcomed and it was highlighted that we can over focus on the formal volunteering roles, but there is so much more out there, such as associational volunteering, helping out etc.

The Cabinet Secretary highlighted it's difficult to quantify as how can you capture simple acts of kindness. We need to understand what builds acts of kindness and connections for people to help, there should be a wider view of social action.

Paul Okroj – CHSS stated we all need to be bold and make differences across societies to change the narrative.

Morven McLean – CHAS highlighted the biggest barrier to volunteering is time, the biggest under represented group are with 28-50 age range this is largely due to family commitments, young children. How can we support this gap within the framework? Should we try and enhance family volunteering, home volunteering...making volunteering future proof?

The Convener commented that the cycle of life can be a barrier to many things, the framework should look at formal and informal volunteering, the use of technology, and societies approach to working.

Ms Constance stated that the research from the Year of Young People 2018 should help understanding of a future proof volunteering strategy.

Alex Cole Hamilton thanked the Cabinet Secretary for taking time out her busy schedule to meet with the CPG and agreed we would continue to work with Govt. on enhancing volunteering.

7. Volunteer Framework – next steps

Helen Webster, Scottish Government reiterated the Minister's comments on working together to create a framework and stated there are 4 pillars of work;

1. Evidence and analysis
Data providing evidence to inform the outcomes. Internal mapping, working alongside the community analytics team to understand how volunteering should be measured.
2. How to develop a framework in communities
Through engagement, young people fund, understanding barriers, getting to the hard to reach disabled, and disadvantaged
3. Infrastructure and innovation
Looking at current structures and making sure they are fit for purpose, sitting alongside innovation what are the newer/different modes of volunteering e.g. ESV.
4. Communications and Engagement
Ask all existing mechanisms to promote volunteering. Engagement through various areas of society.

Helen confirmed there is complete backing across Government to support the framework as well as there being an internal policy group (Govt.), analysis and evaluation team and an external reference group made up of members of SVF and other third sector members, this demonstrates the level of commitment from Government and across the sector.

The ambition is to have this in place by early 2019 and she will seek further support across the sector.

8. Any other business

No other business was discussed.

Date of next meeting is 7th June 2018 (final day of Volunteers Week), photo call in the Garden Lobby 12.25-1.15, Meeting & AGM 1.15-2.30pm, Committee Room 3.

ACTION: The secretariat will link into other committees, and forums to highlight issues facing volunteering and demonstrate a cross working approach to get volunteering on various agendas.