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HOLD THE DATE!

On 9th November CTN is holding a lunch and lecture at York Racecourse. Keep an eye on the news page of www.trusteenet.org.uk for further details

chair focus has been made possible with funding from the Governance Hub



news and opinion from a chair's perspective

Encouraging your board to fundraise

Trustees can make an important contribution to their charity's fundraising. If nothing else, their role allows them to see the bigger picture and bring a new perspective to fundraising plans. However, trustees are often quite intimidated about fundraising, or feel that they don't have enough expertise to do it.

If you are interested in resources on fundraising, including trustees and fundraising, please visit the Institute of Fundraising's website www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk, where you will be able to find a range of resources, including 'The Trustees Guide to Fundraising' which came out on 5 September this year. To find the Guide from the Institute's home page, click on 'Tax effective Giving' then on 'Downloads'.

Questions for trustees to ask about fundraising –

- How can we plan for sustainable fundraising?
- What kind of fundraising is right for us?
- Are we making the most of tax effective giving?
- Is it legal?
- Is it ethical?

There's more than one way to be a chair

A chair doesn't necessarily have to go it alone. This issue we are starting a series of pieces looking at different approaches to sharing out the work of being a chair. Rodney Buse, chair of CTN, tells about his experience of a chair and vice-chair sharing a portfolio of work.

Often, a vice chair's only role is to stand in, in the absence of the chair. However, in my experience there is much to be gained when the chair and vice-chair each have very different skills and experiences, and use these in different areas of the charity as appropriate. In one large charity where I was vice-chair, the chair had skills in policy and the law and the workings of Government, while I had skills in organisational effectiveness and management. In practice, this meant that the chair was largely outward focused while I supported initiatives on quality improvement and business development. We each had our own areas of responsibility, and I think we made a great team. This was to no small degree because the rapport between us was excellent, and I doubt it would have worked so well if that rapport had been absent.

Resources and support for chairs

www.governancehub.org.uk A website on governance for the voluntary and community sector

The Governance Hub has relaunched its website. The new site has a wide

range of helpful resources for chairs and trustees on governance, including an updated section for Chairs and over 200 new entries on the resource finder. There's a new case studies section showing how other organisations have addressed challenges which you may face as a chair, and the Hub will be developing some guidelines for the role of the Vice Chair this autumn.

In the hot seat

Questions put to Jo Grey, Chair of AMEND, the Association for Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia Disorders www.amend.org.uk

What does AMEND do? We support and provide information to patients, families and carers affected by the rare genetic conditions called MEN, where sufferers develop various tumours of a variety of endocrine glands in the body, some cancerous, some occurring in childhood, and others just plain dangerous.

How did you become chair of AMEND? I contacted the original chair back at the start of AMEND's formation in 2001, and, together with my mother, volunteered to help out with the hard graft in order to eventually be able to be in contact with others suffering from our type of the disorder. When the original chair stepped down no-one else seemed keen to take on the role and so, because of the immense 'job satisfaction' I get from working for the charity, I put myself forward and was voted in at the 2006 AGM. Of course, my husband thinks I'm just trying to avoid getting back out into the paid job market!

Is there anything that would make you an even more effective chair? My children and I are big Harry Potter fans and the immediate thing that springs to mind is Hermione Granger's Time-Turner so that I can be in 2 places at once! But back in the real world, just a 'fount of all knowledge' would be great.

What's the biggest challenge you have faced in your role? The first challenge was being contacted by the Charity Commission within weeks of becoming chair to have our trustee recruitment process audited (as part of a random audit of 500 charities). Thankfully with a little deadline negotiation we managed to look at and adjust our processes (which to that point I hadn't had a chance to address) and thereafter complete the audit in time.

The second challenge occurred earlier this year when I had to have surgery to remove and replace a cancerous shoulder bone. I knew that I would be unable to sit at the laptop and type anything for weeks and that I was going to miss one of the biggest medical conferences of the year, as well as an important meeting. The laptop challenge was solved by buying dictation software, although some assumed spellings were quite hilarious. As for the important meeting, I managed to get 'patched in' from my hospital bed. Apparently I was asked a couple of questions half way through the two-hour meeting but had succumbed to the morphine drip by then! It did teach me that the wheels would still turn without me around for a while, and that was quite humbling, as well as reassuring.

What is the major area of work or issue that you are facing now as chair? I'm currently trying to persuade my fellow trustees to sit down together to develop some sort of Strategic Plan. We suffer badly from wide geographic spread (as well as MEN!) and have 3 doctors on the committee – tying everyone down is a nightmare. I am looking for a virtual/USB/MS compatible whip! Until then, I am investigating conference calling.

RESOURCES FOR CHAIRS ON THE GOVERNANCE HUB WEBSITE

- Starting on the Right Track: A Guide to Recruiting and Inducting a New Chair
- Setting up a Network for Chairs
- Organisational Management: Summary guide to leadership, power and change issues
- Trustee Recruitment Toolkit
- National Occupational Standards for Trustees and Management Committee Members

These and many other resources are available on the governance hub's new website www.governancehub.org.uk

KEEP YOUR DETAILS UP TO DATE

If you are no longer a chair or your details have changed, log in to www.trusteenet.org.uk to update your details.

This newsletter is sent to you by CTN

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What do you consider the most satisfying aspect of your role as chair?

Every so often a card drops onto the doormat or I get an email saying 'thank you so much for all your help', and it makes me go all warm and fuzzy, and sometimes even a little tearful!

What tips would you give to a new chair? A lot of the work of a chair is common sense, but a certain amount of learning is necessary. Regular referral to the Charity Commission, NCVO and CTN websites is obligatory. Learn to love making lists and setting deadlines, and follow up on them!

If you weren't a chair/trustee, what would you do with that time? My husband would shout, 'get a paid job!' I really should spend much more time at the gym and the pool to help my physiotherapy along the way, and to generally get fit.

Is there any particular publication, course or resource that you have found helpful and would recommend to other chairs? My favourite publication to date is the NCVOs 'Advice, Information, Support' book. It is very petite book for the price (£15), but it is absolutely packed with 'key resources for small voluntary and community organisations', and is quick and easy to refer to.

To read more about Jo's experience of being in the Hot Seat (as we don't have enough room to print it all here) so please see the accompanying attachment.

Thinking about moving on

Things to think about while you're in post to plan and prepare for when you hand over to a new chair

- How long is the chair's term of office? Can it be renewed?
- Is there a role description for the chair?
- What induction should the chair receive?
- What training should the chair receive?
- What support or advice is available to the chair?
- Who should a new chair talk to to gain a full understanding of the organisation?
- Are there any events or briefings that the chair should attend to understand the wider environment the organisation is operating in?
- What, if any, appraisal process is in place for the chair? How does the chair know that what they are doing is right?

Taken from the Governance Hub's publication *Starting on the Right Track: A Guide to Recruiting and Inducting a New Chair*.

Any other business?

Do let us have your feedback on this e-newsletter by replying to this email. From now on we will continue to send **chair focus** out to you bi-monthly. Let us know if we are getting it right or how we can improve this e-newsletter. We want as much content as possible to be from you and we would really welcome your ideas and submissions.