

chair focus

July 2009

In This Issue

- Keeping right on to the end of the road?
- Does your treasurer know about the Honorary Treasurers' Forum?
- The Good Trustee Guide
- Trustee Review or Appraisal
- Guides published to ease the burden of monitoring requirements on voluntary organisations
- Guardian Charity Awards

Keeping right on to the end of the road? – Chapter 4 – by Ray Collett MBE, Chair of Bolton CVS

The first and most important thing to say is that everything is still going very well! I am of the opinion that this was not luck, but was definitely due to the wisdom of the Board of Trustees in making the right decisions at the right time, thus minimising any possible doubts from the outset.

Meetings with the Chief Officer and the Chair Designate continue, and all questions, doubts, matters for clarification are dealt with immediately, so that my successor has every possible opportunity to raise issues as they occur, and we then deal with those issues immediately.

We have now made decisions as to which interests will continue to be the prime responsibility for the Chair of Bolton CVS, and which can be allocated to other members of the Board. Much of what is currently being covered is self-evidently the role of the Chair of the CVS, (e.g. representation on our Local Strategic Partnership). Some of my other responsibilities, such as the asylum seeker and refugee agenda, will be carried out by another member of the team.

We now have only 3 – 4 months before I step down. I will keep you posted!

Does your treasurer know about the Honorary Treasurers' Forum?

The Honorary Treasurers' Forum was set up to provide a source of information, research and knowledge for the Treasurers of charities large and small. Honorary Treasurers are the unsung heroes of the voluntary sector and they carry out a critical role in the financial and wider management of their charities. The Forum seeks to support them in the very important work they do. It also offers them an opportunity to meet and network with each other.

The Forum holds three meetings a year in central London and these always involve keynote speakers.

For more information, including details of meetings, go to www.treasurersforum.org.uk

Prefer plain text? Email:
membership@trusteenet.org.uk

KEEP YOUR DETAILS UP TO DATE
If you are no longer a trustee or
your details have changed, log in
to www.trusteenet.org.uk to
update your details.

The Good Trustee Guide

If you're looking for one book that will answer lots of your questions about trusteeship *The Good Trustee Guide* published by NCVO is an excellent resource. Recently edited and now presented in a handy reference book format, this book covers a huge range of relevant subjects, including the role of trustees, data, ICT, staff, volunteers, handling change and conflict, developing the board and improving governance.

The book costs £25, which we think is very reasonable for the range of areas it covers, and is available from <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/publication.asp?id=1451> where you can also see a table of contents and download a free sample chapter.

Trustee Review or Appraisal

An extract from *The Good Trustee Guide*, published by NCVO.

An individual assessment is a way for trustees to evaluate their own personal contribution. It could highlight individual strengths and weaknesses, support needs and areas where trustees could use their own skills, experience and interests additionally to benefit the charity. Such an assessment can be carried out via an 'informal review' or a more formal 'appraisal'.

Important are a trustee's own development needs:

- What development needs do I have?
- What kind of support do I need from the board?
- What motivates me in the role?
- What would I like to be done differently?
- What enriches my experience as a trustee?
- How would I like to contribute to the board?

Ideas for carrying out individual trustee reviews

- **Questionnaire** – a simple questionnaire could be sent out to trustees once a year asking for each trustee's comments on their own performance.
- **Review meeting** – a meeting with the chair once a year would allow a trustee to reflect on their experience as a board member. If a more formal appraisal system is to be used then this meeting could refer back to action points set the previous year or at the beginning of their term of office.
- **Code of conduct** – at the basic level all trustees should have a role description and many agree a code of conduct. A review of a trustee's role and contribution can reference to these and provide an opportunity to highlight where issues may have occurred.
- **Appraisal** – some charities now appraise the performance of board members and that of the chair. The approach taken varies. It can take the form of an informal discussion, often between the chair and each trustee. Alternatively, a pre-meeting questionnaire can be drawn up for the trustee to identify their strengths, areas of improvement, support needs and where they would like to develop in

the future. It is important that whoever conducts the appraisal is skilled in giving feedback because of the sometimes sensitive nature of the topic.

Guides published to ease the burden of monitoring requirements on voluntary organisations

Two new guides have been published to help public bodies reduce their monitoring demands on charities.

Intelligent Monitoring and *Principles of Proportionate Monitoring* have been published by the National Audit Office and the Office of the Third Sector respectively.

The publications say that cutting unnecessary red tape would allow third sector organisations to provide services more effectively.

Principles of Proportionate Monitoring is available from the Office of the Third Sector and can be accessed at –

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/216752/principles.pdf>

Intelligent Monitoring is available from the National Audit Office at -

http://www.nao.org.uk/guidance_and_good_practice/toolkits/intelligent_monitoring.aspx

Guardian Charity Awards

There is still time to enter the 17th annual Guardian Charity Awards, sponsored by Media Trust and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). The awards seek to recognise the importance of small to medium sized charities that have been operating for two or more years with an annual income of between £5,000 and £1million. All entries must, also, focus on improving the social well being of the UK, offering an invaluable source for local communities.

To apply for The Guardian Charity Awards 2009 please visit www.guardian.co.uk/charityawards. The closing date for entries is the July 31 and winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in December. The winning charities receive a cheque for £1,000, a new PC donated by Jigsaw Systems, a half-day consultancy support free of charge (including follow-up support for up to six months) courtesy of NCVO's consultancy service and a tailored package of media services from Media Trust.

Chair Focus

Please note that there will be no September issue of Chair Focus. However it will be back in November.

Previous issues of Chair Focus can be accessed at <http://www.trusteenet.org.uk/resources/2041>

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