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Sign us up!

Do you have an e-newsletter which your network members receive? Let us know or sign up Claire Farmer
claire.f@trusteenet.org.uk
 so that we can keep up to date with what you're doing.

And **please** do tell us about your events as we want to publicise as many events for trustees as possible.

Is there anyone else you know who would like to receive this newsletter?

If so, contact Claire Farmer on 01483 230 289 or claire.f@trusteenet.org.uk

News, information and updates for trustee network organisers

Event for Network Organisers (and other interested parties)

Being committed to networking, it makes sense to give Network Organisers the chance to do some networking of your own.

We are running a session on trustee networking and support at the NAVCA national conference this year in Nottingham. There's no need to book just come along at 4:30pm on 16th September (although you do have to book for the conference).

The focus will be on sharing your and our experience of supporting trustees, particularly through networking. Please do get in touch if there are topics you think it would be especially useful for us to cover.

What can CTN do for you?

We may not be able to help you with funding, but there are lots of other things that CTN can do to support trustee networks and their organisers.

- We can, from time to time, provide speakers for trustee events on a range of subjects.
- We can support the trustees in your area – please do let them know about our newsletters (for trustees and for chairs) and our website www.trusteenet.org.uk. Let us know if you'd like hard copies or a pdf version of our leaflet to hand/send out.
- We can advertise (free) on our website any events you run for trustees.
- If you provide us with some information we'll advertise your network and its events on our website and in our e-newsletters.
- Occasionally we will run events to help support network organisers.
- We can help with planning a new network, with facilitating the first session of a new network, with ideas for networks and in reviewing and planning the future of networks.
- We are always happy to talk things over on the phone.
- We produce Network Focus for you – do let us know what you would like to see in it.
- We can put you in touch with other network organisers who have experience and ideas to share with you.

Codes of Conduct for trustees

CTN is doing a project looking at Codes of Conduct for trustees. As part of this we're keen to gain the views and feedback of trustees. Please do get the trustees in your area to comment – more information and an online survey is at www.trusteenet.org.uk/your-voice/surveys/current.

We're also keen to meet with trustees to get their views so if you would

Charity Trustee Networks exists to support trustees, and we consider networks to be one of the key ways of doing this. Please get in touch if there is anything we can do to support you.

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like to host a trustee network meeting in your area (in September or October) that takes the form of a workshop on Codes of Conduct for trustees, please get in touch with Claire Farmer to discuss this further.

Ideas for Networking

Every issue of this newsletter will contain practical ideas for networking exercises and opportunities. Do let us know if you've got any good examples which we can share with other network organisers.

The Good and the Bad

Ask trustees at the meeting to find one or two people they don't know to form a small group. Then ask them to share within the group one good thing which has happened at their charity (or one thing that they've enjoyed about being a trustee). This should create a good buzz of conversation.

Depending on how much time you have, you can stop the networking at this stage (which does create a very positive atmosphere for any subsequent work). However, if you want to encourage more in-depth networking... when the discussion has gone on long enough, ask them to share something that hasn't gone so well.

Afterwards, encourage people to keep in contact/share contact details/talk further about some of the more tricky issues they've talked about.

Case Study – Bromley Trustee Network

Background

Bromley Trustee Network was launched in April 2007, with funding from the National Governance Hub. It was designed to be an opportunity for new and experienced trustees and committee members of local charities and community groups to meet and access information and support.

Since April 2007 the network has met four times to discuss issues, including volunteer management and employment. Community Links Bromley (CLB) organised the network, and also organised evening induction sessions for new trustees and a trustee recruitment campaign. Over 100 new trustees of charities and community groups have attended trustee induction evenings, and over 60 trustee and committee members are registered to receive information about the network and its activities.

A year on it was a good time to take stock and plan the coming year's activities. The funding had come to an end, and planning would also help frame future bids for funding. It was decided to hold a lunchtime planning meeting to which members of the network would be invited.

The Planning Meeting – 22 April 2008

8 trustees from a range of different organisations came to the meeting. The network organiser, Community Links Bromley's Chair and someone from Charity Trustee Network were also there. Prior to the meeting the trustees had been given a short description of its purpose, and on the day they were given a short progress report on the network. Most of the time was allocated to discussion, which was conducted informally over lunch.

The trustees were overwhelmingly positive about the need for support for trustees and networking opportunities for trustees. Some of the issues discussed included–

- The best time for events. There were various views on this, but most agreed with 6/6:30 to 8pm. The importance of having a snack provided at this time was emphasised.

This newsletter is sent to you by CTN

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- The difficulty of putting on events that will attract all trustees – from small and large organisations. People felt that this could not be avoided – and indeed, not all members may wish to attend all events - but could be minimised by careful selection of topics. Also, attendees at meetings could be grouped around tables according to the size of their organisation.
- What the events should be called. It wasn't felt necessary for it to be called a network, so long as there were regular events for trustees and that networking was available at each of these.
- Different formats were discussed eg having an expert come to talk, having workshops, working through case studies. Different people liked different things, but overall they felt there was merit in using different formats for different meetings. Four meetings per year of the network seemed about right, with additional induction evenings for new trustees. It is important to set dates and topics well in advance.
- There was a discussion about how to encourage the 'networking' aspect of the network – ie how the members could support each other. Meetings had been well attended and well received, but their format so far had been based around a speaker, topic and questions with limited opportunity for members to get to know each other. It was felt important that each meeting had a topic and speaker in order to attract participants, and that networking or information sharing could then take place before and after the main topic of the evening.
- There was some interest in setting up an email discussion group, but CLB's experience was that although these are easy to set up they are often not well used. Perhaps this could be revisited once the network is more established?
- Discussion about subjects for future meetings. A wide range of possible topics were discussed and several agreed upon for the next few meetings. These included:
 - Who is responsible for business planning?
 - How to review the role of the board (eg using the Code of Governance)
 - Update from the Charity Commission
 - Finance / tax / insurance (professional firm as speaker?)
 - How to read a set of accounts
 - Codes of conduct for trustees
 - Responsibilities of trustees as employersOne member commented that there was nothing necessarily wrong with repeating topics from one year to the next – some topics, like employment law, are of great importance and are constantly changing.

Outcome

As a result of the successful planning meeting the network organisers -

- were confident that trustees still wanted the network;
- had a clear steer about what trustees wanted from the network;
- had a list of topics that local trustees were interested in and ideas for using different meeting formats;
- a clear plan which they could take to potential funders; and
- had a core of really interested and engaged trustees within the network.

Contact details for Bromley Trustee Network are available at www.trusteenet.org.uk/networks/browse.