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Network organisers event

If you or someone from your organisation are going to the NAVCA conference in Nottingham look out for the Networking for Network Organisers session at 4:30pm on the 16th.

It will be a chance to talk to other people interested in trustee support and networking and share ideas and experiences.

News, information and updates for trustee network organisers

CTN Parliamentary Reception

CTN is publishing a booklet on how to develop and use Codes of Conduct for trustees. This will be launched at a Parliamentary reception on 19 November, from 3 to 5pm, at which Phil Hope MP, the Minister for the Third Sector, will be speaking.

We have 3 places reserved for network organisers to attend this event. It will be first come first served, so if you are able to come along please email Claire Farmer, claire.f@trusteenet.org.uk no later than Friday 19 September. Attendees will also receive a free copy of the booklet.

Following the launch, CTN will be distributing copies of the booklet, and in due course, a PDF version will be available. For more information contact Claire on the email address above.

Ideas for Networks

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

10 heads are better than 1

Prepare a scenario that could arise on any trustee board. It could be one you've made up or a real situation that a member of the network would like help with.

Divide the trustees into groups which are small enough for discussion to be easy but large enough for there to be a range of views and experiences represented. Give each group the scenario and ask them to discuss how they would approach this situation. Be ready to prompt the discussion if necessary with a few questions, but hopefully discussion will flow well, and you'll just have to decide when to stop them.

If you are using a real example (whether current or past), make sure people know at the outset that the discussions are confidential.

Resources for Networks

There are a number of resources available to help with setting up and running networks. The following are all available under 'Networks' on CTN's website at www.trusteenet.org.uk/resources

- How to set up a network
- Setting up a network for chairs
- Making your network a success
- Organising an event for trustees

- Suggested network activities
- What is a trustee network?
- What works and what doesn't

Case Study – Hampshire Trustee Forum

Background

The Hampshire Trustee Forum was formed in 2007 from the amalgamation of two Forums that had been in existence for some time; Hampshire Chairs Forum and Hampshire Finance Forum. Both these forums were reasonably popular and successful, but were not attracting as wide a range of people as the organisers would have liked. The forums had been running for some years and their format was beginning to feel a bit tired. There was a growing consensus among Community Action Hampshire (CAH) and their district CVS partners that the forums needed re-energising.

The Relaunch

A joint decision was made by all partners to relaunch the two Forums as one Forum for all trustees in Hampshire. One of the main aims of the new Forum is to widen its appeal and access to all trustees in the county, rather than limiting it to Chairs or trustees with an interest in finance. The Forum was publicised through the newsletters of the various CVSs involved and a logo was created for it.

The new forum is intended to be self-funding with each attendee paying £7.50 in advance for each meeting. This covers the meeting, a light supper, coffee and administration. Trustees book online or using a form, which is dealt with by staff at CAH. A protocol has been agreed between CAH and the 11 local CVSs, which makes clear where specific areas of responsibility for the Forum lie. As well as doing the administration for the Forum, CAH also writes any copy and organises the publicity work in relation to the Forum. Regular meetings of the Forum are held each year (usually about 3), and may be on the same subject in different parts of the County. It is the responsibility of the relevant local CVS to find and book the venue, organise the caterers and provide staff to attend and support the event itself.

The Forum was relaunched in November 2007 with an event in Emsworth (in the South East of Hampshire). The topic was the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Acts 2006 (as these were a hot topic for trustees), and it was presented by a local solicitors, Blake Laphorn Tarlo Lyons, who provided their services pro bono. 60 to 70 trustees attended this first meeting, which took the form of presentations followed by break-out groups which discussed aspects of the presentation. In general this worked well, but there was an issue of there being trustees from very different sizes and types of organisation within each break-out group, and this was not felt to encourage discussion.

The second meeting was held in the New Forest (in the South West of Hampshire) in February 2008, and was attended by about 40 trustees. The subject was the same, but this time, instead of break-out groups the floor was opened up for questions.

The third and final meeting of the year will be in Basingstoke (in the North of the county) in October. This time the organisers are considering whether it will be possible to have break-out groups again, but to engineer who is in them to make the discussion flow a little more easily.

One thing that has helped the new Forum is the support of the Hampshire

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

Your events

Please do tell us about your network events (and other events for trustees) as we're keen to publicise as many events for trustees as possible.

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.

Claire Farmer, Head of Operations, CTN
01483 239 289
0787 282 3075
claire.f@trusteenet.org.uk

Voluntary Sector Consortium. The Consortium's aims also include supporting trustees, so it has got behind the Forum and has helped to publicise it. Also, feedback from the Forum will be fed into the Hampshire Infrastructure Development Plan which forms the strategy for the Consortium.

The Hampshire Trustee Forum has a page on Community Action Hampshire's website www.action.hants.org.uk/index.php?id=124. This provides general details about the Forum and specific details about forthcoming meetings.

The Future

The relaunch has been successful, and the Forum organisers are now considering possible subjects and presenters for meetings in 2009.

Network Focus Archive

Previous issues of Network Focus are available at www.trusteenet.org.uk/resources/2052

This newsletter is sent to you by CTN

3-4 Frensham Suite, Friary Court 13-21 High Street, Guildford GU1 3DG.

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phone: 01483 230289

website:
www.trusteenet.org.uk

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