Minutes of the Redbridge Voluntary Sector Network – 13 May 2020

# Present

Kate Harrison, One Place East

Susanne Rauprich, Citizens Advice Redbridge

Christine Merritt, Redbridge Forum

Rachel Bywater, VoiceAbility

Andrea Thorogood, Haven House Children’s Hospice

Jon Pushkin, Redbridge Music Lounge

Edith Galliers, Redbridge Council

Sharon Grundy, One Place East

Jo Stuckey, Imagine Independence

Ferzanah Ahmed, Redbridge Council

Annie Robertson, BHR CCGs

John Cooke, Redbridge Council

Sangeeta Sengupta, Brick Lane Circle ?

Meenakshi Sharma, NOISE?

Jenny Ellis, RedbridgeCVS

Colin Wilson, RedbridgeCVS

Shaweb Ahmed, RedbridgeCVS

Ruki Hashi, RedbridgeCVS

Binal Patel, RedbridgeCVS

# Voluntary and Community Groups Updates

All attendees give a short update on what their organisation experiences are and what support they need during the coronavirus pandemic.

# Jenny Ellis, Chief Officer, RedbridgeCVS

Jenny welcomed everyone. Jenny explained that RedbridgeCVS have been working with the council to bring in new services and volunteering pathways, including:

* Continuing to provide information and advice through the website and weekly eNews bulletins.
* Toolkits and resources are available on the website on topics such as safeguarding and volunteering during the pandemic. If you need information on a particular topic, email info@redbridgecvs.net.
* Surveying groups about their day-to-day experiences and needs
* Keeping in contact with as many groups as possible
* Developing a new survey to be sent out in the next few weeks about how best to support groups in the recovery phase.
* Fund raising support to help groups raise emergency funds or long-term sustainable funds. Also support to help groups discuss the situation with their funders.
* Support is available to help groups think through how changes can be made to their working practices during the pandemic.
* Hundreds of volunteers signed up with the Volunteer Centre and over 200 have been referred to local groups and to the council. If your organisation needs volunteers to support your work contact Alice at Alice@Redbridgecvs.net
* The social prescribing team has provided support online and over the phone. They are working proactively with GP's in the borough to seek referrals from people that have been impacted by the pandemic. They are also working to support people that are most at risk, and are launching a six-week befrienders service for essential carers who have been impacted by the pandemic - referrals will be made by the Council’s First Contact team.
* Launched a new directory of community services available during the pandemic. To add you service or suggest changes to an existing entry, contact Colin on colin@redbridgecvs.net

# Edith Galliers, Head of Policy, Equalities and Communities, Redbridge Council

Edith thanked everyone for providing support during these difficult months. She gave an overview of Council services:

* **Wellbeing service:** this was mainly set up for residents who were shielding. This service has extended to anyone who is vulnerable and in need of food parcels, and they provide a pickup of medication when possible. Contact them [online](https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-hub/coronavirus-well-being-service/) or ring 020 8708 5555 if you can’t use the online directory. The phone-based Community Connector role is provided by Vision.
* **Referrals into befriending services:** referrals are provided into befriending services. If you feel someone needs befriending support, contact the wellbeing service.
* **Volunteers:** The Council are using volunteers in new ways, such as creating a community reporter role. They also want to set up Community Researcher role to do soft peer research and understand the lived experiences of residents.
* **New grants:** Small grants pots of £500-£1,000 will be available shortly. Grant will be as accessible as possible and not required match funding.
* **Online discussion tool:** The Councilhas adopted the software the [Scottish government](https://www.ideas.gov.scot/covid-19-a-framework-for-decision-making) used to gather suggestions for their covid strategy so as to share ideas. Edith’s colleague Ferzanah demonstrated the system. [Register here](https://dialogue.redbridge.gov.uk/) to use the tool, and see [here](https://dialogue.redbridge.gov.uk/p56sdg913z) for the voluntary sector group. Email Ferzanah.Ahmed@redbridge.gov.uk with queries or requests for help.
* **Map:** The Council have a [map](https://my.redbridge.gov.uk/map/meals-grocery-delivery) in place to show food outlets that deliver and foodbank locations and could add voluntary groups to this if it was useful.
* **Finances:** Jon from Redbridge Music Lounge mentioned that the group needs to pay rent to the Council but currently has reduced income. Might the Council consider a rent holiday? Edith said she would look into this.

# Shaweb Ahmed, Community Fundraiser, RedbridgeCVS

Shaweb provides support to groups to identify suitable funding opportunities and supports them to apply for those funds. He also helps them manage their work more effectively.

In the last eight weeks funders in London have moved to support communities affected by the pandemic. There is still a need for funds to cover groups’ core activities. Some groups have found funders to be very flexible here, for example making converted restricted funds to unrestricted funds. If you need support negotiating with your funders, contact Shaweb. Shaweb is also looking at the longer-term sustainability of groups in the light of the pandemic.

Shaweb highlighted several grants that groups could take advantage of:

* **London Community Response Fund – Wave Two**Crisis response – grants of up to £10,000 to enable you to meet the immediate needs of communities, from food and essentials, to equipment and additional short-term staff costs
Delivering differently – grants of between £10,000 and £50,000 to enable you to change the way you deliver your work to ensure it continues to meet the needs of your communities, from switching to digital channels to redeploying staff to boost your capacity at a time of increased demand. This grant is being paused 5pm on Tuesday 19th May.
To apply to either fund visit - <https://londoncommunityresponsefund.org.uk/available-funding>
* **Redbridge Safer Neighbour Fund**
Groups can apply for funding of up to £5,000 for one year for projects that aim to prevent or reduce crime through community-led problem solving and/or community engagement initiatives. To apply click [here](https://www.redbridgecvs.net/your-organisation/funding/funding-available-community-led-solutions-neighbourhood-crime#overlay-context=) and the deadline to apply by is the 25th of May 2020.
* **Trust for London, Connecting Communities Fund**Local community groups and organisations based and working in outer London can apply for match funding of up to £10,000. This now includes projects providing support for those affected by Covid-19. The fund will consider supporting projects working to address three priority themes, strengthening voice, advice work and community activities, led by communities, in isolated areas. To apply for this fund click [here](https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funds/connected-communities?utm_source=ncvo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=connected_communities&_cldee=YWxleEByb3NhdWsub3Jn&recipientid=contact-e825d6e224e7e811a958000d3ab6dc82-ef9184aee2a548c1951c673a6d7f1c15&utm_source=Clic)

Shaweb can provide guidance, advice and support – email him on shaweb@redbridgecvs.net

# Colin Wilson, Information Officer, RedbridgeCVS

Colin commented that some groups are finding it difficult to function at all in the pandemic, while others have moved most or all of their services online. RedbridgeCVS has provided guidance to basic techniques like telephone trees and also the use of technology like Zoom. RedbridgeCVS can help groups develop Facebook pages and websites, and wants to look at how else it can help with technology. You can contact him at colin@redbridgecvs.net

# Other Business

* **NHS Feedback**
If you have any feedback about any health services that you know or have heard about Annie would appreciate hearing from you by email on annie.robertson1@nhs.net
* **Future Meetings**It was agreed the meetings would be continued and held every two weeks. If there are any suggestions on topics that groups would like to speak about in further meeting please contact Colin on Colin@redbridgecvs.net