**Minutes of the Redbridge Voluntary Sector Network – 10th June 2020**

**Present**:

Susanne Rauprich, Citizens Advice Redbridge

Rachel Bywater, VoiceAbility

Andrea Thorogood, Haven House Children’s Hospice

Jon Pushkin, Redbridge Music Lounge

Sharon Grundy, One Place East

Jo Stuckey, Imagine Independence

John Cooke, Redbridge Council

Meenakshi Sharma, NOISE

Alan Jaye, [Ilford & District Indoor Bowls Club](https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/01793193)

Anneke Elwes, HostNation

Linval Walker- POhWER

Karen Kent, Redbridge Faith Forum

Janet West, Age Uk

Liz, Anxiety Care UK

Kate Stewart, Redbridge Carers Support Service

Bushra Tahir, Awaaz

Ghazala Navaid, Awaaz/ Muslim Women’s Advisory Council

Diana Neslen, Redbridge Equalities Community Council

Colin Wilson, RedbridgeCVS

Shaweb Ahmed, RedbridgeCVS

Swati Vyas, RedbridgeCVS

Ruki Hashi, RedbridgeCVS

Binal Patel, RedbridgeCVS

**Voluntary and Community Groups**

Attendees of the meeting one after another introduced themselves to the group.

**Swati Vyas, Head of Health and Wellbeing, RedbridgeCVS**

Swati greeted everyone and gave an overview of the health projects run at RedbridgeCVS. These health promotion projects and disease prevention programmes involve providing outreach in the community and raising awareness on health issues such as HIV, Tuberculosis and Cancer. As well an exercise programme called Fit For Fun is offered to local community groups and they also run a Social Prescribing Service. The service supports local residents over the age of 18, that are affected by either; type 2 diabetes, social isolation, low level mental health, or for residents that are carers.

RedbridgeCVS have continued to deliver their health services during covid-19 pandemic through:

* Online services are being offered and they are planning to have webinars and zoom meetings with members in local community organisations. Their team of health and wellbeing buddies who are local residents will be in these sessions providing key messages on a range of health conditions.
* Through existing networks and online forums they are asking community and faith groups thinking about resuming their services virtually for a slot of 10 minutes to 15 minutes of their time. This is to start reengaging with the local community. (Swati would like you to contact Colin by email on colin@redbridgecvs.net if your group is holding any virtual meetings where it is possible to speak with your groups members.)
* Their Social Prescribing Team have continued to provide one to one support virtually to their clients. The team are taking on new referrals through GPs and are contacting clients they have identified as vulnerable and previous clients whose cases were closed to check in on them during the pandemic.

**Shaweb Ahmed, Community Fundraiser, RedbridgeCVS**

Shaweb greets the group and explains his work revolves around supporting local groups with fundraising by identifying suitable funding opportunities and assisting them with the application process. Shaweb mentions Grants Online have conducted research on the latest funding trends which shows funders are adapting existing funding streams to address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. They are recognising the difficulties faced by groups and are making changes such as adopting a more flexible approach to monitoring delivery outputs, extending their application deadlines and adapting on many other aspects.

The following funding opportunities are shared with the group:

**Redbridge Social Action Fund**

Grant to support not for profit groups working with those affected by the Covid-19 Crisis in Redbridge. An initial funding pot of £10,000 is being made available, with a maximum award from this pot for any one applicant of £1,000.

Applications are assessed fortnightly and to make an application or for further information click [here](https://engagement.redbridge.gov.uk/strategy/redbridge-social-action-fund/).

**Coronavirus Community Support Fund**

A new £200m fund aimed at small to medium organisations:

* To increase community support to vulnerable people affected by the Covid-19 crisis, through the work of civil society organisations.
* To reduce temporary closures of essential charities and social enterprises, ensuring services for vulnerable people impacted by Covid-19 have the financial resources to operate, and so reduce the burden on public services.

Grant of between £300 - £100,000 are available. For full details visit the [National Lottery Community Funds website](https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/covid-19/learn-about-applying-for-emergency-funding-in-england).

**London Community Response**

The second wave of London Community Response funding is currently paused for Delivering Differently. Wave 3 will open in early June and wave 4 will focus on recovery later in the year.

* Crisis response (from wave 2 is currently open) – grants up to £10,000 are available to meet the immediate needs of Londoners.

To view the latest grants available or for more information click [here.](https://londoncommunityresponsefund.org.uk/available-funding)

**Independent Age Grants**

This funding is specifically aimed at organisations that are working with older people in one or both of the two priority areas below:

* Older people living in particularly complex and challenging situations
* Older people in danger of being out of sight and out of mind

Grants of up to £15,000 are available and the deadline to apply is by 2nd July 2020 through their [website](http://www.independentage.org/community/grants-fund).

**Foyle Foundation – Small Grants**

The Small Grants Scheme supports smaller, grass-roots and local charities in the UK with projects that have the potential to make a significant difference to their work.

* One-year grants to cover core costs or essential equipment, to enable ongoing service provision, homeworking, or delivery of online digital services.
* Priority to support local charities still active in communities and currently delivering services to the young, vulnerable, elderly, disadvantaged or the general community either directly or through online support.

Grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 are available for 12 months. For more information or to apply visit their [website.](http://www.foylefoundation.org.uk/small-grants-scheme/)

To get support, guidance and assistance with funding or to discuss any financial concerns and see how RedbridgeCVS might be able to support your group email Shaweb on Shaweb@redbridgecvs.net.

**Voluntary and Community Groups Thoughts on Reopening their Work Premises**

Colin asked the group if they had any thoughts or plans to return back to their work premise or if they required any support to allow them to do so. Some groups mentioned the difficulties and challenges such as for those working in smaller offices where implementing social distancing may not be possible due to the lack of space available. Others explained how they were adapting their services and whether they were still able to function well remotely. For most groups they are still not considering going back to their office completely just yet and will continue providing majorly of their services remotely for the time being.

For those groups who are looking at returning back to their work premise the [governments guidelines](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres) are a good place to start to understand the factors groups need to consider. Colin mentioned he will produced a summary document based on the guidance to help groups get a brief idea of issues they need to consider to return back to their office safely.

A survey was agreed by the group to be sent out by Colin to get a better picture of what the needs of groups were in terms of the support, funding and other challenges they were faced with. With this information RedbridgeCVS would liaise with the council to see how they can assist groups more effectively.

Any group that have questions for the council on the Redbridge Social Action Fund, job roles of operational staff in the council, information on when plans are for resuming LBR day centres, advice/support that could be offered to address office space challenges or have any concerns about groups rent paid to the council during the pandemic can email John on john.cooke@redbridge.gov.uk.