Third Sector Strategy Group Forum (TSSG)

Thursday November 21st \*Hybrid\* Generate Room

Present

Louise Crozier (CAB) Carole (Linlithgow CDT) Helen Davis (WLYAP)

Collete Moran School Bank Mark Vance (WLDAS) Tracy Kerr (VSGWL)

Hayley Burton (Xcite) Stuart Barrie (VSGWL) Alan McCloskey (VSGWL)

Neil Barnes (WLCAN) Simon Henderson (Play Works) Gareth (BUSC)

David McDonald (Whitburn CDT)

Apologies: Kerry Taylor (WLC), Simon Henderson (Play Works), Angela Moohan (The Larder), Tracy Murdoch (Kidzeco)

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

Raymond opened his last meeting as chair.

1. **Agency Presentation: Marcia (Health in Mind)**

Marcia has sent apologies as unwell. Will reschedule for 2025.

1. **Action note from previous meeting, actions and matters arising:** Oct 3rd – nothing raised.
2. **Election of new chair TSSG forum**

Louise said she would be happy to take on the role, there were no other nominations or objections. Raymond and Louise will meet for a handover and Alan provided reassurance on Gateway support. Raymond said important to have independent chairperson and for it not to fall to Gateway as potentially conflict of interest.

1. **Council / Sector working group updates and discussion on ideas / plans**

Alan fedback about the meeting last week which had a strong representation from Third Sector. They continue to press for strategic representation within working group as provides opportunity to shape council policy. Started talking about next year’s annual report already and keen to make sure Council understands how the third sector works and operates. There was collective resistance to report back to PDSP in April as it has not been a year. Looking for 7 case studies to bring to each PDSP.

Community planning partnership was cancelled last minute and not rescheduled so didn’t have opportunity to present. Invited to meeting Dec 2nd however clashes with VSGWL AGM so now have slot March 10th and will provide feedback to TSSG forum after.

Council agreed multiyear funding – this is the final year of that arrangement. Guidance will go out 1st Monday in January.

1. **VSGWL report**

* Lothian TSI’s have sent letter to MSP’s re National Insurance increases as could cost charities £75million pounds – an unexpected, significant expenditure. Await Scottish budget December 4th. Continuing to work with SCVO on this also.
* £8million deficit announced at Council executive meeting. Contingency and emergency measures inc staff recruitment freeze now in place along with rationalisation of services and programmes.
* Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund closed to applications October 31st. Panel have started looking at the 79 applications received - £1,228,270.19 applied for**.** Emails will be sent in December and money will be paid in February.
* Community Centre update. Gateway has highlighted information in public domain regarding community concerns. Alan and Stuart have met with officials who will keep them updated. They are engaging with the management committees of the 31 community centres in WL.
* Still collating Stakeholder responses to survey – thank you.
* Website frequently updated, check out our resource panel!

1. **Service locator website (feedback)**

Tracy shared slides explaining why the Service Locator needs improved and who has been involved. Really appreciated feedback from focus group. Tracy showed the pilot new system as it stands just now with support from BDS. Any information which needs updated can be done easily and quickly using a form. Gateway also have a Volunteer resource from St Kents on a Tuesday afternoon who can support orgs by inputting data.

We are keen to create a usable directory for everyone. Will be contacting members first for up-to-date information. Joining is free, please speak to Tracy. New service will be up and running from April.

Raymond wondered was there an opportunity to add links to external websites rather than fill out loads of information. Tracy said that links can be added in organisational description field. We could possibly ask BDS to add a field for links. Any set criteria what organisations can be added e.g. businesses - initially third sector organisations. Perhaps further development in the future once established. Orgs can’t login and update it themselves at the moment, but they can complete form anytime and it will automatically update the website.

1. **Forum / Sector updates**
2. PDSP reps updates / feedback

Stuart spoke about his recent experiences as new rep including reflection on how to better help the sector. Policy Development Scrutiny Panels are a group of people, mostly council officers, and third sector members who go through (scrutinise) developmental policies. Invites input. Influential. Important platform to have voice and connect with officials. West Lothian Council have a You Tube channel where council meetings are broadcast as a matter of public record. Calendar of meetings and all papers are on COINS.

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/calendar.asp>

Reps gather opinions to amplify the voice of the sector and therefore need your support! Part of the meeting is for comments, part for questions. First part is to improve this section of our website. Second part is to publicise. Stuart then showed the website and advised content being refreshed all the time and showed the PDSP section. Trying to make it as easy as possible for the sector.

[Policy Development Scrutiny Panels (PDSP) - Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian](https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/working-together/policy-development-scrutiny-panels-pdsp/)

Carole spoke about her PDSP experience and wondered how does rep input influence council policy? Would like to evidence of impact. Reps don’t get feedback about any comment or question they have raised, reports are just accepted. Raymond said it took him 18months to get head round protocols and advised that after a report is given, ask for update, can ask for things to come back again – it then goes on future workplan and will come up again on future agenda. Alan said that PDSP’s are recommendations not decisions – reports go to Council executive where things are then discussed.

1. WL Food Network

Trustees meeting yesterday rescheduled to Tuesday afternoon, full network meeting next week.

1. Children and Families

December 17th – Hybrid with Christmas treats. October meeting featured Tackling Child Poverty presentation, Firefly guest speaker next month. Spoke about lack of attendance however positive feedback received on forum purpose. Helen happy to continue chairing and equally happy to accept nominations.

1. Employability forum

Next meeting mid-December. George Scott is LEP chair and Alan has been recently elected as co-chair thus adding a third sector voice. If you are involved in employability, please get in touch. During a recent strategy day, chaired by Alan, the partners and council were encouraged to play an active role going forward. Self-assessment completed and work in progress. Two new organisations working in West Lothian - Routes to work and impact arts.

1. WL Volunteer Network

Met online last week and continued to be good networking opportunity. Due to the council deficit the money available for a volunteer celebration may be withdrawn as non-essential spending. It is hoped that a celebration, even on a small scale, will go ahead. Volunteer Fayre Bathgate partnership centre Monday Jan 20th 12.30-3.30pm in the hall – get in touch with Victoria if you would like a stall. Next meeting is festive get together in person at The Gateway.

1. Community race forum

Tracy said there is one in 2 weeks, hasn’t attended recently. Alan suggested inviting MD to next TSSG to give update.

1. Social Enterprise network / forum

Continuing dialogue with WLSEN – likely will create Social enterprise forum within WL.

1. WL Climate Action Network

Events – 30 over the winter month, focusing on energy and affordable heating. Youth climate café coming up with WLYAP. Keen to reach out to everyone. Fuel poverty is a real concern, especially with withdrawal of winter fuel payment. Want to hear people’s stories of climate change – please get in touch with Neil.

Good feedback from members recently. Annual gathering Feb 21st Howden Park - thematic stalls and exhibition. Open to public potentially in the afternoon. Please sign up!

Waiting for results of Council climate survey. This will help shape priorities over the coming months. Business case gone to government for continued funding.

1. Older people’s provider - meets next week.
2. Any others?

* CDT forum – Claire Stewart providing admin support. Impartial. Growing network in WL.
* ARC shop closing, building has been sold.

1. AOCB
2. VSGWL AGM – December 2nd 11am online and at The Gateway. Refreshments.
3. Christmas Networking – open invitation to all – Wednesday December 18th 3-5pm.
4. Social Enterprise support – Following robust recruitment exercise an agreed contract of 1 day per week with CIVITAS has been awarded. This will be led by Raymond Branton.
5. School bank – secured funding of 8k for camp clothing. Will be taking referrals from 17 Schools in areas of deprivation. Packs cost £90 and include e.g walking shoes, waterproofs, sleeping bags. Bridgend – camp was out of reach for many families in the area however they are now are able to offer this to senior pupils. Could accept donations which are almost new quality.
6. Tracy spoke about a webinar she was into day with Michelle about idox WL funding. Email Tracy for the recording link. [Home | West Lothian 4 Community](https://funding.idoxopen4community.co.uk/westlothian)
7. Tracy attending lunchtime webinar next week for In Kind directory – email Tracy for the teams link. They provide items to third sector orgs at reduced rate.

Alan formally thanked Raymond for his support and drive to TSSG forum in the last few years.

1. Next meeting details: 30 January 1pm Hybrid at the Gateway
2. Victoria to email MD and invite - completed
3. Victoria to reschedule guest speaker Marcia – completed

A screenshot of a web page

Description automatically generatedA screenshot of a white text

Description automatically generated

A group of people with a blue background

Description automatically generatedA blue and white cover with cartoon characters

Description automatically generated

A screenshot of a website

Description automatically generatedA screenshot of a website

Description automatically generated

A map of the world

Description automatically generatedA screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

A question mark made out of colorful circles

Description automatically generated