**ICNC Minutes 14th November 2012**

**In attendence:**

Ruth Hayes Advice Network

Mike Sherriff Voluntary Action Islington (Chair)

Colin Adams Octopus Community Centres

Marta Aparicio Voluntary Action Islington (Minutes)

Mark Brennan Homelessness Network

Katy Fattuhi Creative Islington

Rob Hamilton Older People’s Network

Chris Taylor Voluntary Action Islington

Phil Watson Voluntary Sector Health Network

**Apologies:**

Anita Grant Islington Play Association / Children and Young People’s Voluntary Sector Forum

Toufik Kacimi Faiths Forum

Nigel Gansell Pensioners' Forum

Rahel Geffen Islington Disability Network

John MacKinnon Sport Islington

Jonathan Barnes Mildmay Community Partnership

**1. Previous minutes and matters arising**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

**2. ‘Here To’ volunteering project: Jonathan Gibbs/ Jenny Lowthrop**

JL gave a presentation on the forthcoming Here To website.

**3. ICN Update – Project Officer changes; publicising ICN & members – contact details on website**

Chris Taylor is the new project officer for the ICN. He has been working mainly on the Voluntary Sector Conference. The publication of contact details for ICN members was discussed. It was decided that contact details should be on the website for other organisations to access.

**4. Forums feedback**

CA – Is looking at how to provide support to small community groups in budget and finance support. And in the next month will look at the welfare reform benefit changes maybe with workshops to train/engage residents. The issue of how ‘hubs’ connect or communicate with the community or with other organisations was raised. It was suggested that this matter be brought up at the VCS conference.

PW - will attend a meeting with the Integrated Care Board shortly. A draft strategy for the Health and Well Being Board has been circulated.

Islington LINk will become HealthWatch at the end of March 2013 taking on some additional functions particularly in terms of signposting of services, health and adult social care and an expanded role in terms of childrens’ social services. Emma Whitby is going to come to the next meeting.

R.Hamilton – Has been working to try and map the area in terms of provision for old peoples’ needs. More and more groups are small and volunteer led. Is working with hubs to appoint Older Persons’ Champions for each ward, and improve support for network, and information sharing.

KF – Meeting at Kings Place is planned to discuss cultural/creative events taking place in Kings Cross area (eg. Callyfest). There has been a lot of interest in this, and it is already oversubscribed. How can creative sector provide opportunities and make links with local communities. Workshops planned to target young people in the area.

MB – No second night out hub in Islington is being rolled out across London, targetting those who are new to the streets. A lot is being done in the voluntary sector in this area, involving cross-organisation cooperation. Church Shelter network to be used as Staging Post accommodation if this can be arranged.

MS – The VAI AGM was well attended. The new Children Support Service was launched in September. VAI sponsored the Camden and Islington Business Awards. Rowan Arts was the charity of the year. United Way is a London Wide initiative, the focus of which is tackling youth unemployment. This is an American model that brings together business, statutory bodies and voluntary sector to mobilise resources of companies to back community priorities and needs. MS will relate updates about this project.

R. Hayes – The Advice Network to focus on clarifying Welfare Reform, which is not fully understood by those on benefits, who will be seriously affected. The Council’s debt coalition has new centralised help line staffed by CAB, to make best use of resources for those in greatest need. Jeremy Corbyn has raised issue of private sector tenancies. Private tenants are often in need of advice because of high rents, arrears and unscrupulous landlords but advice is not sufficiently targetted towards them. Legal Aid provision is dwindling in the borough as providers find it increasingly financially difficult to keep their businesses located in Islington. A campaign is needed, via social media and elsewhere, to publicise implications of welfare reform. The next round table meeting in January will address this issue, and items for the agenda should be fed to CT.

**5. Community Chest update: Rob Hamilton**

Football projects are not a funding priority for the Community Chest Fund, as this activity is available in many places in the borough. Applications for sports projects will be accepted as long as they can demonstrate they are addressing a specific community need.

RH distributed and talked through a document providing a breakdown of funding allocation so far. The deadline for applications for the final round of funding in 2012/13 will be Wednesday the 5th of December. Applications from groups with less than £50,000 turnover are favoured, though all applications are considered.

**6. Feedback on VCS – Council Roundtable meetings: Youth unemployment**

Key points for the VCS from the meeting were:

* The relationship between young people and JCP could be improved if they worked with the voluntary sector to engage with individuals and families.
* Voluntary sector organisations can provide work experience and volunteering opportunities but organisations often lack the financial resources that this requires.
* More partnership work/ communication between the voluntary sector and Jobcentre Plus was welcomed. A working group to improve communication was suggested.
* There is no funding available to help organisations provide work experience and volunteer opportunities. There may be scope for creativity within the Flexible Support Fund. A small collective bid that was clearly linked to employment was suggested. This would need to be for ‘new’ activity i.e. not currently being provided.
* There are opportunities available to the sector through external funding (not Work Programme) to develop more creative ways to engage young people.
* Links with youth services could be improved as it provides very positive role models. Linking employment support and opportunities to youth services more consistently would be beneficial.
* Enable young people to develop learning from different people and in different environments. Focus provision for young people with opportunities to gain broader experience across a range of sectors (creative, sport, caring etc.). The VCS is well placed to offer this variety.

The relevant action for the VCS was:

* Work with youth services to develop the link with employment support and opportunities for young people.

**7. Voluntary Sector Conference**

Brief information needed in advance of the conference about networks and their activities.

Note-taking and facilitating volunteers are needed and should notify CT of their availability.

If members are interested in setting up an information stall for their networks they should let CT know.

**8. ICN Membership**

The membership renewal process has concluded and some networks are no longer members.

Childcare Trust is back in existence and may be interested in being involved.

**9. AOB**

Date of next meeting: 16th January 2013, 10 – 12am, Voluntary Action Islington.