

**MINUTES OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY SEVENTH MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY
RELATIONS COUNCIL BOARD HELD ON MONDAY 21st AUGUST 2023 2:00PM
HELD IN CRC'S OFFICE**

3912/23 **Present:** Mr M McDonald (Chair), Ms S McClelland (Board Member), Mr M McDonnell (Board Member), Mr R Campbell (Board Member), Mr J McCallister (Board Member).) Ms M Braniff (Board Member)

3913/23 **In Attendance:** Dr J Irwin (CEO), Mr P Day (Engagement Director), Ms U Kelly (DFAP Director), Ms J Adamson (Human Resources Manager), Mr D McNally (Core Fund Evaluation Officer) Ms H George (EA to CEO and Board).

3914/23 **Apologies:** Ms N Tandon (Board Member), Ms A Simpson (Board Member), Ms C Harris (Board Member)

3915/23 **Standard Checks**

- (a) *Members should declare any conflict of interests in any discussions where decisions were required.*
- (b) *Members need to register any offers of gifts or hospitality since the last Council meeting*

None declared.

3916/23 **Minutes**

Members reviewed the minutes of the 236th meeting of the Board which took place on 19th May 2023. The Board approved these minutes.

3917/23 **Matters Arising**

The Chair presented the Board with the matters arising paper, setting out actions which emerged in previous meetings.

The Chair informed the Board that all Appraisals have now been received. This action will now be marked as complete.

The second action relates to the recruitment of a new Funding and Development Director. An update will be provided on this later in the meeting.

The Board noted this paper.

3918/23 **Correspondence**

The CEO presented the Board with correspondence received in July 2023 from three groups working on a proposal for Peace Plus Funding.

The CEO took the Board through the proposal, highlighting the background, timings, and concept note.

The Board considered the structure, finance, timeframe, and governance of the project and CRC's involvement.

The Board agreed that it was an interesting project, which targets rural areas which are in need of this kind of project. They stated that more information was needed before a decision could be made. The Board requested that the Chair and CEO meet with The Executive Office to seek further advice on the proposal and to also get some background information from the local Council Good Relations Officer in the area. An update will be brought to the upcoming Board meeting in September for decision.

The Board noted that should the application go forward with CRC involved it would need greater detail around the risk associated with the project, and an updated timeline.

ACTION: CEO and Chair to request a meeting with TEO to discuss the proposal
ACTION: CRC to speak to the local Council Good Relations Officer regarding the proposal.

3919/23

Chair's Update

i) Boardroom Apprentice Scheme

The Chair informed the Board that DoF will be running the Boardroom Apprentice Scheme in 2023/24. It was agreed that CRC would participate again this year.

The Chair asked a member to volunteer to act as 'Apprentice Buddy' during their time on the Board. Mr R Campbell agreed to take on this role.

The Board discussed what the success rate of the scheme is, and the Chair said he would speak to Eileen Mullan (Board Room Apprentice Scheme) to seek statistics on how successful past participants have been in getting positions on Boards.

ACTION: Chair to seek details on success of the Boardroom Apprentice Scheme.

ii) Recruitment of Funding and Development Director

Ms J Adamson updated the Board on the timeline for recruiting a new Funding and Development Director.

The Job Description and Personal Specification were approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee in July 2023. The advertisements would be placed on online sources on Friday 25th August.

The CEO and Chair will sit on the selection and interview panel when the job closes to application on 11th September.

Ms J Adamson asked a Board member to volunteer to sit on the recruitment panel. Ms S McClelland volunteered and Ms M Braniff offered to act as a reserve.

Ms J Adamson will be in touch with recruitment panel members once the job has closed to applications.

The Board thanked Ms J Adamson for this update.

3920/23

Section 75 Report

The CEO presented the Board with CRC's Section 75 Report for 2022/23.

She highlighted areas where the report had changed from last year. These included the list of organisations and networks, the financial section and the update on policy screening and EQIAs. In relation to policy screening she noted the update relating to the implementation of the Agile Working Policy. Following review this policy was screened out. Evidence from the period in which it has been operating suggests that it has enhanced CRC's Section 75 credentials.

The Board reviewed and approved the report for submission to ECNI.

ACTION: Report to be submitted to ECNI by deadline of 31st August.

3921/23

Core Funding Strategy 2024/25

Mr D McNally explained that at this time of year the funding team review the core scheme, map the work out geographically and by topic, and identify the gaps. This is the first stage of a bigger process. CRC plan to take this analysis to a meeting with The Executive Office later this week.

Mr D McNally presented the Board with a paper including a summary and analysis of activities supported by the Core Fund in 2022-23. This analysis will inform the Board's decision on the 2024/25 Welcome Statements.

CRC's Core Fund awarded £1,381,520 to 31 groups in 2022/23 and supported 68 posts. 104 projects were enabled because of this funding, impacting 507 communities across Northern Ireland, with 36,000 participants reached.

Mr D McNally informed the Board that there has been an increase in activity in some areas during the 2022/23 funding period. He presented the Board

with a number of charts highlighting the geographical areas that the fund reaches, and compared those with the areas contained in the 2022/23 Welcome Statements.

The Board then reviewed some published statistics which may help inform the direction of the 2024/25 Core Fund Welcome Statements.

Mr D McNally then presented the Board with some issues that groups raised during a series of check-in meetings that he and Ms D O'Loan held recently. Issues raised include: the impact of the debate around the Protocol; cost of living; succession planning; the role of the churches; good relations and deprivation; and good relations from a global perspective.

Board members then discussed the issues raised along with the statistics presented by Mr D McNally and agreed a number of themes that should be contained in the 2024/25 Core Fund 'Welcome Statements'. They proposed that 'develop new generation of practitioners', 'Good Relations in relation to sustainability, the environment, and poverty', 'good relations in relation to the changing nature of communities', and 'good relations in relation to hotspot areas and areas not/less engaged' should be part of the 'Welcome Statement' themes.

The Board discussed the need for a funding stream for emerging groups working on good relations. CEO and the Chair will continue to raise this idea with The Executive Office

Mr D McNally then presented the Board with a draft reporting template to be completed by Core Funded groups. This template allows groups to categorise any issues affecting their networks and project participants, in terms of good relations and everyday issues. It was suggested that this report should gather information about the number of projects and end beneficiaries "enabled" by Core Fund to avoid the risk of double counting in relation to project funds.

The CEO informed the Board that the meeting with TEO this week will discuss evaluation methods, what information should be collected, how to collect more qualitative data as well as quantitative, and how to get a better understanding of the experience of end beneficiaries rather than the statistics of the number of projects supported. She also noted that Mr D McNally will be collecting important pieces of published research throughout the year that may be of interest to Board members. If Board members would like to be added to the mailing list that received these papers, please let Ms H George know.

ACTION: Board members to inform Ms H George if they would like to receive Mr D McNally's emails on relevant research publications.

3922/23

Good Relations Week Update

Mr P Day presented the Board with an update on the planning of Good Relations Week 2023.

Mr P Day thanked Board members for attending the Good Relations launch photocall.

A number of District Council Good Relations Week photocalls will be taking place over the next few weeks. This list will be circulated to Board members tomorrow.

CRC have commissioned a local comedian and keen supporter of Good Relations work to conduct some social media work and host events during the week.

There are currently 60 events registered, which is similar to this time last year. There will be another push to register events in the last week of August.

The Chair reminded attendees that a suggestion coming out of the Core Funding check-in meetings, details of which Mr D McNally presented at today's meeting, included asking CRC Board members to engage with Core Funded groups events and Engagement Forums, to learn more about the work being done. The Chair asked that Board members attend Good Relations Week events, Engagement Forums and Shared Learning Forums when they can. Ms H George will circulate details of these events to members.

ACTION: Board members to attend events hosted by Core groups, Engagement Forums, and Shared Learning Forums when they can. Ms H George will circulate details of these events to members.

3923/23

Any Other Business

None

3924/23

Date of Next meeting

Friday 15th September 10:30am – Boardroom, 6th Floor Equality House