Note of the meeting

Scottish Third Sector Research Forum

16 July 2015, 1.00 pm

Robertson House, 152 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4TB

<u>Present</u>

Steven Marwick (ESS) (Chair)
Joanna McLaughlin (Minutes) (TRT)
Patty Lozano-Casal (ESS)
Jane Marryat (ESS)
Jacqueline Rae (SG)
Mark Meiklejohn (SG)
Carolyn Sawers (BIG)
Duncan Thorp (SES)
Cassy Rutherford (VAS)
Ilse MacKinnon (SCVO)
Sophie Flemig (UoE)
Mark McGeachie (JIT)
Louise Meikleham (OSCR)
Chris Harkins (GCPH)
Andy Dey (ACOSVO)
Gemma Jackson (VS)
Vivien Moffatt (IRISS)

<u>Apologies</u>

Alasdair Rutherford (UoS)
Stephen Osborne (UoE)
Claire Stevens (VHS)
Alan McGinley (VHS)
Jonathan Coburn (SVL)
Anne MacDonald (HIENT)
Rob Coward (NES)
Helen Allbutt (NES)
Helen Harper (VS)
Gareth Allen (SG)
Ruchir Shah (SCVO)

<u>Welcome and introductions</u>

Steven welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions around the table followed. Steven ran through the agenda.

Steven noted that Jo would be leaving The Robertson Trust at the end of July and thanked her for her huge contribution to the Forum and for helping the Forum be in a good form.

Minutes and matters arising

The **minutes** of the previous meeting (13 March 2015) were approved, with the following amendment – Sophie did not Chair the last meeting - and updates were given on the actions.

Action: Patty to edit the minutes and upload them onto the website.

Patty handed out revised copies of the infographic to the Forum, which everyone approved without changes.

Action: Patty to finalise infographic, circulate it to the Forum and add it to the Forum's webpages.

Steven noted that the secretariat had reviewed the remit of the Forum and that it is still fit for purpose.

Steven reminded all Forum members to complete the skills matrix. The Forum will use this to review its membership after the September event, to ensure there are no gaps in skills/ knowledge.

Action: All to ensure we have completed the Skills matrix and sent to Patty.

Steven asked members whether they had comments/ suggestions for membership. Members had no suggestions and agreed that membership is okay as it is.

The Forum agreed to come back to the idea of a third sector research conference in the future given that the focus right now should be on the Forum's second event with academics.

Event with Academics

Patty shared a draft programme for the academic event and the Forum broke into two groups to discuss it and identify outcomes for the event.

Feeding back on his group's discussions, Steven noted that:

- The event should remind participants of why collaboration matters. Therefore the event should highlight that third sector organisations and academics both want to make a positive difference on people's lives and collaboration is one way to help them do that,

- The aims of the event could be to: (i) better understand the way in which collaboration happens (i.e. the types of collaboration that can go on

between academics and TSOs), (ii) contribute how the third sector can impact the research agenda, (iii) encourage academics to help third sector to use research, (iv) help people understand who is doing what, and v) provide opportunities to network and form partnerships.

- The event should be practical and enable participation

- What Works Scotland could present their learning about third sector/ academia collaborations. **Action: Jacqueline** to follow up with WWS about presenting at the event.

- Discussions should include barriers/ enablers to collaboration and ideas for things that could be done to increase/ improve collaboration.

- An output from the event could be a practical troubleshooting guide identifying barriers and enablers around collaboration.

Patty noted that her group had had very similar discussions and noted that conversations should be solution-focussed as much as possible. Patty noted that the event could:

- Look to provide a match-making service between the third Sector and academics (perhaps including a form of speed-dating style activity).

- Explore the role of funders in resourcing/ supporting collaboration.

- Include some sort of activity/ game to explore drivers, enablers, challenges and what could be done to improve TS/ academia collaboration.

- Have breakout sessions looking at examples of collaboration in specific thematic areas.

- Thematic discussions on the Forum subgroups' work: benefits of volunteering, health of the third sector and partnership working (3 or 4 breakout sessions).

- **Action: Patty** to liaise with Tara Murphy at Carnegie UK Trust in relation to a presentation on the supplementary guide on how to link to academics.

Action: Patty and Steven to review the draft programme for the event based on the Forum's feedback and circulate a revised draft to the Forum for comments by 29 July.

In terms of who to invite, the Forum agreed that there should be about 1/3 academics, 1/3 third sector organisations and 1/3 others (e.g. funders, policy-

makers, etc.). It was noted that the following people/organisations should be invited:

- Fiona Malcolm (SG) (given the appetite in SG to grow social economy and support and improve collaborations between academics and social enterprises; in particular, Fiona is doing some work in relation to EU funds social innovation). **Action: Carolyn** to invite Fiona and explore with her a breakout session

- ESRC

- Social Firms Scotland

- Scotland Funders' Forum – **Action: Carolyn** to liaise with Eric Samuels (BIG)

Action: Patty to send out invite through ESS's networks and mailing lists

Action: All forum members to promote event through their own networks

Action: Sophie to pull a list of colleges to send to social sciences so that we can reach the right academics

Sub-Group Updates

The Forum split into sub-groups to discuss their different pieces of work. Steven asked each Sub-group to consider what they wanted to do at the Academic Event in September.

Partnership Sub-Group Update

Patty noted that there is now a good first draft of the partnership guide but noted that the group had realised it was trying to be too ambitious by doing two things: (i) collating research on what is good partnership working and (ii) developing a tool to setup and evaluate partnerships. The sub-group agreed that they would initially focus on the research and revisit the tool after the September event.

Patty noted that the sub-group would use a breakout session at the event as an opportunity to consult on the guide, and use the feedback they receive to inform their future work. **Action: Patty** to review the draft in light of discussions.

Volunteering Sub- Group Update

Gemma noted that the group was making good progress with producing a draft version of the volunteering and complex needs report. They are aiming to have produced a final draft by mid-August.

Note of the meeting

Gemma noted that the sub-group will deliver one of the break-out sessions at the academic event. They will use the session to present the main findings from the report, get feedback on any gaps in the report and how these could be addressed and explore how the report can/will be disseminated and used by different audiences. **Action: Gemma** to review the draft in light of discussions.

Health of the Third Sector Sub-Group Update

Ilse noted that the Health of the Sector sub-group is taking forward a number of pieces of work, such as the ESRC-funded "Scottish Civil Society Data Partnership" project. Ilse tabled a short paper with information on this project. The subgroup plans to run a breakout session on using data at the academic event in September. **Action: Ilse** to provide a more detailed summary of today's discussion. **Action: Ilse** to circulate by e-mail the paper she tabled.

Action: Patty, Ilse and Gemma to provide an abstract for the discussion at event with academics, to include in the invitation (so that people know what they're signing to).

Member Updates

Better by Design

Carolyn provided an update from the Big Lottery's 'Better by Design' programme.

Launched in 2013, Better by Design aimed to support voluntary organisations to undergo a process of change so they were able to better meet the needs of their beneficiaries both now and in the future. Key learning from the programme included:

- Funders and TSOs often interpret terms like 'design-led' differently so its important for all partners to have shared expectations from the start

- 18 months wasn't long enough to fully embed the approach, especially with TSOs operating in the challenging environment,

- TSOs valued having a safe space to discuss the issues in the Better by Design programme as well as the peer support they received. However, some TSOs struggled with a funder being involved in these discussions because of the power imbalance.

More information on the Better by Design programme is available to read here. There is a workbook available for download here.

How Funders' Find, Use and Share

Note of the meeting

Jo provided an overview of the research their intern had undertaken on how funders find, use and share evidence. Key findings included:

- While a vast and varied range of resources exist where funders can find evidence, there are significantly less resources dedicated to supporting funders to use evidence to inform their future work and to share their evidence with other funders or stakeholders.

- Although all of the organisations who contributed to this research noted that finding, using and sharing evidence is important to their organisation they also highlighted a number of challenges that limits their ability to do so in practice. This included lack of time, resources and skills and the fact that while evidence exchange is a priority for both charities and funders it is rarely their main priority.

- Funders want more support in finding, using and sharing evidence but their drivers for doing so are different from the charities they support. Therefore, so too is the type of support that funders are likely to value and engage with

As a result of these findings, Jo noted that The Robertson Trust would be working with ESS to better understand the different drivers funders have around evidence exchange and build appetite and skills within this area.

The full report is available to read here.

Other Updates

Sophie informed the Forum about some funding applications she is currently pulling together. One of these aims to explore perceptions of the third sector; the role that the third sector plays in the welfare state, and consequences for organisational restructuring (e.g. employment, contracts, etc.).

Action: All to contact Sophie if interested in having a conversation about her funding applications.

Cassy shared VAS's publication, ["Collaboration works"](Collaboration works) and offer to provide paper copies for members. **Action: All** to e-mail Cassy with number of copies they want.

Vivien noted that IRISS are currently doing some work with Social Services Strategic Forum on a 'strategic research agenda for social services'. As part of this work, they are currently undertaking a mapping exercise and highlighted they may have some learning to share at the next meeting. **Action: Vivien** to update the Forum.

Summary of actions:

Note of the meeting

Action: Patty to edit minutes of 13 March – Sophie did not chair the meeting – and upload them onto the website.

Action: Patty to finalise infographic, circulate to the Forum and add it to the Forum's webpages

Action: All to ensure we have completed the Skills matrix and sent to Patty.

Action: Jacqueline to follow up with WWS.

Action: Patty to liaise with Tara Murphy at Carnegie UK Trust in relation to a presentation on the supplementary guide on how to link to academics.

Action: Jacqueline to follow up with What Works Scotland about presenting at the event.

Action: Patty and Steven to review the draft programme for the event and circulate programme to Forum for comments by 29 July.

Action: Carolyn to invite Fiona and explore with her a breakout session

Action: Carolyn to liaise with Eric Samuels (BIG) (re: SFF)

Action: Patty to send out invite through ESS's networks and mailing lists

Action: All forum members to promote event through their own networks

Action: Sophie to pull a list of colleges to send to social sciences so that we can reach the right academics

Action: Patty to review the draft in light of discussions.

Action: Gemma to review the draft in light of discussions.

Action: Ilse to provide a more detailed summary of today's discussion.
Action: Ilse to circulate by e-mail the paper she tabled.

Action: Ilse and Gemma to provide summary of discussion to Jo and Patty and a note of actions arising from these.

Action: Patty, Ilse and Gemma to provide an abstract for the discussion at event with academics, to include in the invitation (so that people know what they're signing to)

Action: All to contact Sophie if interested in having a conversation about her funding applications.

Action: All to e-mail Cassy with number of copies they want.

Action: Vivien to update the Forum on learning from the work that IRISS are currently doing with Social Services Strategic Forum on a 'strategic research agenda for social services'.

Date of Next Meeting

15 September 2015 – SCVO's offices