**Inspiring Communities Group Meeting Notes**

**Date:** 16th June 2021

**Attendees:**

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| ***Name*** | ***Organisation*** |
| Paul Wilson (co-Chair) | Volunteer Edinburgh  |
| Sandra Millar (co-Chair) | Phoenix  |
| Ben Supple | Royal Zoological Society of Scotland |
| Duncan Gardner | Balfour Beatty |
| Gavin McEwan | Turcan Connell |
| Harriet Mortimer  | Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce  |
| John Heraghty | Common Purpose |
| Rebecca Neish | Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce |
| Willy Barr | Citadel Youth Centre |
| Susan Park (guest speaker) | Phoenix Group |
| Richard Knight (guest speaker) | Maasai Camel |

**Apologies:**

Fiona Haro, Joanne Davidson, Jonny Kinross, Joseph Drugan, Katherine Jenkins, Mike Hartley, Miles Weaver, Richard Knight, Scott Fyfe, Simon Turner, Tommy George, Victoria Simpson

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Plan to have a focus in each meeting on sharing expertise/good practice
3. Guest speaker: Susan Park, Wellbeing Manager, Phoenix Group
4. Update from Volunteer Edinburgh on their mental wellbeing work
5. Q&A
6. Edinburgh CAN B update and Q&A with Richard Knight
7. Review of previous minutes, the Activity Plan, and any updates
8. AOB
9. DONM

**Actions:**

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| **What** | **Who** | **When** |
| Harriet/Sandra to facilitate the sharing of resources from Phoenix’s Mind Matters group | Harriet and Sandra | With the minutes |
| Provide any examples of collaboration between private and third sector organisations – send to Rebecca | All | By next meeting |
| John to send Ewan/Paul more info on his legacy project  | John | By next meeting |
| Paul and Joseph to discuss Community Benefit clauses, Harriet to facilitate | Paul, Joseph and Harriet | By next meeting |

**Meeting notes:**

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| **Item 1** | **Welcome and apologies** |
|  | Paul opens up and chairs the meeting, which is taking place virtually |
| **Item 2** | **Plan to have a focus in each meeting on sharing expertise/good practice** |
|  | Paul – one of the group’s key aspirations was to encourage and build partnerships within the group and we want to focus on the experience and knowledge that exists within the group. Therefore at the start of each meeting there will be a short presentation by one of the organisations represented on the group on an issue they are currently involved in. |
| **Item 3** | **Guest speaker: Susan Park, Wellbeing Manager, Phoenix Group** |
|  | Susan gave a presentation of the work she’s doing within Phoenix Group to support the mental health and wellbeing of their workforce* They work on 3 pillars, of mental, physical and financial wellbeing, but appreciate that these are all interlinked
* They provide a range of activities and resources, including internal events, bringing in external providers, resource and support
* They have 56 mental health first aiders, and ensured that this was a diverse group to provide a representative sample of their workforce
* Provide full access to the headspace app, and in March alone there were over 4000 visits to the ‘sleep’ section of this app
* They are offering mental health training and working with Samaritans on this
* Covid has really had an impact on all 3 pillars, so they’ve tried to increase support for the wellbeing challenges this has presented
* Provide a full calendar of activity, e.g. today was a men’s safe space session, supported by their male mental health first aiders
* Another type of event they do is ‘behind the mask’ – someone within the company, often quite senior, shares their mental health journey, providing a safe space for the individuals and building an environment where it’s okay to share
* They have 9 colleague networks, 3 of which focus on mental health:
	+ Mind Matters – focus on removing stigma and raising awareness
	+ Carers Network – they’ve designed training for mental health first aiders aimed specifically at supporting carers with their mental health
	+ Enable – a disability awareness group, including conditions such as neurodiversity. Focus on the positives as well as raising awareness
* Important that they constantly ask for feedback on what they provide
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| **Item 4** | **Update from Volunteer Edinburgh on their mental wellbeing work** |
|  | Paul – he’s coming at this from the point of view of a much smaller organisation* Volunteer Edinburgh are a mental health provider, and support mental health in the city, but also an employer they have a strong culture of openness
* Some of the practical things they do within the workplace: a very generous sick leave package, flexible working (even pre-pandemic), and always try to ensure colleagues feel supported with a non-judgemental approach
* As a service provider, they started a programme 35 years ago called Volunteering For Therapy, that used volunteering as a tool to maintain and improve mental health – lots of research shows the benefits of volunteering in assisting mental wellbeing, and providing people who aren’t necessarily able to sustain paid employment with the opportunity to meaningfully contribute
* The pandemic provided a real challenge for this

They also run a programme at a local hospital, working with public and patient volunteers to help people feel valued through helpful activities |
| **Item 5** | **Q&A** |
|  | Gavin – loved what Susan had to say about mental health first aiders, how many first aiders do you need?Susan – the plan is always to increase that number – in certain departments there is higher demand, esp. in customer-facing departments, but having reached out more to the other departments they’ve since seen a rise in demand from them as a result.* There are legal requirements around how many physical first aiders you have per x number of employees, but there isn’t the equivalent legislation for mental health first aiders – but perhaps there should be?
* Their challenge is getting the balance right – don’t want to overwhelm people with activity whilst also making sure there is something for everyone

Rebecca – how do you go about creating that culture and helping people open up?Paul – you need to create the environment of safety and trust, and people need to feel secure that if they open up there won’t be negative ramifications* It also needs to come from a senior level and needs real action, not just gestures

Susan – agrees that it needs to be top down, you need visibility and leadership* Their Mind Matters network may be able to parcel up their offering and share that with this group – Sandra and Harriet to facilitate this – ACTION
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| **Item 6** | **Edinburgh CAN B update and Q&A with Richard Knight** |
|  | Paul – introduces Richard Knight, who currently is leading a lot of the work around Edinburgh CAN B, and thanks him for coming and for circulating the CAN B updateRichard – here to answer any questions around Edinburgh CAN B, to find out how the last 6 months have been for the Inspiring Communities group, and to explore any future relationship between the two groupsPaul – Richard’s update mentioned the 2050 City Vision etc. – where is the connectivity between CAN B and the aspirations of the city in terms of strategy and the work of the Council, e.g. the Poverty Commission?Richard – someone from the Council, who is working on the implementation of the Poverty Commission, has just joined, so will be looking at how we can work together* However, he would perhaps challenge the assumption that we need to follow the Council and work within the constraints of city planning?
* We have a notion in CAN B of ‘Extreme Collaboration’ and the need to find new ways of working with people

Willy – agrees with the need to challenge city planning, there’s a real frustration in his day-to-day working that they know what their service users need, but community planning can be frustratingly quagmire and not active or agile enough* Glad Richard mentioned the Poverty Commission and interested to see how that feeds into the work of CAN B

Gavin – at some point it would be useful to see an example of extreme collaboration to help inspire action elsewhere and bring more people on board CAN BRichard – we’re just beginning to see action and collaborations getting going, e.g. two group members are looking at creating pathways for people without qualifications into green jobs. Need to start showcasing this stuffPaul – on the question of Inspiring Communities’ aspirations, we’re looking at where there are opportunities for partnerships and to exploit working together – a clear connectivity between the two groups and what we both want to achieveRichard – agrees, we need to look at the insights we’re all getting on how you encourage and accelerate relationship building and collaboration – anything we could both share on this would be enormously helpful |
| **Item 7** | **Review of previous minutes, the Activity Plan, and any updates** |
|  | Cross-sector working group:* They met last week, and are planning an event for October (roughly), looking at examples of different organisations that have worked together to support each other for a mutually beneficial outcome. Looking to explore and highlight how we can take that forward and make this more habitual
* Looking for examples of different scale and type of support needed - one example will be from Citadel Youth Centre, who are having leaflets printed and distributed by Phoenix Group, but also looking for an example where more resource-heavy support was given – ACTION

Mental health group:* Spoke last meeting about the issue of male mental health in the city, but little new action has happened on this – the health board want to assess the scale of the problem before deciding on appropriate action
* Willy: the City Council have been given money to work on mental health, but rather than going to on-the-ground organisations with established links and practices, they’ve split it into a few big pots of money and asked for bids – these are too big for smaller organisations like the Citadel, so it will likely go to bigger, not local organisations, rather than to those who can make the most difference

Theatre project:* John caught up with Mike Griffiths at the Lyceum. They may not open until November at the earliest but the picture is currently unclear. They’re keen to build a strong relationship with the Chamber. John will stay in touch and re-connect when there are things we can help with

Inclusive Employers project* As part of her Foundation Apprenticeship with the Chamber Policy team, Carla carried out some research into how employers can be more inclusive in their hiring practices and work culture. As part of this she spoke to Paul and his colleague in the Edinburgh Equality and Rights Network, and two of Sandra’s colleagues who co-chair the Phoenix BAME network.
* Carla has unfortunately completed her apprenticeship now but Harriet can share the presentation with the group at the next meeting

Community benefit clauses:* Paul had a conversation with Capital City Partnerships, but their work on this is in a very early stage, so little to report there yet
* Paul aiming to meet with Joseph Drugan to discuss this – Harriet to facilitate - ACTION
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| **Item 8** | **AOB** |
|  | No other business raised |
| **Item 9** | **DONM – 16th August 1-2pm** |