

Lordship Hub Special Board meeting to discuss staffing and finances: 25 October 2022

Attendees:

- Janice, staff café manager
- Dave Morris, board chair
- Sandra, board personnel
- David Selby, board treasurer
- Ruth, board membership and communications
- Yvonne, board

Apologies: Sue, Carl, Nefertiti, Brenda, Carola, Debra

Note of discussion

Dave Morris as Chair had called this urgent meeting as a result of some recent serious personnel challenges the board needed to address in the light of a number of office staff giving notice. He proposed that there be a discussion of the situation and the options for addressing the situation. He proposed that the meeting not make any immediate decision but immediately set up a working group which would collate many of the options put forward in recent weeks by staff and board members, which could then be shared for consultation and then decisions made at next board meeting. This process was unanimously agreed.

He thanked all staff and board for their hard work and dedication to the Hub. He asked whether everyone had received the summary of the current and future staffing situation, circulated before the meeting to all staff and board members – see annex below.

He then set out some options recently suggested - which might be considered, fleshed out and added to by a working group

- Appraisals for staff, and maybe also for board members
- Raise wages
- Fewer roles, each with more hours
- Reviewing the service we offer customers and community
- Re-jig job descriptions so we have a coordinator or general manager
- Reduce pressure/service in the café whenever necessary (Plan B and C)
- Launch a fundraising appeal
- Apply for the £10k grant from power to change
- Minimising bureaucracy and admin eg re financial payments
- Close 1 or 2 days a week for a period of time this winter
- Close for a week to give ourselves space to regroup
- Mediation between office and café
- Identify skilled volunteers to do particular roles
- More support for Personnel matters
- Appraisals and accountability for key Board roles

The group then had an open discussion about the situation and the options proposed above. These were some of the thoughts expressed:

- It would be really helpful for café managers to have a day off (next Wed was agreed) to consider what this means for them
- Why have we got to this point; we have to look at what has led to this many office staff leaving and others feeling stressed
- One person had asked if it would help if the café became semi-autonomous (eg organisationally and financially) within the hub if the staff wished it to be so; café manager Janice's view was that could only

happen if the flat rate of pay was changed so senior staff were paid more; was not clear how volunteers would be found and supported if café was autonomous; Janice felt that café and café staff are crucial part of hub operations and could not easily or even realistically be separated

- Need to reflect on feedback that current and existing staff have provided including how board and staff work together ; should all staff join the board in future, or ensure that their staff rep on the Board is fully briefed and empowered, so their expertise shapes decision making effectively and we remove any hierarchy that some staff have identified as a problem
- Everyone is doing their best, but recent volume of resignations suggests our best is not good enough
- Every area of hub is not working well together, a lot of friction between different teams
- There is a lot of friction and over-complication of processes and systems; also a lot of things are done on paper instead of by computer which is inefficient and eats up staff time
- Staff should be included in job interviews ; and that should include cross-team members interviewing eg reps from both café managers and office staff in interviews where possible
- We could put some of the currently volunteer personnel role into a paid staff role and/or bring in some professional support
- When there are grievances they are not dealt with; staff do not feel comfortable loading those problems on a volunteer board member who is responsible for personnel because they are a volunteer and it is a lot to take on

Actions

- Working group to be set up immediately to oversee the process and collate feedback:
 - o Quickly establish if there are changes which would persuade one member of office staff to stay in the role so we retain some of our skilled and valued office staff
 - o If this is not possible, develop plan B options re how we will ensure office functionality
 - o Share a table of options - based on recent feedback expressed and the views at this meeting -with wider staff and board members and key volunteers (eg Joan and Tim) to gather further feedback
 - o Present options to the next board meeting for some key decisions
- Working group to include
 - o Dave M
 - o Ruth
 - o Sandra
 - o Yvonne
 - o David
 - o Janice as rep for café managers
 - o Office staff rep tbc
- Next board meeting to be moved to 8th November to allow extra time for feedback on options developed
- Café to close on Wednesday 2nd November to give café managers a day to discuss and decide future arrangements given staffing situation. Office staff could to be offered this option if requested.

Annex: staffing situation as of 25th October

The chair of the board had shared this summary ahead of the meeting.

Three Office staff

Hire Co-ordinator - Carola - 20hrs

Office Admin and Fundraiser - Debra - 20hrs

Volunteer Co-ordinator - Albertina - 20hrs

Four Cafe staff

Cafe Mgr - Janice - 23hrs

Cafe Mgr - Leona - 30hrs

Cafe Mgr - Brenda - 20hrs

Cafe Assit. - Amber - 10hrs (contract up to 05th Dec)

Maintenance

Danny 6hrs -

Atec

Accountancy firm monthly payment

Resignations/Vacancy

Office Admin and Fundraiser - Effective - 12 November

Volunteer Co-ordinator - Effective - 31 October

Finance Officer - 2nd posting of the vacancy in place now.

Community and Room hire co-ordinator - Effective 30th November