

# Chief Officers Group in the Third Sector (COGITS)

## Minute of meeting

28 April 2022

**Attendance:** David Barr (Aberlour), Sian Bertram (D&G Hard of Hearing), Roland Chaplain (Glenkens Business Association), Kim Dams (DG Voice), Pamela Deans (D&G Advocacy Service), Katrina Dick (Newton Stewart Initiative), Alex Dickson (DG Befriending Project), John Dougan (Relationships Scotland), David Hook (D&G Blood Bikes), Carolyn Kennedy (Better Lives Partnership), Helen Keron (Glenkens Community Arts Trust Ltd), Eileen Longworth (D&G ME & Fybromyalgia Network), Helen McAnespie (Food Train), Clair McFarlan (Solway Firth Partnership), Carolyn Yates (Castle Douglas Development Forum)

**Present:** Norma Austin Hart (TSDG), Natalie Anderson (TSDG), Marsali Caig (Consultant, TSDG), Alan Hall (TSDG), Elaine Murray (D&G Council), Rob Davidson (D&G Council)

**Apologies:** Maureen Chand (Mull of Galloway Trust), Frank Hayes (For Enjoyment CIC), Angela Roberts (ADS South West Scotland), Phil Stewart (D&G CAS), Chris Ward (Creetown Initiative), Karen Ward Boyd (Holywood Trust)

### Welcome

NAH welcomed everyone to the seventh meeting of COGITS, apologies were noted as recorded.

### Q&A with Councillors Elaine Murray and Rob Davidson – “How should senior third sector figures engage with politicians”

The group had a positive discussion with Cllrs Murray and Davidson, the key points were:

*What is the route in for TSOs to form delivery partnerships with the Council?*

The immediate requirement after the election will be to form a new administration, to develop a new plan and to identify the departments responsible for delivery. There would be merit in a direct approach to Directors for the next 12 – 18 months.

D&G Council is operated as a committee system; everything is agreed democratically. The council leader is not the Chief Executive. There is a close relationship between Directors and committee Chairs. The view is that all councillors are equal, all residents have an equal right to representation. Enquiries can be submitted through the elected members system.

Councillors are involved in policy and officers are involved operationally. However, practically it is not always as simple as this, eg a councillor might ask an officer if something could be done and what the resource implications would be. This would then go to a committee for a decision to be made.

*The last plan had 4 priorities. The third sector is a useful, strategic partner. What can we do to influence priorities if we are not in the plan?*

From 6 May to the 24 May the priority will be to appoint the Leader, Depute and the Administration. After the 24 May, for approximately 2 months, the plan (which indicates what needs to be achieved) will be developed. This is a critical period to engage and discuss. Identify what roles have been established and who the key contacts are. During this period nothing has been settled into a policy structure for the next 5-year period. It is a good time to position the whole third sector as a critical partner.

*What are the views are on how the Third Sector can support any moves towards a future "wellbeing economy"?*

The third sector has a critical role in moving towards a wellbeing economy. In D&G there is a fairly standard economic model, this has not worked, and the region has lagged behind the rest of the country. There is a great deal of potential to do well as a region, what we need is around us already. The relationship between the money and the people who need it needs to improve.

*There is a lack of clarity as to how D&G Blood Bikes should be funded, would it be worth contacting the new councillors in their first two months to get a contact in relation to Blood Bikes funding?*

There is an NHS endowment fund which they can provide details on. TSDG would be happy to support with help with funding applications. NAH sits on the IJB and agreed to discuss this further with DH.

**Actions:** MC to provide details of the NHS endowment fund to DH. NAH to link DH to the TSDG Funding Officer and Community Engagement Officer and discuss with DH how this issue might be taken to the IJB.

*How can we ensure that the third sector is represented in the next plan, with COGITS consulted as needed / appropriate?*

The locality hubs will play a key role, these are the space between D&G Council, decision making and grass roots organisations. Community wealth building has the potential to answer questions about a wellbeing economy.

*What will be the biggest challenges and opportunities for the next administration?*

Challenges:

- The financial challenge, with a drive to pay back borrowed money
- Overcoming barriers which lead to uncertainty and instability in relation to funding decisions and commitments
- Complex decision making

Opportunities:

- Community wealth building and new methods of delivery.
- There is a new Chief Executive (Dawn Roberts) who will be taking up post late summer, this will lead to new opportunities.

**Note of the meeting of 9 December 2022 and matters arising-**

The note of the meeting of 9 December 2022 was agreed as an accurate record.

## **Matters Arising:**

- ***Chamber of Commerce / Breakfast Events***

NAH contacted the new director, Suzanne Mitchell. Breakfast events were thought to be a good idea and should happen soon.

- ***Letter to political groups asking them to ask questions of their candidates***

NAH updated that unfortunately this had not happened due to resources pressures at TSDG however the political input at the meeting today had been arranged.

- ***Voice of the sector***

Marsali Caig was present today to provide the update and presentation to COGITS.

- ***Mentoring Pilot***

NAH would give a brief update today and a more detailed update at the next meeting.

- ***RES Delivery Plan***

NAH updated that due to the size and complexity of this subject, time would be allocated at one of the next 2 COGITS meetings for this. NAH had presented an update to the TSDG Board and it was included in the new TSDG Business Plan.

**Action:** Agenda item - RES Delivery plan to be added to the agenda of either the June or September meeting of COGITS (NAH)

## **Voice of the Sector Project**

Marsali Caig provided an update to members in relation to the Voice of the Sector project, the presentation is attached as Appendix 1.

Members were then divided into 2 breakout rooms to discuss:

- What would help you to move into the representation space?
- What practical support can TSDG offer you to facilitate that involvement?
- What do you see as your role in effecting culture change within partnership working arrangements?
- How can the sector build trust and strengthen collaboration?

- How can the public profile of the sector be raised?

#### Group 1 Feedback:

1. The importance of not putting all the responsibility on the people who ask.
2. How can we change the culture to have more effective conversations?
3. Third sector representatives have been removed in place of TSDG representatives, this is not positive.
4. Representation activity places a financial pressure on small organisations.

#### Group 2 Feedback:

1. Perceived conflict of interest by the public sector.
2. Strong links between representatives and forums.
3. An education pack containing the purpose of the meeting, key individuals, statistics etc would be helpful.
4. A jargon busting list would be helpful.
5. Representatives should give feedback to TSDG forums.

**Actions:** MC to contact KD offline to discuss the questions and gain additional feedback.

**Action:** NAH to contact CY to discuss remuneration for time spent on third sector representation roles and how this works in the arts sector.

**Action:** NAH to meet with PD to discuss PPC.

### Shared Prosperity Fund

NAH updated members that the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) has now been announced with approximately £6.7mill available over 3 years. Expenditure of this will be based on an investment plan. D&G Council will be developing the investment plan and are required to submit this to the UK government by 1/8/22.

NAH has written to the interim Chief Executive. This is a particularly important fund for the third sector. COGITS members should be aware of this and take the opportunity to ask the council how the plan is being put together and how the third sector can be involved.

### Mentoring Framework Pilot

NAH updated that the pilot project has now finished, and a report produced, it was judged to be a great success.

The project is currently increasing the pool of mentors and the next step will be to recruit more mentees. COGITS members were encouraged to think about who might be an aspiring leader and therefore potentially suitable to be a mentee.

**Action:** NAH to give a presentation of the mentoring framework project at the next meeting.

### Identifying 2022 Priorities for COGITS

NAH introduced this item, identifying COGITS priorities for 2022 to inform the agenda.

Members were presented with 7 questions on Mentimeter:

1. What priorities would you see for COGITS in 2022 within the “Third Sector Representation” theme?
2. What priorities would you see for COGITS in 2022 within the “Leadership Challenges” theme?
3. What priorities would you see for COGITS in 2022 within the “Political Engagement” theme?
4. What priorities would you see for COGITS in 2022 within the “The Role of the Third Sector in Regional Strategy” theme?
5. What priorities would you see for COGITS in 2022 within the “Working in Partnership” theme?
6. What priorities would you see for COGITS in 2022 within the “Campaigning” theme?
7. Are there any other priorities you would suggest for COGITS in 2022?

Mentimeter software enabled members to input responses directly, with word clouds created from responses (Appendix 2), these will be analysed and a list of 2022 priorities determined.

24<sup>th</sup> May to the end of July will be an important window for political engagement and how members get to know the new councillors. COGITS will next meet on 23 June. NAH agreed that TSDG would create an A4 template for TSOs to use in their engagement with the new councillors.

Members discussed inviting the new leader and depute leader to a future COGITS meeting, it was decided that the September meeting would be more appropriate than June, with interim efforts being focussed on getting the third sector included in the plan and model.

**Actions:** NAH to review the word cloud outputs from mentimeter and draft a list of priorities.  
NAH to create an engagement template for members and present at the meeting of 23 June 2022.

### **COGITS: Appointment of Chair**

NAH introduced this item, indicating that it had been the original intention for COGITS to have a Chair from the membership. The group discussed various models, including co-chairing and rotating. HK asked if this could be a paid role, as an acknowledgement.

No volunteers came forward. NAH offered for those interested to speak with her. It was proposed that the Chair should not be a member of the TSDG Board. NAH will draft out the ask and send this out to members.

**Action:** NAH to draft out the ask and distribute to COGITS members.

### **Next meeting**

The next meeting of COGITS will take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022 at 10am

Future meetings have been scheduled on:

22 September 2022, 10am

22 December 2022, 10am

<b>Actions arising</b>			
Date	Action	Who is responsible	Deadline
18/08/21	COGITS agenda item – event for Third Sector organisations to meet with local and national politicians	NAH	23/06/2022 or 22/09/2022
28/4/22	MC to provide details of the NHS endowment fund to DH	MC	16/05/22
28/4/22	NAH to link DH to the TSDG Funding Officer and Community Engagement Officer.	NAH	16/05/22
28/4/22	NAH to discuss with DH how this issue with Blood Bike funding might be taken to the IJB.	NAH	31/05/22
28/4/22	Agenda item - RES Delivery plan to be added to the agenda of either the June or September meeting of COGITS (presentation and analysis at next meeting, focussing on the 23 actions)	NAH	31/05/22
28/4/22	Voice of the Sector Project - MC to contact KD offline to discuss the questions and gain additional feedback.	MC	09/05/2022
28/4/22	Voice of the Sector Project - NAH to contact CY to discuss remuneration for time spent on third sector representation roles and how this works in the arts sector.	NAH /CY	31/05/2022
28/4/22	Voice of the Sector Project - NAH to meet with PD to discuss PPC.	NAH / PD	31/05/2022
28/4/22	COGITS Agenda item Mentoring Framework – presentation at next meeting	NAH	23/06/2022
28/4/22	COGITS Priorities - review the word cloud outputs from mentimeter and draft a list of priorities	NAH	23/06/2022
28/4/22	COGITS Priorities - create an engagement template for members and present at the meeting of 23 June 2022.	NAH	23/06/2022
28/4/22	COGITS Chair - draft out the ask and distribute to COGITS members.	NAH	21/05/2022

## Voice of the Sector Project - Presentation

### Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway

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COGITS meeting  
28<sup>th</sup> April 2022

'The Voice' project

Marsali Caig  
Marsali.Caig@btinternet.com



### Aims of the Presentation

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- Context
- The project so far
- What I need from you



## Timescales for the project

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- Engagement with sector and public sector: until June
- Report with recommendations for TSDG Board: July



## 'The Voice': the issue

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.Accepted practice that third sector works with public sector to tackle issues and support collective decision making

.One of the roles of TSDG is to bring a third sector voice into local governance processes, particularly in community planning

.Generally, the most senior staff member of TSDG fulfills this role currently

.Unrealistic and untenable; representing a diverse third sector across all of the community planning areas cannot be serviced by a single individual

.Third sector representation/visibility needs to change





## 'The Voice' project

TSDG's current Business Plan has recognised this with one of its key objectives stating an agreed intention to:

*'Develop a culture of collaboration and partnership working to maximise the influence and impact of the third sector'*

The Voice project is seeking to develop a new model for third sector representation.



## Previous work: Ladder of participation

This is what the public sector told us about why they involved the third sector:

Reason for participation	% of responses	Grouping
Requirement	3%	57% lower level involvement
Information	23%	
Understanding	24%	
Consultation	7%	
Involvement	25%	43% more strategic involvement
Collaboration	15%	
Effect culture change	3%	



## 'The Voice': previous work

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- .TSOs identified concerns in relation to strategic partnership working
- .Recognised your own capacity and confidence as constraints

### *Key findings included:*

- ✓Getting this right is along term project requiring culture change
- ✓A need to shift 3rd sector from contractors to colleagues
- ✓TSDG role in building capacity in the sector
- ✓A need to deal with the barriers to participation



## Reinvigorating 'The Voice' Project

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- . Pandemic has impacted on both the project and potentially how the sectors are working together; governance arrangements/key stakeholders for partnership working may have changed
- . The challenges have in some areas become more acute
- . Focus at this stage on 6 key areas of Community Planning partnership working– Health & Social Care, Children's Services, Community Learning & Development, Housing, Employability and Community Justice



Success will see TSDG shift to the role of **facilitator** rather than **representative** for identified forums/meetings



## Feedback so far: public sector

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- Willingness to engage and change the relationship & dynamic
- Governance arrangements are hugely varied and the third sector is not fully represented
- More could be made of the existing TSDG Forums and other engagement mechanisms
- The third sector isn't well understood by the public
- The sector is not an attractive career option for younger people; they don't understand its diversity or offer
- The third sector needs to collaborate more
- There is an opportunity for TSDG to facilitate some changes to how engagement happens



## Feedback so far: third sector

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- Appetite to have a greater voice in partnership working arrangements
- Some individuals are willing to take on a representative role within partnership arrangements; those who currently represent their own organisations in forums feel valued
- Sector needs to get better at collaborating, not competing...building trust
- Gap in public understanding of what the third sector does
- More could be made of structured offer from TSDG in relation to COGITS and the various thematic forums



# Your pieces of the Voice jigsaw

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I need your feedback:

- What would help you to move into the representation space?
- What practical support can TSDG offer you to facilitate that involvement?
- What do you see as your role in effecting culture change within partnership working arrangements?
- How can the sector build trust and strengthen collaboration?
- How can the public profile of the sector be raised?



**COGITS Priorities 2022 – Mentimeter word cloud outputs**

What priorities would you see for COGITS in 2022 within the “Third Sector Representation” theme?



What priorities would you see for COGITS in 2022 within the “Leadership Challenges” theme?





# What priorities would you see for COGITS in 2022 within the "Campaigning" theme?



# Are there any other priorities you would suggest for COGITS in 2022?

