

Unlock Democracy Council Meeting
18th July 2020
Via Zoom

Present: Jessica Metheringham, Jacob Webb, Stuart Hill, Catherine Bearder, Helen Close, Phil Starr, Rachel Collinson, Sean Shore, Stephen Gosling, Vicky Seddon, Marcus Cain, Stephen Carter, Ian Driver, Peter Hirst.

Staff: Sarah Clarke, Tim Rouse, Trudie Kee, Simon Howard.

Apologies: Peter McLaverty, Sab Jones, Luke Williams

14:00 Minutes, matters arising

Council minutes from the previous meeting were shown for information, these will be put for approval with the minutes of this meeting to the September session.

Management board minutes from the previous meeting were also given for information.

14:05 Budget and finances

Phil Starr introduced the budget item, clarifying that £40,000 has now been allocated to project costs and presented the updated budget for approval.

Catherine Bearder asked for clarification on Committed Giving and working to increase that. Tim Rouse gave clarification on the work done with regular giving.

Stephen Carter asked for an update on Direct Debits and legacies. Tim Rouse said that the problem with Direct Debits has been mostly solved and gave clarification on the way that members pay subscriptions and there was a discussion about legacies. There was a general discussion about legacies with input from Stephen Carter, Tim Rouse, Phil Starr, Helen Close and Catherine Bearder.

Rachel Collinson asked a question about projections for fundraising and membership growth, to which Phil Starr replied. There was a general discussion on the decisions around furloughing staff, fundraising, project costs in the budget and risk assessment of the budget and the organisation.

Decision: A vote on the budget returned: 9 for 1 against 2 abstentions

Rachel Collinson added via chat that *“I am concerned that membership, which has been going up over the last 6 months, will now go back to flatlining or decline, and we need to spend most of that £40k on staff in order to sustain our current income, whether through fundraising or campaigning.”*

14:48 Strategy and campaigns

Jessica Metheringham introduced the item.

A proposal was heard from Stuart Hill on campaigning for PR and votes at 16 and on

working with Labour. Jessica Metheringham suggested the former may fit into the Community Democracy item in the 'Proposal for 2020/21 Programmes' paper and clarified that working with Labour was already in the programme proposals paper. Sarah Clarke elaborated on these points and that work is ongoing.

Contributions were heard from Vicky Seddon (practicalities of Phil Starr's local government campaign document, contacting MPs), Catherine Bearder (working with all parties locally, hustings, student fairs), Stephen Gosling (devolved government involvement, votes at 16), Peter Hirst (local groups), Phil Starr (short, medium and long term aims and planning), Helen Close (SMART objectives), Jacob Webb (staff resources in the project)

Decision: Council voted on accepting the principle of Stuart Hills proposal on PR and votes at 16 fitting into the Community Democracy plans. 7 for 5 abstentions

Action: Management Board and staff to discuss any proposal and the implications further.

Rachel Collinson added via chat that *"without an analysis of the impact on membership and membership recruitment in Scotland and Northern Ireland, I cannot evaluate this proposal, which is why I have abstained."*

15:16 Structure

Jessica Metheringham updated that members from Management Board will soon meet with the Union soon to discuss the stopgap measures. They proposed that review of staff structures will be completed by the end of financial year 20/21.

Contributions were heard from Stuart Hill (getting the work done before the end of the financial year), Peter Hirst (Council member involvement in endorsing proposals), Ian Driver (support of Stuart and Peter's contributions), Jacob Webb via chat (support of Stuart and Peter's contributions), Vicky Seddon (staffing decisions and delivering campaign strategies), Phil Starr (consultation with staff and the union, the role of Management Board),

Action: Management Board will bring a progress report to Council for feedback in September.

15:26 AOB

Vicky Seddon voiced concerns about the way that Council communicate and how records are kept, and stated that there are too many channels of communication which have become confusing, to which many council members agreed.

Contributions were heard from Stuart Hill (accessibility), Marcus Cain (avoiding email), Stephen Gosling (emails), Rachel Collinson (software expertise and Loomio), Jacob Webb (Loomio and inclusive communications), Sean Shore (integrations in Slack)

Rachel Collinson offered to help anyone struggling with IT issues to get in touch with her.

Helen Close (volume of information, Loomio), Catherine Bearder (Slack), Sarah Clarke (staff experiences with Slack).

Decision: Council members chose to either trial 1 month for Slack or 1 month for Loomio. 3 votes for Slack and 7 votes for Loomio. A 1 month trial for Loomio was agreed on.

Next meeting 12th September

15:55 Meeting close