



# **WM Funders Network**

Charity Number: 1173579

## **Trustees' Annual Report & Financial Review for the Period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020**

March 2020

# WM Funders Network

## Trustees' Annual Report & Financial Review

### for the Financial Period from 01-04-2019 to 31-03-2020

## Reference & Administration Details

### Charity Details:

**Name:** WM Funders Network

**Number:** 1173579, registered with the Charity Commission on 27 June 2017.

**Address:** C/o 109 Court Oak Road, Birmingham B17 9AA

e-mail: [info@wmfn.org.uk](mailto:info@wmfn.org.uk)

website: <http://www.wmfn.org.uk/>

### Names of the Charity Trustees who Manage the Charity

**Pauline Roche** – Chief Information Officer, RnR Organisation (Individual Member) - **Chair**

**Peter Hughes** – Regional Manager, Charity Bank - **Vice Chair**

**Steven Simpson** – Chief Executive, Harborne Parish Lands Charity – **Treasurer (resigned in November 2019)**

**Peter Hardisty** – Grants Officer, Harborne Parish Lands Charity – **Treasurer (appointed in November 2019)**

**Melinda Connelly** – Regional Manager, Central Region, BBC Children in Need

**David Owen OBE** – Chair, Owen Family Charity Trust

**Debbie Pippard** – Head of Programmes, Barrow Cadbury Trust

**Popinder Kaur** – Chief Executive, The Haven

**Yvonne Gilligan** – Chief Executive, Edward's Trust (elected in November 2019)

### Names & Addresses of Advisors

Role	Name	Address
Bank	Lloyds Bank	32-34 Alcester Rd S, King's Heath, Birmingham B14 7PU
Independent Examiner	Steven Simpson	C/o 109 Court Oak Road, Birmingham B17 9AA
Secretary	Dipali Chandra	C/o 109 Court Oak Road, Birmingham B17 9AA

### Names of Senior Staff with Delegated Responsibilities

None

## Structure, Governance & Management

### Description of the Charity's Trusts

*The object of the CIO is to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the charitable activities of voluntary and not-for-profit organisations and grant making charities working in the West Midlands and its environs ("the area of benefit") and the effective use of charitable resources for the public benefit in particular but not exclusively by promoting and developing good practice in the making of charitable grants by exchanging information, knowledge, expertise and experience.*

### Type of Governing Document:

Constitution

### How the Charity is Constituted:

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

### Trustee Selection Methods:

There must be at least three charity trustees. The maximum number of trustees is 12.

In accordance with the Constitution, Trustees are appointed or re-appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

In appointing Trustees, who must be members of WMFN, due consideration is given to ensuring that the Trustees have, between them, the skills and experience necessary to manage the charity effectively and in accordance with charity law. Skills gaps are identified through skills audits.

The assessment of new trustees is informal (i.e.: an introductory meeting with the Chair).

### How New Trustees are Inducted and Trained:

New Trustees are introduced to the work of the WM Funders Network by meeting with the Secretary and Chair as part of their induction and are invited to attend a Trustees meeting as an observer. An information pack of the constitution, organisational policies and procedures and relevant reports are provided.

Trustees are invited to attend a strategy review and planning session held every three years. A skills audit is undertaken to identify gaps in knowledge and skills required for the governance and management of the CIO.

### Additional Governance Issues

The charity is run and managed by delegation of a workplan to an external contractor who meets regularly with the Chair, and with the Treasurer as required.

There are occasional working parties responsible for specific projects which the charity is, or is planning to, undertake, and task and finish groups who undertake reviews of policies & procedures.

## Objectives

Objective 1: Increase skills and expertise among members and others with an interest in civil society

Objective 2: Establish WMFN as the go-to organisation for information about issues of relevance to funding of civil society

Objective 3: Start to influence policy and practice among third parties in the region

Objective 4: Create a solid, sustainable organisation with a good reputation across the WM

## Statutory Declaration on Public Benefit

The charity makes decisions in ways that manage risks or harm to the charity and its beneficiaries consistent with the purpose of the charity, the charity commission guidance on public benefit.

No personal benefit is more than incidental.

## Activities

- Increase skills and expertise among members and others with an interest in civil society
- Establish WMFN as the go-to organisation for information about issues of relevance to funding of civil society
- Start to influence policy and practice among third parties in the region
- Create a solid, sustainable organisation with a good reputation across the WM

## Events

**22<sup>nd</sup> April Roundtable discussion: Safeguarding.** Melinda Connelly, Regional Manager, BBC Children in Need @HPLC (Attendance 12)

**25<sup>th</sup> May The Future of Civil Society: The role of funders workshop** – [Asif Afridi](#), Deputy CE Brap and Commission Panel Member; Jess Middleton, Insights Manager, [BBC Children in Need](#), @ Brewin Dolphin (Attendance 26)

**20<sup>th</sup> June Update on Birmingham Commonwealth Games and Coventry City of Culture:** Cat Orchard, Head of Policy and Legacy for Birmingham City Council Commonwealth Games Project Team; Chenine Bathena, Creative Director, Coventry City of Culture Trust @ Brewin Dolphin (Attendance 20)

**3<sup>rd</sup> July Laying the Foundations for Resettlement, Integration and Social Cohesion – Specialist immigration and legal advice:** [West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership](#); [Stoke on Trent Coventry](#) and [Herefordshire](#) Local Authorities; ASIRT, [Brushstrokes](#) and [North Staff and Stoke on Trent CAB](#), and independent funders – Barrow Cadbury Trust, [Paul Hamlyn Foundation](#) and National Lottery Community Fund @ Gowlings (Attendance 70)

**16<sup>th</sup> July User involvement; what is good practice roundtable discussion:** Liz Gadd, [Inspiring Impact](#) @HPLC (Attendance 11)

**24<sup>th</sup> September Equality and Diversity – What does success look like? roundtable Discussion:** [Asif Afridi, Deputy Director, Brap – Equality and Human Rights organisation](#) @Tyndallwoods (Attendance 11)

**14<sup>th</sup> November Annual General Meeting & talk on The Future Development of Small Charities:** Speaker: Rita Chadha, CE, Small Charities Coalition (Attendance 25)

**27<sup>th</sup> January: Laying the Foundations for Resettlement, Integration and Social Cohesion – Early Action approaches to community safety, health and wellbeing -** WM Strategic Migration Partnership, Coventry City Council, WM Police Service, Walsall MBC, Refugee and Migrant Centre, Wolverhampton, Coventry Community Law Centre, Bosnia and Herzegovina Network, Comic Relief and BBC Children in Need. (Attendance 60)

**12<sup>th</sup> March Annual Conference: [Responding to change together: Funding reimaged for a new decade](#)** Rita Chadha, CE, Small Charities Coalition, Chair and Jane Ide, CE, NAVCA keynote speaker (Attendance 100)

## Communications

We circulated on average 6 events e-bulletins and updates per month, 8 news and events updates over the 12 months and updated the website on a regular basis.

Our Twitter account (@westmidsfunders) has 1,051 followers and we also have a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WMFundersNetwork/>.

We continue to use social media to spread news about our work and connect with others doing similar work, and we use these routes to circulate information and promote members' work.

## **Outreach**

We continued to take forward our development plan and became a partner with several WM local authorities and specialist migration agencies to focus on needs of refugees and migrants and gaps in provision.

We continue to build relations with other national and local funding networks including ACF, WM LA Funding Officers Forum, and Small Charities Coalition, West Midlands Funders Forum and local voluntary sector infrastructure support organisations as well as public sector bodies.

## **Achievements and Performance**

2019 -20 started off as an exciting and active year but ended on an unprecedented note with the impact of the pandemic on all our lives.

The WMFN year started with a briefing to look at the implications of Brexit for the Third Sector and funders. The UK decision to leave and no longer be a contributor or recipient of European Structural and Social Funds has implications for the work and beneficiaries of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in the region.

In June a briefing on two forthcoming significant cultural events in Coventry and Birmingham (City of Culture and Commonwealth Games respectively) was held. Both have the potential to be catalysts for social and economic change for the people that live in the region. Both initiatives have plans to involve communities in the design and production of activities and events, and ideas about the legacy.

Roundtable discussions were held on the following topics:

Safeguarding, user involvement, diversity and equality.

Safeguarding has been making headlines and in response charities have been responding to review and tighten up its policies and procedures.

There has been a growing interest amongst charities and funders about users and their involvement in shaping services they need or receive. Many voluntary and community organisations do involve their users in the services they provide.

There has been a lot of high-level debate in the funding sector about the need to improve the diversity of the charity sector governance and workforce in recent months. The importance of considering the purpose of the funder and what it is trying to achieve with its funding is critical to consider why equality and diversity is important.

Two key events were held on migration and integration in the WM, in July 2019 and January 2020. A partnership between several local authorities, WMFN and specialist migration agencies planned a collaborative approach to raising awareness and understanding of the needs and gaps in provision and promoting good practice that makes a real difference to the lives of refugees, asylum seekers and new migrants.

In 2018 the WMFN had contributed to the work of the Independent Commission on the future of civil society. In 2019 a workshop was organised to learn of the Commission's recommendations and how funders' individual and organisational behaviour and attitudes could be developed and changed in addressing, power, accountability, relationships and trust in supporting civil society.

Our November 2019 AGM guest speaker Rita Chadha, CE, Small Charities Coalition (SCC) spoke of her keenness to re-define 'small' and for SCC to focus on working and supporting charities that have an income of no more than £350,000 pa, rather than up to £1m as the SCC previously did. Many small charities lack the confidence and understanding of how to approach and engage with funders. In the West Midlands around 80% of VCS are micro to small organisations that work in neighbourhoods, within communities of place and interest – the backbone of the sector and civil society.

This year's Annual Conference in March 2020 aptly entitled 'Responding to change together: Funding reimagined for a new decade', was held just before the national lockdown. It was jointly planned with One Walsall and Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations, chaired by Rita Chadha, CE, SCC and featured a keynote from Jane Ide, CE, NAVCA.

The voluntary, community and social enterprise sector has faced challenging times with an economic downturn, government austerity measures and local public sector cuts, Brexit negotiations and social tensions. The Conference sought to look at how the sector continues to adapt and respond to this changing landscape in a climate of reducing funds and increasing demand; how can we re-imagine what we do and how we do it; what could be new ways of thinking and approaches to current and future challenges and opportunities. As we move into a period of uncertainty due to the pandemic and a global economic recession, these questions continue to remain pertinent for funders and the VCSE long term.

Publications including 6 events e-bulletins and updates per month, 8 news and events updates over the 12 months

## **Funds and Sponsorship**

We remain grateful to members who continue to support WMFN through membership subscriptions. In addition, with additional contributions from particular members towards running costs, we have been able to develop the Network services.

We are also grateful for the 'in kind support' that members have provided.

***PAULINE ROCHE, CHAIR***

## **Financial Review**

### **Statement of the Charity's Policy on Reserves**

The Charity's policy on reserves is to generate and maintain a balance which is sufficient:

- a) to preserve the financial viability of the Charity in the event that unforeseen and/or unavoidable circumstance precipitate a short-term fall in its income;
- b) to enable the Charity, in the interests of meeting its objectives, to undertake from time to time the setting up of new and innovative projects on a pilot basis to demonstrate the viability and potential benefits of such activities as a precursor to securing the external funding necessary to maintain such projects on an on-going basis.

For these purposes the Charity will endeavour to generate and maintain reserves which are at least 25% of its annual turnover

### **Details of Any Funds Materially in Deficit**

The Trustees declare that the charity had no funds which were materially in deficit at the date of the statement of assets & liabilities.

## **State of the Charity's Finances**

WM Funders Network is now into the second year of operating following the transfer of assets from our former legacy organisation, Charitable Trusts West Midlands two years ago, and the charity is doing well in the face of unprecedented global upheaval that has taken hold in the last quarter, and particularly the last month, of the financial year.

Membership income appears to be significantly above last year's figure, and this is likely to be due, in part, to an increase in secretariat activity, reflected in the accounts. Also, events' income is significantly up on last year, again due in part to increased secretariat activity. Whilst donations would appear to be lower than last year, this is reflecting the final year donation, of a three-year grant, from Barrow Cadbury Trust, and the original transfer of assets from CTWM showing in last year's accounts.

The budget expectation was that the charity would spend down more reserves in the year than in 2018-19, however careful on-going cost control and revised budgeting had reduced this to £2,232.

The charity has a challenging year ahead in 2020/21 but is in a strong governance and operational position to plan a programme of activity in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, and, is well positioned to deliver its plan once committed.

The charity continues to have the resources it needs to achieve its charitable purpose.

***PETER HARDISTY, TREASURER***

## **Restricted Funds**

None

## **Particulars of Any Outstanding Guarantee Given by the Charity**

The Trustees declare that the charity has given no guarantee where potential liability is outstanding at the date of the statement of assets & liabilities.

## **Particulars of Any Outstanding Debt**

The Trustees declare that the charity has no outstanding debts which are secured by an express charge on any of the assets of the charity at the date of the statement of assets & liabilities.