**NOTES ON INAUGURAL KENT ARTS AND WELLBEING NETWORK MEETING**

**TUESDAY, 11th JUNE 2019,**

**THANINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCE CENTRE**

These notes seek to summarise the first network meeting attended by 19 people The meeting was presented with a potential way forward in the form of a strategic programme vision and then commented on that vision in three groups. The detailed notes of that vision and the ensuing discussions are captured separately. The high level strategic vision developed by Kent Arts and Wellbeing as a basis for discussion, was of a programme that was

* Substantial, providing a level of impact and awareness that would strongly encourage organisations – both large and small to undertake creative activities to improve wellbeing
* Kent wide with impact in at least 6 communities across Kent
* Creatively inclusive, using a range of creative activities; and those activities should not just involve participation but take people on a journey of personal discovery and achievement
* Focused on both physical communities, and communities of interest – such as people living with dementia, living in care, or living with COPD. As such it would not automatically apply only to older people
* Wide reaching, with positive impacts on all concerned – service users, volunteers, staff, creative leads and carers
* Transformative, creating an army of committed volunteers who can make a difference not only in affluent communities but also those with higher levels of social deprivation
* Sustainable

To realise that vision, the programme needs to

* Adopt a collaborative approach with innovative individuals and organisations working together so that
  + Needs are identified and met
  + Talents and resources are optimised
  + A breadth of influence and impact is generated
* Be team based with professional creatives, leading and mentoring volunteers, so that the level of personal contact and cost effectiveness that Our Work of Art(OWoA) has shown to be critical can be achieved.
* Select and train creatives to be able to work flexibly with clients and their service users, and be able to support and mentor their volunteers
* Recruit, train and care for volunteers
* Secure funding
* Build in sustainability- the capability to meet needs affordably.

All three groups agreed that the strategic programme vision represented a possible way forward but needed significant development. The discussions have generated lots of positive issues and ideas, and it was agreed that the next step would be to arrange 1:1s between network members and KAAW so that a more detailed approach for the next meeting could be generated that took into account all points of view. It is proposed that this will take place in June, July and August with a target to issue more detail in September and hold a follow up meeting toward the end of the month.

The key comments, areas for further development are summarised below. They will provide the backdrop to subsequent discussions

**FOCUS AND SCOPE**

* The focus needed to be person centred and structured to support/relieve workload of existing providers. It also needs to appeal to diverse cultural backgrounds and faith groups and demonstrate acceptance of diversity and inclusiveness,
* While it was agreed that scope should not be restricted to older people, and that intergenerational activity was highly desirable, there was no clear agreement on scope. Suggestions included , clients over 50, vulnerable people/young people at college, young people and carers, mental health of young and old, LGBT groups, middle aged men. The issue of scope will need to clarified and agreed

**DESIRED OUTCOMES**

**For individuals and communities**

* Increased connectedness of both individuals and communities
* Overcoming social isolation and loneliness, and promoting happiness
* Promoting a sense of self worth
* Building confidence, skills and maintaining independence
* Encourage digital capability
* Increasing sense of community and social cohesion
* Increasing sense of safety and support
* Reducing inequality
* Accessible and affordable
* Pe received to be worthwhile

**For participating organisations**

* Time freed up to enable other activities
* More trained volunteers
* More support for creatives running activities
* Training for leading combined arts projects
* Opportunity to share resources
* Seen to be making a difference with positive public perception – showcasing?

**ENABLERS**

* Secure sufficient funding
* Directory of available activities
* Work with other community groups - eg to provide transport

**PROCESS**

* Need to understand who could be involved , how to bring “vested” interests on board and what is missing.
* Need to involve community leaders in design
* Need to ensure intergenerational activities are included
* Need a level of staffing and capability that can ensure engagement of “reluctant” participants
* Recognise that one size will not fit all. Determine how to both customise approach and provide consistency of experience
* Full engagement may need encouragement – taster sessions and handholding
* Covering Kent will be a challenge, especially maintain momentum – needs to be addressed in design
* Need to create robust and sustainable capabilities so that good initiatives do not founder
* Need skill balance. What exists? Need for skills audit?
* Identify and fill gaps in training for creatives, volunteers and others
* Consider ambassadors to share and promote message
* Use existing services where appropriate to support programme – SKC health Checks
* Delivery needs to be reliable and provide back up in case of illness etc
* Design needs to consider scale translatability
* Don’t trample on existing initiatives

**ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS**

* Volunteers very important
* Need to understand expectation of volunteers and participants and legacy
* Need volunteer profiling
* How you engage volunteers is key. There is volunteer gold in relatively deprived areas with right approach.
* Programme must provide sustainability especially for volunteers
* Need clarity about who volunteers work for and subsequent responsibilities eg DBS. May vary in different settings. Also issue of protective ”ownership”
* Bank of volunteers useful. Data base to find volunteers?
* Central orgs to supply and train volunteers for creatives?
* Volunteer centre approach?

**STRUCTURE**

* Need clarification on shape of any “ umbrella” organisation
* Need proposals on issues of governance, and roles and responsibilities. These need to address split of roles and responsibilities between organisations
* Need to consider how to integrate activities across Kent
* Do we need different groupings of organisations to reflect different sets of needs, and how would these be integrated
* Do we need to establish geographical groupings with meeting hubs?
* What will be the access points to participate in proposed activities?
* Don’t forget art’s organisations – especially those who are also commissioners of activity and supported by funding.

**CONSTRAINTS**

* Time availability – often small part of responsibility. Dilemma of lack of time, and the need to speculate to accumulate
* Lack of resource , eg no activity co ordinator.
* Lack of and stop /start nature of funding. Plus issues about where to target funding and competition between organisations for funding. Need to commit to the bigger picture.
* Not knowing what is going on. Myths and inaccuracies about what is happening
* Importance of art and creativity not seen, and at bottom of list of priorities.
* Availability, suitability and training of volunteers; and volunteer management
* DBS, safeguarding and data protection and associated policies.
* Transport

**HELP**

* Mapping of what is going on
* Skills audit and opportunity to share resources
* Understanding what each organisations is prepared to commit to and divide up tasks
* Understand what funder want
* Funding strategy for Programme/network
* Directory of services
* Guide on implementation of using creative activities to improve wellbeing – shaped by members.
* Clarity about payment – network needs a policy. Self financing – sponsorship and other activities by service users? Possible involvement of friends and families to provide sustainable funding?
* Taster session – a creative fair for care providers?
* Clarification of the transformation we want to see
* A contract between care provider and artist?
* Talk on safeguarding/DBS/volunteer checks

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26/6/19