

Present:

Martin Trinder	CVS Beds (minutes)
Len Simkins	Advice Bedfordshire
Elliott Stephenson	Grand Union Housing Group (Deputy Chair)
Beccy Campbell-Grieve	Project 229
Karen Jones	Christians Against Poverty (CAP)
Jenny Harris	Carers in Bedfordshire
Charmaine Neita	Amicus Trust
Sam Conder	Macmillan Welfare Rights Service – Central Bedfordshire Council
Simon Kerr	Citizens Advice Bedford
Francesca Marritt	Citizens Advice Bedford
Gill Eden	Debt Advice Service – Salvation Army Bedford
Debra Brewster	Mind BLMK
Brian Cunningham	BRASS
Sarah Broughton	Bedford Foodbank

Apologies:

Amanda Ryan	BPHA (Chair)
Paulette Rennie	Bedford Community Support Group
Rawshana Noor	Disability Resource Centre
Jo Hansen-Cole	Citizens Advice Mid Bedfordshire
Noor D'Agostino	Peabody Trust (formerly Catalyst)
Yasmina Mahmood	Hospital Social Work Team - Bedford Borough Council
Wendy Jephcote	Autism Bedfordshire
Melanie Gomez	Hightown Housing Association
Steven Kunes	Hightown Housing Association
Kash Karimzandi	Citizens Advice Leighton-Linslade
Karen Lister	Debt Advice Service – Salvation Army Bedford
Jo Rising	AgeUK Bedfordshire
Georgia Bowers	Bedford Libraries – Bedford Borough Council
Chiara MacCall	Queens Park Community Organisation

Elliott welcomed everybody to the meeting.

3. Minutes of last AGM and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last AGM (30th June 2022) were accepted. It was noted that the meeting was held at CVS Bedfordshire.

It was also noted that the document celebrating 25 years of BAF can be found on the website - <https://cvsbeds.org.uk/aboutbaf>

There were no further matters arising.

4. Presentation

Beccy from Project 229 and Karen from CAP provided an overview of their services.

Project 229 is small independent Charity that has been operating since 2005, providing a proactive Community Centre linking local people with a range of services. Between the main hall, a smaller meeting room, and the café area, the building offers a range of spaces for use.

The development of the Café space has further enhanced the community use of the project, with a range of groups and services using the building, and local people feeling able to come in get support. More details can be found on the website - <https://www.project229.org/>

Christians against Poverty (CAP) is based at Project 229, offering a Debt Advice Service. As a local Debt Coach, Karen is able to provide intensive support to local people, with the support of CAP's national team. Further information can be found on the website - <https://capuk.org/get-help/cap-debt-help>

The meeting discussed the growing need to develop a new, campaigning anti-poverty network locally. BAF's Steering Group will discuss the issue.

Elliott thanked Beccy and Karen for their presentations.

5. BAF Annual Report and Finance Report for 2022/23

The annual report (including a finance report) was circulated to those attending the meeting.

The Financial Statement to 31 March 2023 showed that the level of income from membership had grown over the last year despite the increased membership fees for 2022/23, This had substantially reduced the expected deficit – as no income was generated from activities such as training last year

The annual report and finance report were agreed.

6. BAF membership fees for 2023/24

Although BAF's Steering Group had recommended that membership fees should remain the same for 2023/24, it was agreed at the meeting to increase the fees by 10% in order to support the Forum's move towards sustainability. The following rates were agreed:

- £11 - lower rate for organisations with 0-2 employees
- £55 - standard rate
- £110 - higher rate for organisations with over 100 staff

7. BAF elections - BAF Officers (Chair, Deputy Chair and Treasurer) and Steering Group members for 2023/24.

Following discussions, the following were elected unanimously:

- Chair - Amanda Ryan
- Deputy Chair - Elliott Stephenson
- Steering Group Member - Brian Cunningham
- Steering Group Member - Francesca Marritt

The two other current SG members (Paulette Rennie and Rawshana Noor) will be contacted to give them the opportunity to be part of the Steering Group again this year.

Martin Trinder will continue to undertake the functions of the Treasurer.

It was also noted that Len Simkins attends the Steering Group meetings on behalf of BAF's company, Advice Bedfordshire.

8. Any other business

Elliott thanked Beccy for the use of the café area at Project 229 for the meeting.