



## Minutes of Transition Network Board of Trustees Meeting Friday 18th November 2016

Trustees present: Peter, Hilary, Andrew, Henry, Clare, Tony (online)

Staff in attendance: Sarah, Rob, Nicola

Apologies: Ellen

### 1. Check-in

Roles:

Keeper of the record: Nicola

Keeper of the time: Andrew

Keeper of the heart: Clare

Keeper of the tech: Henry

### 2. Previous minutes and actions

Minutes of 18th September 2016 Board meeting: Amend Action point “Staff to bring communications statistics and Hubs table to each Board meeting” by adding “once the new website is created.” (Action point also superseded by Transition Dashboard item on today’s agenda.)  
Minutes otherwise **agreed**.

#### Actions:

The following actions are carried forward:

- Sarah and Rob to get a sense whether the Transition content and activities proposed by HEC is Transition Network work or not, and the extent of Rob’s time this would take.
- The International Group will have a first go at developing Principles Which Support Us to Work Internationally, drawing on Board feedback. These will be reviewed at a future Board meeting and then be tested with Hubs.

The following actions will not be carried forward:

- Henry no longer pursuing the idea of writing a blog on what Brexit means for Transition Network. There have been a lot of blogs on the Transition Network website about Brexit.
- Tony and Nicola (and others including Filipa) will continue to monitor the funding-related needs and obstacles emerging post-Brexit, but this doesn’t need to continue as a formal Board action.

Other actions done.

Conflict of interests for this meeting: Noting that Peter is working as a paid consultant for the anonymous Foundation. Peter has been talking to VKRF about them funding his work as a catalyst for sustainable change. Peter is on an advisory board to Friends Provident Foundation. Peter has kept Tony and Sarah updated with potential conflicts of interest in talking to funders about new work directions.

Tony is involved in a Greater London Bank application to Friends Provident Foundation (and his work is currently in receipt of funding from Friends Provident Foundation).

### **3. Treasurer's Report**

Financial position very similar to previous Board meeting. We still have a structural funding deficit of around £50,000 to fill for next financial year. We have a stable financial outlook but we need to fundraise sufficiently for about £50,000 of general overheads. Realistically this will be from finding new project funding. Also we remain totally dependent on the anonymous Foundation. Really happy with financial staff team.

**Action:** Tony and Nigel to assess whether any disclosure is needed in the accounts relating to Peter working as a paid consultant to one of our funders (the anonymous Foundation).

### **4. Funding update**

KR Foundation decision due in December 2016 – if this is successful this would give £29,000 per year for Transition Network overheads.

Nicola will be looking at Erasmus+ criteria as Claire Milne is interested to see whether there is scope for funding Cultural Emergence Leadership training; and Nenad has enquired whether there will be any proposals for joint Transition Network and Hubs applications to Erasmus+.

The international REconomy group of Transition Hubs have decided to fundraise together, and aim to apply to KR Foundation.

Peter skyped with Juliette Timsit this week. Her view is that, post the election of Donald Trump, USA funders are shifting their focus from top-down to bottom-up. She suggests to Transition US that they draft something to go to funders and potential funders. We should encourage the Transition message that the way to encourage bottom-up change is to support people who can engage people with different views, facilitate charged conversations. Post-Brexit, UK funders might be coming to the same conclusion.

We need to develop a way for Peter to hand over his role in communicating with funders, as part of succession planning.

The anonymous Foundation visit to Totnes was positive. Though Peter is working as a paid consultant for the anonymous Foundation, they are keeping aware of conflicts of interest and John leads on the Transition Network funding programme. Transition Network is the core of their Global Sustainable Living programme, with the philosophy of “this works, we want to support it.” The

anonymous Foundation would like us to link with, support, share trainings with some of their other fundees, around biodiversity in South East Asia, or indigenous peoples. Can we share some of the work about burn-out, being and doing, with these groups? Independently, Naresh and Sophy are offering training. Could we offer a partnership with Universite du Nous around organisational development and inner Transition?

Diversifying our income streams: this is an idea that needs to be kept alive.

Reviewing our strategy needs to be looked at in 2017? Is this fundable work? Also a new strategy will change what we apply to funders for.

## **5. Annual Report and Accounts**

Letter from auditor was signed confirming that Transition Network is a going concern.

Annual Report and Accounts to March 2016 was signed by Peter and sent back to the Totnes office for Tony's signature.

## **6. Delivery Director's Report**

### **Strategic Outcome 1 - Communications**

The new website will go live next week... with a blitz of publicity from Thursday 24th November. Testing was comprehensive and useful by 45 people worldwide. The website development included checking the database of Transition initiatives – this is now up-to-date information about current Transition initiatives. Amy, Ainslie and Sarah will be discussing how to get more regular, qualitative feedback from users about the website.

Next, Ainslie will be working on the communications strategy, including a focus on how to bring a range of different voices.

We have just approved seed-funding grants for Hubs, a number of which had communications elements: for example filming Transition activities in Japan and Spain/Portugal, training Transition Storytellers in the Netherlands, Transition interviews in Hungary. We have drawn their attention to liaising with Ainslie.

We have secured agreement to show *Demain* in the UK; but frustratingly we have not secured an agreement covering other countries. In the New Year, we will be able to distribute DVDs of *Demain* in the UK. The agreement is to pay the distributor Elle Driver a minimum of 50 euros per screening, as well as encouraging people to post video clips of their reactions to the film online. We aim to produce a document "How to make the most of your screening of *Tomorrow/ Demain*".

An incredible TV programme called *Apres Demain* was shown in Belgium, with a panel of young people asking a panel (including Josue of the Brussels/Wallonia Hub) searching questions about what this meant for their lives.

Sarah attended an ECOLISE policy workshop in Brussels. Good interest from policy makers. ECOLISE might get the funding to pay someone to hold a policy role and suggest when members should get involved or not.

ECOLISE are discussing whether to set up a small group from around Europe who would respond to policy changes from the point of view of community energy, to inform an MEP. There are some risks in this, as renewable energy is only part of the picture.

The key question is: What is the enabling policy framework to allow Transition to flourish? Our role is to support ECOLISE to hold the perspective of speaking for a systemic approach and calling for an enabling policy framework capable of creating space for bottom-up activity to flourish. The approach of the person appointed to the ECOLISE policy role will be critical here.

ECOLISE is co-ordinating a European Day of Sustainable Communities. Transition Network could help design a Brussels-based event as part of this.

Strategic Outcome 2 – Support – no further comments

Strategic Outcome 3 – Livelihoods/REconomy

We are about to ask to extend the UK REconomy project by 3 months. A new REconomy communications person is about to start. Interesting events planned - at Sheffield, to support next steps on local economic development plan, St. Albans and London.

Aim to organise a dreaming meeting in January for people involved in REconomy from around the UK, partly to help inform an application to Friends Provident Foundation.

**Action:** Sarah will email to ask Board for suggestions of people who should be invited to a UK REconomy dreaming meeting.

Tony recommends that we submit reports or recommendations to the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission (which includes looking at an alternative measure to GDP) and IPPR's Commission on Economic Justice.

**Action:** Tony will send links to the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission and IPPR's Commission on Economic Justice, to see if we have the capacity to contribute.

Strategic Outcome 4 – Demonstrating Impact

Sarah held a good meeting with Transition Research Network recently, who have a new volunteer taking a key role.

Outcome 5 – International

We have agreed seed-funding grants to Hubs for really interesting projects. Two bids from Romania and Italy were on organisational development, and we hope to fund these from the Tudor Trust grant. Hope to form a small learning circle on organisational development with the Romanian and

Italian Hubs. (Interesting conversations with other grantees at a recent Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust event were about organisational leadership and structure).

Filipa is making one-to-one contact with a number of Transition Hubs. Japanese Hub is a notable example (they have found language a barrier to engaging in the Hubs Group). Filipa heard about fantastic Transition work in Japan and is supporting them to connect, including contributing material to our website in Japanese. There is interest in developing a Transition Hub in Taiwan. There is also interest in forming a Transition support network between Asian countries.

Filipa's role: There is an idea to develop the Hubs Co-ordinator role as a circle of paid Hubs Co-ordinators – for example based in Asia, Europe, USA, Latin America – sharing the tasks between them. We need to shape the structure that could work here, could have potential for fundraising (for example Oak Foundation have an interest in Brazil). We are currently developing a proposal for Filipa to be employed by the Brussels/Wallonia Hub, as this would be easier than the current arrangement through Group S. The proposal is that we would give the Brussels/Wallonia Hub a grant to employ Filipa. This could be a model for paying other potential co-ordinators, through the Hubs in their country.

## **7. Transition Dashboard**

It is important for us to get better at receiving feedback as an organisation and bringing it to the Board. We want to be careful to collect meaningful evaluation, that is useful to staff, Hubs, funding applications, funding reports AND the Board. Some of the data Henry proposes might be very useful for strategic decisions by the Board. HR indicators would help us review HR as a Board – support for doing this annually.

- Website statistics will be more meaningful after the new website is under way.
- The forthcoming What is a Hub document includes the suggestion of an Annual Review of Hubs.
- Staff and board have just completed a baseline survey for the organisational development work, which is being analysed by Amy.

Ainslie, Amy and Sarah will be discussing evaluation of the website use. Sarah and Amber are currently discussing sickness monitoring.

**Action: Sarah, Nicola and Henry will meet in January ahead of the February Board meeting to see what could form the first piece of a Transition Dashboard.**

Meeting preparation: Trustees need information earlier so that Board members can prepare. This should be much more possible for the February Board meeting.

## **8. Co-chair and trustee appointments**

Recruiting trustees is a board responsibility. However, the trustee recruitment sub-group note they are holding a question about whether staff should be involved in decisions about recruiting trustees in the future.

The sub-group of Peter, Hilary and Sarah reported back on the selection process and made a recommendation for 3 new appointments. It was noted that the response to our advert for trustee recruitment hadn't been particularly broad or diverse, with some of the strongest candidates having relatively similar experience and perspectives to existing trustees. It was also noted that the recommendation of three men as new appointees was counter-productive in respect of the gender balance of the board. The sub-group took the view that any future recruitment exercises would need to pay particular attention to using a wider range of networks to advertise the roles and perhaps actively seek applications from women and other underrepresented groups.

The board recognised that the proposed appointments came from within the current Transition movement "culture" and perhaps might not inject an appropriate level of challenge, new perspectives and healthy discomfort. However there was some feeling that this could be a sensible holding position at a time of considerable organisational change in the charity and at a point when we might soon be encouraging a shift of focus towards more international governance arrangements co-designed with the Hubs Group.

It was noted that the Hubs are currently proceeding with the election of a second Keeper of the Global Perspective who would hopefully bring a new perspective and a voice from outside the UK.

The board reflected on the considerable carbon and financial costs associated with one of the recommended appointments and queried whether an appointment as trustee was the most appropriate and effective use of the experience and skills on offer.

**On the basis of this discussion, the Board approved the appointment of Joe Duggan and Peter LeFort as new trustees.**

**Action:** Sarah and Peter will draft communications to all candidates about the outcome of the trustee recruitment process.

Need to think about induction for new trustees.

**Action:** Hilary and Henry to update induction pack and meet with Joe and Peter respectively.

**The Board decided to accept Henry Owen's offer to become Co-Chair with Peter Lipman,** noting his commitment, insight, energy and ability to engage with new ideas and structures.

## **9. Transitionese project**

The Transitionese project report to the Board marked the end of phase one of this project. This project involved designing an imaginative call for freelancers. We asked two applicants to work together – they became a great international team on this project. They have involved Hubs really well. We held a webinar with five Hubs to introduce the [transitionese.transitionnetwork.org](https://transitionnetwork.org) platform and the Transifex tool for collaborating on translations. These Hubs said they'd form translation teams and start putting their resources online.

In order to sustain the benefits of this project, we now have to engage people and crowd-source the work. We have agreed budget for 6 months work on this. We will also look for funding opportunities.

**The Board officially thanked Deborah, Pedro and Sara for their work on the Transitionese project.**

#### **10. Municipalities project - implications and preparation**

If we are awarded the funding for the Municipalities in Transition project from KR Foundation, we will need to work fast to appoint a project team. We would aim to call out to Hubs and hold an election by consent to the roles of the Core Team. There would be key implications for Sarah's time in setting up this project.

We would have to look carefully at the funding contract around sub-granting (eg sending a grant to a Hub to employ a member of staff).

#### **11. Organisational Development project - next steps following Away Days**

At the October 2016 Away Days we decided (by consent) that the organisational development action learning project would be the Initiative Registration Service (IRS) and health-check project. This project will use new governance structures and learn from it. At the Away Day we appointed Mike as the project lead link, and set up roles.

The project governance circle has since met (Sarah, Filipa, Naresh, Laurent, Guillaume, Henry as observer, Amy observing as researcher). They decided the wealth exchange, a decision by consent on how much to pay Universite du Nous for their work so far. Now we need to re-elect the governance circle, and aim to use Loomio for this.

Universite du Nous offer to coach the staff involved in the action learning project through the process.

At a mid-point, there will be a 3-day seminar for staff and trustees to understand and learn from the action learning project. This is likely to be one of the weeks commencing 20th or 27th February 2017. Not everyone needs to attend. Hilary, Andrew, Tony and Peter are interested in attending the February seminar. Henry and Clare are unlikely to be available.

A closing 3 day seminar is proposed for June or July 2017. At that stage the governance circle will be able to bring ideas of recommendations for the whole organisation. We still need to confirm how people who haven't been involved, attend (or not) this one. Does this need a modular approach (a part for the project team and a part for everyone)?

Therefore we propose to not hold a separate Away Days during spring/summer 2017.

It would be ideal to have at least a one day event that introduces new Board members? Could do a Board-only meeting/ Away Day? How does renewing our strategy fit into this?

**Action: We will try to arrange a one-two day Board and Staff strategy meeting in April 2017.**

#### **12. Dates of 2017 Board meetings**

The following dates were confirmed for 2017 Board meetings:

10th February 2017 (Bristol)

Thursday 29th June 2017 (London)

15th September 2017 (A virtual online meeting)

We will aim to hold Away Days in November 2017 (as October is a very busy month for many of us), and therefore an early December board meeting (Bristol).

**Action: Nicola to doodle for a one-two day April Strategy meeting; November Away Days; and an early December 2017 Board meeting.**

### **13. Any Other Business**

It is exciting and inspiring how the Transition Italia Hub and Transition groups in Italy have been responding to the August 2016 Amatrice earthquake. They have been involved in rescue, bringing in resources, hosting people, and connecting with Transition groups in New Zealand. They are now holding an event for people affected by the earthquake to connect and share feelings together, creating a space to talk and think about it. (This event supported by a small seed-funding grant in the recent round). Ainslie will be looking at how to share this story.

**Action: Nicola to check Henry's email is updated on trustees email list and staff and board email list.**

**END**